

Infant and Toddler Newsletter

The Power of a Puddle

Why is it that the playground can be full of amazing play opportunities, materials and equipment but a toddler would rather play in a puddle of water left over from a weekend rain? What is it that draws children to water? Maureen Healy, author of *The Emotionally Healthy Child* and founder of *Growing Happy Kids* for parents and teachers, explains that water play helps children engage with their senses, something children often do naturally through all different types of play. "Boys and girls who play with water are stimulating many of their senses (touch, sound, sight)," she says. "Most children love to use their five senses to learn and develop, which includes the senses of touch, sight, and sounds, which most water play has."

With safety in mind, educators should be using the environment including naturally occurring elements like puddles and rain fall as the second teacher. Children love to jump in a puddle, splash in the water, and see what sinks or floats. Whether we just happen upon a puddle or spend time planning a water play activity, water provides a wealth of opportunities for learning. Children use gross motor skills when jumping, fine motor when splashing, and scientific thinking when exploring the concept of sink or float. The gain valuable social, emotional and language skills while playing together. Capitalize on that puddle and talk about how it feels. Help them put words to the experience. Is the water wet, cold or maybe even yucky? Encourage them to try something new. Lesson planning doesn't have to involve complicated materials or curriculum to be of value. Sometimes children just need a stick, a leaf, a little water and a responsive caregiver.

<https://www.romper.com/p/why-do-kids-love-playing-in-water-so-much-experts-explain-this-splashing-phenomenon-16968037>



Infant and Toddler Spring Training Opportunities:

Caring for Little Ones: Using Sign Language to Communicate



Eastern Shore Child
Care Resource Center

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Inside this issue

The Power of a Puddle.....	1
Infant and Toddler Spring Training Opportunities.....	1
Let's Look at the Regs!	2
Ideas for Simple Water Play..	2





Let's Look at the Regs

Regulations are not just rules.
They are a guide to help us keep children safe.

13A.15.08.03 Water Activity Supervision.

A. A child engaged in swimming or wading shall be under immediate supervision by the provider or substitute at all times.

B. Whenever children are engaged in a swimming activity, at least two adults permitted to have child care responsibilities under this subtitle shall be present during the activity.

C. When water is over a child's chest and the child cannot swim, the provider or substitute shall be in the water with the child to provide one-to-one supervision.

D. When water is more than 4 feet deep, an individual 16 years old or older who holds a current certificate of approval for lifeguarding from the American Red Cross, YMCA, or other organization acceptable to the office or the local health department shall be present and on duty at all times while a child is in the water. A provider, substitute, or approved additional adult with the requisite certification may fulfill this requirement.

E. A child engaged in swimming or wading shall be under immediate supervision by the provider or substitute at all times.



Ideas for Simple Water Play

When the weather is rainy and uncomfortable for us as adults, it doesn't mean that our children feel that way. Rain puddles have an almost magnetic pull for children. They love to jump in them, roll through them on their trikes and feel the splashes on their legs, float things in them and much more.

1. Puddle jumping – As long as it is warm enough, I regularly encourage my five-year-old to put on his raincoat and boots and run outside to jump in puddles while it is raining! He likes puddles after the rain too, but his favorite is watching the rain fall into the puddles as he jumps off the front steps into them! What a fun way to develop the gross motor skills of jumping and stomping! Children also experience cause and effect and properties of water through this simple activity.

2. Floating and Sinking – Use a puddle as a natural water table. Let your child explore properties of floating and sinking by experimenting with different items found outside. Does a leaf float in the puddle? What about a stick? Or a rock? This can lead to other experimentation and questioning. Why do ripples form when you drop a rock into a puddle? Children learn to make predictions and explore strategies for answering their questions through this type of play.

3. Puddle Music – Rain has many sounds. Listening to rain on the roof and rain falling into a puddle are different experiences. A soft rain also sounds different from a hard rain. Try to replicate the sounds of rain using a pot or a wood block, a drum or a shaker. We also love to sing while we play in puddles. Songs can also lead to imaginative role playing in the puddles. Here are some songs we like to sing on puddle days.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat
It's Raining, It's Pouring
There's a Hole in the Bucket
Singing in the Rain

To read more of this article and additional ideas: <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/play-in-puddle>

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