
A Letter to Families About the Discovery Area

Dear Families,

Young children have many questions about the world around them. They ask, “Where did the puddle go?” “What do worms eat?” “How can I make my truck go faster?” “Do fish go to sleep?”

In our classroom, the Discovery area is a place where children explore and investigate to answer their questions. They observe, experiment, measure, solve problems, take things apart, and handle the materials and living things we put out. They predict what will happen as a result of their actions.

In the Discovery area children *do* what scientists do. They ask questions, plan and conduct investigations, gather information, construct explanations, and communicate findings. They also learn important scientific concepts as they study plants, animals, magnets, properties of materials, light, shadows, how things work, rainbows, the human body, our senses, how things move and change, and more. In addition to learning science content, they learn how to solve problems together and how to communicate with others.

What You Can Do at Home

Young children are curious and love to investigate. You don’t need to be an expert to help your child learn about science. Science is all around us, from making bubbles in the bathtub to boiling water on the stove. Your enthusiasm and positive attitude about science will be contagious. Get in the habit of wondering out loud (“I wonder how that ant can carry that big piece of food”; “I wonder why your shadow is sometimes small and sometimes big.”).

The questions you ask and comments you make when your child is exploring can extend his or her scientific thinking. Here are some examples:

“What do you think will happen when. . .?”

“I wonder why. . . “

“How do think we can find out. . . ?”

Look for opportunities to support your child’s scientific thinking during everyday activities: playing with toys, taking a bath, helping to make dinner, playing in the backyard, or going on an outing. Remember, you don’t need to know all of the answers! It is a good sign if your child is curious, wants to investigate everything, asks lots of questions, and wants more answers. We encourage you to visit our Discovery area with your child.