

2023 Week of the Young Child Activities

Music Monday

Place small rhythm instruments (cowbells, castanets, tambourines, shakers, etc.) in shoeboxes, one instrument per box. Secure with tape. Line up the shoeboxes on a tabletop, including some empty ones. Invite children to explore the boxes by shaking them. Invite them to compare the different sounds. Prompt children to test the empty boxes. Do they make noise? Are they light? Heavy? What can they tell about the boxes? After children have spent a fair amount of time exploring the boxes, have each child choose a box to explore further (remove the empty ones first). Remove the tape for the children. Invite children to take the instruments out of the boxes. Are they what the children were expecting to see? Do they sound the same way they did when they were inside the boxes? Encourage the children to play the instruments while listening to familiar songs.

Tasty Tuesday

Offer each child a six-cup muffin tin. Fill large plates with bite-size foods of different textures, colors, and shapes. For example, fill one plate with grains, one with a type of protein, such as ham or hard-boiled eggs, one with cheese, one with fruits, one with vegetables, and one with a treat, such as graham crackers. Set the table buffet style. Help children fill the six spots of their muffin tin with items from each plate. Once everyone is ready, sit at the table together and enjoy taste testing the foods! Visit with children about their favorite foods and flavors. Keep allergies in mind as you choose foods for this activity.

Work Together Wednesday

Gather children in a circle. Sit in the middle of the circle so the activity starts and finishes with you. Place a foam ball on a paper plate. Model how to balance the foam ball on the plate. Explain to children that you will pass the plate to the child sitting next to you and that child will pass it along, and so forth. The goal is that everyone works together passing the plate and ball around until it gets back to you without dropping the ball on the floor. Are they ready for the challenge? As children pass the plate around, talk about how careful they are being and how they are working together. If the ball falls on the floor, gently place it back on the plate and encourage the children to keep working together to pass it around. In addition to learning teamwork, this activity allows children to explore balance and movement and test the weight of an object. At the end of the activity, congratulate the children on accomplishing this goal!

Artsy Thursday

Cut a large piece of butcher paper or cardboard. Invite children to sit around the paper. Pour at least three different colors of paint in the middle of the paper or cardboard. Locate two different sized balls, giving one ball to a child sitting on one side of the circle and the other ball to a child sitting in the other side of the circle. Encourage children to roll the balls to each other, noticing the marks on the paper. How are the colors of the paint changing? What pattern are the balls creating? Observe how children appreciate the art created by the rolling ball. How does the paint feel on their hands? How messy did the balls get? Offer paintbrushes for painting directly on the paper to children who do not like the feeling of paint on their hands. Display the artwork in the discovery or science area so children can appreciate and explore it further.

Family Friday

Spending time together as a family or as part of a community can be challenging due to different circumstances, especially over the last couple of years. Invite families to spend time in the classroom with their children for a fun hands-on activity. Begin by gathering art supplies, writing tools, and craft materials. Divide the materials among families. Explain to them that the purpose of the activity is to get together as a community to create memories, engage with each other, and have a fun time. Invite families to create postcards with encouraging and positive messages, messages that would cheer up someone going through a tough time or would just serve as a reminder of how fun and exciting life is! Once all the families have finished their postcards, play a game to exchange them. Invite everyone to sit in a circle and play a version of "Hot Potato" with the cards. Choose one card at a time, and pass it around as families sing a song together or as music plays. Give families a cue to stop singing or pause the music. The child or family member holding the postcard when the song stops keeps it. Continue playing until each child/family has a card. Enjoy reading the caring messages together!

Note: You can have families create cards throughout the week at pickup, drop-off, or at home. When everyone gathers today, play the game to distribute the messages.