

Science in the Bathtub

Bathtime offers just what young children need to develop the basics of scientific thinking: a place to explore with simple interesting materials, extended time to play, and an adult's participation and encouragement to think about how things work.



While you're watching your child play in the water, remember this: the best way to support children's science exploration is to help children **do their own thinking** rather than tell them facts. This inspires your child to do exactly what scientists do: observe closely, make predictions, try things out, and make thoughtful conclusions. At this point in your child's life, these thinking skills are much more important than learning the facts.

Ask questions like these:

- ◆ **I wonder what would happen if...** you poured in two cups of water this time.
- ◆ **Did you see ...**how the boat moves when you squirt water at it?
- ◆ **Why do you think ...**the tray floats and the soap doesn't?

Later, you can look at the plumbing fixtures together. Ask the same kinds of questions:

- ◆ **I wonder what would happen if ...**the faucet broke.
- ◆ **Do you see ...**that vortex when the water swooshes down the drain?
- ◆ **How do you think...** the hot water gets to the tub?

More Resources:

Worms, Shadows and Whirlpools by Karen Worth, Ph. D.

www.peepandthebigwideworld.com/resources/karen.html

Bath Toys that Help Children Explore Water:

- Plastic containers
- Styrofoam tray to be a boat
- Plastic people or animals to ride in the boat
- Sponge
- Turkey baster
- Pump action bottle
- Funnel
- Plastic tubing

