

INTRODUCTION

This 48 page thematic book about the weather contains a collection of skill-based activities and ideas for children ages 3 to 6 years. The ideas and suggestions are based on the philosophy of developing the whole child through play, exploration and varied experiences. These activities should enhance the child's ability to develop communication, motor/physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and adaptive/self-help skills. The teacher should approach and implement the activities in a way that takes into consideration each child's individual needs and abilities.

Many of the activities have been organized to meet the criteria of the interest areas (centers) found in most early childhood classrooms. They include:

- Art and Crafts
- Housekeeping
- Outdoor Play
- Blocks and Building
- Library/Writing
- Math and Manipulatives
- Music and Movement
- Table Toys
- Dramatic Play
- Sand and Water
- Computer Center
- Cooking and Nutrition

Opportunities to develop pre-literacy and literacy skills should be apparent in every center in the classroom. Using the activities in this book, children can explore the basic concepts of color, shape, number, quantity and position that naturally occur in a stimulating, early childhood environment. It is essential for early childhood educators to build each child's vocabulary every day. It is one of the basic components needed by children in order for them to become successful learners and literate adults. In almost every activity throughout the day, there will be an occasion to incorporate information related to basic language concepts. With this book, one will discover activities and games which will allow the children to explore ideas and vocabulary which will help them develop essential skills.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This resource book includes an array of ideas, activities and reproducible pages that you and other early childhood educators can utilize to develop stimulating activities around a given theme. The graphics, clip art, game ideas and other reproducible pages throughout the book are meant to be copied for individual classroom use. You may adapt or modify the ideas or instructions to best meet the developmental level of the children you serve. As a time saver, protect your work by laminating the products or placing the reproducible pages in plastic page protectors. The following describes each section and some helpful tips and hints regarding how to implement the ideas into your curriculum:

Everything You Need to Know About...

This section includes a number of interesting facts or points about the weather in general. It also includes a list of websites that may be used as a resource for additional information on the topic.

Dictation and/or Creative Writing Page

Library and Writing

Use this page for children to write their own words or stories. Make several copies and place them in your writing center with appropriate writing tools.

Clip Art

There are many uses for these cute, simple thematic illustrations. Each graphic can be enlarged or reduced to meet your individual needs. You can use the clip art illustrations in the following ways:

- In newsletters and notes
- On rebus stories or letters
- In experiential charts or books
- As part of your routine chart
- In rebus recipe charts
- On song charts
- In each center or area
- On charts and bulletin boards
- In thank you notes
- On homemade games
- With your calendar
- On rewards/certificates

Awards and Certificates

Use these cute, thematic certificates to reward children or thank volunteers. You can use the awards to:

Recognize accomplishments
Recognize good sportsmanship
Acknowledge acts of kindness

Praise good deeds
Support teamwork
Support positive behavior

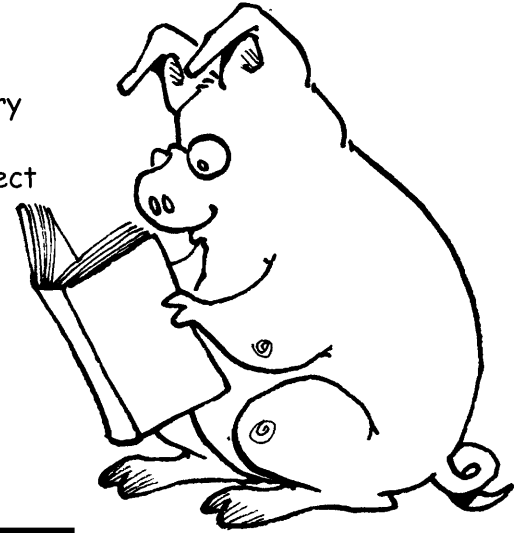
Identify strengths
Thank volunteers
Acknowledge good choices

Thematic Literature List

Library and Writing

This list of children's literature with the theme of the weather includes books to read to the class, picture books, and books for beginning readers. A list of vocabulary words pertinent to the theme of the weather is also included. Here are a few tips for reading books aloud:

- Select good, well written and illustrated books
- Position yourself so that each child can see the book
- Review some of the words in the book before you read it
- Change the intonation of your voice to dramatize the story
- Read leaving words out to elicit responses from children
- Point out beginning consonant sounds (phoneme) and connect it with the letter (symbol)
- Comment on words that rhyme
- Point out the title, author and illustrator
- Point to words from left to right and top to bottom, etc.
- Keep the children on track - listening to the story
- Ask "wh" questions - "what, where, why, when"
- Expand on the concepts in the book in other centers
- Repeat readings of the same story



Songs, Poems and Fingerplays

Music and Movement

Songs and fingerplays are an essential piece of an early childhood curriculum. These simple thematic jingles are set to familiar children's songs. Short poems and fingerplays are also included in this section. They help children to learn about the rhythm and rhyme of our language. (Copies of the songs and poems can be shared with parents and used at home.) The songs can be written on large poster board so that children, families and volunteers can follow along. Clip art pictures can be added in place of words to create a rebus song chart. Develop a song basket filled with copies of each song. (Song cards can be made by copying each song to a large index card. Glue a clip art picture to the back of each card and laminate for durability. Place the song cards in a large basket for children to easily select a song they wish to sing.)

