

Topic of Study – Magnets

Introduction

Children are fascinated by magnets. To them, magnets seem to have almost magical properties. They are able to see magnets attracting certain objects but not others. However, they may not understand why this happens. Preschool children simply need opportunities to explore and experiment with magnets as a foundation for learning more about them during science classes they will have later in school.

Teacher Notes about STEM

- *Early childhood educators are now linking together science, technology, engineering and math into what is called STEM curriculum.*
- *This topic of study, Magnets, focuses on the science component of STEM.*

Teacher Notes

Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements (Rev. 1.1.15) requires the following:

400 PROGRAM – 401 Program Requirements for all ages

5.a. The facility shall have an approved curriculum with weekly activity plans appropriate for the developmental needs of each group of children.

To assist your program in meeting this requirement, refer to Developing Weekly Activity Plans for Adventures in Learning for information on how to develop your plans. In addition, 2 different examples of blank activity sheets are included. Feel free to make copies of the plan sheet you select and use it each week. To help you in your planning, there are also 2 samples of completed plan sheets that you may use as guides when developing weekly activity plans for your group of children.

- ***Adventures in Learning** is an Arkansas approved curriculum.*
- *This curriculum guide is a collection of activities that support the Big Ideas listed below. Choose those activities that best meet the needs of the children in your group.*
- *Since curriculum developers were unable to locate any books about magnets that are appropriate for preschool children, it is suggested that you include classroom favorite books, songs and fingerplays in your activity plans.*

Additional Teacher Notes:

- *Magnets can be used on sides of filing cabinets or metal desks.*
- *Your children may discover that magnets sometimes repel rather than attract objects. When repelling occurs, the objects feel like they are pushing against each other. Simply state that magnets repel as well as attract.*
- *Try some of the activities in this curriculum guide to be sure they will work. For example, you will want to make sure the magnets are strong enough to attract designated objects.*
- *Include magnetic manipulatives and activities throughout the year.*

Big Ideas

Here are two big ideas about magnets you can help children explore:

- Magnets make things move without being touched
- Magnets attract objects made of iron and steel

Materials to Collect and Make

- Collection of magnets and/or magnet wands
- Magnetic storytelling figures
- Magnetic nursery rhyme figures
- Magnetic storyboards
- Magnetic marker boards
- Magnetic tape
- Refrigerator magnets
- Cookie sheet (steel)
- Paper plate
- Sand (small amount)
- Shoebox lid
- Washers
- Steel paper clips
- Pot holders with magnets attached
- Magnetic alphabet letters, both upper and lower case
- Magnetic numerals
- Fishing poles made by attaching a string with a magnet at the end of it to either a dowel rod or a stick
- Divided dog dish
- Magnet manipulatives

Teacher Note: *School supply stores and catalogs and online sites offer a variety of magnetic materials and magnet kits. Some may be listed as part of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).*

Introducing and Concluding the Topic

Introduction: Finding out What Children Know about Magnets

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short term and working memory and long-term memory*)

CD3.2 Engages in symbolic and abstract thinking (*abstract thinking*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

To introduce the topic of “Magnets” you need to find out what children already know about the topic. This allows you to build on your children’s experiences. It also helps create an interest in the topic. Here’s how to begin.

- Prepare for this activity by gathering magnetic tape, a craft stick and a steel paper clip for each child. Take these items to the group time area.
- Gather the children in a group. Say, “For the next two days we’re going to be learning about magnets.”
- Write on chart paper, chalkboard or a marker board the word “Magnets”.
- Ask if anyone knows what a magnet is, allow children to tell you what they know about magnets and record what they say on the chart paper.
- Tell children that they will make their own magnet as a way to help them learn about magnets.
- Give each child a craft stick and a piece of magnetic tape to attach to the stick. (The magnetic tape should have a sticky backing so it will adhere to the stick.)
- Explain to them that they now have a magnet.
- Give each child a steel paper clip and ask them to put in on the floor and to hold the magnet stick just above the paper clip, slowly moving the stick back and forth.
- Invite children to tell you what happened. [The magnetic stick attracted (picked up) the paper clip.]
- Say, “You now know that a magnet will attract a paper clip.”
- Write on the chart paper the following: Magnets attract paper clips.
- Now ask children what else they would like to know about magnets and make a list of what they way.
- State that “We’ll find out even more about magnets in the next two days.”
- Keep the two lists until you have completed this topic of study.

