

Self Help Inc.,
Community Partnerships for Children
Chill Out

At Home Curriculum
of Winter Activities
for Parents to Do With Their Children!

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Winter Curriculum Activities for Home

When you think your child is just playing at preschool, think again. The fun games and activities that children do in the classroom are actually learning experiences. They provide the foundation that children will continue to build upon throughout their education. Below are some activities that you can try at home and how they relate to the State Guidelines. These samplings of activities are taken from the January calendar on Preschoolexpress.com. You can access this website at the beginning of each month for more calendars to extend your child's learning. Some of the activities below have been enhanced for further learning.

Small Motor Development Activity: *Pick up cotton balls with tweezers and /or kitchen tongs; put the cotton balls in various sized containers.*

Learning experiences:

1. Physical Development – Use thumb/finger in pincer grasp.
2. Physical Development – Build finger dexterity.
3. Physical Development – Use eye-hand coordination, visual perception and tracking, and visual motor skills in play activities

Science Activity: *Sprinkle salt on an ice cube, place a thread on top. Wait a minute, and then lift the thread.*

Learning experiences:

1. Inquiry Skills – Make predictions about changes in materials or objects based on past experiences.
2. Earth and Space Science - Compare and contrast natural materials such as water, rocks, soil and living organisms using descriptive language.

Sensory Activity: *Fill your sensory table (or lg. dish pan for home) with warm soapy water. Add straws to the soapy water and make bubbles.*

Learning experiences:

1. Earth and Space Sciences - Explore and discuss what air is or does (air takes up space inside bubbles and beach balls; air can move things; air can support things such as parachutes and kites).
2. Inquiry Skills – Identify and use simple tools appropriately to extend observations.

Geography Activity: *Make a map of your house or classroom. Have the children trace paths from room to room or area to area. You can also do this for your neighborhood.*

Learning experiences:

1. History and Social Science – Engage in activities that build understanding of words for location and direction.
2. History and Social Science - Construct and describe simple maps of their immediate neighborhood.

Language Activity: *Have a child make up a story by looking at a picture from an old calendar or card.*

1. Language - Observe and use appropriate ways of interacting in a group (taking turns in talking; listening to peers; waiting until someone is finished; asking questions and waiting for an answer; gaining the floor in appropriate ways).
2. Language - Communicate personal experiences or interests.
3. Composition - Use their own words or illustrations to describe their experiences, tell imaginative stories, or communicate information about a topic of interest.

Don't forget to check out www.preschoolexpress.com at the beginning of February and March to find more fun activities to do at home with your child.





More fun winter themed Math Activities for indoors!

When the weather outside is frightful these activities are sure to delight the children!

*Did you know that the best context for children to learn is through play?
The following activities will introduce and reinforce beginning
math concepts through play.*

Wondering what to do with all those old gift boxes? Here's a fun way to use those boxes before you place them in the recycling bin!

GIFT BOXES (Size Discrimination) You can help your child learn size discrimination with a stack of gift boxes.
Set out 4-6 gift boxes in different sizes.
Have your child find the largest box, the next largest, etc.
Have your child line the boxes up from smallest to largest.
Have her stack the boxes on top of one another from largest to smallest.

Stuck inside the house because of the cold? Here are some simple ways to pass the time using items found in your house!

STUFFED ANIMAL TRAIN (Counting and Numeral Recognition)
Set out five cardboard boxes (approx. 2' x 4') in a line for a train.
Tape a number card on each box (1 thru 5)
Set out 15 stuffed animals.
Have your child place the correct number of animals in each box according to the number posted on the train car.
Variation: You can reverse this game by leaving the animals in the boxes and taking the numbers posted on the boxes off and mixing up the cards.
Have your child then place the cards back on the train according to how many animals are in the box.

ANIMAL LINEUP (Size Discrimination)

Set out 5-10 stuffed animals.
Have your child place the animals in a line from the smallest to the largest.
Variation: Place animals in the line from the largest to the smallest.
Have your child count the number of animals that are in his line.

JELLYBEAN ESTIMATE (Estimating)

Place some jellybeans in a small glass or clear plastic jar or glass.
Have your child try to guess how many jellybeans are in the jar.

COUNTING BUTTONS (Counting) Winter time is usually a time of heavy clothing with lots of buttons. Go on a button search with your child.
Have him count how many buttons they have on, then how many buttons you have on. Who has the most?

