**Unit of Study: Water (Toddlers)**

**Unit Overview**: This unit presents children with a variety of opportunities to explore one of the most important substances on the planet: water! Through activities, children will explore its physical properties, learn about its uses, expand their knowledge of life forms that rely on it, and understand how it changes and interacts with the environment.

Water has special physical properties that toddlers in particular find fascinating and soothing. Teachers will help students explore these properties further by introducing different materials that children can use to manipulate water intentionally for various purposes (i.e. sponges, syringes, and turkey basters to suck up water; wash cloths, loofas, and other cloth materials to spread it, etc.). Toddlers will explore materials independently and with teacher support to become innovative problem solvers when faced with various challenges!

Teachers will use the water topic to further “flesh out” familiar nursery rhymes and songs, incorporating props and water into large group singing experiences. Teachers will read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts featuring rain, water, and aquatic environments. Throughout the course of large and small group readings, teachers will prompt children to share their experiences related to water, and to recap details/information from the text.

Teachers will also help students think about weather in new ways and investigate how weather changes the environment (i.e. puddles after a rain storm, worms on the pavement, etc.).

Students will also make connections between water and their common living routines, such as bathing, cleaning materials, and drinking water to stay adequately hydrated. While water is something that is familiar and common, through structured activities our classroom will build increased awareness of its prevalence and functions.

The following activities represent some recommended learning experiences to facilitate this unit of study, in addition to other teacher-developed activities.



