



Winter Activity Bundle

Getting Started

We hope that you and your children enjoy the experiences included in this Winter Activity Bundle. Keep in mind when exploring the season of winter with your group, it will be very different depending on where you live. Adjust and adapt the activities as needed. At the same time, exploring the concepts of snow, ice and cold weather is just as important for children living in warm climates as it is in cold ones. This helps them develop a better understanding of their world. As with all Gee Whiz materials, you will find experiences for all ages groups ... infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children in this guide. **Any materials printed in red may require a little more time to gather or prepare.** In the bundle, you will find several pages of hands-on experiences (both whole group and small group) + the following printable materials:

- Snowflake Lotto Printable
- Toss & Count Snow Friend Printable
- Build a Snowman Sequencing Printable
- Find & Count Printable
- Racing Sleds Printable
- Winter Memory Printable



At Gee Whiz, we use a series of picture symbols to help you identify the developmental areas addressed by each activity. Below you will find a chart that matches each picture to a developmental area. As you review the experiences presented in this guide, you will quickly see that each experience addresses many different developmental areas. For more information on these developmental areas, please check out our User's Guide: <https://geewhizeducation.com/gee-whiz-users-guide/>

Program Symbols for Developmental Areas

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 🗨️ = Language Development | 🌐 = Social Studies Knowledge |
| 📖 = Literacy Knowledge | ♥️ = Social & Emotional Development |
| ① = Math Knowledge | 🎵 & 🖋️ = Music & Creative Arts |
| 🔍 = Science Knowledge | ✋️ = Physical Development & Health |
| ? = Logic & Reasoning | 😊 = Approaches to Learning |

Exploring Together Activities

These experiences are for your entire group...even your infants! Infants can watch and absorb all the fun!

What is Winter?

(all ages, 🗨️ 😊 ? 📏 ✍️ 🎵 🌐 📖 ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- Access to a computer, tablet or phone
- Books about winter (your choice)

- Winter is a season that looks very different in different parts of the world. Today you will explore the concept that in some parts of the world, winter can be cold and snowy. If you don't live in a place that gets cold in the winter or if your children have never seen snow, you will use a short video and/or books to help the children build background knowledge.
- Sit on the floor with the books or a tablet OR position yourself near the computer. Turn on a very short video, such as this one, and encourage interested children to join you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG3LVTFQUA4>.
- While watching this video (or looking at books), pause to ask the children questions. This will help you gauge the children's understanding of the winter season and help you plan additional experiences. To help the children become more familiar with winter and get them moving, sing the following song and invite the children to act it out.

I LOVE WINTER

(tune: "The Wheels on the Bus")

I love winter ... yes, I do.
Yes, I do. Yes, I do.
I love winter ... yes, I do.
It's so fun!

We'll go sledding ... yes, we will.
Yes, we will. Yes, we will.
We'll go sledding ... yes, we will.
Let's sled now!

We'll go skating ... yes, we will.

We'll go skiing ... yes, we will..

Add additional verses focused on winter activities.



Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What do you know about winter?*
- *What would you like to learn about this season?*
- *If we had a big snowstorm today, what would you do?*
- *Why do you think it snows?*
- *Why do you think some people like winter while others do not?*
- *What do you think animals do when it snows?*

Exploring Together Activities

Find the Snowflakes

(all ages, 🗨️ ? ❤️ 😊 🔍 📌 🖐️)

Materials:

☐ **Printed snowflakes, hidden** - Print out 1 or 2 copies of the cards from the Snowflake Lotto Game (p. 17), cut apart and hide.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *Where did you find your snowflake?*
- *What do you think would happen to real snow if we brought it indoors? Why do you think that?*
- *How many snowflakes do you think we found all together?*
- *What is the same about the snowflakes we found?*
- *What is different about them?*

- Group games are fun for children and they also require them to practice self-regulation. In addition, this game incorporates positional concepts...which is a mathematical skill.
- Walk around and act like you are looking for something. As children become curious and ask what you are doing, explain that you had some beautiful snowflakes to show them but now you can't find them. Invite those children who show interest to help you find the snowflakes. As the children look for, and discover, the snowflakes talk about where they were hiding (e.g., under the couch, behind the chair, etc.). Using positional words such as these to describe the location of the snowflakes is a great way of exposing children to positional concepts in a meaningful, hands-on way.
- Once the children find all of the snowflakes, have those children who are developmentally ready count them with you. Then, invite more verbal children to compare and contrast the snowflakes. How are they the same? How are they different? You might want to share at this point that all snowflakes are unique and different.
- If the children enjoyed playing this game, you may want to have them cover their eyes as you hide the snowflakes again for them to find.



Exploring Together Activities

Pass the Snowflake

(all ages, 🗣️ 😊 🧠 ? 🎵 ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- Large snowflake cut from sturdy white paper/cardstock. To make even more durable, cover with clear Contact® paper.**
- Music

- Playing group game, like this one, is a great way for children to practice following directions and cooperation. While passing the snowflake, the children will also practice fine motor control, self-regulation and engaging with others.
- Sit on the floor with the prepared snowflake. As children show interest, invite them to join you. Encourage them to look at the snowflake with you. What do they see? What do they know about snowflakes? Here are few facts about snowflakes you may want to share.

