Activities

Summertime Fun Activities

Grades: PreK–K

Overview
These activities range from a Parachute/Sheet Scramble to Making Pressed Flowers, Painting with Colored Ice, Making Lemonade, Imagining a Dream Vacation…

Recommended Materials
- Sponges
- Riding vehicles
- Large sheet or parachute
- Washable markers
- Big chalk sticks
- Assorted size paintbrushes
- Old crayons (without the paper coating)
- Heavy paper or oak tag
- Watercolors
- Assorted collage materials
- Glue sticks
- Trays to use as a mobile work surface
- Portable, unbreakable microscope
- Magnifier
- Unbreakable mirror
- Paper, clipboard, and markers for field drawings
- Plastic zipper bags and containers with lids for collections
- Measuring tape

**Directions**

1. **The Parachute Game**

**Materials**
A Parachute

Since the goal is fun and the expectation is that we will all work together to create it, why not introduce this section of activities with a cooperative game? Time to bring out the parachute for some fun cooperative activities. A parachute is particularly good for summertime games because the wind created by moving the parachute can cool off the entire group! (No parachute? Use a large sheet instead!)
Before you begin, talk about the importance of cooperating with one another. What does that mean? It means that with everyone's help, the activity will work! Ask children, "Can you fill the parachute with air by yourself?" "Why not?" "What do we have to do to get it to go up?" "We have to cooperate!"
Ask children to take a space around the edge of the parachute or sheet and experiment with moving together to make it go up and down. Once children have mastered this, they can play with taking turns running underneath it.

2. Making Pressed Flowers

Materials
- small wildflowers and grasses (even dandelions look great)
- dried flowers (optional)
- small pieces of colored tissue paper
- self-adhesive clear vinyl
- glitter
- scissors

IN ADVANCE: Talk about the flowers that are starting to come up. What have children noticed around their homes or the school? Even the most crowded city areas will have some planted flowers and a lot of beautiful weeds growing at the same time. Talk about the places flowers grow. What do the plants need to grow? (Some plants don't need much and can survive in a crack in the sidewalk.)

STEP BY STEP
1. Bring a table outside along with the flowers and other materials needed to make gifts. (You can take a walk with your children to collect additional flowers if some are nearby.)
2. Cut the clear contact paper into wide strips. Help children peel off the backing. Invite them to place strips lengthwise in front of them, with the sticky side facing up.
3. Next, ask children to place flowers and grasses on the bottom half of the sticky vinyl. Encourage them to add torn pieces of colored tissue paper. Invite them to add glitter around the design. Last, show children how to fold the top half of the vinyl down over the bottom half and press in place. Later, you can use a pin to prick any bubbles that may form.
4. Use the final products for presents. The pressed flower designs can be cut into strips for bookmarks, free-form shapes for window pictures, or large rectangles or ovals for place mats.

For younger children: This activity may be difficult for young children who are still developing fine motor coordination. You might want to let children examine the different flowers and grasses, talk about their similarities and differences, and glue them onto construction paper to create lovely nature pictures. Children can add to these creations with crayon or paint.

For older children: Encourage children to imagine settings where these wildflowers and grasses may have grown. Then print children's dictated stories about the histories and homes of these beautiful objects of nature.

EXTENSIONS
Take a nature hike to collect small natural objects children can bring back to preserve with self-adhesive vinyl. This will serve as a wonderful visual memory of the walk. You can also give children who are going on a family trip a small zipper bag to collect objects at the beach, in the mountains, at the lake. They can preserve their "finds" in the same way when they return to school.

3. Painting with Colored Ice

Materials
Paper or newsprint
Water and basin
Aluminum foil
Freezer
Watercolors and brushes
STEP BY STEP
1. To make the frozen paper, dip newsprint or white drawing paper in water and place on a sheet of aluminum foil.
2. Top the wet paper with foil and dip another sheet of paper in water.
3. Keep alternating foil and wet paper until you have enough wet paper sheets for your class.
4. Place in the freezer for one hour.
5. Take out the paper and peel off one layer of frozen paper and foil for each child.
6. Invite children to paint with watercolors on the frozen paper. What happens?

4. Dream Vacations

Materials
- travel brochures, maps, and posters from a local travel agency
- old airline tickets or passports
- play money
- overnight bags with personal items
- plastic sunglasses
- scrap paper, pencils, hole puncher, and stapler

IN ADVANCE:
Bring out the travel brochures and posters and talk about travel and summer trips. Ask, "What trips have you taken with your family?" (They can also include day trips.) "Where have you gone?" "What did you see and do?" Make an experience chart of the places children have visited.
ACTIVITY

1 Show children the new props they can use in their play travel agency, where people choose a vacation and buy airline tickets.

Divide the children into travel agents, customers and returned travelers. Let the children change roles selling tickets, deciding on travel plans and telling stories of their adventures.

For younger children: Talk with them about overnight stays they may have made to a relative's or friend's house. Open one of the small suitcases and see if children can identify the different kinds of things they would need for an overnight stay.

For older children: Encourage children to tell stories about places they've visited (that can include a trip to the new grocery store around the corner).

EXTENSIONS

Plan for a pretend camping trip. Include backpacks and canteens as props. An old sheet can be used with blocks to form a tent, or take a large appliance box (washer, refrigerator) with both ends cut off, and cut on one fold. Fold in one side so a triangle 10-shape is formed (tape to hold in place). Use old pillowcases as sleeping bags for children and their toys. Serve gorp, a popular hiking food, for a snack (Mix together granola, Chex, or Cheerios, raisins, and nuts and place in plastic sandwich bags. Take a hike and eat the snack at the campsite.)
5. Making Lemonade

Materials

- tray
- lemons
- measuring cup and spoons
- large spoon
- small cups or bowls
- binder ring
- knife (optional)
- white grape juice
- small pitchers
- strainer
- ice (optional)

STEP BY STEP

1) Gather the ingredients and refer to your recipe (see step 3) as you work.

2) Cut the lemon in half and see the color and texture of the rind and the star shape of the segments inside. Ask your child to squeeze the juice into a cup or bowl (through the strainer to prevent seeds from falling in). What can you see happening?

3) Help your child use the measuring cup and spoon to measure 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of white grape juice, and 1½ cups of water. Pour the ingredients into the pitcher. Stir with a large spoon.
4) Add ice cubes or chill in the refrigerator. Once cool, help your child pour out a serving of lemonade. Encourage your child to think of words to describe the drink to someone who never saw a lemon.

EXTENSIONS
Talk with about other kinds of things that can be made with lemons (breads, ice pops, cookies). Try out some of these recipes.

Talk about other favorite juices and where they come from. Let your child experiment with squeezing grapes, apples, and other fruits. If possible, use a juice press to make drinks from other fruits.

Additional Resources: Teacher Books
- The Cooperative Sports and Games Book by Terry Orlick (Random House)
- Science and Math Explorations for Young Children by Barren, Binderman, Boffen, Echols, House, Hosoume, Kopp (Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley)
- Sidewalk Chalk: Outdoor Fun and Games by Jamie Kyle McCillian (Sterling Publications)
- Terrific Transitions by Ellen Booth Church (Scholastic)
- 25 Literacy Building Art Activities by Ellen Booth Church (Scholastic)

Subjects:
Outdoor Activities and Recreation, Science, Arts and Crafts, Social Relationships, Games