What We Know about Magnets	What We Would Like to Know about Magnets	Things We Learned about Magnets

Conclusion: Finding out What Children Have Learned about Magnets

- Gather the children in a group at the conclusion of the study about magnets.
- Write on chart paper, chalkboard or marker board, “Things We Learned about Magnets.”
- Invite children to tell you some things they have learned about magnets. Recall with them that first they made their own magnet and learned that magnets attract paper clips. You may have to ask prompt questions such as, “What are some other things we learned that magnets will attract?” “What are some things we discovered that magnets will not attract?”
- Make a list of all the things children learned about magnets
- Read the first two lists you have made with children. Then say, “Here are some new things you learned about magnets,” as you read the list with them.

Teacher Note: *This method of introducing and concluding the topic is known as KWL. What do children know, what they want to know, and what did they learn.*

Reading Books with Children

Teacher Note: Curriculum developers were unable to locate any books about magnets that were appropriate for preschool children.

Language and Literacy Materials and Activities

Learning Goals:

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences

EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language (*rhyme*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

Activity: Magnetic Nursery Rhymes

- Place magnetic nursery rhyme figures on a magnetic board and you and children say the rhyme together.
- Place the magnetic nursery rhymes figures and board in the library for children to use independently.
- Join the children and encourage them to “read” and say the rhymes with you.

Learning Goals:

CD1.1 Shows curiosity and a willingness to try new things (*exploration and investigation*)

CD3.1 Uses reasoning and planning ahead to solve problems and reach goals (*problem solving*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences*)

ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth’s environment, and physical objects and materials (*physical objects and materials*)

Activity: Magnetic Storytelling

- Present a familiar story to children using magnetic storytelling figures on a magnetic storyboard.
- Follow up by asking children why they think the storytelling figures stayed on the board. Accept all answers.
- Ask children if they think felt storytelling figures will stay on the board. Again, accept all answers and say, “Let’s find out.”
- Place felt figures on magnetic board (They will fall off.)
- Ask children “What happened here?”
- Allow children to examine both the felt and the magnetic figures and discover that the figures that stay on the board have a magnetic strip and the felt figures do not.

Learning Goal:

EL3.2 Show knowledge of the shapes, names, and sounds of letters

Activity: Fishing for the Alphabet

- Make fishing poles by attaching a string with a magnet attached to the end of it to a dowel rod or a stick.
- Create a fishing pond by taping off an area of the floor.
- Scatter magnetic letters (upper case) in the pond. Choose letters so that each child can “catch” the first letter of his/her name.
- Begin by asking, “Jamelia, can you tell me the first letter of your name? Now can you catch the first letter of your name?”
- Encourage children to “catch” other letters of the alphabet and name them. Some children may be able to identify the child whose name begins with each letter.

Teacher Note: *For children needing a visual cue, show the child his/her name card and point to the first letter of the name. Say, “That’s a J. Now can you catch the letter J?”*

Science / Discovery and Math

Learning Goals:

CD1.1 Shows curiosity and a willingness to try new things (*exploration and investigation*)

CD3.1 Uses reasoning and planning ahead to solve problems and reach goals (*problem solving*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*physical objects and materials*)

Activity: Magnets, Nails and Water

- Provide magnets and nails and allow children to experiment with the two objects. Children will discover that magnets will attract nails.
- Ask children what they think will happen if you put the nail in a glass of water. Will the magnet attract the nail? Accept all answers.
- Place a nail in a glass of water and allow children to use a magnet to see if they can make the nail move.
- Show them how to move the magnet around the glass to make the nail "dance."
- Discuss with them what happened between the magnet and the nail in the water.
- Conclude with children that a magnet's force can go through different materials such as water.