All snowflakes have six sides.

No two snowflakes are exactly the same.

At least 1 septillion snowflakes fall each year.

- After sharing this information, introduce the group game, "Pass the Snowflake." To play the game, have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Give one child the prepared snowflake. Turn on recorded music and encourage the children to pass the snowflake while the music plays. When the music stops, the child holding the snowflake should share something he/she likes about the season of winter. Continue playing the game until every child that is verbal has a chance to share.



Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What do you know about snowflakes?*
- *Tell me about a time when you saw snow.*
- *What do you think it would be like to catch a real snowflake in your hand?*
- *How do you think snowflakes are formed?*



Small Group Activities

The experiences on the next few pages are designed for small groups of children...toddlers through preschool. Many are child-directed and just require you to assume a supportive role.

Playdough Snow People

(all ages, 🗣️ 😊 🧠 ? 📌 ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- White playdough
- Small twigs

- Children use their senses to learn about their world. This experience invites them to explore while building fine motor control at the same time. In addition, the children will build both expressive and receptive language skills as they engage with you and other children. For those children who are ready, an introduction to the sphere shape is possible
- Set out the materials listed above and invite the children to use them as desired to create snow people. Children who are developmentally ready may be able to create balls/spheres with the dough while younger children may simply play. This is totally fine! Be sure to ask open-ended questions as the children create.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can be exposed to the sphere shape as they create snow people. They may also choose to use the twigs for arms, legs, hair, etc.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What do you like about snow people?*
- *Tell me about how you are using the playdough and twigs.*
- *If this was real snow, how do you think it would feel?*
- *If you were going to build a snow person from snow, what types of clothing do you think you would need to wear?*



Questions to Spur Thinking

- *How does the water feel?*
- *What do you think is going to happen to the water when we add the ice?*
- *How do you think the ice will change when we add it to the water?*

Fun with Ice & Water

(all ages, 🗣️ 😊 📄 🧠 ? ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- Ice to put in the water table or container of water - You could use ice cubes or freeze water in different sized containers to make blocks of ice**
- Large sheet of white paper and marker

- The children will definitely use their senses during this experience! As they play, they can also make and test predictions. Writing down their predictions adds an element of literacy to the experience.
- Invite interested children to play in the water. As they play, add ice cubes or blocks of ice. Encourage the children to predict what they think is going to happen to the ice. Write down their predictions on paper, talking about letters and words in the process. Now is also the perfect time to reinforce vocabulary words like *cold*, *melt*, *water*, *freeze*, etc.
- Advanced Preschoolers: Have these children compare and contrast their predictions to the actual results.

Small Group Activities

Painting with Ice

(all ages,       )

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What color of marker is your favorite? Why do you like that color the best?*
- *Tell me about your creation.*
- *What do you think is going to happen when you move the ice painter over your marker drawing?*
- *Why do you think the ice is melting?*

Materials:

- Ice painters - To prepare, fill an ice cube tray with water, cover with foil and insert a craft stick into each ice cube section. Freeze.**
- Washable markers, white paper

- Children love to create! This experience invites children to use ice and washable markers to create unique designs. At the same time, it encourages the children to make and test predictions.
- Set out the white paper and washable markers. Invite interested children to create. Now would be a great time to talk about colors!
- Once the children finish their creations, give each child an ice painter. Invite the children to move the ice over their washable marker creations. What happens?
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can make predictions about what will happen when they use their ice painters on their creations. They can then compare their predictions to the actual results.

How Long Will It Take?

(all ages,       )

Materials:

- Ice cubes or snow (if you have snow in your area)**
- 2 bowls
- Stopwatch (there is a stopwatch feature on most cellphones)
- Large sheet of white paper, marker

- Today the children are going to be scientists and they make and test predictions!
- Show the children the two bowls of ice. Encourage verbal children to use their senses to describe the ice. This is a great way of building vocabulary.
- Next, challenge the children to predict how many minutes it will take to the ice to melt in two different locations ... inside and outside. Write down their predictions on a large sheet of paper. Then, have the children help you choose locations for both bowls and start a stopwatch. Compare the children's predictions to the actual results.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can help you read the stopwatch.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *How does the ice look? Feel? Smell? Sound?*
- *Where do you think we should put the bowl of ice inside? Where should be put the bowl outside?*
- *Which bowl of ice do you think will melt first? Why do you think that?*

Infant Activities

The experiences on this page are designed specifically for infants.

