

A Letter to Families About Sand and Water Play

Dear families,

Two of Earth's most basic materials—sand and water—are also two of the best natural materials for learning!

Playing with sand and water gives children opportunities for hands-on learning of science and mathematics, since these materials are easy to manipulate, pour, measure, compare, and contrast. When children play with sand and water, we have the opportunity to talk about important concepts such as why something sinks or floats, what makes something wet or dry, solid and liquid states, and comparing quantities.

When you visit our classroom, take a look at the ways we use sand and water as materials for learning. Meanwhile, you can expand your child's opportunity to benefit from the many advantages of sand and water play at home.

What You Can Do at Home

- If your child particularly enjoys playing with water or sand, you might want to set up some play areas for these activities at home. These areas need not be large. A small dish tub or baby bathtub filled with sand or water, and a few tools and toys such as measuring cups, shovels, spoons, funnels, and plastic animals or vehicles, can provide hours of inspired engagement.
- Also think about other places that you can visit where children can play in sand and water, such as a playground with a sandbox, a beach, or a pool. Often, the same tools and toys used for sand and water play indoors can be used outdoors, but you might also want to think about their size. Outdoor activities can provide opportunities to use larger items since there is typically more room to use them.
- Add a few extra minutes to bath time to allow your child the opportunity to play. Provide materials for scooping, pouring, and measuring water. Talk with your child about what she is doing while she plays.