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## Garden Water Table Adventure

### Materials Needed:

- A child-height table or a large, shallow storage bin placed on the ground (a water table is ideal if you have one).
- A small amount of lukewarm water (just a few inches deep).
- A variety of plastic cups, scoops, and small bowls of different sizes.
- Large, soft sponges.
- A few floating toys (like rubber ducks or plastic boats).
- A small, child-safe plastic watering can.
- A towel for the child and for clean-up.
- Optional: A few large, non-toxic leaves or flower petals from the garden to float.

### Learning Objectives (Developmental Goals)

By the end of this activity, the student (Oliver/Ollie/Mila) will:

- **Fine Motor Skills:** Practice grasping, squeezing, and releasing objects like sponges and cups.
- **Cognitive Development:** Explore cause and effect by splashing, pouring, and watching objects float or sink.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Experience the temperature and texture of water and different submerged objects.
- **Language Development:** Hear and begin to associate words with actions (e.g., "splash," "pour," "wet," "full").

### Lesson Activities

#### 1. Setup (5 minutes)

1. Place the water table or bin in a shady, safe spot in the garden on a flat surface.
2. Fill the table with just a few inches of lukewarm water. Safety is key; the water should be shallow.
3. Place all the cups, sponges, and floating toys into the water. Spread them out to invite exploration.
4. Have towels nearby for easy access.

#### 2. Guided Exploration (10-15 minutes)

This part of the lesson is child-led. Your role is to facilitate, ensure safety, and introduce language.

1. **Invitation to Play:** Bring Oliver/Ollie/Mila to the water table. Show excitement! Say, "Look, Oliver/Ollie/Mila! Water play!" Let them approach and touch the water at their own pace.
2. **Modeling Actions:**
  - Pick up a cup, fill it with water, and pour it out slowly. Say, "I'm pouring the water. Can you pour?"
  - Pick up a sponge, dip it in the water, and squeeze it. Say, "Squeeze! Look at the water come out." Hand them a sponge to try.
  - Push a rubber duck gently through the water and say, "The duck is swimming! Splash, splash, splash!"
3. **Observing and Narrating:** Watch what the child does. If they splash, say "Big splash!" If they pick up a cup, say "You have the blue cup." This narration builds vocabulary and reinforces their actions.
4. **Creative Element:** If using garden items, gently place a large leaf or flower petal in the

water. Say, "Look, the leaf is floating like a little boat."

### 3. Wind-Down & Clean-Up (5 minutes)

1. Give a gentle 2-minute warning. Say, "Two more minutes of water play, then we'll be all done."
2. Encourage the child to help with clean-up in a simple way. Ask, "Can you put the duck in the bowl?" or "Let's put all the cups together." This introduces the concept of tidying up.
3. Gently guide them away from the table and wrap them in a towel. Praise their participation: "You did such a wonderful job playing with the water today!"

### Language & Vocabulary

Focus on simple, repetitive, and descriptive words. Connect words directly to the action.

- **Action Words:** Splash, pour, scoop, squeeze, float, swim, stir, wet, dry.
- **Object Words:** Cup, water, boat, duck, sponge, flower, leaf.
- **Descriptive Words:** Wet, cold/warm, full, empty, big, little.

### Differentiation & Inclusivity

- **For a Hesitant Child (Support):** Start with no tools, just water. Encourage them to dip their fingers in. Slowly introduce one familiar toy. Sit with them and play alongside them without any expectation.
- **For an Eager Child (Challenge):** Introduce a tool that requires more coordination, like a turkey baster or a small, child-safe ladle. Challenge them with simple tasks like, "Can you pour water from the big cup into the small cup?" or "Let's try to sink the sponge."

### Assessment (Informal Observation)

During the play session, observe and make a mental note of the following:

- Does the child engage with the water willingly?
- Do they attempt to grasp objects like the cups or sponge?
- Do they try to imitate your actions (pouring, splashing, squeezing)?
- Do they show curiosity by exploring different items in the water?
- Do they react to the sensory experience (shiver, laugh, splash more)?

### Safety Note

**Never leave a child unattended around water, not even for a second.** The amount of water should always be very shallow. Ensure all items are large enough that they cannot be a choking hazard. Check the water temperature before the child begins to play.

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