Snow Sensory Bottle

(all ages, 🗨️ 😊 🕯️ ❓ ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- ❑ **Snow Sensory Bottle** - To make, fill a clear plastic bottle about a third full with water, add a few drops of blue food coloring, then fill the rest of the bottle with baby oil; next, add a generous amount of white glitter or fine sequins to create the "snow" effect. Then, wrap the lid with masking tape...just to be sure.
- Infants are often fascinated with sensory bottles. This very simple learning tool is wonderful because it exposes young minds to the concept of cause and effect (e.g., I move the bottle and it changes). While this concept seems very simplistic to you and I, it is new knowledge to infants. Sensory bottles are also great because they help infants build fine motor control.
- Sit on the floor and hold the infant in your lap. Show the infant the sensory bottle. If the infant appears to want to hold the bottle, give it to him/her. Watch to see what the infant does and then describe his/her actions as well as what happens when the bottle moves. Be sure to use plenty of descriptive language! Remember...infants are like little sponges absorbing everything you say.



Snowflakes Falling from the Sky

(all ages, 🗨️ 🕯️ 😊 🎵 ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- ❑ **Snowflakes hanging above the diapering area** - To make, print an additional copy of the individual cards from the Snowflake Lotto Game (p. 17) or cut your own. Attach each snowflake to a length of string or crepe paper streamer to each and hang above the diapering area.
- Having something to look at during diapering is a great way to reduce the wiggles. Adding a song just gives this everyday experience a new element of literacy and language.
- Make the snowflakes move before you begin diapering by touching them gently with your hand. Sing the song at the right as you diaper the infant and he/she watches the snowflakes moving above the diapering area.

SNOWFLAKES FALLING FROM THE SKY
(tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Snowflakes falling from the sky,
Whirling, twirling, up so high.
Falling, falling, down, down, down,
Soon they will all reach the ground.
Snowflakes falling from the sky,
Whirling, twirling, up so high.

School-Age Activities

Snowball Race Game

(all ages, 🗨️ 😊 🌐 ? 🎵 ❤️ 🖐️)

Materials:

- Cotton ball + large spoon for each child
- Box or bag
- Music (your choice)

- School-age children love games and they love to move! This game achieves both of these goals while also helping the children build eye-hand coordination, balance and so much more.
- Begin by talking with the children about snow. What do they know about snow? What experiences do they have with snow? What would they like to learn about snow? After the children share their ideas, use the internet to find answers to their questions.
- Then, introduce the game, "Snowball Race." To play, each child will need a large spoon and a cotton ball. Place the box or bag away from the children. Then, explain that you are going to turn on music. While the song plays, the children must try to carry their "snowball" (cotton ball) on their spoons all the way to the box or bag. This is not a competitive game because the children are not competing against one another. Instead, it is a game where each child can challenge him/herself individually.
- **EXTENSION:** Once the children get proficient, move the box/bag farther away and/or shorten the length of the song you use. This will make the game more challenging!

Graphing Temperatures

(all ages, 🗨️ 😊 🌐 ? 📖 🕒 🌐 🖐️)

Materials:

- Notebook or sheets of white paper
- Pencils
- Thermometer mounted outside where the children can see it
- Access to a computer or tablet

- This experience invites school-age children to learn more about how winter affects different parts of our world. At the same time, they will gain experience reading a thermometer and using the internet as a source of information.
- Position yourself near the window where the thermometer is mounted. Invite interested children to join you. Can any of the children read the thermometer? What is the temperature today? Talk about how winter affects the temperatures in your area. Then, invite the children to choose a location (or locations) in the world. What do you they think the temperature is there today? Use the internet to find out! Compare the temperature in your area to the areas in the world the children choose.
- Next, have the children gather temperature data for the next week...both in your area and the area(s) they chose. Have them record this data in a notebook and then use to create a graph. What does the graph tell them about winter temperatures?

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What do you like about snow? What don't you like?*
- *What technique made carrying your snowball easier?*
- *How could be make this game harder?*

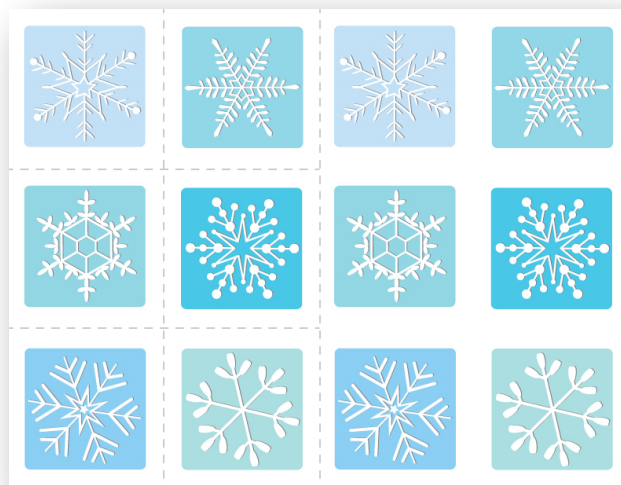
- *What is the temperature in our area today?*
- *Do you think it is the same temperature all over the world? Why or why not?*
- *What search terms should be type in the search box to find out the temperature in (place chosen by the children)*

Snowflake Lotto Game

The Snowflake Lotto Game is found on page 17/
There are several ways you can use this material.

