Sun-Sational Activities

Grades: 3–5, 6–8

Creating Color Spectrums

Although sunlight looks white, when it passes through water — such as raindrops or a glass of water — it bends and separates into a spectrum, or rainbow, of seven colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Invite small groups to create spectrums from sunlight by using clear plastic cups of water and white paper. Have them pinch the cup by the rim, then gently tilt it up and down until a color band appears on the paper. Next, provide different hues of food coloring and have each group predict what will happen if they add the colors to the water. (The bands of color will be altered.) Have groups add one drop of color to each cup. To extend, students can vary the amount of water and the size and shape of the cups. Have them write their observations to determine which method cast the brightest rainbow images.
Art for a Sunny Day

Materials
- images of the sun from throughout the world from ancient times to the present
- cooking pot
- mixing bowl
- large mixing spoon
- measuring cup
- plastic bag
- plastic trays or paper plates
- ingredients: 2/3 cup water, 2 cups salt, ½ cup water, 1 cup cornstarch

IN ADVANCE
Talk about the things children like to do on a sunny day. Make a "sunny" experience chart. Place a yellow circle in the center of the chart paper and represent children's ideas as rays of the sun. Invite children to invent art projects to do on a sunny day.

ACTIVITY
1) Prepare the sun clay in the following way:
   - Place the salt in the pot and add 2/3 cup water
   - Stir and cook over medium heat for four to five minutes, until salt is dissolved
   - Remove from heat
   - Gradually mix ½ cup water with cornstarch in a separate container
• Stir until smooth and add to the salt mixture
• Return to low heat and stir, cooking until smooth

The beauty of this clay is that when it hardens in the sun, it doesn’t crumble like play dough. Store in a sealed plastic bag.

2) If possible, take this project outside.
3) Provide children with a plastic tray or paper plate to work on and give each child a glob of clay to model.
4) Encourage children to search nearby for natural objects they can use to decorate their sun sculptures.
5) Place the finished items in the sun to dry.
6) Predict how long it will take for the sculptures to dry.

EXTENSIONS
The process of making solar prints is another way for children to experience the power of the sun. Children place shaped objects or nature materials on dark colored (black, blue, or purple) construction paper and leave them in the direct sun for a day or two. Eventually, the paper fades around the objects, so when the objects are removed they will leave a pretty shadow design!

Shadow Play

On a sunny day, organize a game of shadow tag. Inside, use an old-time book to show how to cast farm animal hand-shadows on the wall.