COUNTING PAIRS (Matching and Counting)

Go through your house and find five pairs of gloves or mittens.
Mix up the gloves and give them to your child.
Help her count how many individual gloves she has.
First, have her sort the gloves into pairs.
Then have her count for you how many pairs she has.

When the weather isn't so frightful here are a few great outdoor activities to stimulate mathematical thinking!

COUNTING SNOWMEN (Counting)

Go for a ride in the car with your child when there is snow on the ground.
Have your child count the number of snowmen he sees.

SNOWBALL TOSS (Counting)

On a snowy day, help your child make 10 snowballs.
Set out a plastic basket.
Have your child try tossing the snowballs into the basket.
Movement activities are a sought after prize during the winter months. Here are some quick ideas to do while playing outside in the snow!

What They Learn!

Children learn to listen and say the names of numbers in meaningful context. They learn to be curious and to explore problem solving that's appropriate to the developmental levels and learning styles of each individual child.



SHOVELING SNOW

Children can have a lot of fun out in the snow with a small metal or plastic dust pan. Show your child how to scoop up the snow and toss it aside. Dust pans can also be used to make designs in the snow, by moving them across the top of the snow.

SNOWBALL TOSS

Set out a basket or cardboard box.
Stack up a pile of small snow balls.
Have your child try to toss the snowballs into the basket.
Count how many snowballs they get in the basket.
Variation: Have child try to toss the snowballs at a snowman in your yard.

CARDBOARD BOX SLED

You can make a quick sled for your child by using a cardboard box.
Place your child in the box and push her around the yard.
Or you can add a rope handle by poking a hole on one side and tying it on.
Variation: Old baby bathtubs work great as sleds also.

SNOWMAN'S HATS Create a small child sized snowman for your child.
Bring out a variety of hats for your child to place on and off the snowman.
Talk with your child about which hat fits the best, which is most colorful etc.

After a fun filled adventure in the snow here is one last activity to do as you sip cocoa and look out at the snow.

Snowflake Picture and Poem:

Snowflakes are unique just like people.
Make a copy of this poem and paste it onto a piece of construction paper.
Glue a current picture of your child on the paper.
Have your child decorate the paper with snow flakes
or use chalk to make a snow scene.
Talk with your child about their special unique gifts!
A great way to reinforce your child's self esteem !

SNOWFLAKE SPLENDOR

And to the earth the snowflakes came,
Patterned all, yet none the same.

And we would find, if we did seek,
Each one special, each unique.

Each majestic in its way,
Adding splendor to our day.

So when the flakes begin to fall,
Let the flakes remind us all

That we like flakes are all unique
And this in others we must seek.

Each one special in its way,
Adding splendor to our day!
Jean Warren



What They Learn!

Children learn to use both sides of their bodies to strengthen their coordination. Their physical development with also be strengthened. They will learn how to play physical games with rules and structure!



What They Learn!

Children will learn to recognize rhythm and rhyme in poetry. They are encouraged to play with sound, rhythm, language, materials, space and ideas that will help them to express their creative abilities.



Here are some activities to do when the weather outside is less frightful!

Snow Critters: adapted from naturenet.com

Everyone knows how to make a snowman, but what about snow critters? Start with a snowball, roll it along the ground and build your own menagerie of outdoor creatures – rabbits, squirrels, foxes, bears, etc. Use stones, old leaves and twigs for eyes, ears, and whiskers. Be sure to carefully leave a path of ‘untouched’ snow leading up to your creation. Then, from 10-20 feet away, try to make that creature’s tracks leading up to it by simulating that animal’s walk. Hop like a bunny, lumber like a bear, scamper like a squirrel. Keep track of how long your creation lasts. Which disappears first – the critter or its tracks?

Nature Walk:

Take a nature walk early in the morning after a fresh snowfall. Bring a camera and a small notebook. Take pictures of the footprints you see in the snow and try and guess what animal made them. Draw a picture of what animal you may think made those footprints. Prepare for your adventure by reading a book about animals in the winter such as Footprints in the Snow by Cynthia Benjamin or Big Tracks Little Tracks by Millicent Selsam.



Snooping Snowflakes from www.nwf.org

Investigate the many shapes and sizes of snowflakes with this cool spy technique.

What you need:

- a snowy day
- a sheet of black construction paper
- a magnifying glass

What you do:

- Freeze a piece of black construction paper.
- Let some snow fall on the paper.
- Have your child look at the flakes with a magnifying glass.

What you talk about:

Ask the following questions:

- How are the snowflakes alike?
- How are they different?
- What did you learn about snowflakes?