Activity: Magnet Detectives

- Place a layer of sand in a shoebox lid.
- Hide two steel paper clips and a nail under the sand. Be sure not to bury the objects too deeply.
- Tell children they will be magnet detectives trying to find hidden treasure.
- Allow each child a turn using a magnet to try and find the treasure buried in the sand.
- Guide children to slide the magnet slowly above the surface of the sand.
- Conclude with children that a magnet's power will go through different materials such as sand.

Teacher note: *Children will enjoy being "magnet detectives" on their own. Allow them to add other objects to see if magnets will attract them.*

Activity: Follow the path

- Draw a simple path on an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper. Write "Start here" at the start of the path and "Finish Line" at the end of the path.
- Lay the paper on a steel cookie sheet.
- Place a large steel paper clip or washer on the starting line.
- Hold the cookie sheet 6-8" above the table. Ask a child to hold a magnet underneath the cookie sheet and drag it along to try and keep the paper clip or washer on the path from the start to the finish line.

Activity: Magnet Sorting Game

- Place a divided dog dish on the science/discovery table
- Mark one side of the dish "Yes" and one side "No."
- Place a variety of objects on the table; some that magnets will attract (pick up) and some they will not: steel paper clips, washers, nails, magnetic alphabet letters and numerals, steel wool, cotton balls, small pieces of paper, pieces of felt, plastic spoon, cork, plastic paper clips.
- Invite children to predict which objects magnets will attract and which objects magnets will not attract.
- Challenge children to experiment to see if their predictions were correct and place the objects that magnets attract in the "yes" section and objects that magnet will not attract in the "no" section of the dog bowl.

Learning Goal:

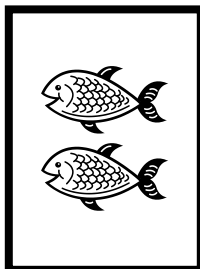
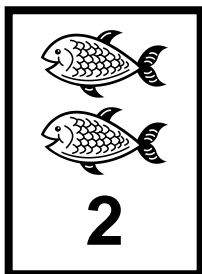
MT1.1 Demonstrates number sense and an understanding of quantity (*connection of number, numeral and quantity*)

Activity: Fishing for Numerals

- Tape off an area of the floor for a fishing pond.
- Scatter plastic magnetic numerals in the pond. Begin with numerals children recognize, then add additional ones. For example, begin with 1 through 5, then gradually add 6 through 10.
- Allow children to use a magnetic fishing pole to fish for the numerals and name those they catch.

Try this:

- Make number/numeral cards from 1 to 10, for example. Place one fish and the numeral “1” on a card, two fish and the numeral “2” on a card, for example.



- Children fish for a numeral, name it and place it on the correct card.
- Make number cards without numerals on them for children who are ready for this more advanced activity. You may need to help them count the fish on the card.

Teacher Note: *By having two sets of cards, some with numerals and some without, you are better able to individualize this activity for the children in your group.*

Learning Centers

Teacher Note: *As children are involved in the learning centers, they are engaging in activities that support all of most of the domains of child development and early learning*

- *Social and Emotional Development*
- *Cognitive Development*
- *Physical Development and Health*
- *Language Development*
- *Emergent Literacy*
- *Mathematical Thinking*
- *Science and Technology*
- *Social Studies*
- *Creativity and Aesthetics*

However, there will also be activities included and these will have specific learning goals.

Learning Goals:

CD1.1 Shows curiosity and a willingness to try new things (*exploration and investigation*)

CD3.1 Uses reasoning and planning ahead to solve problems and reach goals (*problem solving*)

ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Art Center

Painting with Magnets

- Place a sheet of paper on a steel cookie sheet.
- Allow children to select a color of paint and squirt a few drops on the paper and place a washer in the paint.
- Show children how to press a magnet against the bottom of the cookie sheet and use it to move the washer across the paper.
- Ask children what they think will happen as the washer moves across the paper.
- Observe as children discover that as the washer moves, it will make a design.

