

Water play at nursery

Water is naturally fascinating to children, they are drawn to water to explore its structure and properties.

Create or improve your nursery's water play area with our top tips:

- Ensure you have a good supply of spare clothes for the children and towels to dry them off
- Have a range of different resources to engage children in the water area
- Offer opportunities for children to be active whilst cooling down
- Provide opportunities for children to play with water inside and outside
- Use water barrels and rain butts to collect the natural water, this will help preserve the water supply
- Remember to risk assess, check for allergies when using essential oils and to supervise children around water.



Loose parts

Young children may not grasp the concept completely but playing and investigating with different items in water and using their senses, will build a foundation for learning. It also provides opportunities for the children to explore the textures, colours and properties of different items, e.g. floating and sinking.

- Water tray, paddling pool or bowl
- Bubbles, essential oils, colouring
- Buckets, pots, pans, teapots, jugs, cups and beakers
- Boats
- Funnels
- Syringes
- Straws, pipes, guttering, tubes
- Water wheels
- Pebbles, shells, rocks, glass beads, water beads.

Role play

Ensure you vary your water activities to provide different role play opportunities for your children. The more variety you can offer in your water area, the more children can use their imagination and relate what they see to their play.

You could make 'cups of tea' with containers and water, provide sailing boats and let their imagination run wild.

Working with babies

Babies can enjoy water play too! Fill a tough spot or shallow tray with water, make sure the room is warm and you have plenty of towels, hold younger babies safely in your arms and dip their feet gently into the water, allowing them to splash. Model language back to them by repeating the happy sounds they make as they splash!