Simple Science Projects

You don't need test tubes and chemicals to do great science projects with children. You can find a lot of materials for science right in your home or backyard. Children will love trying some of these science projects.

Sink or Float

What is needed:

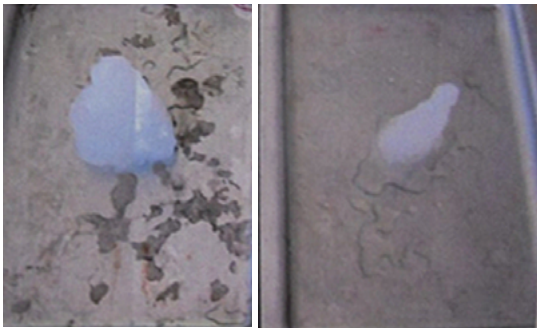
Bowl or pan of water

A number of different items, such as a cork, small sponge, stone,feather, ball, paper clip, etc. (make sure you have some items that will sink and some that will float)

What to do:

The pan of water can be placed on a plastic tablecloth or old shower curtain for easy cleanup. Talk with the children about what it means to sink or float. Let them try putting the objects into the water to see if they sink or float. Have the children gather more things to put in the water. They may like to try to guess what will happen before putting them in the water.

Changing Water



What is needed:

Water

Pan or ice cube tray

What to do:

Set out a pan of water. Let the children put their hands in the water and ask them to tell you what it feels like. Tell them you're going to make the water change. Put the pan into the freezer or pour the water into ice cube trays and freeze until solid. Show the children how the water has changed. Set out the ice so the children can watch it change back into water.

The children may like to try putting other things into the freezer to see if and how they change. You may want to try freezing a cup of juice, an apple, a banana, etc.

Closely supervise children in and around water.

With infants and toddlers an adult should be within an arm's length, close enough to provide "touch supervision."

Absorption

What is needed:

Pan of water Different types of materials, such as a paper towel, writing paper, newspaper, sponge, piece of wood, etc.

What to do:

Ask the children what could be used to clean up some water that spills on the floor. Set out the materials. Let the children dip a corner of each item into the pan of water. Watch to see if the item absorbs the water or just gets wet. Put a few drops of food coloring into the water, so you'll be ble to see the color move into the material as the water is absorbed.

More on Absorption

What is needed:

A cup of water

Food coloring

1 stalk of celery

What to do:

Put several drops of food coloring in a glass of water. Stand the stalk of celery into the glass of water. Watch over time as the colored water is absorbed into the celery stalk, visible in the stem and leaves of the celery.

Baking Soda and Vinegar

The acid in vinegar makes a chemical reaction when it comes in contact with baking soda.

What is needed:

Baking soda

Vinegar

Paper cups

What to do:

Cover the table or floor with a plastic tablecloth or old shower curtain to make cleanup easier. Give each child a paper cup. Pour some baking soda into each cup. Pour the vinegar into a small pitcher or measuring cup with a spout. Let each child use the pitcher to pour some vinegar into his paper cup. Watch as the mixture foams.

The children may be interested in trying this experiment with other materials. See what happens if you put flour, salt, sugar, or other materials in the cup, then add vinegar.

Children love science projects.

Rotting

What happens to food if it sits out too long?

What is needed:

A piece of fresh fruit or vegetable, such as an apple, banana, pepper, tomato, etc.

Dish or paper plate

What to do:

Put the fruit or vegetable on a dish or paper plate. Write down the predictions the children make about what they think will happen if the food sits there for a week or more. Observe the food over several days and weeks as it rots, using a magnifying glass and drawing or taking pictures at different stages. Discuss what is happening with the children.

Rotting Comparisons

What is needed:

Different types of food to compare, such as a fresh vegetable or fruit, slice of bread, some dry cereal, peanut butter, piece of cheese, hot dog, etc.

Sandwich bags

What to do:

Each child can choose a type of food to watch, and put that food into a bag. Use a marker to write the name of the food on the bag. Watch what happens to the food over several days and weeks.

Simple science projects use things that you have around the house.

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