

BATHTIME FOR INFANTS

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.



Bathtimes are a great opportunity to support STEM learning. You can talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words as you bathe your child.

Infants can begin to learn about **cause and effect** by **noticing through their senses** how their actions and/or bath toys interact with water. Encourage your child to notice the **sounds** they and the water create during bath time.

Children learn new things when they practice them in everyday routines. Try one or two of the following activities during bathtimes. With a little bit of practice, bath time can become a natural place to talk and learn about STEM. Use these ideas to set up the environment and materials to best suit your child's needs.

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

GENERAL BATH TIME 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/very little head control or who has rigid muscle tone, consider using a cleaning wipe instead of soap and water as an alternative



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.



BATHTIME FOR INFANTS ADAPTATIONS

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ACCESS/ENVIRONMENT

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

- 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

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

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

INTERACTIONS/INSTRUCTION

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

Note: Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues (e.g., touch, object, movement, visual, etc.)

- Provide hand-over-hand support to help your child explore water better
- Narrate/sign your child's actions as they experiment with the water (e.g. "Wow! The spoon disappeared under the bubbles when you dropped it.")
- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Use pictures and/or icons to signal next steps and/or each step of a sequence
- Communicate with your child at eye level
- Speak/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



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EXPLORATION I

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Water Explorer

Description: Help your child **explore** water with **their senses** by talking about how water **feels and moves**. While bathing your child in a bathtub, sink, or basket, encourage your child to splash and pat the water.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore water. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking skills.

While bathing your child, describe how the water feels. Ask, "*How does the water feel? Is it **warm? Cool? Bubbly? Smooth?***"

While children are learning how to express words, they may already have numerous ways to communicate! Watch for their cues as they may express their **curiosity and interest** by turning toward an object or pointing to something. Using open-ended questions offers an opportunity for children to **explore** an object that they are interested in.

Introduce various textures by using bath toys that are non-toxic and safe for water use. You can include bubbles, soft sponges, smooth rubber ducks, and textured bathmats. Talk about how the **different textures feel** and encourage your child to **touch and explore**.





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EXPLORATION II

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Splasher

Description: Help your child **notice and recognize** that **they can interact** with water by modeling **patting and/or splashing** the water and **dropping** different objects into the water. While bathing your child in a bathtub, sink, or basket, encourage your child to **repeatedly splash/pat** the water and **throw/drop** water safe toys (e.g. sponge, rubber duck, ball) into the water.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore water. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking skills.

While bathing your child, model interacting with the water by patting and/or splashing the water. Talk about how the water moves. *"Wow! I made a **big splash!**"* Encourage your child to explore what happens when splashing the water with different body parts, such as their feet. You can use your hand under their hand or foot to help them **create a splash**.

While children are learning how to express words, they may already have numerous ways to communicate! Watch for their cues as they may express their **curiosity and interest** by turning toward an object or pointing to something. Using open-ended questions offers an opportunity for children to **explore** an object that they are interested in.

Introduce various bath toys, such as balls, rubber ducks, or sponges, that are non-toxic and safe for water use. Talk about the **different splashes** each object makes.





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EXPLORATION III

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Pop Singer

Description: Help your child **explore and create sound** by talking about how the water bubbles '**pop**'. **Sing** songs that are water themed. While bathing your child in a bathtub, encourage your child to pop bubbles and sing/sign along.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore water. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking skills.

While bathing your child, talk about the **sounds** they may be **hearing or feeling**. Point out that bubbles make a '**pop**' sound when they burst. Talk about the water '**splashing**.'

While children are learning how to express words, they may already have numerous ways to communicate! Watch for their cues as they may express their **curiosity and interest** by turning toward an object or pointing to something. Using open-ended questions offers an opportunity for children to **explore** an object that they are interested in.

Introduce water-themed songs and encourage your child to sing/sign along. See the next page for ideas.





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SING-ALONGS

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"Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

by Eliphalet Oram Lyte

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

"Five Little Ducks"

by Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs

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"

by James Orchard Halliwell

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

"I'm a Little Teapot"

by Clarence 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"

by California Folklore Society

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"

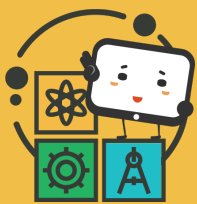
by Sharon, Lois, & Bram

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.



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- 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

