

Learning at Home

10 Ideas for Water Play

There are so many ways to spark children's interest and learning. With these unique, open-ended activities using household materials, children (and adults) can explore concepts of science, math, art, language, and so much more. Note that these suggestions will give you a place to start and can lead in many directions, based on children's interests. For additional Learning at Home ideas, visit our [Family Resource page](#).

There are endless opportunities to explore with water!

- ▶ **Create a bin for water play.** Add tools like bowls, measuring cups, spoons, sponges, and basters. You can also vary the water experience by tinting it with watercolor paints or adding soap to it to create a toy-washing station. Experiment with water by testing whether items will sink or float and what materials will dissolve in water, or see what happens when you try to combine oil and water.
- ▶ **Make a job of watering indoor plants every day.** Place a rain gauge outside your window to watch how much water the outdoor plants are getting.
- ▶ **Experiment with water drops.** You can blow them across a flat surface using a straw and watch how they roll or use an eyedropper to count how many drops can fit on a penny — it's more than you'd think!
- ▶ **Create some music using water in jars or glasses.** Fill up your containers to varying heights and gently tap on the sides. What sounds do the different containers make? Do they change if you add water or take some away?
- ▶ **Create water works of art!** Paint with water on construction paper. To tint ice cubes to paint with ads food coloring or watercolor paint to your water-filled ice cube trays, dip in a craft stick to create a handle, and freeze. Once they're frozen, you are ready for a unique painting experience.
- ▶ **Make water walk.** Fill jars with tinted water and connect them with strips of paper towel, each with then ends dipped in the water. Set them aside and watch the watercolors move and mix over time. Dip white flowers, celery, or lettuce leaves into tinted water and watch the water move through the plants.
- ▶ **Try your hand at building a boat** using recyclables, tape, or anything else that comes to mind. Once it's constructed, test it out! Can you make it even better? What can you do to make it move across the water?
- ▶ **Dip sidewalk chalk into water** before drawing with it. Check out the vibrant new colors it creates!
- ▶ Mix up your own bubble solution with six cups of water, one cup of dish soap, and two tablespoons of corn syrup or glycerin. Experiment with the amounts to see what solution works best for you.

Take It Outside!

Take advantage of warmer weather with these ideas for outdoor water play.

- ▶ Set up a "car wash" for wagons, bikes, or other outdoor toys.
- ▶ Combine water and dirt for a messy mud day. Use old cooking tools to create a mud kitchen, or enjoy the texture of it in your hands or between your toes.
- ▶ Set up a water relay race, challenging children to move water as fast as they can from one bucket to another using only small cups or sponges. See how much water they can move in just a minute.
- ▶ With spoons, bowls, and other cooking tools, make "soup" using nature items like flowers, herbs, and leaves.
- ▶ Paint on sidewalks, rocks, and fences in the sun. Notice the change in colors as the paint dries.
- ▶ Add a little water to a sandbox to help the sand hold its shape. Supply the space with buckets, shovels, and molds to make a sandcastle.