

Rainy Day Walk



Before the Walk

Children are fascinated with water. A rainy day walk exposes children to a variety of sensory experiences and can easily stimulate long-term project work. Rain is a critical component of the Earth's ecosystem and can be a lot of fun to explore. A walk in a soft rain, or just after a rain, allows children an opportunity to

- 🔍 **notice the effects of rain**
- 🔍 **learn about puddles and where they form**
- 🔍 **observe where water goes and how it moves**
- 🔍 **float small items in rivulets of water and experiment with sinking and floating**
- 🔍 **observe worms**

🔍 **consider the importance of rain**

🔍 **look for a rainbow**

Prior to the walk, read several stories to very young children about rain and rainy days to establish a knowledge base and to excite them about the walk. Invite the children to share their experiences with rain. Have they even been caught in a rainstorm? What happened? Talk about why it rains and what would happen if it never rained.

Some children may need to be reassured that it is okay to walk in a soft rain, and that you will keep them safe. Introduce the things you plan to bring for the walk and suggest ways children might use them.

Words to Use and Learn

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| absorb | earthworm | monsoon | raincoat |
| clouds | evaporate | mud | storm |
| damp | fog | puddle | thunder |
| drain | lightning | rain | umbrella |
| drizzle | moisture | rainbow | wet |

Things to Bring on the Walk

- ✓ a spiral notebook that includes the children's questions and notes about experiences that might interest them (provocations), and for noting your observations of the children during the walk
- ✓ backpacks or paper bags for collecting things
- ✓ writing and drawing tools
- ✓ objects for floating and sinking experiments in puddles, such as small toy boats, leaves, stones, rocks, twigs, bottle caps, pennies, nails, and craft foam
- ✓ towels for drying hands and feet
- ✓ a camera
- ✓ a tape recorder or other recording device



During the Walk

Remember to slow down and follow the children's lead. Pay attention to details and work to fine-tune the children's observational skills as well. Be on the alert for creating moments that will surprise and delight the children. Ask open-ended questions to enhance their learning and to present more possibilities for exploration. Your role is to spark the children's interest and curiosity. Use the following suggestions or come up with some

of your own based on your knowledge of the children in your group.

As you and the children walk before, after, or even during a light rain shower, encourage them to use all of their senses to investigate and explore what is special about rain. Always take care to tailor your questions and the activities to the developmental level of the children in your group.

Using the Sense of Sight

How do the sky and the light change when it rains? Is it darker just before a rain shower? Is it lighter after a rain shower?

How do the reflections from puddles affect the light and color all around them?

What does the rain look like as it falls?
Where does the water go?

How does the rain affect flowers, plants, and trees? Do their petals or branches droop? Do the rain droplets form small pools inside flowers or buds? Where else does the water collect?

Is there a rainbow in the sky? What are the colors of a rainbow? What causes rainbows?

 **Using the Sense of Smell**

What are the different smells in the air? What does it mean when people say, "It smells like rain"? Can you really smell rain? Are the smells different before, after, and during a rain shower?

What do puddles smell like? What does mud smell like? What do wet flowers and plants smell like?

 **Using the Sense of Hearing**

How are sounds in nature affected by an imminent rain shower? Are the birds quieter? Are their calls different?

How are sounds in nature different just after a rain shower? Are the birds noisier? Are their calls different?

What does rain sound like? What does thunder sound like?

What other sounds can the children hear?

 **Using the Sense of Taste**

What does the rain taste like as it falls on the children's tongues? Can children catch the rain in their cupped hands and taste it?

What would a "recipe" for rain include as its main ingredients?



Using the Sense of Touch

What do different things such as cars, sidewalks, and toys left in the rain feel like when they are wet?

Depending on the weather and other conditions, consider inviting children

to remove their socks and shoes and walk barefoot in the grass or in small puddles. What does wet grass feel like on their feet? What do puddles feel like on their feet?

Rainwater

Look for places where the water is flowing. What makes the water move? Have the children put some twigs in the flowing water to see what happens. Or put a large rock in the twig's path. What are some ways to stop the water from flowing?

Watch the water flow down a sewer drain. Where does the water go from there?

Worms

Look for worms and observe them. Have children dig in the soil to see if there are any worms. Are there more worms on the sidewalks or in the soil? What happens to worms left on the sidewalk?

Does It Sink or Float?

Float the objects you brought along in the puddles and little streams formed after a rain shower. Notice which things float and which don't. Collect the things that float in one container and the things that don't in another. Guess what makes things float.



After the Walk

Back inside, children's discoveries, collected items, and theories can become the starting point for documenting what they know or think about rain. Refer to your notes, if needed, to remind, inspire, and excite children about some aspect of the rainy day walk. Remember that your role is to facilitate children's learning.

Older Children

Discuss possible ways of documenting the walk, such as paintings, drawings, clay or paper sculptures, wire constructions, transparent collages that color the light, mobiles, and illustrated stories or poems.

If some children want to work together, they might consider making a group mural of a rainy-day scene for a wall in the room that includes 3-D items such as cotton balls, tin foil, clear plastic, and fabric scraps.

Make a pro and con chart about rain. Have children finish the sentences "I like rain because . . ." and "I don't like rain because . . ."

Choose a word listed in Words to Use and Learn on page 30. Write the word on chart paper. Have children make up as many words as they can using the letters in the selected word.

Invite children to write acrostic poems about rain. Acrostic poems begin with a word such as *thunder* or *umbrella* written vertically on a sheet of paper. Then use each letter of the word to start a new sentence or phrase that is related to the word.

For example, using the word *rain*, an acrostic poem might look like this:

RAIN

Really wet

And cold outside

Inside it's

Nice and dry and warm

Print photographs taken during the walk. Children can use the photographs to make a class book about the rainy day walk.

Younger Children

Younger children may simply delight in splashing in and experimenting with water at the sensory table, in which case you might take photos or make audio recordings of them at play.

Reinforce new words by adding them to an existing word wall. Remember to use the words again on the next rainy day.

Introduce rhyming by asking children what rhymes with *rain*, *wet*, or *mud*. Add the new rhyming words to the word wall.

Reread books about rain that were read previously.

Print photographs taken during the walk. Glue them inside a blank book and have children write or draw anything they like next to the photographs.

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Revisiting the Walk

Plan to take the same walk again on another rainy day to observe new things, to test theories, or even to be reminded of rainy-day colors and light. Consider involving people who work or play in the

area. Work with the children to generate a list of the people they are likely to see. What questions might the children ask them or what might the children want to observe the people doing?



Books

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