

ACTIVITY

Learning Goals

SPONGES AND WATER

To explore the sun's strength. To show the effect of the sun on water (to introduce the concept of evaporation). To show the importance of drinking water when someone is exposed to extended sunlight.

Materials Needed

Shallow trays or bins, sponges in varying shapes and sizes, water, a sunny day, and an empty shelf inside a cabinet or closet.

Time Needed

5-10 minutes preparation.

Appropriate Group Size

Small or large groups.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Fill bins with about 1-2 inches of water.
2. The kids can play with water and sponges for awhile (obviously, attention span will vary).
3. When the kids seem ready to move on, gather all of the sponges and place them on two trays or bins.
4. Place one tray in the sunshine and one tray in the dark cabinet.
5. Check periodically throughout the day.

Comments/Suggestions

Be sure to never leave bins of water out of sight from adults. Children have been known to drown in as little as three inches of water. Be sure to have drinking water available.

Modifications

If you have young children in your class, use shallow dishes for the activity and continue to monitor. If you do not have sponges, use cotton balls or paper towels.

Things to talk about

- What's happening?
- Where did the water go?
- Do the sponges feel cool or warm?
- Why did this happen?
- Does your body also lose water?
- What happens when you are thirsty? (Answer: Your mouth gets dry, you get hot, and sometimes you even feel dizzy and tired.)
- This is why we need water to drink, so we don't get dry just like the sponges.

What you can do to extend this activity to other areas

1. Wash clothes in sudsy water. Hang them on a clothesline to dry in the sun.
2. Hang watercolor pictures to dry in the sun.
3. Leave a glass of water in the sunshine. Mark lines on the outside of the glass periodically to see how the water evaporates.
4. Fill a large bucket with water. Use paintbrushes to "paint" wet patches around the playground. See how quickly they dry. Compare results in shaded areas versus sunlight.
5. Brush water on your hands and arms. How does it feel in the sun?
6. Use magnifying glasses for the children to examine their skin. (Don't do this in the sun!) How does it compare with the sponges? Does your skin look different when it's wet?
7. Make it part of your daily routine to take water breaks. Can the children keep water bottles in their cubbies?
8. Sing to the tune of *This is the way we wash our face*, etc.
"This is the way we cool our bodies, cool our bodies, cool our bodies,
This is the way we cool our bodies, All day through..."

HOW WELL DID THE ACTIVITY WORK AND HOW WILL YOU DO IT DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?