

Summertime Science for Preschoolers

Summer's in full swing and the temperature is creeping ever higher. Turn the heat to your advantage by engaging in a bit of science and math, summer style. Fill up the kiddie pool, gather a stash of preschool science equipment, and get ready to introduce your child to the power of hypothesis.

Science equipment? Hypothesis? Don't worry, we're not talking about beakers and goggles here. The only science equipment a preschooler needs for a little exploration is a pile of Tupperware, spoons, cups and various other containers snagged from your kitchen. And "hypothesis" is just a fancy word for scientific guess.



What You Need:

- Yogurt containers
- Paper cups
- Small pitchers
- Kitchen measuring cups
- Spoons
- Plastic bowls of different sizes
- Empty milk or juice containers
- Old shampoo bottles

What to Do:

1. Kids naturally enjoy experimenting with water and need little encouragement to splash about. Put the containers near the kiddie pool and sit back for a few minutes as your child takes a gander. Allow plenty of time for independent discovery.
2. Casually join in the play and ask questions related to the containers and their volume as you fill and dump out water. Bring in simple terms of comparison such as more, less and equal.
3. Help him explore these activities:
 - Compare two containers to decide which holds more and which holds less.
 - Find the container that holds the most.
 - Find the container that holds the least.
 - Estimate how many of the smallest container will fit inside the largest container.
 - Line up the containers from least volume to greatest.
 - Find two containers that appear to be similar and then test to see if they really do hold the same amount.
 - Discover how the width and height of a container affects how much it will hold.
 - Fill each container once and dump the water into a large bucket to see how much water the containers hold all together.
 - Estimate how many of a particular container it would take to fill the kiddie pool.

Sure it's wet entertainment for a sweltering day. But what your little one doesn't know is that he's building the foundation for science and math concepts. He'll think it's just good, clean fun!