



### POWER OF PLAY® ACTIVITY GUIDE



#### Primary Development Areas Addressed:

- Sensory-Motor/Physical
- Cognitive • Language

#### Number of Children

1   2-3   3-5   5-10



#### Rationale:

Toddlers love to play in the water and can spend extended periods of time playing alone or side by side with peers. Improved sensory-motor development, through use of hands in play, supports expansion of cognitive possibilities.

#### Environmental Set-up:

Children love water play activities both indoor and outdoors.

When indoors, water protective strategies may be required. Core set-up includes the following tasks:

- Place a protective floor mat under the sand & water table (optional);
- Fill sand and water table with water (3/4 full);
- Identify & gather varied water objects/toys that sink or float (i.e. sponges, cups, spoons, boats)
- Place objects in bucket(s) for easy access by children; and
- Provide waterproof apron for each child. Towels and dry cloths may be necessary.

#### Objectives:

- Investigation of sensory-motor components of objects (texture, weight, temperature, etc.);
- Language development (internal & expressive).

#### Activity Overview:

Children stand at water table with two buckets of selected objects located on the floor close by for easy access. Ask children to choose object from the bucket.

- 1) Provide ample time for free exploration with chosen objects/toys in the water
- 2) Use guiding questions to facilitate investigation of “float or sink” characteristics of items in water

#### Guiding Questions:

“What happens when you drop something into the water?”

“Did it make a splash?” “Where did it go?” “Did it float”, “Did it sink?”

Note: Sand & Water activities require constant supervision, particularly with young children as many objects in the table could be a choking hazard.

#### Implications for Brain Development:

This activity provides age appropriate exploration and play that enhances brain development. The two-year old brain has learned the “map” of the body (where the hands are, where body parts are) that allows the child to use the body more efficiently to explore the world. Prior to 2 years of age, the brain has experienced individual characteristics of the world (how things smell, look, sound, taste, feel, etc). By age two, the brain is ready to link these characteristics together through formation of new nerve networks and elimination of unnecessary connections. This results in more integrated ideas about “what” things are and how to communicate, through language, these emerging concepts.

#### Developmental Learning Outcomes:

*Sensory-Motor/Physical Development:*

- Improved hand, grasp and release.

*Cognition Development: Sensory-motor stage of cognitive development:*

- Experimentation                      • Spatial relationships   • Explore cause and effect
- Problem solving   • Classifying (e.g. big/little, sink/float, heavy/light)

*Emergence of Language:*

- Symbolic play   • Interest in experiencing physical world

*Social/Emotional Development:*

- Self-regulation   • Parallel/individual play   • Beginning conversation

#### Activity Variation:

- Sort objects/toys into sink or float categories. Test decisions.

#### Resources:

Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development:

<http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/DLiT/2000/Piaget/stages.htm>

West, S. & Cox, A.(2001). *Sand and water play: Simple, creative activities for young children.*

Lewisville, N.C: Gryphon House.