Background information to share:

Snowflakes are made up of tiny bits of ice called crystals. These crystals grow around tiny bits of dust in the clouds. When these crystals stick to each other, they become snowflakes. Some snowflakes have as many as 200 crystals. Snowflakes come in many different shapes. Some look round like plates; others look pointy like stars. Follow this activity up by creating your own snowflakes using paper and scissors. Use a little glitter to make your snowflakes sparkle.

Simple Science: experimenting with temperature:

Ever wonder why Eskimos build their houses out of snow? Try this experiment and see why snow can help people stay warm,

You will need:

- 2 outdoor thermometers
- a place to hang a thermometer

Here’s what to do:

- Hang one thermometer outside out of direct sunlight.
- Bury the other thermometer in a pile of snow. After an hour uncover the thermometer that is under the snow.
- Compare the two thermometers. Did they record the same temperatures? If they are different what made one register a warmer temperature?

FROST RECIPE

Here is a fun recipe you and your child can use for making frost.

Here’s what to do:

- Place ice cubes in a can.
- Pour salt on top of the ice cubes.
- Stir the ice around and around with a wooden spoon.
- Let your child discover the frost that forms on the outside of the can.
- Let your child write on the sides of the can with her fingers.

What They Learn!

While doing these activities, children will learn about the environment. They will learn to ask questions and be curious as to how things happen. Children will learn how to use simple tools to observe objects and scientific phenomena.





Winter Activities for Home or School:

The winter months can provide a treasure trove of learning for young children. The following activities will keep children engaged and active in any kind of weather. But did you know that all these activities can be aligned with the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences and other quality tools as well? Look in the text boxes beside each of these activities and learn which guidelines are met by the activity. Keep these guidelines in mind, as you and the children complete these activities learning about this wonderful season through play.

Is it too snowy and cold to play outside? Make a model of the snowman you will build when the weather is better with this recipe for snow dough! Paint a snowy masterpiece that has form and substance using this recipe for snow paint!

Recipe for Snow Dough:

You will need:

Large mixing bowl
Measuring cups
2 cups Flour
1 cup Salt
Water
2 tablespoons Vegetable oil
A container with a cover to store your dough



Here's what to do:

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Add water until it is perfect dough. Use anything you can think of to make eyes nose, arms such as dried beans, pasta, pipe cleaners, buttons, twigs etc

*** extend the activity-use the snow dough to make letters, numbers or shapes!**

Recipe for snow paint:

You will need:

2 part shaving cream paint brush or fingers!
1 part white glue construction paper
A mixing bowl

Here's what to do:

Mix together until it looks glossy and use on dark paper to create snow pictures with a little form and substance!

*extend this activity by using the snow paint to make letters,

numbers, or shapes. Change it by using papers with houses or trees pre-drawn and the paint can be used to change the picture into a snowy scene.

Snow Painting

Here comes Picasso! This activity can be very creative and lots of fun. All you'll need are empty spray bottles. Fill them with water and add a few drops of food coloring (or washable tempera powder paint). Put rubber dishwashing gloves over your child's mittens and let your child spray art onto the snow.

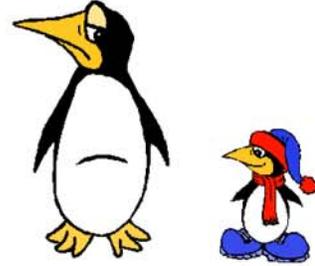


What They Learn!

Children learn to solve simple addition and subtraction problems by using comparative language. They learn problem solving skills. They learn the concepts of measurements by using standard and nonstandard units of measure!



How Do Penguins Stay Warm!



Ever wonder how animals that live in very cold climates stay warm? Animals like penguins, polar bears and seals? Here's a project that will explain how these animals stay warm in sub zero degree weather.

What's Needed?

Large plastic tub/bucket
Ice
Water
Ziploc Bags
Vegetable Shortening

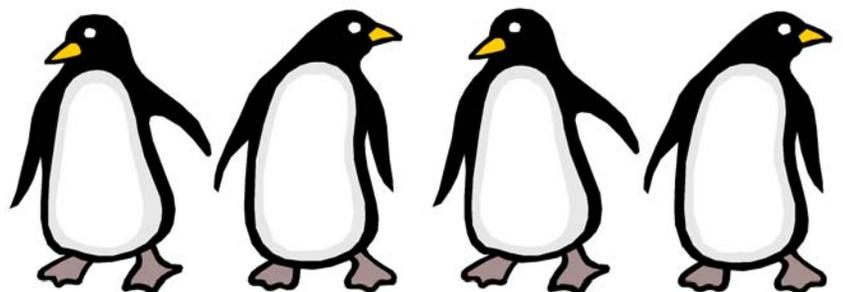


What They Learn!