Preparation

- Print the pages included on page 17/
- Mount the page to heavyweight paper and cut apart where indicated. You will end up with 1 playing card (with 6 snowflakes) and 6 individual cards. If you have a larger group, you may want to print out and prepare several copies so multiple children can play at one time.



Directions for Use

- To play the game, have the children turn the individual snowflake cards face down on the table.
- Have the children take turns choosing a card, looking at the snowflake and then matching it to the one on the playing card. Continue to play in this fashion until all of the snowflakes are matched.

Other Ways to Use This Material

- Print out 2 copies of the individual cards and use them to play a memory game.
- Print out the individual snowflake cards, cut them apart and hang them from the ceiling.
- Use the individual snowflake cards to practice counting skills. Have the children close their eyes as you use the cards to make a set. When the children open their eyes, they should count how many snowflakes are in the set.

Toss & Count Snow Person

The Snow Person printable can be found on page 18.

You can use this material in several different ways.

Toss & Count Game

- Print out a copy of the Snow Person. Tape it to a cardboard box, paper grocery bag or even a clothesbasket.
- Next, put out a bowl of cotton balls. The children are going to pretend that these are snowballs.
- To play the game, have the children attempt to toss cotton balls into the box, bag or clothesbasket. As the children play, encourage them to talk about which techniques work best for tossing the “snowballs.”
- After all of the cotton balls are gone, have the children work together to count how many went into the box, bag or clothesbasket and how many missed.



My Own Snow Person

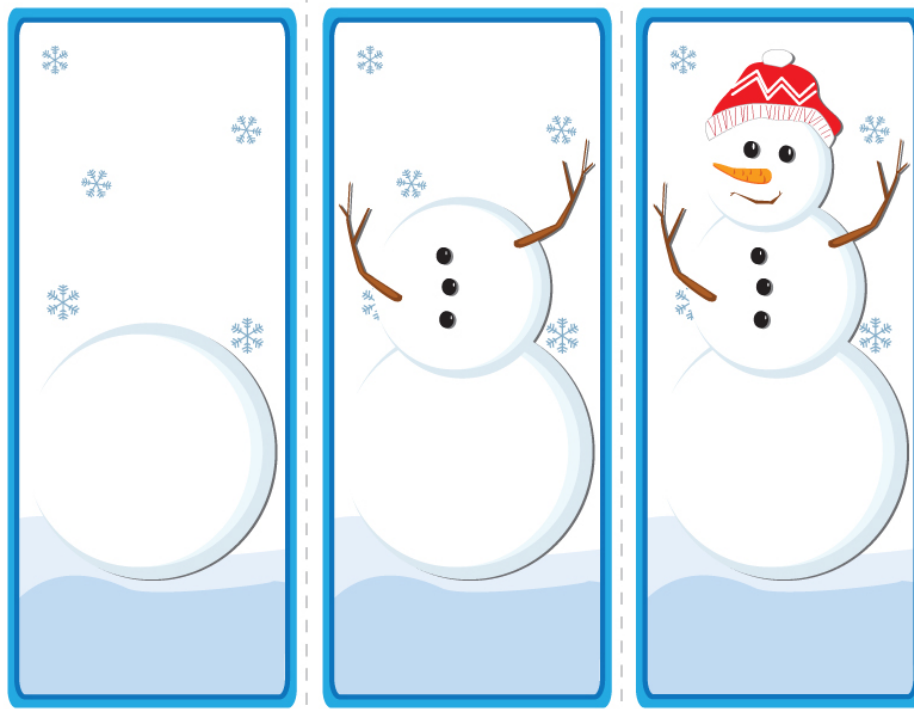
Print out an additional copy of the Snow Person for each child. Then, invite the children to use their Snow Person in any way they would like.

- Some children may want to make their own Snow Person game to take home by glueing or taping a copy of the snow person to a paper lunch bag.
- Others may want to make a huggable Snow Person by glueing or taping it to a paper lunch bag that is filled with paper towels or old newspapers.
- Still others might choose to mount the Snow Person to a sturdy piece of paper and then cut into pieces to create a puzzle.

Build a Snowman Sequencing

The Build a Snowman Sequencing can be found on p. 19.

Print a copy out for each child.



Ideas for Use

- Print out a copy of the sheet for each child.
- Sequencing is a skill that takes time to develop. Most older preschoolers are able to understand the passage of time but your younger children (Toddlers, Twos and Threes) probably are not. That said, it is never too early to introduce the concepts of first, next and last.
- Invite those children who are ready to cut apart the scenes. Before they do so, talk about what they see happening in each one. Ask lots of questions! Then, have the children cut the sheet apart by following the dotted lines. Next, have them mix up the scenes and challenge the children to find the one that comes first ... then next ... then last. Why do the scenes need to go in that order?

Sequencing Center Activity

- Mount a copy of the sheet to heavyweight paper, cut apart and cover with Contact® paper.
- Add this game to your activity center where the children can play with the cards. As they do so, reinforce the concepts of first, next and last.

