



October 23, 2024

LITTLE LEARNERS

NEWS FROM GILLISPIE PTEP!

DIVING INTO DISCOVERY: THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER TABLE PLAY

By now, you have probably noticed that your young learner is drawn to one of the water tables to explore and play at one point or another during our time together. This self-directed play at the water and sand tables has some surprising and important benefits for early childhood development.

Sensory Exploration:

Both centers allow children to learn with hands-on materials and acquire new information through their senses. These sensory experiences can assist some children with calming their bodies and extending their attention span.

Creativity:

Water and sand are classic examples of open-ended materials that do not have one specific purpose. Young explorers focus on the process of playing with the sand and water instead of trying to create an end product.



Social Skills:

When children play together, water and sand play activities can also boost social skills. They may communicate verbally or physically with their peers. They learn skills like sharing a space, taking turns with tools, or working together to accomplish a common goal. They may be splitting tasks: one child slowly pours water into the container with sand while the other mixes it. Any time children play together, they are learning social behaviors.

Mathematical Learning:

The sand and water centers introduce higher-level thinking concepts like volume. When children empty two pails of sand or water into one larger pail, they learn which has more and which has less. They can see how many cups it takes to fill the largest bucket.



RECOMMENDED READS

Here are links to blog entries and articles that help explain the concept of sharing for toddlers. It is a recurring question!

- [Why Your Toddler Doesn't Need to Share with Others](#)
- [Toddlers and Sharing: Tips for Parents](#)
- [Helping Young Children With Sharing](#)

IDEAS FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Our favorite play dough recipe ever!

This recipe is easy and a great way to have fun with your toddler.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups all-purpose white flour
- 3 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 cup + 2 tablespoons table salt
- 3-4 tablespoons cooking oil (canola, coconut, vegetable, etc.)
- 3 cups hot water
- *Optional:* Food coloring

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, combine the flour, cream of tartar, salt, and 3 tablespoons of cooking oil. Whisk until well mixed.
2. Gradually add the hot water, whisking until the mixture is smooth.
3. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. Be careful not to overcook, as this will make the dough too dry.
4. Remove the pot from heat and gather the dough into a ball. Place it in a Ziploc bag or cover with plastic wrap, and let it cool slightly.
5. Once cooled, divide the dough into portions if desired. Add food coloring to each portion, kneading until the color is evenly distributed. For a single color, add the food coloring to the water before mixing.
6. For vibrant colors, use more food coloring than you think you'll need.
7. Store the dough in airtight containers or Ziploc bags when not in use.



ASK US ABOUT PTEP!

Gillispie's Parent Toddler Exploration Program (PTEP) offers fun-filled mornings where you and your little one can learn and explore together, interact with peers, and build lasting friendships. For more information please contact info@gillispie.org.

Upcoming sessions:

- **Session 2:** January 8 - February 26
- **Session 3:** March 5 - April 30

