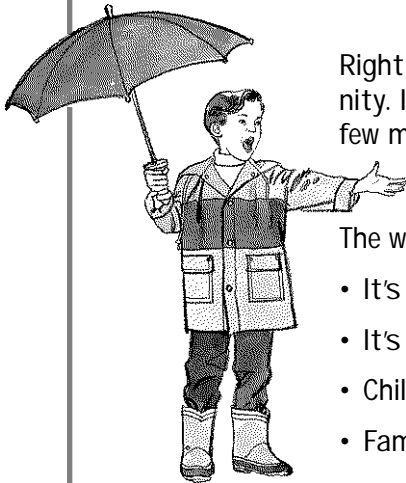




Caring for Kids

Take a Look!



Right outside your window, right outside your door, is a wonderful learning opportunity. It's always there, and it changes in small ways every day and in big ways every few months. If you haven't guessed by now, this learning opportunity that children enjoy and adults tend to overlook is the weather!

The weather is a perfect project idea any day of the year for many reasons:

- It's part of the children's everyday world.
- It's free to enjoy and low cost in terms of planning and doing.
- Children of all ages are able to learn about this topic.
- Families can be included in activities.

Children are naturally curious about the weather, and weather provides opportunities for learning and play every day of the week.

TIP - Computer weather sites and your local weather can be found at: <http://www.weather.com>

INTRODUCE WEATHER LEARNING TO ALL CHILDREN!

For very young children:

- Talk about the weather — what you see, smell, hear, and feel. *Say, "Is it cool? Is it bright? Is it warm outside today?"*
- Hold a baby up to the window and tell him about the weather. *Say, "It's raining outside." "See the snow falling."*
- Move or dance around to the sounds of the weather. Make up songs and sing about what you are seeing.
- Gently move babies' arms and legs as you describe all the things you could do outside today in the weather.

For older children:

- Look at and talk about the weather each day.
- Take time every day to go outside and explore the weather.
- Keep a weather calendar. Find pictures or draw symbols that tell about the weather. Make an umbrella for rainy days, sun for bright days, kites for windy times, a snowman for snowy days. Have the children put the symbol on the calendar.
- Make weather books. Check the weather each day and have the children draw a picture of the weather (sunny, raining, cloudy, etc.) in a homemade weather book.
- Thermometer — Teach the older children to read a thermometer daily to check the outdoor temperature.

S N A C K S

Bring the weather inside with these easy nutritious snack ideas!

SNOWFLAKE FRUIT

What you need:

Fruit — such as apples, oranges, grapes

Coconut flakes

What you do:

All cooks need to wash their hands. Let the children help you wash the fruit. An adult needs to cut the apple into bite-sized pieces. The children can peel the oranges and separate the sections. Grapes can be pulled from the stem (the children can help do this) and an adult can cut them in half if preferred. Let the children help by putting all the fruit into serving bowls. Put coconut into a small dish. Let the children help themselves to the fruit and then pretend that it is snowing by sprinkling coconut flakes on top.

Caution: Young children can choke easily on raw fruit. Watch young children closely when they are eating these foods.

SUNSHINE SHAKE

What you need:

6-ounce can unsweetened frozen orange juice concentrate

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

1 teaspoon vanilla

6 ice cubes

What you do:

All cooks need to wash their hands. Put all the ingredients on a table. Let the children help you measure and put all the ingredients into a blender. An adult should be the one to use the blender. Explain to children that the blades inside are very sharp. Cover tightly, and blend until smooth. Tell the children to listen “until the very loud crunching noise stops.” Pour and enjoy. *Makes 4 servings*

WHIPPED CREAM CLOUDS

What you need:

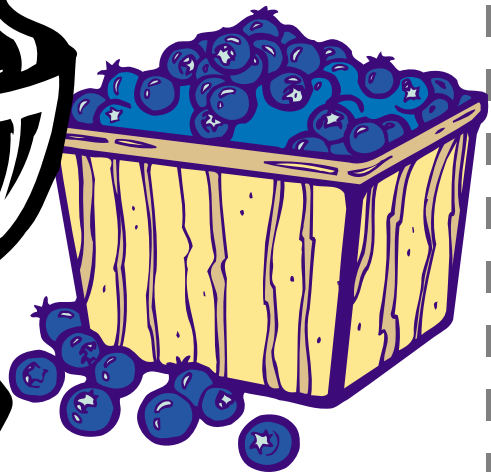
Small carton of nonfat or light whipping cream
(look for whipping cream near the milk in the grocery store)

Fresh or frozen berries

What you do:

All cooks need to wash their hands. Prepare fresh berries (remove any stems or leaves and rinse) or thaw frozen berries. Pour whipping cream in a bowl large enough to allow space for beating. Using a hand rotary beater, let each child take turns beating the cream until soft peaks form. Add just a little sugar to taste if desired. Serve the whipped cream “clouds” on top of the berries.

Caution: Young children can choke easily on fresh or frozen berries. Watch young children closely when they are eating these foods.



Check it Out!

He or She? Him or Her?

Please note: In this and all Better Kid Care publications we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." When we use he or she, we include all children.

Children of all ages and stages will enjoy listening to stories about the weather.

Look for these titles when you visit the library.