**Learning Experiences**

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| **COGNITION** | | |
| Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to develop effective approaches to learning | | |
| Strand A: Curiosity and Initiative | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description:**  **Water Play**  Teachers will place a variety of materials in the water table, including sponges, turkey basters, spoons, ladles, cups, and forks. As children play, teachers will monitor children’s efforts to move and manipulate water with tools and will use question prompts to encourage focused investigation and exploration of water. Teachers will also draw on students’ interactions with materials to model asking questions. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Allow children to self-direct actions. * Comment on children’s actions and the results of those actions (“You pushed the water hard and it splashed”). * Position a variety of diverse materials near the child to attract interest. * Ask simple, open-ended questions about both actions and effects and re-state children’s answers (“what did you do with the block? … That’s right, you dropped it in the water… What happened when you dropped it? … yeah, it splashed!”) | * Record how children played with materials, noting both repetitive and innovative actions taken to manipulate water. * Record interactions with different peers * Rephrase classmates’ words when needed to ensure that communicative attempts are understood between peers * Encourage peers to share their thoughts, ideas, and play with others * Identify what task/problem children are attempting to complete together and document |
| **Learning Objectives:**  Students will:   * Use senses to actively investigate and explore the effects of new actions on objects. * Explore objects, activities and environments. * Ask questions and seek answers from a   variety of sources. | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to develop listening skills**  **PROGRESSION: Vocabulary**  Teachers will support ELL learners by saying/labeling the English words for items as children use them. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| **COGNITION** | | |
| Strand C: Early learning experiences will support children to strengthen executive function. | | |
| Strand C: Cognitive Flexibility | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Fill up a pail**  Teachers will set out a bin of shallow water (1/4 inch) and a variety of materials (turkey basters, plastic syringes, cups, ladles, spatulas, sponges, washcloths) and will invite children to help fill an empty pail using the water from the shallow bin. At first, typical strategies such as scooping with a cup will suffice, but as the water level gets lower, students will need to experiment with other materials to extract the water and put it in a pail. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Give children opportunities to explore and use materials independently. * Occasionally model how to scoop and pour water. * Remind children that you need assistance filling the pail of water. * Comment on/narrate student actions. * Ask children to describe what they are doing with materials. * Encourage novel approaches and uses of materials, even when these approaches are not successful. | * Teachers will write narrative observations of students’ actions during activity. Teachers will describe students’ use of materials, focusing on diversity of strategies rather than effectiveness of those strategies. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Use objects in new and unexpected ways. * Purposefully try multiple ways of using objects. * Realize when something is not working and with adult assistance try another approach. * With adult assistance, stop and consider alternatives when encountering a problem. | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to develop listening skills**  **PROGRESSION: Vocabulary**  Teachers will repeat names of materials throughout activity and will point to them to reinforce meaning. Teachers will encourage children to repeat the names of materials. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| **Social and Emotional Development** | | |
| Strand B: Early learning experiences will support children to develop self-regulation. | | |
| Strand B: Regulation of Emotions and Behavior | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Calming Bottles**  With student assistance, teachers will use -precleaned plastic bottles to create liquid sensory bottles of varying consistencies, colors, etc. (conditioner or soap in some for a thicker consistency, food coloring in another, glitter in another, cotton balls in another, etc.) Teachers will invite children to use sensory bottles while waiting, transitioning, laying down for nap, etc. during the day to support self-regulation. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Set calming bottles out in visually prominent area before wait-requiring transitions or naptime. * Encourage children to choose a bottle to take with them for nap time. * Model and explain how calming bottles are to be used. | * Teacher will document student participation in different routines (i.e. nap time, transition to group time, transition outside) and will note strategies that children use to transition effectively. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * With adult assistance, find comfort in rituals and routines. May use special comfort object to self-soothe. * With adult support, use self-soothing techniques to calm. | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand B: Early learning experiences will support children to develop speaking skills.**  **PROGRESSION: Vocabulary**  Teachers will use these experiences to model and use the English words “calm” and “relax” |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| **Physical Development & Health** | | |
| Strand C: Early learning experiences will support children to acquire adaptive skills | | |
