

Splash happy – getting creative with water

Water offers lots of opportunities for creative fun – and with careful planning water shortages shouldn't stop play. Remember too to make the most of rainy days – create a store of wet weather gear by asking parents for old wellies and waterproofs, or scour charity shops to help enlarge your store.

Use these activities to get creative, encourage children to understand the value of water – and at the same time support curriculum subjects such as science, maths, music and dance.

The activities you will find here include:

Boxing clever

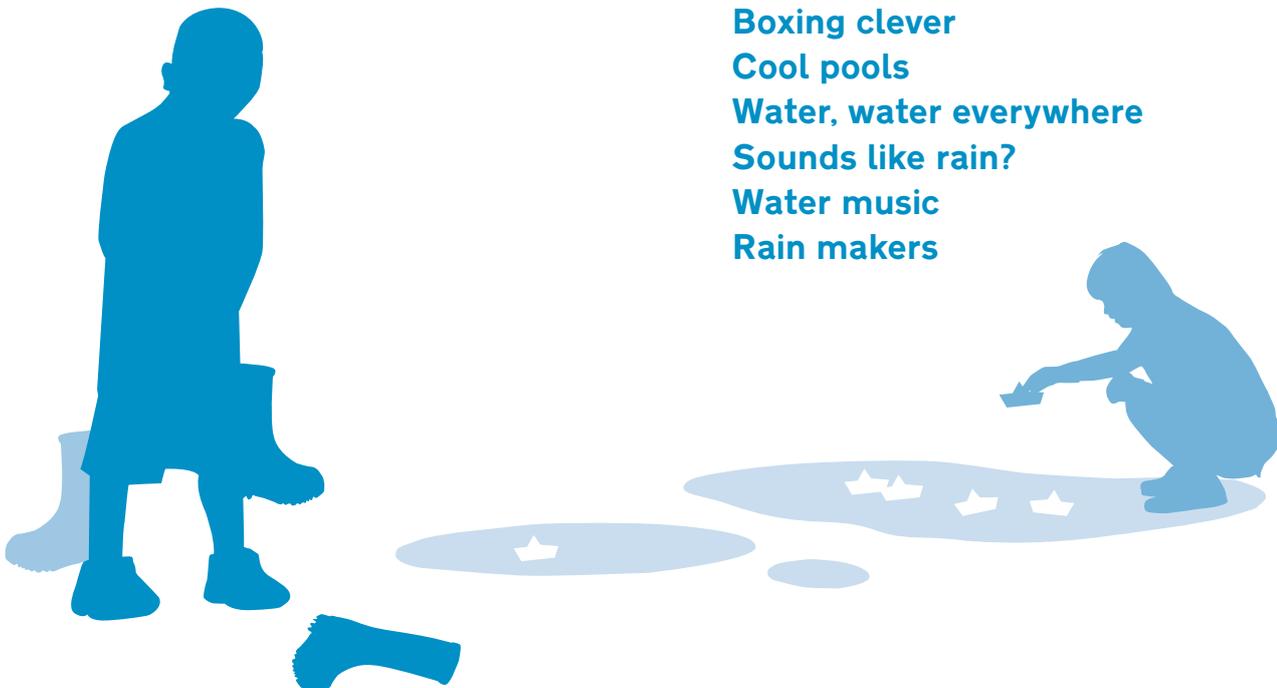
Cool pools

Water, water everywhere

Sounds like rain?

Water music

Rain makers



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National School Grounds Week

Make a little go a long way...

When playing with water you need to make sure it is clean enough to use. If tap water is your best option, think about making the most of it.

- Reuse the water for watering plants afterwards and/or locate your play activity where the water falls directly on to an area that needs watering.
- Gather clean water for use in play that would otherwise get wasted (see 'Waste not, want not' for more ideas).
- Where is your tap located? Is this near to where play takes place or does water need to be transported, in which case how do you make sure you do not lose much in spillage?

Boxing clever

If you are short of water play resources why not hold a 'water works' day – invite parents in and ask them to bring along any old equipment they have or can dig out in a charity shop, to put together a water play box. Request donations for items such as umbrellas, hoses, wellies, waterproofs, jugs, water pistols, colanders, sieves, guttering, drain pipes, ladles, buckets, bowls, watering cans, measuring cylinders etc. Having a range of equipment can really make a difference to the range of play experiences children can have outside. You could also look at installing permanent features for water play such as hand pumps, splash pools (below), water troughs, channels and rills, bridges, an Archimedes screw, sculptures, boulders etc.

Cool pools

Allowing rain water to collect in a small splash pool will offer lots of fun and be safe enough to play with as it will dry out quite quickly and therefore not get stagnant. To create a splash pool all you need are some dips and small hollows outside where water can collect – for example, a hollow in a rock, an indentation in the asphalt, or even a bowl left outside during the rain. Children might take small world figures outside for imaginative play, make mini-boats to float, create a floating art-work by using petals or leaves or just have fun splashing the water.

Water, water everywhere?

Let parents know that the children may need a change of clothes or plan a non-uniform day and get some towels ready! Then make a game of seeing how much water children can transport from one place to another. The person with the most water at the end wins.

- Provide a selection of materials including buckets, hosepipes, guttering, funnels, string and sticks.
- Explain to children that 3.28 billion litres of water each day is lost due to leaks in the water system.* Their task is to see if they can transport two litres of water from one area to another without carrying it at any point.
- Give them 5-10 minutes to look through their items and make a plan. It would be good to talk to them about elevation and the effect gravity has. You can also ask them to think about how large amounts of water are lost.
- Give the groups around 25 minutes to construct their systems and allow them to test it out with a small quantity of water.
- Give the groups another 10-15 minutes to make amendments before asking each to demonstrate their system and discuss why they chose the method they did.

*Ofwat 2009-2010

Sounds like rain?

Listen to a range of songs related to the rain, such as 'Rain drops keep falling on my head' and 'Singing in the rain'. Are there pieces of music that you can listen to where composers have represented the sound of rain?

If it is raining outside make the most of this. Ideally go outside in the rain and listen to the sound it makes on different surfaces such as on the roof or canopy, on an umbrella, on the asphalt etc. Can you hear it landing on the grass? Experiment with a range of instruments to represent the different sounds you hear. You may want to expand this by making other sounds, such as thunder. The children can then develop a story through musical sounds of a rainy day, or even a rain storm, using the different instruments they have chosen.



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The logo for National School Grounds Week is a green, cloud-like shape with the text 'National School Grounds Week' inside. 'National' and 'Week' are in white, while 'School Grounds' is in blue.

National School Grounds Week

Water music

Filling containers of the same dimensions with different amounts of water will produce different sounds when they are struck. Allow the children to experiment in producing different pitches of notes and creating a range of notes to play short motifs or phrases. Use larger containers to create low notes, and much smaller ones to develop top notes. Use a range of beaters too to see which give you the best note for the different containers. If you can adjust the water content to be able to play a number of recognisable notes you will be able to use these instruments to play simple tunes, or accompany songs – maybe about water or the rain.

Rain makers

Rain dances have been important rituals across many cultures from Eastern Europe to the Americas and Africa. The hope was always that a culture's gods will hear their pleas and rain will come to support the growth of healthy crops. Why not get the children to come up with their own rain dances to encourage rain during NSGW? They can even create their own costumes, practice their own songs and perform their dances.



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