

## ACTIVITY: DRAGON BOATS

### Supplies Needed:

- Scissors
- Tape
- Hole punch
- Pencils or dowels
- Wood scraps
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic containers
- Empty milk cartons
- Other materials that could be used to build floating boats
- Markers, stickers and crayons to decorate the boat

### Process:

1. Engage your child in a discussion about boats. What makes them float? What are they made of? What kinds of boats have you seen?
2. Using materials such as wood, foil, plastic or cardboard, experimenting on building a boat that will float when placed in a bathtub or sink.
3. Fill up a bathtub, sink or basin with water and predict whether or not the boat will sink or float.
4. If the boat sinks, try redesigning it using new materials.
5. Decorate the boat using markers and crayons.

### Suggested Adult Interactions:

- Challenge your child to create different boats out of various materials and see which ones float or move quickly across the water.
- Have your child explain or demonstrate why some boats float better than others.
- Try adding small objects inside the boat and see if the boat continues to float.
- Encourage your child to collect items around the house to place in the water and predict which ones will float and sink. Record the predictions on a chart.
- In China there is a Dragon Boat Festival. Part of the festival is a boat race across waterways. What are some celebrations that your family enjoys?

### Skills Developed:

- Fine Motor skills
- Creative expression
- Appreciation for other cultures and traditions
- Mathematic and Scientific thinking skills such as observation, comparison, and ordering
- Inquiry skills

### Literacy Connection:

Making predictions is a key step for young children as they develop literacy skills. Encouraging children to predict what will happen next while reading books or conducting mini-experiments will show them that making predictions is a part of the learning process.

Additionally, in situations where new words are introduced (i.e. - festival, float, sink), take a moment to discuss their meaning using familiar words. You may find that once the word has been identified your child will use it in their own speech. Developing vocabulary is another key component of early literacy development.

### Reading Books:

- *Chinese Children's Favorite Stories* by Mingmei Ye
- *Red Eggs and Dragon Boats* by Carol Stepanchuk

### Adult References:

- *Moonbeams, Dumplings & Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities & Recipes* by Nina Simonds, Leslie Swartz and The Children's Museum of Boston
- *Kids Celebrate!* by Maria Bonfanti Esche and Clare Bonfanti Braham

### Next time you are here:

Check out *Children of Hangzhou: Connecting with China*, an exhibit designed to engage children and families in learning about one of the oldest civilizations – and now among the most modern in the world – through some of its young people, will be at Minnesota Children's Museum through May 16, 2010.

**Minnesota**  
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*Smart Play*

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