



SINK OR FLOAT?

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY:

Invite your child to predict and then test different objects (toy boats, leaves, rocks) in water to see which ones sink and which ones float.

Encourage them to touch, observe, and describe the objects' features, such as size, shape, weight, and material, and then sort them into "sink" and "float" groups. Encourage your child to think about why things float or sink.

As your child explores and compares objects, they begin to notice how materials and object characteristics can affect what happens in water.

STEM LEARNING AREAS:

Engineering: Figuring out how things work and using materials to design, build, test, and improve solutions to problems

Physical Science: Concepts related to objects or things, what they do, and how they move

- **Structure & Properties of Materials:** Understanding characteristics of things and how those characteristics impact what things do

Math: Concepts related to numbers, patterns, shapes, and space, and how to use them to solve problems

- **Classification & Data Analysis:** Sorting things into groups and then figuring out how many are in each group to help answer questions

WHAT DO I NEED?:

- Large clear bucket or container
- Various waterproof items (toy boats, rocks, ball, rubber duck, leaves)

WHAT CAN I TALK ABOUT?:

- Water
- Sink/Float
- Sorting
- Compare and Contrast

WHAT CAN I ASK?:

- Which objects do you think will sink? Float? What do you think about [specific object]?
- Why do you think some objects float and some sink?



DO NOT leave children unsupervised during bath time or while playing with water. Children can drown in 1 inch of water.



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ADAPTATIONS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested playtime activity. These are only suggested activity adaptations. Consider consulting your child's care team first.



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.

ENVIRONMENT

- Use modified or flexible seating
- Place items on an anti-slip mat or in a container or tray within reach
- Introduce objects one at a time to help the child stay focused

MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- Use items that are easier to grasp and manipulate
- For children with physical disabilities with fine motor/grasping needs, consider using tools and assistive devices (grabber, reacher)

INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Use pictures or icons to signal next steps (see following page for examples; you want to laminate or cover with tape or contact paper to protect them from water)
- Model and demonstrate how to interact with objects

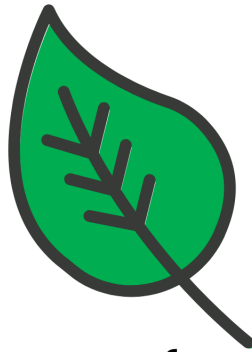


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VISUAL CUES FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



Water



Leaf



Ball



Ship



Need more visual cues?

Visit [STEMIE's Visual Cue Library](#) or check out STEMIE's tips for creating and using visual supports with [A Guide to Visual Supports](#).



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Check out these great books about boats:
 - *Boat Book* by Gail Gibbons
 - *Who Sank the Boat?* by Pamela Allen
 - *Alphabet Boats* by Samantha R Vamos
- Check out these great books about water:
 - *Hey, Water!* by Antoinette Portis
 - *Follow the Water from Brook to Ocean* by Arthur Dorros
 - *Water. Exploring the Elements* by Simone Akasha Nofel

