

We Skoolhouse



Ready-Made Curriculum: Water Exploration



A Practical Guide for Exploration

Each unit offers a suggested flow of experiences designed to support deep, meaningful learning through play. You'll notice intentional repetition—this is purposeful. Repeating activities builds memory, mastery, confidence, attention, and focus, forming the foundation for long-term learning.

The experiences are open-ended & process-driven, focusing on how children learn rather than what they produce. This allows for a range of learning styles & encourages exploration at each child's unique pace.

Flexibility Matters

Each unit includes a suggested daily activity guide to support your planning—but it's not meant to be followed rigidly or completed in a set order:

- **Follow the children's lead:** If they're deeply engaged, slow down. If interest fades, it's okay to pause and return later. Some children need time to warm up to new ideas—don't move on too quickly. Repeating an invitation over several days can spark richer engagement.
- **Move at your own pace:** Stretch a week into two, repeat activities as long as needed, and allow units to grow over time.
- **Revisit, don't rush:** There's no need to introduce a new unit each month. Returning to a familiar concept—like revisiting water after exploring texture or paint—deepens understanding and strengthens memory. Revisiting isn't starting over—it's going further.

This guide is about making space for curiosity, experimentation, and meaningful learning. Use it as a springboard—trust yourself, trust the children, and allow learning to unfold naturally.



Unit: Water Exploration

Water play invites toddlers into a world of discovery, using their senses, movement, and natural curiosity. Through scooping, pouring, splashing, freezing, and observing, toddlers build early science understanding, fine motor skills, and language—all through joyful, hands-on exploration. Repeating experiences allows for deeper engagement and supports developing memory and confidence.

Domain	How Water Play Supports Development
Physical	Supports refinement of fine motor skills through pouring, squeezing, and scooping motions. Gross motor engagement (e.g., standing at a water table) promotes balance and coordination.
Cognitive	Deepens executive functioning as toddlers experiment with filling/emptying and problem-solving how to move water between containers. Engages early scientific thinking: prediction, observation, and adjustment.
Language	Expands functional vocabulary and language comprehension by naming tools, actions, and sensory experiences. Facilitates two-way communication during cooperative or parallel play.
Social-Emotional	Encourages peer awareness and cooperation as toddlers begin to share space and materials. Helps with emotional regulation as the repetitive nature of water play can have a calming, organizing effect on the nervous system.

Unit: Water Exploration

Focus Materials: Water, cups, sponges, ice cubes, spray bottles, watercolors, aquatic animal (figurines)

Books: Water, Water Everywhere by Leslie Perkins, Splish, Splash, Ducky! by Lucy Cousins

Songs: "Rain, Rain, Go Away!" & "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Vocabulary: Water, splashing, pouring, dripping, soaking, floating, sinking, warm, cold, gentle, stream, puddle, swish, squirt, slippery, sprinkle, fill, empty, scoop, rinse

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Water exploration in table or bin	Sponges & cups in water	Water exploration in table or bin	Sponges & cups in water	Watercolors painting
Week 2	Watercolors painting	Spray bottle art	Small world ocean play	Spray bottle art	Small world ocean play
Week 3	Painting with ice	Sponges & cups in water	Painting with ice	Spray bottle art	Small world ocean play
Week 4	Save the ocean animals	Watercolors painting	Watercolors painting	Save the ocean animals	Water exploration in table or bin

Unit: Water Exploration

Suggested Activities

- **Water Exploration in Sensory Bin or Table:** A shallow bin filled with water and a few props (cups, funnels, scoops). Children freely pour, splash, and transfer, engaging in open-ended sensory play.
- **Sponges & Cups in Water:** Offer sponges and cups for squeezing and transferring water. Builds hand strength and coordination through simple cause-and-effect exploration.
- **Spray Bottle Art:** Plain water or colored water in spray bottles is sprayed onto paper hung vertically. Strengthens motor skills while creating vibrant, process-based art.
- **Small World Ocean Play:** Ocean animal figurines in a water-filled bin with shells encourage pretend play, storytelling, and sensory exploration.
- **Save the Ocean Animals:** Ocean animals are wrapped in pipe cleaners for children to “rescue.” Supports fine motor development and problem-solving.
- **Painting with Ice:** Colored ice cubes with popsicle stick handles become melting paint brushes. Children glide them across paper, mixing sensory and art.
- **Watercolors Painting:** Toddlers use brushes and watercolor palettes on thick paper to explore color, blending, and expression through process art.



Unit: Water Exploration

Alternatives and Extensions:

Explore these simple variations to extend play, supporting repetition, variety, and deeper sensory learning:

- **Ice Excavation:** Freeze small toys inside large ice blocks. Provide squeeze bottles with warm water, salt, or toy tools for children to melt or chip the ice. Encourages focus, patience, and problem-solving.
- **Sink or Float:** Offer a variety of everyday and natural items (e.g., spoon, leaf, rock, sponge) and let children test them in a bin of water. Add clipboards or visuals for children to “sort” the results if desired.
- **Ice Exploration:** Provide plain or colored ice cubes in a tray or shallow bin. Let children touch, move, and watch them melt. Add small scoops or cups for extended water play.
- **Pouring Station:** Set up pitchers, cups, bottles, and funnels at a low table or outdoors with water. Toddlers build control and coordination while experimenting with pouring and transferring.
- **Bubble and Foam Play:** Mix water with tear-free soap and whisk into foam. Add small toys, cups, or scoops for tactile exploration and pretend play.

