

ACTIVITY: MAKE A RAIN STICK

Imitate the sounds of raindrops by creating your own musical instrument.

Note: This activity involves the use of push pins and toothpicks, and requires closer supervision.

Supplies Needed:

- 2 paper towel tubes
- Paint and brushes, or markers and crayons for decorating the tube
- Round toothpicks
- Masking tape
- Cloth squares, 3" X 3"
- 2 Rubber bands
- Push pins (for making holes in the paper towel tubes)
- Small dried beans, rice or seeds

Process:

1. Tape 2 paper towel tubes together into 1 long tube with masking tape
2. Decorate the tube with paint, markers or crayons
3. When it's dry, cover one end of the tube with small cloth squares and hold it in place with a rubber band.
4. Use a push pin to poke holes in the tube. Space the holes 1 inch apart. Do this the entire length and circumference of the tube.
5. Insert the pointy ends of the toothpicks through each of the pin holes, pressing them into the tube as far as they will go without breaking through to the other side. Use scissors to remove any excess toothpick from sticking out of the tube.
6. Pour the beans, rice or seeds into the tube and cover the open end of the tube with another cloth square and secure with a rubber band.
7. Turn the tube slowly end-over-end and listen. It will sound like light rain.

Suggested Adult Interactions:

- Challenge children to see what different sounds they can create by using other materials to fill the tube, such as large beads, birdseed or cornmeal. Try other toothpick arrangements to change the sound.
- Have children use the instrument to play along with a familiar song, such as *The Ants Go Marching* (rhyming) or *B-I-N-G-O* (predictable lyrics).
- See if any of the instruments they hear around them sound like a rain stick. Encourage children to notice other instruments that sound like those found in nature.
- Have children discover other ways to play their rain stick, by shaking it fast and slow or tapping it on the table and floor.

Skills Developed:

- Small motor skills (while taping, painting and drawing).
- Creative thinking (when designing and decorating).
- Cause and effect (when moving the stick)
- Observation and comparison

Reading Books:

- *The Yellow Umbrella* by Dong Il Sheen and Jae-Soo Liu
- *Bringing Rain to the Kapiti Plain* by Vera Aardema
- *Max Found Two Sticks* by Brian Pinkney

Adult References:

- *Kids Make Music – Clapping and Tapping from Bach to Rock*
by Avery Hart & Paul Mantell

Next time you are here:

Check out the *Earth World* Gallery on the 4th floor and keep your ears open for the sounds of the outdoors. Notice the noises of the animals, the thunder overhead and the leaves rustling.

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