| Strand C: Dressing and Hygiene | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Using water to clean our bodies**  Prepare for activity by coloring sticky mailing labels a variety of dark colors, cutting them into small (dime sized) circles, and sticking them onto various body parts of baby dolls (we recommend using stickers that will not fall off easily) to represent dirt. Place the baby dolls into a water table or water bin with wash cloths, loofas, and other bathing materials and invite the children to try to get all the “dirt” off the babies using the provided materials. As an extension of this activity, teachers may add glitter or a similar material to the dolls’ hair and invite children to try to wash the glitter out. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Explain to children that the sticky patches on the dolls are “dirt” * Model how to use different tools and comment on children’s use of self-selected materials. * Ask children to name or describe their strategies (“how are you getting the dirt off?”) * Comment on the effectiveness of children’s strategies (that washcloth wipes some dirt off). * Ask children structured questions to connect activity to their own experiences (“how do you clean your body when you take a bath? How do you know if you got all the dirt off?”) | * Teachers will write narrative observations describing children’s use of materials. Teachers will comment on children’s familiarity with cleaning motions (back-forth cleaning motion, for example) with a variety of cleaning tools. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Engage in dressing and hygiene routines with increasing intention. * Attempt to complete basic self-care routines with caregiver assistance. | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand B: Early learning experiences will support children to develop speaking skills.**  **PROGRESSION: Conversations and Discussions**  Teachers will help dual language learners participate in short conversational exchanges by using simple, plain questions about the experience, restating student responses, and asking follow up questions. Teachers will use students’ known vocabulary but will incorporate new language and support students’ knowledge of word meaning through gestures, enunciations, and repetitions. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| **Early Language, Communication, and Literacy** | | |
| Strand D: Early learning experiences will support children to gain book appreciation and knowledge | | |
| Strand D: Interest and Engagement with Books | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Interactive Itsy Bitsy Spider:**  Teachers will introduce a waterproof spider prop (laminated image, plastic spider, etc.) and a water spout prop (paper towel roll, plastic PVC tube, etc.). The teacher will manipulate props during singing of the itsy bitsy spider song to demonstrate actions associated with song vocabulary. The teacher will suspend props over a small tub of water and will invite children to use cups to “wash the spider out” by pouring the water onto the top of the water spout to dislodge the spider. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Sing song several times during course of unit * Introduce and name props prior to song onset * Fade out 2nd of rhyme pairs to give children time to think of/ anticipate the rhyme (i.e. “the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the water *spout*, down came the rain and washed the spider …… *out*!”) * Use gestures to supplement vocabulary introduced. * Challenge children to vary the tempo and volume of different song renditions (sing song softly one time, slowly another, etc.). * Highlight target vocabulary and/or rhymes by stressing the sounds of target words and/or increasing the loudness. | * Print out the lyrics of song in advance (one set to pertain to each child). Circle words/phrases that each child is able utter and put squares around words/phrases that each child is able to represent through gestures. * If helpful, video record session to review at later time. * Have one teacher lead/facilitate the experience while the other records child utterances/gestural representations. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Point to props/images when named or in the context of songs * Chime in on nursery rhymes or repeat words or phrases from familiar stories * Sustain attention for short periods of time while engaging in a language experience * Recite familiar phrases of songs, books and rhymes | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to develop listening skills**  **PROGRESSION: Comprehension of Information Presented Orally**  Teachers will supplement target words with visual props and/or auditory inflection to reinforce the pronunciation and meaning of vocabulary. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections** |
| **Early Language, Communication, and Literacy** | | |
| Strand D: Early learning experiences will support children to gain book appreciation and knowledge | | |
| Strand D: Interest and Engagement with Books | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Bubbles the Fish**  Teachers will sing the “Bubbles the Fish” song to children throughout unit:  *Bubbles the fish, see him swim and swim,*  *(\*put hands together and gesture fish swimming\*)*  *He looks out at you, and you look in at him, (\*point to children, then self\*)*  *Bubbles the fish, he has no troubles,*  *You say “hello fish!”*  *(\*wave to fish with open hands\*)*  *and he just blows some bubbles.*  *\*Flick fingers repeatedly against lips to make bubble noise\**  Teachers will use energetic gestures and intonations to encourage child participation. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Sing song several times during course of unit * Prior to singing, show a picture of a fish and/or ask child questions about fish (“where do fish live?” “have you seen a fish?” “how do fish move around?”) * Fade out 2nd of rhyme pairs to give children time to think of/ anticipate the rhyme. * Use gestures to supplement vocabulary introduced. * Challenge children to vary the tempo and volume of different song renditions (sing song softly one time, slowly another, etc.). * Highlight target vocabulary and/or rhymes by stressing the sounds of target words and/or increasing the loudness. * Model song gestures while singing. * Sit with children who struggle to attend and use hand over hand guidance to demonstrate how to perform song gestures. | * Print out the lyrics of song in advance (one set to pertain to each child). Circle words/phrases that each child is able utter and put squares around words/phrases that each child is able to represent through gestures. * If helpful, video record session to review at later time. * Have one teacher lead/facilitate the experience while the other records child utterances/gestural representations. * Monitor length of child participation across singing activities. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Chime in on nursery rhymes or repeat words or phrases from familiar stories * Sustain attention for short periods of time while engaging in a language experience * Recite familiar phrases of songs, books and rhymes | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to develop listening skills**  **PROGRESSION: Vocabulary**  Teachers will supplement target words with visual props and/or auditory inflection to reinforce the pronunciation and meaning of vocabulary. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections** |

