

HAPPYhomeroom

A Newsletter for the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
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Spring Themed Books

- ✿ *Spring is Here!* by Heidi Pross Gray
- ✿ *And Then It's Spring* by Julie Fogliano
- ✿ *It's Spring!* by Susan Swan
- ✿ *Everything Spring* by Jill Esbaum (National Geographic)
- ✿ *Spring is Here!* by Will Hillenbrand
- ✿ *In Like a Lion Out Like a Lamb* by Marion Dane Bauer
- ✿ *Puddles* by Jonathan London
- ✿ *Fletcher and the Springtime Blossoms* by Julia Rawlinson
- ✿ *It's Spring* by Samantha Berger
- ✿ *Mouse's First Spring* by Lauren Thompson
- ✿ *Mud and Red Rubber Boot Day* by Mary Lyn Ray
- ✿ *The Rain Came Down* by David Shannon
- ✿ *Listen to the Rain* by Bill Martin
- ✿ *Down Comes the Rain* by Franklyn M. Branley
- ✿ *Let It Rain* by Maryann Cocca-Leffler



Out with the Old, In with the Clean!

Start with a plan: Write a list of all of the cleaning that you wish to accomplish. This way you can divide up the responsibilities and it will feel great when you can cross items off the list as you finish them.

Give kids their own cleaning tools: Get a smaller bucket for kids to keep their own kid sized spray bottle with kid-friendly cleaner inside. They can keep some sheets of paper towel or their own rags, and even a small dustpan and broom set.

Use squirt guns instead of spray bottles: As long as kids know they are to squirt the windows instead of each other or you, this is a fun way to get some cleaning done.

Put on the music: Play upbeat, fun music to get everyone energized while they clean. Put clean,

old, fluffy slippers or socks on your children's feet to get the floors shined as they boogie to the beat.

Put on a show: All little kids love to be on camera. Tell your children that you are making a "How to Clean" video starring them. Have them show off their helpful cleaning skills while you video tape. To be fair, let them turn the camera on you too. When the cleaning is done, you can watch the funny videos together.

Focus on one room at a time: It can be overwhelming to try and tackle everything at once; therefore have everyone help out with one room at a time. You will be spending time together and getting the work done faster this way. Win, win!



Getting Messy is Good For the Brain

Have you ever wondered why your kids are drawn to puddles, sand, and mud? They are going on instinct and their instincts are correct. Playing outdoors and getting messy are valuable parts of their childhood as well as key tools in early learning.

In today's society, children have ever increasing access to technology and thus are spending more time indoors and less time playing outdoors which is having negative results on their early development. While parents may be nervous about the clean up involved in letting kids jump in puddles, build mud castles, etc., parents need to consider that the benefits will last far longer than the dirt.

As spring rolls around and the rainy season begins, parents need to fight the urge to keep kids indoors and instead put on those shoes and raincoats and head outside for some fun and learning!

Benefits of Outdoor Play

- ✿ Decreased risk for obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other health issues.
- ✿ Increased physical fitness, gross motor skills, and eye hand coordination.
- ✿ Improved communication skills and vocabu-



lary as children invent activities, pretend, learn new words to discuss what they are seeing and doing, and explain their ideas to others.

- ✿ Enhanced appreciation for the outdoors and development of their senses. When outside, children see, hear, smell, touch, and even taste things that contribute to their understanding of the world that they cannot grasp through t.v. or computers that only use two senses.
- ✿ Increased focus and attention, even in children with ADD/ADHD.
- ✿ Lower rates of sickness and higher levels of vitamin D, which strengthens bones and immune systems.
- ✿ Stronger reasoning and observation skills as children interact with their environment and draw conclusions about what they are observing.
- ✿ Improved self-esteem as there is no wrong way to play outdoors. Children of all abilities can benefit from outdoor and messy play.

(Sources: Rainorshinemamma.com, earlychildhood-news.com, High Scope, ourhandsonlearning.com)



Spring Activities-Rain Themed

Outdoor Rain Activities:

Rain Art:

(science, fine motor, creativity)

Materials:

- Chalk, chalk pastels, or Kool Aid powder
- White paper
- Rain



Directions:

1. On a rainy day (without thunder or lightning), have your kids prepare their paper. They can either draw on it with chalk or pastels or drop pinches (or handfuls) of Kool Aid onto their paper.
2. Carefully take the paper outside and put it in the rain.
3. Watch as the rain makes different patterns on the picture. Discuss how the speed of the rain makes different patterns as the rain hits the picture either harder or more gently.

