

SUPPORTING A CHILD'S CURIOSITY

Children are naturally curious, so to be sure this sense of exploration doesn't get lost in your day, give them lots of opportunities to follow their own questions and be exposed to new things, people and experiences that build their interest. By supporting a strong curiosity, parents and teachers are giving children the tools to construct their own learning, to make it more meaningful and to have more success in school. Curiosity activities support a wide variety of state standard developmental areas as children engage all of their senses, use creativity, and build a foundation for problem solving. Including activities that support a child's natural curiosity in your daily curriculum creates a bridge between knowledge and fun, making your day not only developmentally successful, but a time for pure enjoyment for both you and the children!

Storyteller Fun

Professional storytellers make even the simplest stories come alive! Either take a field trip to visit one, or invite them to your classroom. In addition to having them tell a story, have the children prepare questions to ask them about what they do and how they learned to do it. After this visit, have the children choose one of their favorite stories and do a storytelling session on it for the group! *Activity supports curiosity through story and encourages creativity as children learn a variety of ways to tell a story.*

Exploring the Sound of: Paper!

Give children a sheet of paper, it can be any kind: construction, newspaper, typing paper, poster board, tissue paper. Ask them to play with it and see how many different sounds they can make with it. They can crumble it. Rip it. Tap it against itself. Blow on it or wave it. Let them try to see if they can come up with something new you haven't discovered yet! *Activity supports curiosity through the exploration of possibilities through the senses and also supports creativity through functional freedom, using paper for something other than drawing on it.*

Newspaper Names

Give the children a story cut from a page of a newspaper and a highlighter marker. Ask the children to look closely at the words on their page and highlight all the letters they can find from their name. Gets children to be more curious about the written word in other forms, such as the newspaper they see their parents read. *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of possibilities as children discover new forms of the written word.*

Story Mixer

Read two different storybooks to the children. Make a list of the characters from one story and the setting and plot from another story. Then, mix the two together! With the children, write a new story using the characters from one put into the setting and plot situation of the other. Would the characters act differently than in the original story? What would they do? How would they react to the problem? Would it change the ending? Rewrite the story together. Have the children draw new illustrations to go with it and

create a new class book! *Activity supports creativity by exploring the possibilities in a story when small changes are made as children experiment and wonder; activity also supports creativity through stimulus freedom.*

Recipe Cards

Provide each child a copy of a recipe. Create them using a standard sheet of paper, and draw (or use photos of) the ingredients for the recipe, also writing the name of the ingredient next to it. Or, you can draw it on a large chalkboard or dry erase board. Also include the measurements such as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, 1 Cup, 2 teaspoons, etc. Don't abbreviate, write out the entire word. Go over the recipe with the children, helping them to "read" it on their own. When making the recipes, use one they may have some familiarity with, such as chocolate chip cookies. Add a couple of ingredients in the recipe that do not belong, such as 2 cups pickles, or 1 cup bacon. After reading all of the ingredients talk with the children about what may be wrong in the recipe. Have them point the items out and read them. Talk about the measurement amounts as well and if they seem correct. You can put in a few that will need to be changed, such as 1 cup salt or 5 bags chocolate chips. (Although they may vote to leave in that much chocolate!) After the discussion regarding reading the recipe and understanding it thoroughly, transfer it to hands on learning by making the cookies. Encourage children to find the ingredients by reading the labels of items in the cupboard and sizes marked on measuring tools. *Activity supports curiosity through experimentation with ingredients in a recipe.*

Explorer Kit

Every good explorer needs the right tools for discovery! Provide a few of these kits in your Discovery Area, and create extras for taking outside as well. Include in the outside bags: compass and binoculars. Make the Kit using either a belly-pack carrier, a small shoulder bag, or metal lunch box. Preferably in a camouflage design! Make it fun for them to dress up as real explorers and they'll be more excited about trying out the Discovery Area!

Contents to include:

Magnifying glass – several types/sizes

Stethoscope

Tweezers

Small plastic clear jars.

Petri dishes

Magnet

Small notepad and pencil

Small plastic jar of water and eye dropper (to observe how item changes when wet)

Small cloth for drying object

Handheld tape recorder to tape sounds made with object

Color Paddles

Prism

Small Flashlight

Safety Goggles

An explorer's kit supports curiosity by giving children the tools they need to explore their world, experiment and wonder.

Me and My Shadow

On a driveway, or paved playground area, in the morning of a sunny day have children stand and create a body shadow of themselves. Use sidewalk chalk to trace the figure. Let the children use sidewalk chalk to finish the drawing by adding eyes, hair, clothes, etc. Then, a couple of hours later have them return to the spot to see if they can repeat the shadow. The sun will have moved and now their shadow will have moved too! Let them trace another outline. Continue this throughout the day to see just where the shadow travels to! *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of our world, the sun and its shadows and the turning of the earth and our place in it all.*

Smelly Day for a Walk!

Take a walk outside with the children and stop at intervals to close your eyes and smell. Have the children do this as well and see what types of smells they can discover. Stop often to smell things such as flowers, tree bark, mud, someone's garbage, a puddle, a dog pen, etc. Make a list of the smells so when you return inside you can discuss them again. *Activity supports curiosity through exploration of the outdoors, heightening awareness of our sense of smell.*