

Water Wonders: A Sink & Float Splash Day

Materials Needed:

- A large, shallow plastic bin, water table, or baby pool
- Warm water (enough to fill the bin a few inches)
- Several old towels for spills and drying off
- A variety of waterproof toys and objects that sink (e.g., large, smooth rocks; plastic toy cars; metal spoons - ensure all are too large to be a choking hazard)
- A variety of waterproof toys and objects that float (e.g., rubber ducks, corks, sponges, plastic balls, small empty plastic containers with lids)
- Tools for scooping and pouring: plastic cups, ladles, small buckets, funnels
- Two smaller, empty bins or buckets labeled with simple pictures: one with a drawing of an arrow pointing down (for SINK), and one with a drawing of a boat on waves (for FLOAT)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Oliver, Mila, and Reggie will be able to:

- Demonstrate fine motor skills by scooping, pouring, and transferring water.
- Explore the early science concept of sinking and floating by physically sorting objects.
- Develop new vocabulary through play (e.g., "sink," "float," "wet," "splash," "heavy," "light," "full," "empty").
- Engage in cooperative play by sharing tools and space.

Lesson Activities

1. Warm-Up: The Splash Song (5 minutes)

Goal: To get the children excited and introduce key vocabulary in a fun, low-pressure way.

Instructions:

1. Gather Oliver, Mila, and Reggie around the dry water bin. Before adding water, get them ready for the activity.
2. Sing this simple song to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat":

*Splash, splash, splash the water,
Now it's time to play.
We will scoop and pour and learn,
Hooray, hooray, hooray!*

3. After the song, slowly pour the warm water into the bin. Encourage them to say "splash!" as the water goes in. Let them gently touch the water to feel the temperature and texture.

2. Main Activity Part 1: Free Exploration & Pouring Practice (10 minutes)

Goal: To build confidence and practice fine motor skills.

Instructions:

1. Provide the children with the cups, ladles, and buckets.
2. Let them freely explore scooping and pouring. Don't worry about precision; focus on the experience.
3. Model the action and the language. Say things like, "Mila is filling her cup. Look, it's **full!**" and "Reggie poured the water out. Now his cup is **empty!**"
4. Encourage them to pour water from one container to another. This helps develop hand-eye coordination.

Teacher Tip: Expect spills! This is part of the sensory experience. Having plenty of towels handy makes cleanup easy and keeps the focus on fun.

3. Main Activity Part 2: The Sink or Float Game (15 minutes)

Goal: To introduce a simple scientific concept through hands-on sorting and critical thinking.

Instructions:

1. Gently remove the pouring tools from the main bin. Place the two sorting buckets (with the "sink" and "float" pictures) nearby.
2. Hold up one of the floating objects, like a rubber duck. "This is a duck. Hmm, Oliver, do you think it will sink to the bottom or float on the top?"
3. Let the child place the duck in the water. Exclaim with excitement, "It floats! The duck is floating!" Guide them to place the duck in the "FLOAT" bucket.
4. Next, hold up a sinking object, like a large, smooth rock. "This is a rock. Mila, do you think this will be heavy and sink, or will it float like the duck?"
5. Let her place the rock in the water. "Wow! It went all the way to the bottom. It sank! The rock is a **sinker.**" Guide her to place it in the "SINK" bucket.
6. Continue this process with all the objects, giving each child a turn to guess and test an item. Use the vocabulary words "sink" and "float" repeatedly.

Teacher Tip: It's okay if they don't guess correctly. The goal is the process of discovery, not getting the right answer. Celebrate every discovery with enthusiasm!

4. Cool-Down & Wrap-Up: Bubble Mountain & Drying Off (5 minutes)

Goal: To provide a calming transition away from the main activity and reinforce a positive experience.

Instructions:

1. Remove all the solid objects from the water bin.
2. (Optional) Add a tiny drop of tear-free bubble bath soap to the water. Help the children use their hands to swish the water and make bubbles.
3. As the play winds down, announce that it's time to clean up in two minutes. A visual timer can be helpful.
4. When time is up, help Oliver, Mila, and Reggie dry their hands and arms with the towels. Talk about how the water was "wet" and now the towel is making them "dry."
5. Briefly talk about what you did: "We had so much fun playing with water today! We learned that rocks sink and rubber ducks float!"

Differentiation & Inclusivity

- **For a child needing more support:** Guide their hand gently during the pouring activity. Focus on just two or three objects for the sink/float game to avoid overwhelm.
- **For a child ready for a challenge:** Ask "why" questions. "Why do you think the light ball floated?" Introduce a bottle with a lid—test it when it's empty (floats) and then help them fill it with water (sinks). This introduces the concept of density in a very simple way.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** This activity is perfect for practicing sharing. If a conflict arises over a toy, guide them by saying, "It looks like Oliver is using the blue cup right now. You can use it when he is done. Would you like to use the red cup while you wait?"

Assessment (Informal Observation)

During the lesson, observe the following:

- **Motor Skills:** Did the child successfully hold a cup and pour water, even if messy?
- **Concept Understanding:** After a few tries, did the child begin to anticipate whether an object might sink or float? Could they place the object in the correct sorting bucket with guidance?
- **Language Development:** Did the child listen to new words? Did they attempt to repeat or use words like "splash," "sink," or "float"?
- **Engagement:** Was the child focused and actively participating in the activities?