

Ideas for Using Household Materials

These are just some of the ideas shared by attendees during the Gee Whiz webinar, "No Money? No Problem!" Creating Learning Opportunities with Household Materials"



Water Bottle Ideas

CAUTION: Remove & discard caps for under 3 or those children who put things in their mouths OR secure caps with glue & duct tape.

- Paint with the bottles (press bottoms or sides in paint and then on paper)
- Use as bowling pins. Tape letters, numbers, colors, shapes, etc. on the outside of the bottles. Roll a ball and talk about which bottles fell and which are left standing.
- Use the bottles to make puppets
- Write about why you might take a water bottle on a trip or outing
- Use to make bubble snakes by cutting the end, securing a sock with rubberbands and then blowing
- Make shakers. Fill the bottles with all kinds of things (e.g., pom-poms, rice, dry pasta, etc. Make a hole in the lid. Push the ends of several pieces of curling ribbon through the hole and secure on the inside. Then, secure the lid to the bottle with glue and tape.
- Talk about how many cups of water the children drink in a day and how many the average person should drink
- Make Letter Bottles. Fill the bottles with small items that begin with the letter.
- Make an oil and water bottle. Great for calming children down!
- Make an Alphabet Search bottle. Fill the bottle with rice and alphabet beads (from the craft store). Search for different letters by shaking the bottle
- Make a terrarium. Remove top portion, wrap sharp edges with masking tape. Add dirt and moss, small plants, etc.
- Remove tops and plant seeds in the bottom portion. Again, wrap sharp edges with masking tape.
- Cut and use to make mini rafts for the water table. Again, wrap sharp edges with duct or masking tape.
- Have children fill the bottles with whatever they want. Then attach their photo to the side for a Mother's Day gift.
- Fill the water bottles with different materials (sand, water, cornmeal, dirt) and see if they all hold the same amount.
- Use the bottles in dramatic play as pretend microphones
- Write a message to someone and put it in the bottle to deliver it
- Seriate bottles by size
- If bottles still have labels, challenge children who are ready to seek out and find specific letters. Also talk about words and logos.
- Cut off the top and wrap edge with tape. Children can look through the bottle like a telescope and see how they world looks different. Can even try to read books this way.

Paper Gift Bag Ideas



- Add to dramatic play so children can pretend to go shopping
- Make funny hats with other art materials
- Sensory bag - Put an item inside. Children touch with their hands and try to guess what it is without looking
- Have several bags. Children close eyes. Put an item in one of the bags. Have children find the item.
- Crumble up balls of old newspaper and attempt to toss them into the bags
- Have children try to figure out which items would fit in which bags by size
- Writing activity - What could I put in this bag? OR What could we do with these bags?
- Create Name Bags by having children practice writing their names all over the bags.
- Cut out a shape on each bag and then have the children match the shapes and patterns.
- Have children attempt to toss bean bags or small balls into the bags.
- Try to catch bubbles with bags.
- Put scarves in the bag with a small portion hanging out. Infants/Toddlers can then pull the scarves from the bags.



Whisk Ideas

- Weave pieces of ribbon or yarn in and out of the whisk
- Make bubbles in the water table
- Push pom-poms through the wires on the whisk so they end up inside. Then press them to make them come out.
- Tie ribbons on the whisk and then shake while dancing to music
- Hit the whisk (gently) on different surfaces and talk about how the sounds are different
- Make pudding or another food that uses a whisk to prepare
- Press whisks in playdough
- Compare different types of whisks (sizes, too)
- Make puppets with whisks
- Outside activity - Dip the whisks in paint and then "fling" on a shower curtain. Could also fling on large sheets of paper to create unique art
- Add whisks to the sand table, sand box or a container of sand
- Whisk different colors of water or paint together and talk about what happens
- Predict the number of pom-pom balls it will take to fill the whisk

Blanket Ideas



- Build forts or tents
- Use blanket as a parachute. Put a beach ball on top and make it bounce up and down
- Talk about the textures of different types of blankets
- So the child a toy. Put the toy under the blanket. Can the child lift the blanket to find the toy?
- Use blankets to make a cozy book reading area
- Spread out a large blanket on the ground outdoors and add books to read
- Challenge children to fold the blankets as small as possible
- Use a quilt to play, "I Spy"
- Add assorted sized blanket to dramatic play. Children can then use them as desired (e.g., to put dolls to bed, as a cape when role-playing a hairdresser/barber, etc.
- Hang blanket and then have the children crawl under it
- Hang blanket and use it as a "net" for playing volleyball or badminton
- Use small blankets for "superhero" capes
- Use small blankets to play a game like Musical Chairs or even Tag

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At Gee Whiz, we are dedicated to supporting family child care providers and others who work with young children.

There are many free resources on our website and we encourage you to take a look!

Please also sign up for our newsletter (on the homepage) so you will be notified about upcoming webinars, new materials and much more!

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