



BATHTIME FOR INFANTS

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ROUTINE:

Bathtime is a great opportunity to support STEM learning for your infant! Talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words as you bathe your baby.

Narrate what your infant is experiencing, like the **feeling of warm water**, the **sounds of splashing**, and the **textures** of washcloths and toys.

"You kicked the water! Did you hear that splash? How does that feel?"

As you bathe your infant, encourage them to interact with the **water**, noticing how it **feels, moves, pours, and splashes**. Watch for your baby's reactions, like a kick, a reach, a wide-eyed look, or a smile. These are the ways your infant tells you they are curious and engaged.

Explore bath toys together, describing their **colors, textures**, and **what happens** when they go in the water. When they show interest in something, pause and give them time to explore it.

STEM LEARNING AREAS:

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

- **Sound:** Vibrations that can be heard or felt when objects move
- **Structure and Properties of Materials:** Understanding characteristics of things and how those characteristics impact what things do
- **States of Matter:** Everything around us is made of matter, which can be a solid (like ice), a liquid (like water), or a gas (like steam).

Life Science: Concepts related to living things

- **Living Things:** Animals, including insects and people, and plants

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested daily routine. 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.



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ADAPTATIONS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

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

GENERAL BATHTIME TIPS

- Test the temperature of the water before placing your child in the bathtub or basket
- Ensure there are no electronics nearby that could accidentally fall in the bathwater
- To prevent mold growth, be sure to use child AND water safe toys
- For an infant with no or very little head control or who has rigid muscle tone, consider using a cleaning wipe instead of soap and water as an alternative

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENT

- To help position your child for bath time, place your child in a plastic basket or child bathtub
- Add a waterproof plastic mirror to the edge of the bathtub or basket
- Add grippers to the bottom of the basket or bathtub

MATERIALS

- Use long or bigger handled toys for easier grasping
- Put household objects and toys into a basket or container within reach of your child
- Offer high contrast household objects and toys for better visual discrimination
- For easier grasping, adapt water toys by building up the handles or creating grip straps using household items (pool noodles)

INTERACTIONS OR INSTRUCTION

- Provide hand-over-hand support to help your child explore water better
- Narrate/sign your child's actions as they experiment with the water ("Wow! The spoon disappeared under the bubbles when you dropped it.")
- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Use pictures or icons to signal next steps or each step of a sequence
- Communicate with your child at eye level
- Speak or sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts with words, facial expression, or body language
- Make eye contact and smile as you talk to your child



Adaptations are simple changes you can make to your child's space, toys, or activities to help them stay engaged and learn STEM ideas and words during daily routines.

Quick Tip:

Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues, such as touch, object, movement, or visual.





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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

1 – WATER OBSERVER



Description: Help your infant to **explore water** with **their senses** by **noticing how it feels, moves, and changes when they interact** with it. Encourage them to **touch, splash, and pat the water** and **explore** bath toys too.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to make connections between words and real-life experiences. This helps children develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Before placing your infant in the bath, let them **touch the water** with their **hand or foot**. Describe how it **feels**: "Do you feel the water? It is **warm and wet!**" Ask: "How does the water **feel**? Is it **warm or cool? Bubbly or smooth?**"

Model patting and splashing the water and encourage your infant to do the same. Use your hand gently under their **hand or foot** to help them create a **splash**. Narrate what happens: "Wow, you made a **big splash!** The **water moved!** Can you **do it again?**" Encourage them to try splashing with **different body parts**, like their **hands and feet**.

Introduce various bath toys that are non-toxic and safe for water use, such as soft sponges, rubber ducks, and balls. Place a floating toy near your infant and gently guide their **hand to touch or push it**. Say, "You **pushed** the toy and it **moved** across the water!" **What happens when you push it again?**"

While infants are learning to express words, they already have many ways to communicate! Watch for your infant's cues. They may show curiosity and interest by turning toward an object, reaching, kicking, or widening their eyes. Follow their lead and encourage them to explore what they are interested in.



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

2 – SOUND OBSERVER



Description: Help your infant to **notice the sounds of water**, from splashing and bubble popping, and your **voice**, with water-themed songs. Encourage them to explore the **different sounds** they can **make** themselves.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to make connections between words and real-life experiences. This helps children develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As you begin the bath, narrate the **sounds** you and your baby **hear** together. Say, "**Listen!** Do you hear the water running? It sounds like this: whoooosh!"

Encourage your infant to splash and listen to the sound it makes. Narrate: "You **splashed** the water. I heard a **big** splash! Can you **do it again?**"

Point out the **sounds** bubbles make when they **pop**. Say, "Do you hear that? The bubbles make a little popping sound when they burst!" Encourage your infant to touch and pop the bubbles and listen for the sound.

Make different sounds together, like dripping water, pouring water from a cup, or tapping the side of the tub. Ask: "Did you hear that? Does that sound the same as or different from the splashing?"

Sing water-themed songs and encourage your child to sing or sign along. See the next page for ideas. Pause and give your infant time to respond with sounds, movements, or expressions.

While infants are learning to express words, they already have many ways to communicate! Watch for your infant's cues, like a turn of the head, wide eyes, a kick, or a vocalization. Respond warmly: "I hear you! Are you making a sound too?" These back-and-forth moments build your baby's curiosity about **sound**.



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

WATER-THEMED SING-ALONGS

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

"Five Little Ducks"

Five little ducks went swimming one day
Over the hills and far away
The little duck said, "Quack, quack, quack,
quack"
And only four little ducks came back
(Repeat until no little ducks came back)

"Rain, Rain, Go Away"

Rain, rain, go away,
Come again another day.
Little (child's name) wants to play.

"I'm a Little Teapot" by George Harry
Sanders and Clarence Z. Kelley
I'm a little teapot, short and stout,
Here is my handle, here is my spout.
When I get all steamed up, hear me shout,
Tip me over and pour me out.

"The Itsy Bitsy Spider"

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the water
spout,
Down came the rain and washed the
spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the
rain,
And the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the
spout again.

"Five Little Fishies"

Five little fishies swimming in the sea,
Teasing Mr. Shark, "You can't catch me!"
Along came Mr. Shark as quiet as can be,
And snapped that fishy right out of the
sea.

"Splish Splash" by Bobby Darin
Splish, splash, I was takin' a bath
Long about a Saturday night, yeah
A rub dub, just relaxin' in the tub
Thinkin' everythin' was alright.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Check out these books about bathtime:
 - *Time for a Bath* by Phillis Gershator
 - *Bathtime* by New Holland Publishers
 - *Good Night Bath Time* by Adam Gamble & Mark Jasper
 - *Splish! Splash! Bath Time* by Little Hippo Books