Teacher Note: *Invite children to experiment with another way to paint with magnets.*

- Lay a circle of white paper in a paper plate.
- Ask the children to dip a large steel washer in some paint and place it on the paper.
- Suggest that they hold the plate in one hand and the magnet in the other and press the magnet against the bottom of the plate and use it to move the washer across the paper.
- Ask children what they think will happen as the washer moves across the paper.
- Observe as children discover that as the washer moves, it will leave a trail of paint.
- Allow children to dip the washer in the paint as often as necessary to complete the painting.

Teacher Note: *Conduct this activity near a sink or have a small tub of water and paper towels nearby for cleaning hands.*

Learning Goal:

ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information

Block Center

- Attach a magnetic strip or disk magnet to the back of a toy car or truck and a metal washer to the front of a lightweight second car.
- Ask children which car they think can tow the other.
- Allow children to experiment and discover that the front car can tow the second.

Library/Book Center

- Add magnetic storytelling figures and a magnetic storyboard to the library center and allow children to play with them on their own.
- Add magnetic nursery rhyme figures and a magnetic board to the library center and allow children to play with them on their own.

Home Living/Dramatic Play

- Add a steel cookie sheet
- Add refrigerator magnets
- Add pot holders with a magnet attached

Manipulatives

- Add a variety of types of magnets (wands, horseshoe, bar)
- Add a variety of items, some that will attract and some that will not
- Add some of the activities related to magnets included in the Science/Discovery and Math section of this guide
- Add purchased magnetic materials

Learning Goal:

ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information

Water Tub or Table

- Use a Styrofoam bowl for a boat
- Slide a large steel paper clip onto the rim of the bowl.
- Place the boat in the water table or tub.
- Invite children to take turns holding a magnet a short distance from the boat. (Make sure the magnet is strong enough to attract the paper clip)
- Observe and listen to the children as they discover that the magnet can change the direction of the boat without touching it directly
- Ask children "What happened there?"

Quiet Corner

Learning Goal:

SE2.1 Experience, expresses, and regulates a range of emotions (*emotion expression*)

- Create a quiet corner in your classroom; a place where children can go to be alone and to get away from the stresses of group living.
- Place soft items in the quiet corner. Carpet on the floor, soft pillows, and soft and cuddly stuffed animals or dolls are examples.
- Discuss with children when they might want to go to the quiet corner. When they are angry and need to get away from the source of their anger? When they are sad and need to be alone? When the room gets too noisy and they need a quiet spot?
- Explain to children that the quiet corner is for one child at a time.

Teacher Note: *Make sure this area can be supervised by the adults in the classroom at all times.*

Transition Activities

Learning Goals:

CD2.2 Shows flexibility in adjusting thinking and behavior to different contexts (*adjusts behavior to match context*)

EL3.2 Shows knowledge of the shapes, names, and sounds of letters (*alphabet knowledge*)

Activity: Letters and Names

- Gather magnetic alphabet letters (upper case) that represent the first letter of each child's name in the group.
- Place a letter on a magnetic board and say, "If your name begins with this letter (or if your name begins with a "B") you may choose a learning center."

Teacher Note: *Use this activity for transitioning children to different activities.*

Family Connection and Engagement

Send home a note to parents stating for the next couple of days, the children will be learning about magnets. Suggest some ways families can be involved in the topic of study.

- Place refrigerator magnets on the refrigerator and allow children to play with them.
- Allow children to place the refrigerator magnets on other surfaces to determine if the magnets will stay on them.
- Place magnetic alphabet letters (upper and lower case) on refrigerator and involve children in finding the letters in their name. Use an upper case letter for the first letter and lower case letters for the remaining letters.
- Place magnetic numerals on refrigerator and let children play with them.