It Looked Like Spilt Milk
By Charles Shaw

Peter Spier's Rain
By Peter Spier

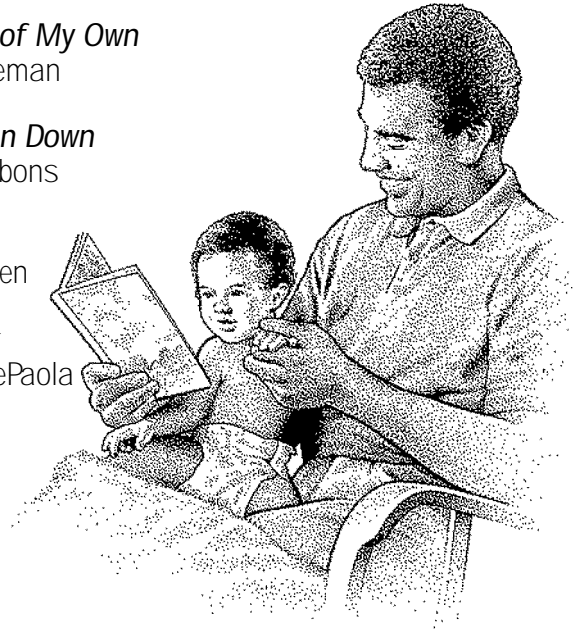
The Snowy Day
By Ezra Jack Keats

A Rainbow of My Own
By Don Freeman

Sun Up, Sun Down
By Gail Gibbons

Owl Moon
By Jane Yolen

Cloud Book
By Tomie DePaola



HEALTH NOTES:



Help Them Stay Healthy in All Kinds of Weather

Talk about why the children do each of these at home and at child care. Add to this list when the children and you have a new idea.

- Eat good food
- Get plenty of sleep
- Dress for the weather
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Wash hands
- Play outside

Feeling Under the Weather

Children can catch so many things...colds, flu, sore throats, and on and on.

If you don't have a policy about sick children, write one now. Be sure to tell parents how you plan to deal with sick children.

An illness policy should take into consideration:

- Whether the illness is contagious.
- Whether the child is running a high fever or vomiting.
- Whether you could give care to the sick child and still care for other children.
- Whether you would be able to take the child to the doctor or hospital if necessary.

For useful information to help you write an illness policy, read the online copy of "Model Child Care Health Policies," prepared by the PA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and ECELS (Early Childhood Education Linkage System) at:

<http://www.paaap.org/ecels/model.htm>

While you're thinking about steps to take when a child is ill, also plan what to do in case you become ill.

CAN THE WEATHER BE DRAMATIC? — YOU BET!

Add these ideas to your pretend play areas:

- Rainy day clothing — Add raincoats, hats, rain shoes, and a cassette tape containing rain sounds to the pretend play area.
- Weather station — Create a weather station by adding to the pretend play area a map, pointer, adult clothing, and pretend microphone.

A RECIPE FOR RAIN

Here's what you need:

A pot of water

A cake pan

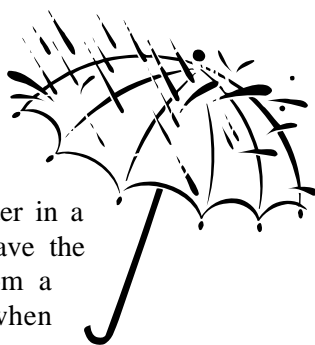
Ice cubes

Set the stage by boiling water in a pot and talking about it. Have the children watch carefully from a safe place. Explain that when water gets warmed up it changes from a liquid to a steamy cloud (vapor).

Fill a cake pan with ice cubes and hold it over the steam. Have the children watch for water drops to appear on the bottom of the pan and fall back into the pot. Remind the children that the water was changed into steam and when the steam hit the cold pan, it cooled off and changed back into water.

Explain that this is what happens outdoors. That is, when the warm, wet air of the cloud meets cool air, the water inside the cloud falls as rain.

Caution: Children should never do this activity by themselves. This activity is for older children and requires an adult using the stove and boiling water. Children should watch from a safe distance and should be watched closely when doing this activity.



SNOW FUN

Measure it!

Go outside! Give children a paper cup with their name written on it. Have the children fill their paper cups with snow. Mark the level where the snow is on the outside of each cup with a marker. Write "SNOW."



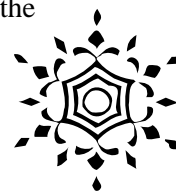
Come inside! Put the cups together in a place that the children can visit. Talk about what the children think will happen. After the snow has melted, put a mark on the outside of each cup with a marker to show the water level. Write "WATER."



Ask the children: Is the WATER line the same as the SNOW line? Why? Why not? Is there a little or big difference?

Melt it?

Fill two cups with snow. Leave one outside and bring one inside. It's a good idea to place the one outside where the children will be able to see it or place it where you and the children can go outside and visit it often. Ask the children what they think will happen to the snow that was brought inside and the snow that was left outside. Why? Keep your eye on the two cups. What has happened? Is this what the children thought would happen?



YOU CAN LEARN TOO!

Visit the
Better Kid Care Web site:
www.betterkidcare.psu.edu
for these resources:

- Web-based workshops and learn-at-home videos offering training credits that will count toward requirements in Pennsylvania.
- Family Time-Work Time (read and copy for parents)

- The E-Newsletter (read and sign up)
- Snack and activity ideas
- A live satellite workshop in your own home on your own computer

REMEMBER... the Better Kid Care Telephone Helpline for child care providers is as close as your phone. Call toll free 1-800-859-8340.

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