Find & Count

The Find & Count printable can be found on p. 20.

Print a copy out for each child.



Ideas for Use

- Print out a copy of the sheet for each child.
- The goal of this printable is to reinforce visual discrimination, counting skills and language. This is also an excellent printable to send home to encourage family involvement!
- Invite the children to look at the scene and describe what they see. Encourage them to share their experiences as well. Then, play the game, "Find & Count." You can do this like, "I Spy." For instance, you might say something like, "I spy ... snowballs. How many snowballs do I spy?" You could also say, "I Spy... children playing in the snow. How many children do I spy?"

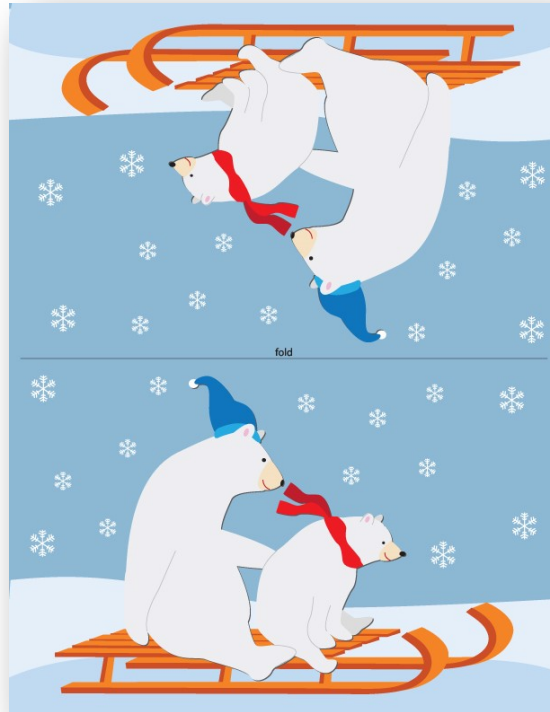
Additional Uses

- Mount a copy of the sheet to heavyweight paper and cut apart to create a puzzle.
- Use the scene to reinforce colors. Name a color and see how many things in the scene the children can find that are the color you name.

Racing Sleds

The Racing Sleds printable can be found on p. 21.

Print a copy out for each child.



How to Use

- Print out a copy of the sheet for each child. You will also need string/yarn, drinking straws and blue painter's tape.
- First, have the children prepare their racing sleds. To do this, they will need to cut following the dotted lines. Then, they will fold where indicated. Next, lay a drinking straw on the back side of the fold and secure with tape. Fold the paper and tape near the edges.
- Next, cut lengths of string/yarn for each child that are about 5-6 feet long. Tape one end of the string to the floor using blue painter's tape. Then, help each child thread his/her racing sled on to the free end of the string. At this point, keep the string on the ground. Then, when you give the signal, have the children raise their strings up and watch what happens!

Other Use

- Print out a copy of the sheet and cut into two sleds. Mount each sled to an empty box or a block. Add these to your block area.

Winter Memory Game

The Winter Memory Game can be found on pages 22-23.

Preparation

- Print out the Winter Memory Game (pgs. 22-23)
- Mount the pages to heavyweight paper, cover with clear Contact® paper (to make the pieces more durable, if desired) and cut apart where indicated. You will end up with 16 cards.



Directions for Use

- To play the game, put all of the picture cards on the table and mix them up. Turn all of the cards face down on the table.
- To play the game, have a child turn over two cards. If the pictures match, the child takes the cards. If not, the child turns them face down.
- Continue to play until all of the cards are matched. Then use the pictures on the cards to talk about winter. How are all of the pictures related to this season? What experiences do the children have with each one?



Other Ways to Use This Material

- Hide the cards around the room and have the children work together to find them all. Once found, the children can match the cards.
- Put one set of the cards in a paper bag. Shake the bag. Have each child choose a card. Then, have the children search in books for pictures or photos that match their cards.

Books, Links & More!

Here is a Book List you may want to use to help you locate books to explore with the children. In addition, links to websites that contain information you may find helpful are also included.

