



healthy body  
happy me 2022

RIGHT FROM THE START

Wednesday

# Healthy Body, Happy Me 2022 Wondrous Wednesday



National Day Nurseries Association

\*Brighter thinking  
for early years

Supported by





## Wondrous Wednesday

Babies and young children are naturally curious about the world around them. Practitioners can help to foster this curiosity by providing an environment and experiences where children feel safe to share their ideas, to make mistakes, to have a voice and the ability to make their own decisions.

Curiosity is essential to create our future scientists, technicians, engineers and inventors. We need to provide opportunities for children to think for themselves, be creative with their ideas, make predictions and theorise about what may happen and provide a sense of awe and wonder that excites and motivates them. Children who are motivated and curious are able to focus on what they are doing. They use their language or alternative communication methods to share their ideas and predictions.

Wondrous Wednesday is all about helping children to experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, igniting their curiosity through a wide range of experiences and making them active learners who are able to follow their own interests and ideas.

**All activities must be risk assessed and water activities must be supervised by adults.**



*The next generation of influential figures*



*Learning through exploration*

## Activity 1 Sensory den

Children learn through their senses of touch, sight, sound and smell. Activities that can awaken these senses and widen their experiences inspire them to learn more about the world around them.

A sensory den is a good way to create an environment that can envelop children, support them to explore their different senses and respond to sensory stimulation. Providing calming sensory spaces can also support children's wellbeing and provide opportunities for social interaction and understanding new concepts.

### Learning opportunities include:

- Exploring senses
- Supporting children's well-being
- Developing communication
- Developing children's physical skills.

### Sensory den

#### Activity outline

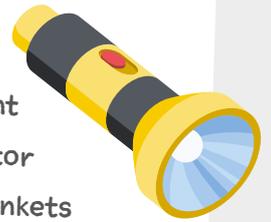
- Place a lightweight, dark coloured blanket over the top of the tent to create a dark space
- Place different lights around the inside of the tent. Use a projector if available
- Add lots of cushions and blankets
- Play different gentle sounds into the tent such as bird song, water sounds etc.
- Give children torches so they notice the changes they can create in the dark space.

### Ideas for different ages

This activity is suitable for all ages. Older children can have more involvement in designing and building the den, placing the fabric themselves to create the desired effect.

### Resources

- Torches
- Small pop-up tent
- Mini light projector
- Cushions and blankets
- Lightweight dark blanket(s)
- Sound system to play sounds.



### Extension ideas

Encourage children to take part in the planning of the sensory den. Add items that help them to feel relaxed and calm.

Hang different items from the ceiling to create different effects, such as CDs that can turn to reflect the lights and teddies that move up and down on pieces of lycra or elastic.

Add scent bags with different scents for children to explore.



## Activity 2 Water displacement

Enjoy watching children's awe and wonder as they help the bird to get a drink of water. This activity will encourage children to make predictions and follow through on their ideas to see if they work in practice. You will support children's curiosity by asking them to puzzle over, 'I wonder what can we do?' and providing scope for them to make decisions. This activity enables you to introduce a range of mathematical vocabulary when talking about volume and capacity and for talking through new ideas and concepts.

### Learning opportunities include:

- Developing mathematical language and making predictions
- Developing problem solving skills
- Introducing new vocabulary
- Igniting curiosity.



### Resources

- A bird puppet or soft toy (you could make a bird using an old sock, dough or clay)
- Stones, pebbles and rocks
- The Crow and the Pitcher <https://bit.ly/3zJcLW9>
- Clear plastic containers
- Tuff tray/ table top
- Permanent marker
- Camera (optional)
- Water.