Alternatives:

- Make new pictures as the speed of the rain changes to see how speed affects the pictures.
- Have your child experiment with putting different amounts of Kool-Aid on the picture (scoops, pinches, mounds, etc.) and discuss what happens when the rain hits each one.
- Try getting the paper wet first and then putting the Kool-Aid or chalk on.

(Source: messypreschoolers.blogspot.com, handsonaswegrow.com)

Rainy Day Science

(science, critical thinking, language)

Materials: (Have your child help you collect some or all of the items below)

- Something fabric
- Something metal
- Something plastic
- Piece of paper towel or paper napkin
- Stick or other piece of wood
- Piece of cardboard



Directions:

1. On a rainy (not stormy) day, gather the items above. Ask your child what he/she thinks will happen to the objects when they are put out in the rain.

Extension: Write down your child's predictions, saying the words as you write.

2. Have your child place each item in the rain. Wait 5-10 minutes (depending on intensity of the rain).
3. Have your child examine the objects. Do they look any different? Do they feel or

smell any different? Have your child touch, pull, and twist the objects. Did they react differently than they did before they got wet?

4. Reread the predictions that your child made and see how accurate they were based on your observations. Discuss why the items reacted to the rain in the way they did.

Extension: Put the items back in the rain for longer or in harder rain and discuss the new observations. Or try putting different materials in the rain, then predict and observe what happens.

(source: amomwithalessonplan.com)

Other Rainy Day Activities

☂ **Jump in puddles:** Let kids experiment with making small and big jumps, hops on one leg, running jumps, etc. to see how they each affect the size of the splash.

☂ **Catch raindrops:** Have children try and catch raindrops on their tongue, in their hands, on their feet, etc. Discuss what the raindrops feel like, taste like, sound like, etc.

☂ **Look for worms:** See how many you can find. Observe how they move, how far they move.

☂ **Measure the rainfall:** Place a cup outside and measure the rain throughout the day. Write the measurements and their times on a piece of paper. Or make predictions at the beginning of the day as to how much rain will be in the cup by the end. Check your results.

☂ **Take a rain walk:** Discuss how your neighborhood looks different in the rain. What is the same? What does the sky look like when it is raining?

☂ **Make ripples:** Have your child throw rocks into puddles. Observe the ripples that are made. Try throwing rocks from different distances or rocks of different sizes and compare the results.

☂ **Look for rainbows:** After the rain has stopped, look for the sun and see if you can spot a rainbow.

☂ **Make mud pies or sandcastles (depending on your soil):** Let your child dig and explore. Bring out various shovels, buckets, cups, and other utensils for your child to experiment with the mud.

(Source: preschoolers.about.com)



Indoor Rainy Day Activities:

Rain Sticks:

(Fine motor, science, creativity)

Materials:

- Paper towel tube
- Dried rice or beans
- Colorful duct tape or masking tape
- Toothpicks or sturdy pins with flat heads



Directions:

1. Take the tube and place tape across the bottom to completely cover it.
2. Place 1/4 cup of rice or beans or both into the tube and tape the top opening closed.
3. Take the tube and poke in about five toothpicks or pins down each side, they can all be facing the same direction or in different directions.
4. Wrap tape around the tube, covering up the toothpick or pin heads.
5. Show your child how to hold the tube up, then tip it upside down to listen to the rice/beans falling down the tube. When you do it slowly, it sounds like rain.

(Source: preschool-plan-it.com)

Rain In a Cup:

(Science, fine motor, self-help, language)

Materials:

- Clear cups
- Water
- Shaving cream
- Food coloring



Directions:

1. Have your child pour water into their cup until it is about half full.
2. Squirt a layer of shaving cream on top of the water. Explain that water droplets rise in the air and land on dust particles. A huge group of them together forms a cloud. The shaving cream is the cloud.
3. Have your child drop a few drops of food coloring on top of the shaving cream.
4. Watch and wait. Slowly the food coloring will penetrate the shaving cream (just like water penetrates the clouds) and will drop into the water, coloring the water.
5. Discuss how the food coloring acts like water droplets in the clouds. When the drops get heavy, they fall out of the cloud and you see rain.

(Source: preschool-plan-it.com, coffeecupsandcrayons.com)