Winter Books

The Biggest Snowman Ever by Steven Kroll

The Mitten by Jan Brett

Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner

Sneezy the Snowman by Maureen Wright

The Snow Thief by Alice Hemming

There Was a Cold Lady that Swallowed Some Snow by Lucille Colandro

The Very Hungry Caterpillar's First Winter by Eric Carle

Winter is Here by Kevin Henkes



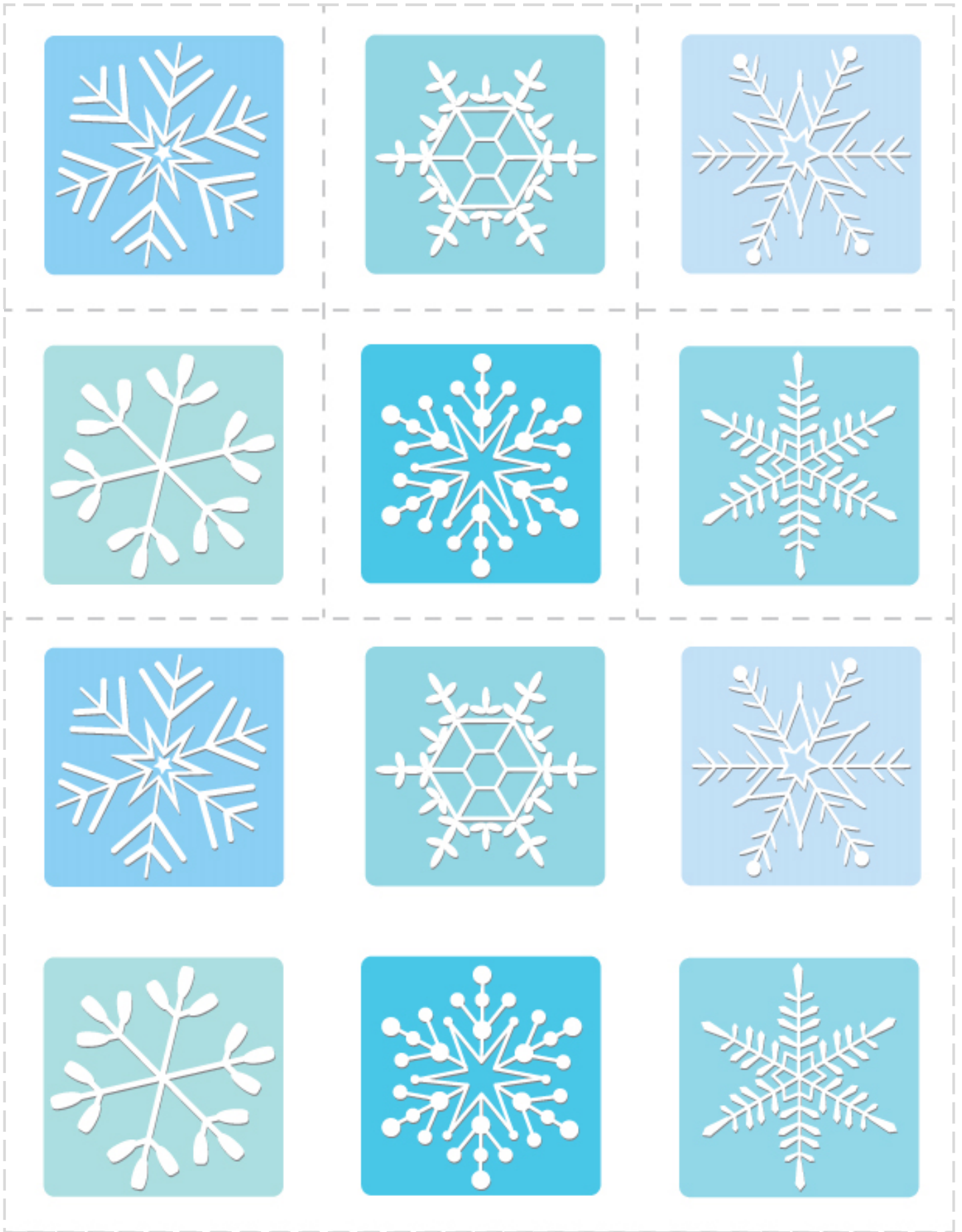
Helpful Web Links

Here are some links to information and videos you may find helpful...and very funny! The ones of the children sharing may inspire you to have the children in your group create their own video. ☺

Overview of Winter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG3LVTFQUA4>

Video about playing in the snow: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_hFn7TWIlg