## Water displacement

### Activity outline

- Prior to the activity, the practitioners should watch, 'The Crow and the Pitcher' video (1 minute, 33 seconds) to ensure they are familiar with the story
- Set up the story scene on a tuff tray to match the story. For example, sand/grass, a container and place the various pebbles around the scene
- Sit together with the children and introduce the bird puppet. Tell the children that the bird needs some help and ask if they think they can help him with the problem
- Act out the first part of the story – the crow is thirsty and finds a container with water but is unable to reach the bottom to get a drink. As he can't lift it up and drink it with his wings like we can with our arms, what could he do to get the water? Try acting out the suggestions the children come up with
- Show the children the story video of 'The Crow and the Pitcher' and then try the experiment using the smallest stones you have. Mark the water line before you start so you have a visual marker for the children to compare. Encourage the children to keep adding stones until you move the water up towards the brim of your container for the bird to drink
- Ask the children if they can think how the water has moved and why. Explain how the stones push the water out of the way and take up the space the water used to take. The more stones you add, the further up the container the water moves. Encourage children to check this at home when they get in the bath. Ask their parent or carer to mark the bath water level with their finger or a suction toy before they get in, and then see how their own body pushes the water out of the way and takes its place once they sit in the water
- Encourage children to experiment with different sized stones and containers. Can they predict how many stones it might take to move the water to various markers on the containers?
- Take photographs of the activity and create your own project
- Keep the resources out in your continuous provision for children to experiment and revisit.

## Activity 2 Continued...



### Ideas for different ages

Create a 'water ball pit' for babies to explore. Place an empty sand pit (or other container large enough for babies to sit in) and add some room temperature water. Add some balls until the container is full. If you have different sized and textured balls, add these too for the babies to discover.

Create a 'tin foil river' for children to float their boats. Lay out the tin foil to the length of river you require. Roll up each side of the tin foil to create an edge/barrier to keep the water inside. Add the water and pop in some boats for the children to play with. Add some blue food colouring to make the water more visible.



Water ball pit

### Extension ideas

Why not try this activity outdoors using buckets and stones? Experiment with different objects to see which moves the water the most. This might also encourage experiments about floating and sinking.

Encourage families to get involved at home by experimenting with filling the sink with dishes (measuring the water before and after the dishes are added) and at bath times by marking the bath water level before children get in and once they are in the bath.



Try it at home

## Activity 3 Frozen rescue

For this activity, children will need to use their creativity and problem solving skills to 'rescue' the objects frozen into ice. They will use their physical skills to manipulate objects and tools to try to melt or remove the ice. New vocabulary can be introduced to make predictions and describe what is happening. Children will observe the cause and effect of the ice freezing and the tools they choose. Children will feel a sense of achievement once they have successfully 'freed' the trapped items.

### Frozen rescue

#### Activity outline

- Select a range of objects to freeze that are linked to children's interests. Match the items to containers or materials you can freeze them in, such as freezing a small animal in a rubber washing up glove to make a frozen hand shape
- Fill with water and add a drop of food colouring (optional). Place in a freezer overnight to freeze
- Remove the ice from the containers and place them on trays, plates, or add to existing resources, such as a sand pit, water tray
- Show the children the frozen ice. Do they know what it is or what they can see? Explain that the objects are trapped in the ice and they need rescuing. Ask for rescue volunteers
- Ask the children to think about how they can rescue the objects from the ice? What do they need? Encourage them to try out their ideas to discover what works
- Provide a range of objects for the children to explore. Ask them to look around the setting for other objects that may work to excavate the objects
- Talk about the process of freezing and melting and ask children what happens to snow and frost, where the snow and frost goes and what makes the snow and frost disappear
- Once objects are free, talk to children about which of their tools worked best and why.



#### Resources

- Water
- Freezer
- Trays or plates
- Different sized containers. Try to choose unusual objects, such as wellington boots or washing up gloves
- Themed objects, such as dinosaurs, cars, sea creatures or animals
- Food colouring - use a range of colours but do not make them too dark
- Small spray bottles, empty washing up bottles, pipettes, and dishes filled with warm water
- Towels, bags, foil, spoons, lollipop sticks etc.



#### Learning opportunities include:

- Problem solving skills
- Making predictions
- New vocabulary
- Feeling a sense of achievement
- Cause and effect of freezing and melting.



## Activity 3 Continued...



### Ideas for different ages

Add crushed ice to tuff spot activities for younger children to explore. Add blue food colouring to crushed ice for children to explore. Hide different toys in the crushed ice for them to find, such as polar bears, penguins and seals.



### Extension ideas

Freeze some objects in ice, as above. Experiment with methods of defrosting the ice and monitor the process using timers to record the quickest/slowest. This could be ice blocks sat outdoors, blocks in cold water, blocks in warm water or wrapped in towels/foil.

Take photos at different stages and record your activity for children to revisit and discuss.