You are providing children with various opportunities and materials that encourage them to think, question, and reason about observed and inferred sciences. When you encourage dialog, you are expanding their vocabulary by discussing scientific concepts in everyday conversation.

What To Do!

Fill a big bucket with cold water and lots of ice. If you have some plastic Arctic animals, throw them in the water too. Let the children put their hands in to play with the animals. Most likely, they will quickly tell you that their hands are too cold. Talk with them about how Arctic animals stay warm in the icy water because of something called blubber. Explain that blubber is a thick layer of fat beneath the skin of many sea mammals such as whales, seals, penguins, and walruses. To demonstrate how blubber helps keep animals warm, fill two Ziploc bags with vegetable shortening. Seal the bags and place them into another Ziploc bag. Have the child slip his/her hand in between the two bags of shortening and close the outside around his/her hand. Then have him/her place his/her hand into the bucket of icy water. The shortening will act as blubber and keep the child's hand warm.





Songs for Snowy Days

Adapted from www.preschooleducation.com



Hibernation Song

Sung to: "Are you sleeping?"

Bear is sleeping, Bear is sleeping.
In a cave, In a cave.
I wonder when he'll come out,
I wonder when he'll come out.
In the spring, In the spring.

Dance Like Snowflakes

Sung to: "Frere Jacques"

Dance like snowflakes
Dance like snowflakes
In the air
In the air
Whirling, twirling, snowflakes
Whirling, twirling, snowflakes
Here and there
Here and there.

Snowflakes, Snowflakes

Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"

Snowflakes, snowflakes, dance around,
Snowflakes, snowflakes, touch the ground
Snowflakes, snowflakes, in the air
Snowflakes, snowflakes, everywhere
Snowflakes, snowflakes, dance around
Snowflakes, snowflakes, touch the ground

Snowflakes Falling Down

Sung to: "Row, Row, Row your Boat"

Snowflakes falling down,
Falling to the ground.
Big, white fluffy flakes
That do not make a sound.

Who is Made of Snow

Sung to: "Do your ears hang low?"

Who is made of snow
When the temperature is low?
Who stands outside
When The ground is cold and white?
Who starts to melt
When the warm sunshine is felt?
Who is made of snow?

Snowflakes, Snowflakes

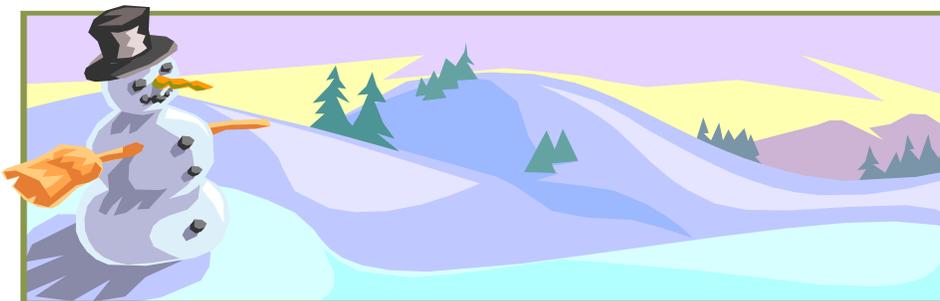
Sung to: "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"

Snowflakes falling
One by one,
Time to play and have some fun.
Build a snowman
Snowballs, too,
Come and see what you can do.
Snowflakes falling
One by one,
Time to play and have some fun.

Five Little Snowmen added

Sung to: "5 little monkeys"

Five little snowmen riding on the sled (pretend five fingers are sledding)
One fell off and bumped his head (pretend one finger falls off...rub head)
I called Frosty and Frosty said (dial imaginary telephone)
"No more snowmen, riding on that sled!" (say in a deep voice)
Four little snowmen... etc



