

Ideas for Using Household Materials

These are just some of the ideas shared by attendees during the Gee Whiz webinar, "No Money? No Problem!" Creating Learning Opportunities with Household Materials"



Water Bottle Ideas

CAUTION: Remove & discard caps for under 3 or those children who put things in their mouths OR secure caps with glue (E6000 glue works well and you can get it at Walmart) & duct tape.

- Paint with the bottles (press bottoms or sides in paint and then on paper)
- Use as bowling pins. Tape letters, numbers, colors, shapes, etc. on the outside of the bottles. Roll a ball and talk about which bottles fell and which are left standing.
- Use the bottles to make puppets
- Fill bottles with rice and small items (like game pieces/a button). Shake and find items.
- Use to make bubble snakes by cutting the end, securing a sock with rubberbands and then blowing
- Make shakers. Fill bottles with different kinds of things (e.g., pom-poms, rice, dry pasta, etc.) Compare the sound made when different materials are in the bottles.
- Talk about how many cups of water the children drink in a day and how many the average person should drink
- Make sand/water scoops by cutting the bottle. Cover sharp edges with duct tape.
- Make an oil and water bottle. Great for calming children down!
- Make an Alphabet Search bottle. Fill the bottle with rice and alphabet beads (from the craft store). Search for different letters by shaking the bottle
- Assorted items in the bottle (some metal). Use magnet on the outside to see which you can pick up.
- Have children put small twigs or sticks in the bottles.
- Remove tops and plant seeds in the bottom portion. Again, wrap sharp edges with masking tape.
- Cut and use to make mini rafts for the water table. Again, wrap sharp edges with duct or masking tape.
- Have children fill the bottles with solar or battery-powdered lights to make a gift.
- Fill the water bottles with different materials (sand, water, cornmeal, dirt) and see if they all hold the same amount.
- Use the bottles in dramatic play as pretend microphones
- Use with sand and add funnels
- School-age: Estimate the # of beads needed to fill each bottle.
- If bottles still have labels, challenge children who are ready to seek out and find specific letters. Also talk about words and logos.
- Cut off the top and wrap edge with tape. Children can look through the bottle like a telescope and see how they world looks different. Can even try to read books this way.
- Experiment ... how many small bottles of water to fill a large one?
- Write a message, put it in a bottle and give it to someone special

Paper Gift Bag Ideas



- Add to dramatic play so children can pretend to go shopping
- Make puppets with other art materials
- Sensory bag - Put an item inside. Children touch with their hands and try to guess what it is without looking
- Have several bags. Children close eyes. Put an item in one of the bags. Have children find the item.
- Crumble up balls of old newspaper and attempt to toss them into the bags
- Have children try to figure out which items would fit in which bags by size
- Writing activity - What could I put in this bag? OR What could we do with these bags?
- Create Name Bags by having children practice writing their names all over the bags.
- Cut out a shape on each bag and then have the children match the shapes and patterns.
- How much will bags hold before they break?
- Try to catch bubbles with bags.
- Put scarves in the bag with a small portion hanging out. Infants/Toddlers can then pull the scarves from the bags.
- Cut or tear bags to create colorful collages



Whisk Ideas

- Weave pieces of ribbon or yarn in and out of the whisk
- Make bubbles in the water table
- Push pom-poms through the wires on the whisk so they end up inside. Then press them to make them come out.
- Tie ribbons on the whisk and then shake while dancing to music
- Hit the whisk (gently) on different surfaces and talk about how the sounds are different
- Make pudding or another food that uses a whisk to prepare
- School-age: Find recipe (international) online or in cookbook that requires a whisk. Make the recipe.
- Press whisks in playdough
- Compare different types of whisks (sizes, too)
- Make puppets with whisks
- Outside activity - Dip the whisks in paint and then "fling" on a shower curtain. Could also fling on large sheets of paper to create unique art
- Add whisks to the sand table, sand box or a container of sand
- Whisk different colors of water or paint together and talk about what happens
- Predict the number of pom-pom balls it will take to fill the whisk

Blanket Ideas



- Build forts or tents
- Use blanket as a parachute. Put a beach ball on top and make it bounce up and down
- Talk about the textures of different types of blankets
- So the child a toy. Put the toy under the blanket. Can the child lift the blanket to find the toy?
- Use to play, "Peek-a-Boo"
- Shape blankets into giant letters
- Challenge children to fold the blankets as small as possible
- School-age: Measure size of blankets/graph.
- Use a quilt to play, "I Spy"
- Add assorted sized blanket to dramatic play. Children can then use them as desired (e.g., to put dolls to bed, as a cape when role-playing a hairdresser/barber, etc.
- Hang blanket and then have the children crawl under it
- Hang blanket and use it as a "net" for playing volleyball or badminton
- Use small blankets for "superhero" capes
- Put numeral cards on blankets. Do exercises matching number of times.
- Test how water goes through different blankets

Other Ideas from Webinar Participants

RECIPE FOR SCENTED PLAYDOUGH:

2 cups of flour
2/3 cups of salt
4 tablespoons cream of tartar
2 tablespoons of oil

1. Mix the dry ingredients
2. In a large pan add oil
3. Add mixed up dry ingredients to pan
4. Add in Water and gently stir
5. Turn on medium heat and stir until it thickens
6. Add extract or spices to make the scent you want



OTHER MATERIALS PROVIDERS USE:

- Cupcake/muffin tins
- Ice cube trays
- PVC pipe
- Diaper wipe boxes
- Rocks/wood chips (as building materials)
- Tennis balls - Cut slits and then squeeze to make the "mouth" open
- Egg cartons
- Cookie cutters
- Coffee filters
- Plastic cups to make "clucking birds" by putting strings through the cups
- Bubble wrap
- Old pots and pans
- Shoeboxes

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