

## Tip Sheet

# PRESCHOOL CHILDREN LOVE SCIENCE

Does your child like to look at bugs? Does he play with sand? Does she like to collect leaves and flowers? Does he ask questions all the time? Your children are young scientists! Children are natural explorers. They take things apart and put them back together. They experiment to see what happens when you mix sand and water, or different colors of paint. All this may look like a mess to a grown-up, but it is a good sign. Your child is curious about how things work. And scientists are curious too, so try to encourage your child's natural curiosity.



First and foremost, encourage your child to ask questions. Questions that begin with “why” or “how” show that children are trying to work things out. Questions such as, “Why is the moon round?” can stump any adult. But you don't have to know the answer. Ask your child, “Why do you think it's round?” and you'll encourage her to think about it. Or you can suggest looking up the answer online together. Perhaps you can find a book about the moon at the library.



Encouraging your child's curiosity is not difficult and does not have to involve lots of mess. When you are taking a walk, collect leaves. When you get home, sort them into leaves of the same shape or the same color. On the way to school each day, point out changes in the plants that you see. Some flowers are only open in the mornings. Point this out, and look at them again on the way home. Try growing a dried lima bean in a zip-lock bag with a wet paper towel inside. Tape the bag to the window and observe it each day. Hang a pine cone covered with peanut butter outside your window. See if birds or squirrels come to feed. You can sprinkle birdseed on the peanut butter too.





Cooking together is a great way to get your child to explore. What happens to the cake mix when you add water? What happens to the cake when you put it in the oven? What happens to eggs when you whisk them? What do you see in the middle of an apple when you cut it open? Most children love to cook, and cooking with Dad or Mom is a very special treat. Make sure you ask your child to help with cooking when you have time to spare. This way you can allow time for all those important questions.



Lastly, bring home books about science or nature from the library. Story books are wonderful and children need to hear lots of stories. But books about birds, trains, planets, plants, and other topics are good for kids too. Some children like them even better than stories.



So, encourage your child to be curious about everything she or he sees and hears. You will not only be giving your child a chance to become a scientist, you may begin to see this beautiful world through his or her eyes. What a gift for both you and your child!



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