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| **Creative Arts** | | |
| Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to engage in and enjoy the arts | | |
| Strand A: Visual Arts | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Painting Water**  Teachers will bring small pails of water and a variety of sponges and paintbrushes to the outdoor area. Teachers will invite children to use the water and art utensils to “paint” a building wall or sheets of butcher paper taped vertically against fence posts. Teachers will invite children to describe what they are doing/creating with the art utensils and will comment on how the impressions fade over time. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Ask children reflective questions, (e.g., “what are you doing with your paint brush”) * Model how to use and manipulate materials, including different types of strokes and lines (circles, vertical lines, horizontal lines, zig zags). * Comment on children’s actions * Ask children to describe what they are doing/attempting to do with materials. * Bloom’s Questions: “What are you doing with the pain brush? What are you trying to make? I wonder why that part is getting lighter now?” | * Take pictures of children’s creations, with corresponding text captions of children’s own descriptions of creations. * Use “tell me about what you made,” prompt to elicit student reflection on work. Record student descriptions. * Note the types of lines/strokes children are able to produce (i.e. circular, linear, squiggle) |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Experiment with a variety of media * Experiment with strokes and lines * Create art in a variety of media with some control and own purpose | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand B: Early learning experiences will support children to develop speaking skills.**  **PROGRESSION: Social Conventions**  Teachers will engage dual-language learners in discussions about what they are making. Teachers will repeat key words and will use pointing and gestures to reinforce meaning. Teachers will restate students’ conversational statements into complete sentences and will ask follow-up questions. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| **Early Mathematical Discovery** | | |
| Strand A: Early learning experiences will support children to understand counting and cardinality | | |
| Strand A: Recognition of Quantity | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description: Fishing for Pairs**  Teachers will create and laminate 5 pairs of matching fish (pairs will have distinct and obvious differences of patterns, colors, sizes etc.) and attach a magnet strip to each using superglue or waterproof adhesive. Teachers will place the fish in a shallow but wide container of water on a table and will offer children fishing “rods” with magnetic weights at the bottom. Teachers will model how to catch a fish with the rod and will invite children to do the same. As children draw in fish, the teacher will ask children questions about the physical attributes of the fish and will ask the child to identify fish that look the “same”. Teacher will repeat words “same” and “different” in the context of the activity. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Model use of materials before giving materials to children. * Encourage children to persist despite difficulty, providing hand over hand support if required. * Ask children specific questions about captured fish (i.e. “what does that fish look like? Is he bigger or smaller than the other fish? Do you see any lines or dots on that fish? Do any other fish look like him?”) * Teachers will encourage children to locate / catch identical “matching” fish * When children do not respond to question prompts, use self-talk strategies to model thinking, “I think this one has a big dot. I see another fish that has a big dot like him. Can you point to the fish that also has a big dot?” * Bloom’s Questions: “What does that fish look like? Does he have any special patterns? Does that fish have purple on him? Which fish looks the same? Are these the same or different?” | * Create an assessment checklist specifying specific classification skills (identifies characteristics with/without support, identifies/matches pairs with/without support). Use checklist to note children’s skills for each fish pair. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Match objects that are the same * Sort objects on the basis of one attribute with adult support. | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand B: Early learning experiences will support children to develop speaking skills.**  **PROGRESSION: Conversation and Discussion**  Teachers will ask children questions in English but will use translate app or knowledge of child’s home language to repeat target words in the child’s primary language. Teachers will repeat child statements to confirm understanding and reinforce vocabulary. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| **Early Scientific Inquiry** | | |
| Strand E: Early learning experiences will support children to understand features of earth. | | |
| Strand E: Earth's Features and the Effects of Weather and Water | | |
| **Learning Experiences:** | **Interactions** | **Assessment Strategies** |
| **Activity Description**: **Weather Review:**  During daily group meetings, the teacher will ask students to look out the window and describe the weather, including follow-up questions to analyze what terms like “rain” “sunny” or “cloudy” mean. | **Teaching Strategies:**   * Ask children to look outside to describe if they can “see” the weather. * Ask follow up questions about weather-related vocabulary, “Jayla said it’s cloudy? What does it mean when it’s cloudy outside?” * Ask variety of open ended questions regarding origin of weather “where does the rain come from? How do you know? How do you think the water got up in the sky?” | * Teachers will record student responses to structured questions, making particular note of vocabulary pertaining to Earth’s features. |
| **Learning Objectives:**   * Observe natural features of the earth * Describe common features of the earth and what is found there | **Individualizations/Modifications** |
| **DUAL – LANGUAGE LEARNERS:**  **STRAND: Strand B: Early learning experiences will support children to develop speaking skills.**  **PROGRESSION: Comprehension of Oral Instructions, Questions, and Prompts**  Teacher will use translation app to prepare the question “what weather do you see outside?” in children’s primary language and will restate the question in English. Teacher will then restate child responses in primary language and then English. |
| **IEP/IFSP Connections:** |

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| Family Engagement Strategies: |
| * Encourage parents to introduce a variety of open-ended play materials during bath time, including cups, spoons, boats, etc. * Encourage parents to take their children on a walk after a big rain storm and to talk with their child about changes to the environment (puddles on the ground, misty air, dripping of water from building roofs, worms on the sidewalk, etc. * Invite parents who have fish to bring their fish in to share with the class |