Winter
Children's Storybooks

The Mitten by Jan Brett

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

White Snow, Bright Snow by Alvin Tresselt

Caps, Hats, Socks, and Mittens by Louise Borden

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

Millions of Snowflakes by Mary McKenna Siddals

The Snowman by Raymond Briggs

Snow by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

Names for Snow by Judi K. Beach

The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg

First Snowfall by Anne Rockwell and Harlow Rockwell

Winter by Tanya Thayer

Teddy's Snowy Day by Ian Beck

Snowy, Flowy, Blowy by Nancy Tafuri

The Big Snow by Berta & Elmer Hader

Winter by Nuria Roca

Stranger in the Woods by Carl Sams

Clifford's First Snow Day by Norman Bridwell

The First Day of Winter by Denise Fleming

Snow Family by Daniel Kirk

A Snowy Day by Robin Nelson

Snow is Falling by Franklin M. Branley

Footprints in the Snow by Cynthia Benjamin

Animals in Winter by Henrietta Bancroft and Helen K Davie

Big Tracks Little Tracks by Millicent Selsam

Winter is the Warmest Season by Lauren Stringer



Overview and Explanation of Project

We know it can be challenging to keep children occupied when it's too cold or snowy outside. These winter-themed activities have been designed to provide some at home learning activities for the winter months. In addition, we have aligned these activities with the learning guidelines that teachers use to plan similar activities for your child in their programs. This illustrates how real learning takes place in the context of your child's everyday play.

If your child is in an accredited preschool (either center based or family childcare) you may hear the terms NAEYC, CDA, UPK (Universal Preschool), NAFCC, and the MA State Standards and Guidelines. These are all tools to access quality for preschool children. All of these tools are used to measure developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom. Each sheet in this packet will show the connections to the standards of the MA Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. We hope you enjoy the activities that were provided.

Feel free to contact any of the Self Help Inc., Community Partnerships for Children support staff listed on the cover of this packet if you have any questions and we will be glad to assist you!



WINTER IDEAS

January, February and March

Ice Catchers: You'll need to have the weather very cold for a few days to have this activity work- brrrrrr!!! Give each child a metal pie pan. Let them arrange evergreen sprigs, dried flowers, seeds, etc. in the pan. Arrange a length of yarn in each pan to be used as a hanger loop. Take the pans outside and pour water into them to freeze. After they have frozen for a few days, take them out of the pan and hang them around the play yard to decorate as translucent ice catchers!

Pink Sweetheart Pops: Combine 2 cups of plain yogurt, 1 can (12 OZ) cranberry-apple juice concentrate and 2 teaspoons vanilla. Pour the mixture into small paper cups and insert plastic spoons for handles. Chill in the freezer until set. Makes 8-10 pops.

* Cut out patterns, using heavy paper, to make silhouettes of famous people like President Washington and President Lincoln. Let the children make rubbings over the paper of these picture silhouettes.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: An activity to do on this special day is to set out construction paper that has colors that represent a variety of skin tones. Have each child select one of the papers. Help them trace their hands on it and then cut out the tracings. On a large paper draw a big circle and have the children glue their paper hands on it to make a friendship wreath to hang up and display in the classroom!

Magic Pudding: For each child place a tablespoon of instant pistachio pudding mix into a baby food jar or a clean container. Add 2 tablespoons of cold milk. Watch the contents magically turn GREEN! Put the lids on securely and shake for about 1 minute. Then let the children eat their yummy pudding snacks!

* Cut complete heart shapes out of construction paper. Then, cut each full heart shape in half. Put out some rectangular plastic mirrors on a tabletop, along with the heart halves. Challenge the children to make the half hearts whole by positioning the two halves in the mirror.

Valentine Vases: Completely cover a 16 oz. plastic soda bottle with strips and pieces of masking tape. Then, sponge paint the bottle all over. When the paint is dry, fill this beautiful vase with colored water and add a white carnation. The flower will become more colorful every day. What an awesome gift idea!

Weighing Gold Nuggets Like a Little Leprechaun: Collect rocks in a variety of sizes and then spray paint them gold. Set out the "gold" nuggets and a scale on a tabletop. Let the children weigh the gold, discover the gold, and explore the gold.

Snowball Shake: Help each child fill a large cup - 3/4 full of milk. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream and then have them sprinkle some coconut on the top. Drink with a straw and enjoy this snowball shake!

Create snowflakes with the children by dabbing the end of an empty spool of thread in white paint. Make prints onto some blue paper. Or you could have the children roll pasta shapes in glue and place them on a piece of wax paper in a snowflake design of their choice. Let them dry, peel them off the wax paper and spray them lightly in white paint. Then, if you choose, also spray them with adhesive and add a sprinkle of glitter. Mount them onto blue paper as a background for some very creative snowflake designs.

Check out the website www.preschoolersexpress.com! Awesome ideas for this time of year!