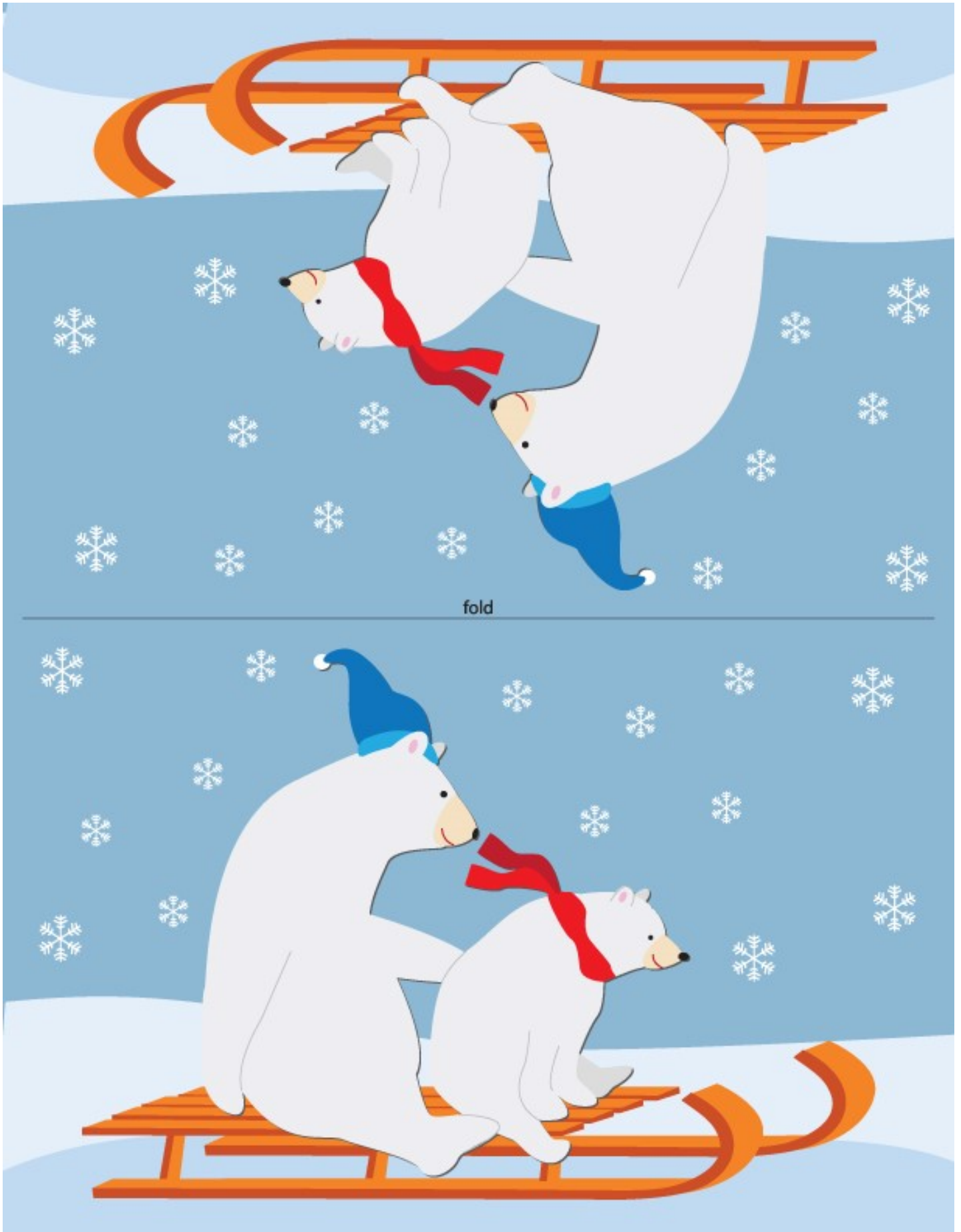
Video about snowflakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M48RfaWcWA>



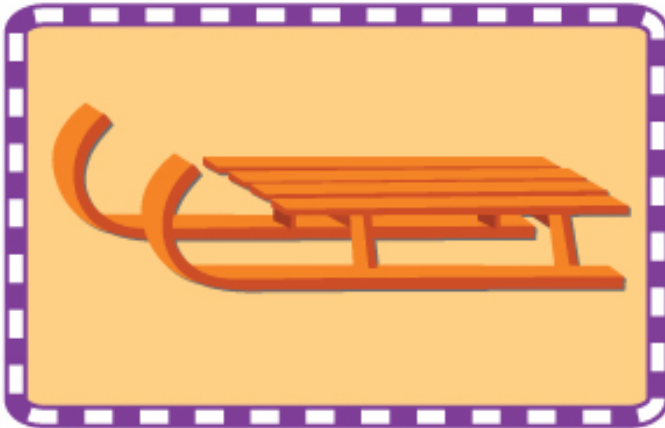
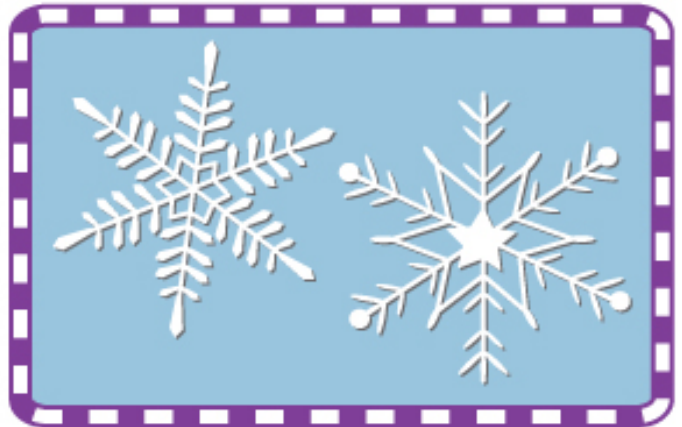
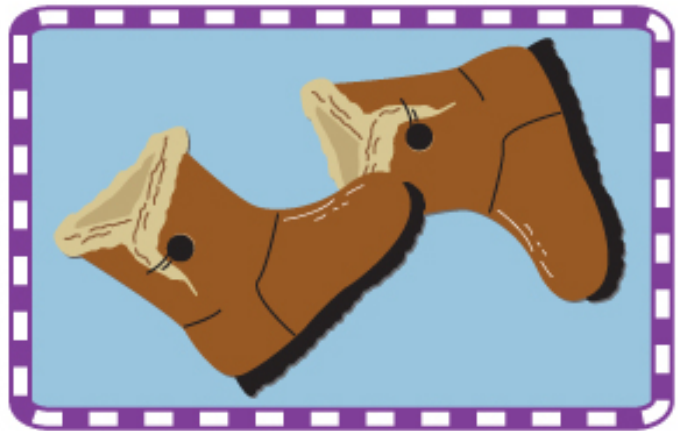