Activities and Games

These skill-based activities and games can be used with the entire class, small groups of children or by individual children. The activities have been organized as they relate to interest centers typically found in the early childhood classroom. Use the ideas and activities in each section to facilitate the following skill development and concepts:

Dramatic Play

exploring emotions
dress-up & make believe
using creativity
acting out life experiences
pretend play & role play

practicing skills
sharing & turn-taking
imitation
resolving conflicts
receptive & expressive language development

vocabulary development
using imagination
social skill development
self-help skills

Outdoor Play & Field Trips

exercise
social skills
trying new things

exploration
following directions
fair play & sportsmanship

gross-motor skills
teamwork
building concepts

Math and Manipulatives (Science)

using math & science tools
social skills
language skills
visual-perceptual skills
measurement relationships
experimentation & exploration
learning about your surroundings

following directions
cognitive skill development
math concepts & properties
position, quality & quantity
recording information
learning properties of substances
number, letter, shape recognition and matching

time & space
findings & predictions
living & non-living things
gathering information
turn-taking

Music and Movement

gross-motor development
following directions
movement of body parts
language skills

singing & vocal expression
rhyme & rhythm
exploration of emotions
individual expression

beat
math skills
pre-literacy skills
imitation

Library and Writing

literacy skills
sound-symbol relationships
creative writing
concept & vocabulary development
looking at, listening to and participating in stories

use of writing tools
exploring books
self-expression

retelling stories
following directions
attention span

Patterns and Crafts

Arts and Crafts

This section includes several patterns or craft ideas to utilize in your art center. One must always consider that, for the young artist and creator, the "process" is much more important than the product. The young artist develops skills in several development domains. Use the ideas and activities in this section to facilitate the following skill development and concepts:

creativity
exploration & experimentation
learning properties of substances
building self-esteem
building fine motor skills
following directions

pre-literacy skills
unique products
using drawing, writing and cutting tools
finding new ways to use materials
manipulation of various materials

Bulletin Board Ideas

Several suggestions are included for creating interesting and informative bulletin boards based upon the theme of the weather and can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. Here are a few tips:

Keep them neat and professional looking
Display photos of kids at play & work
Display magazine pictures of "real" things
Keep them current to theme or activities of the program
Display at the appropriate height for children's viewing
Display higher for family members and volunteers

Display children's unique creations
Change the boards periodically
Use neat and concise letters & writing

My Book About...

Library and Writing

Make copies of the pages in this section to create an interesting book about the weather for your young learners. Simply duplicate the pages, cut and assemble them by number. Attach the pages together with staples or brads. Laminate the front and back for durability. Children will enjoy listening to the story and coloring the pages. Older children may have the skills to color, cut, assemble and read the story for themselves. Having children make their own book helps develop pre-emergent reading skills in early learners.

Goodies to Make and Eat!

Cooking and Nutrition

The recipes found in this section are devoted to cooking and nutrition. Clay or dough recipes, which you may use in your art or sensory area, are also included. The recipes can be copied onto poster board, large sheets of paper, or recipe-sized cards so that children, families and volunteers can follow along. You may want to add clip art pictures in place of words to create rebus recipe charts. Use the recipes in this section to facilitate these developmental skills:

following directions
cooperating with others
counting & measurement concepts
sensory exploration of foods
pre-literacy and literacy skills

performing activities in sequential order
manners and taking turns
use of simple kitchen utensils
observation of food in different forms
practicing different food preparations

At Home With...

This section is meant to provide families with ideas and activities to do at home with their children. These activities will help to encourage communication between family member and child, as well as support the skill development of the child. The activities should be optional for those families who wish to and have the time to participate. Educators may wish to incorporate the ideas into their newsletters or simply attach the "At Home With...." sheet to their notes.

Parent/Family Involvement

Throughout each theme book, educators will note the various opportunities to encourage parent/family involvement. Communication between parents and the program is one key to increasing parent involvement. One mechanism to increase communication with parents is through notes or newsletters.

Tips for Notes and Newsletters

Make them visually appealing - add clip art	Write blocks of information
Be specific when referring to a day or time	Typewritten or printed
Write about each center, activity, or type of news	Make it neat - professional
Add a response sheet for parents	Proof for typing errors
Request assistance - parent volunteers for at least one activity	
Keep them easy to read - vocabulary/avoid lengthy sections	
Avoid using last names on general newsletters without permission	
Add questions for parents to ask their children to encourage conversation	

Note:

All of the patterns and illustrations in this book can be enlarged to better suit the needs of young learners.