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**Making Science Less Abstract for Preschoolers**

**By Nicole Brekelbaum**

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**A simple experiment that can help preschoolers discover and enjoy the wonders of science.**

Most childcare businesses supervise children for more than three hours a day, five days a week. Such long hours in care can have a serious impact on a child's growth and development. Businesses that offer educational curriculums help children grow academically and help prepare them for school. Science plays an important role in the learning process and should also be included as part of the curriculum. Science encourages preschoolers to ask questions, make predictions, and find answers to some fascinating questions. Here is an interesting experiment that can help teach science to preschoolers. We came across ideas for this experiment on PBS Kids Website ([www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)). We tried it ourselves, at Young Achievers Inc., and it was an extreme success.

First, we had circle time with the kids and recited some classic nursery rhymes. One of the nursery rhymes was the age-old rhyme, Little Miss Muffet. After singing in our circle we asked the kids some questions about Little Miss Muffet. We discovered that they knew what Little Miss Muffet sat on, what she ate, and what frightened her. We then posed a thought-provoking question to the preschoolers. "Can the curds be separated from Miss Muffet's curds and whey?" The children responded with interesting answers. Their answers became our scientific hypotheses. We documented all responses in large text on our chalkboard so that the children can see and value their predictions. We then headed to the kitchen "laboratory" to see whose prediction was true.

We had the kids sit at the table and measure the milk and vinegar portions for the experiment. They counted how many cups of milk were needed and how many tablespoons of vinegar to add. It was now time to blast the mixture into the microwave for two minutes. We recommend that an adult perform this part of the experiment to avoid placing children in harms way. After two minutes, the mixture was ready to be taken out of the microwave. We allowed it to cool for several minutes and then the children compared two samples of the mixture before and after it was placed in the microwave. They observed that the mixture was lumpier after being heated in the microwave. The children then strained the mixture by using kitchen towels. What remained was a white, rubbery substance – the curds. They were excited. They saw first-hand what Miss Muffet ate. Then they discovered through experimentation

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that curds can be separated from Miss Muffet's curds and whey.

The children dyed the curds different colors using food coloring and made their own rubbery type of play dough. They loved touching the curds and feeling its texture. Some children even shaped the curds into cool looking dinosaurs and flowers with our help. At the end of the day the children were enlightened and had a great appreciation for science. They were all proud to show their parents what they had done. They were truly young scientists!

If you would like to try this with children at your childcare business we recommend the experiment for children ages 3 and up. The following materials are needed:

3 cups of Skim Milk

2 tablespoons of white vinegar

Microwave–safe bowl for mixing and heating

Kitchen towels for straining

Nicole Brekelbaum is the director at

– A home–based learning center for aspiring

youth located in Pflugerville, Texas. She has been providing childcare in her home since her career switch from working engineer to childcare director and mom.

### **Preschool Learning Activity: Stimulating Children's Minds**

**By Jennifer Houck**

It is important for those who work with preschoolers to choose a preschool learning activity carefully. Teaching preschoolers is a rewarding experience and young children are like pliable putty in their preschool teacher's hands. Those who teach children, especially preschoolers, experience one of the finest joys that life has to offer. If you have ever watched a young child's eyes widen in amazement as they see a new creature emerge before their sight – as with a science–based preschool learning activity, then you understand the true rewards of teaching children.

Choosing the best preschool learning activity for young children will enhance their skills, prepare them for kindergarten, and help them develop important emergent skills. Some skills that are critical to early childhood development include:

· Language Arts/ Literacy · Mathematics · Science · Social Studies/ Character Building · Physical Education/Health

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You should make sure that any preschool learning activity that you select will enhance the child's understanding and awareness of these core skills and developmental areas. Language skills are critical for developing an understanding of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and communicating. Some simple Language activities may include listening games, rhyming, and following oral directions.

Mathematics is essential for the early learner's awareness of numbers, spatial concepts, patterns, and how mathematics pertains to their daily environment. Mathematical preschool activities may include counting, estimating, reading books that focus on numbers, and using items such as toy cash registers and number based puzzles.

Science and Social Studies skills are essential for children to develop an understanding and awareness of the world around them. It is important to teach children how to draw conclusion, ask questions, and observe the world that they live in.

Teaching children the importance of health and physical fitness through play is not only fun, but it is also vital to develop their sense of self. Activities should promote safety, hygiene skills, and health through proper nutrition.

Jennifer Houck is the owner of the online Parent Center at

to where

you can find many more resources and arts/crafts to help in raising in your preschooler.



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