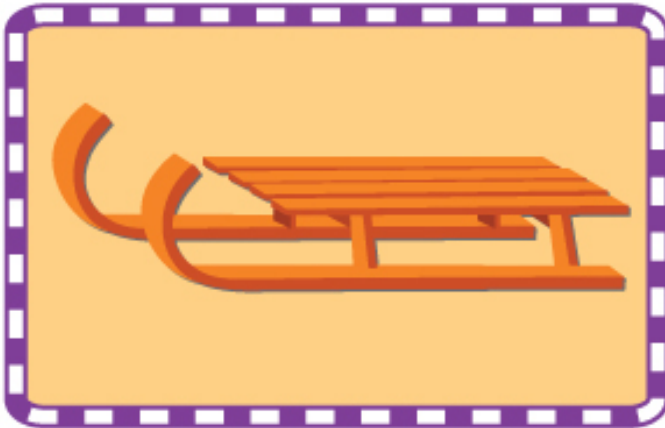
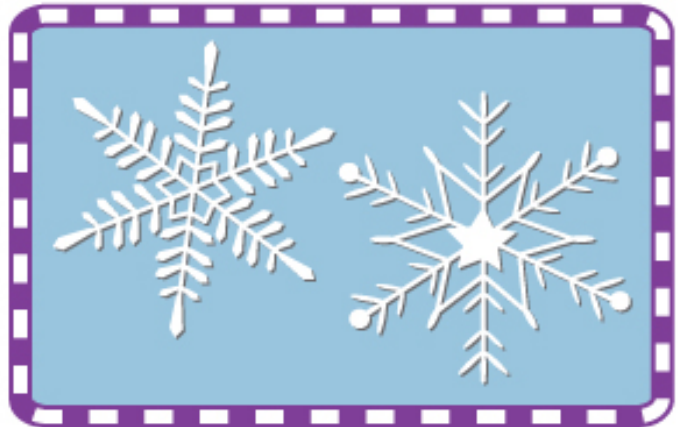
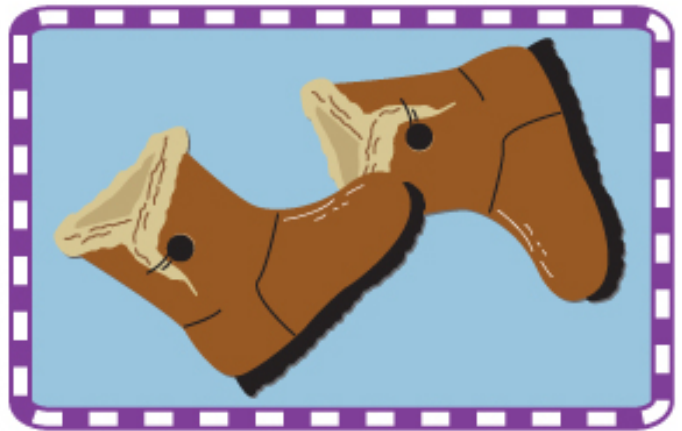
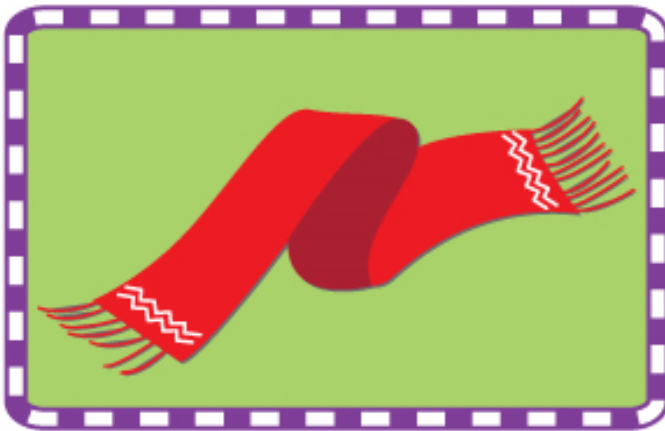






fold





Special Offer!



The Gee Whiz Curriculum is designed specifically for home-based child care programs and:

- Includes lesson plans with hands-on experiences for **ALL ages** (infants-afterschool)
- Is **open-ended** and encourages children to learn through exploration
- Is **aligned** with state/national standards and **approved** in many states for QRIS programs
- Uses common **household materials** to save you money
- Provides access to **training webinars...at additional no charge!**



To subscribe, go to www.geewhizeducation.com

To view discount details, visit our website and then look for the "Special Offer" tab under "Training & Support."