## Activity 4 Brilliant bubbles

Playing with bubbles is great fun for children of all ages. It encourages young babies to visually track and crawl after bubbles and older children can chase and catch them, encouraging movement and promoting their physical development skills. Playing with bubbles is a social activity that children can enjoy with their friends and making the bubble mix lends itself to creative thinking and problem solving. For example, without the right amount of each ingredient, the bubble may burst too quickly or not form at all.

### Learning opportunities include:

- Support personal, social and emotional development
- Develop vocabulary: open (the pot), more, blow, pop, gone, float, high, fall, shiny, glisten, size etc
- Develop hand-eye coordination
- Develop spatial awareness
- Mathematical language
- Thinking skills.

### Brilliant bubbles

#### Activity outline

- If making homemade bubble wands, make an example of each type you are going to offer for children to see and try out
- Gather your materials together and ask the children about their experiences with bubbles
- Introduce your bubble wands and bubble mixture, showing children how to blow bubbles. Get children to practise blowing before they choose a bubble wand
- Provide wands of different sizes and shapes for children to observe, such as pipe cleaner for a small circle, hula hoop dipped in the mixture, spatulas, funnels and plastic bottles.

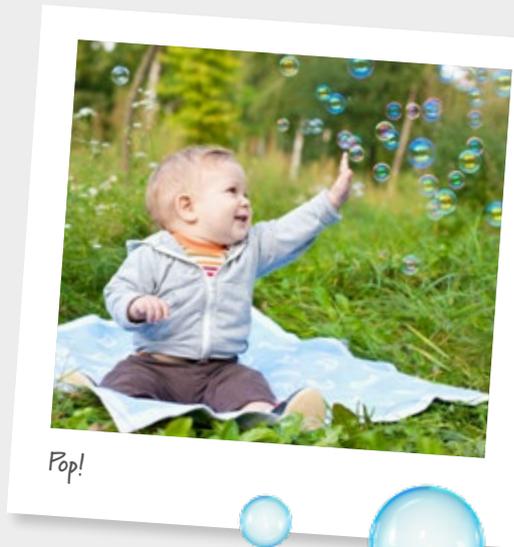


The perfect mix

### Resources

- Bubble wands and bubble mix
- Plastic straws, funnels, bottles, pipe cleaners and/or hula hoops to make your own bubble wands
- Washing up liquid, water and container. If making your own bubble mixture - one part washing up liquid and six parts water.

## Activity 4 Continued...



### Ideas for different ages

Blow bubbles for babies and toddlers. For young babies, blow bubbles so they can visually track or reach out and touch the bubbles (during tummy time). Older babies and toddlers can crawl after, or jump and catch bubbles, as you blow them up into the air and let them gently fall towards them.

Children of all ages will enjoy trying out the different equipment to create bubbles to play with.

### Extension ideas

Provide different materials to make bubble wands for children to experiment with, such as dipping straws in the mixture and blowing down the straw to create bubbles, or taping a bunch of straws together and creating multiple bubbles. Encourage children to choose and try a range of objects/materials. Make sure they know the difference between blowing and sucking before you do this activity.

Fill the water tray with colourful, soapy bubbles using washing up liquid, bubble bath, water and food colouring. Whisk up the bubbles until they make soft, colourful peaks and add to your chosen tray for children to explore.

Older children may enjoy mixing their own bubble solution. Talk to them about the right ingredients for their recipe. Testing out their solution is a great way to develop their critical thinking skills and this can be extended further by asking questions such as, 'what do you think we may need more of in our mix?'

Further resources and links:

Inspiring Your Little Scientists  
(NDNA)

<https://bit.ly/3GQ7BJS>

Little Scientists Leading the  
Way (NDNA)

<https://bit.ly/3uOKRaX>



Rescuing others



## National Day Nurseries Association

At NDNA, we don't just provide nursery membership, lobby government and offer training, we are dedicated to making a difference. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours. We enhance, support, nurture, cherish and challenge.

Every year we run an annual Healthy Body, Happy Me campaign to encourage better health and happiness by giving nurseries FREE resources for play, learning and fun.

Get involved with our 2022 campaign and help keep your children happy and healthy.

**Important: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies. Children should always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials should always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**



National Day Nurseries Association

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