



Technology Activity

Magnifying Magic

Magnifying glasses make things look bigger. This activity encourages children to use this valuable tool to view objects up close and to observe the details of their environment.

SETUP

- The goal of this activity is to introduce children to magnifying glasses and to get them excited about and comfortable using this wonderful observation tool.
- Set up the table with magnifying glasses and an assortment of objects to view.

DO IT TOGETHER

- Children love magnifying glasses and the experience of “making things bigger.” Whether they’ve used them before or not, they’re going to want to just grab them and start looking at things. Give your child some time to try them out and play. Your child may need guidance on how to hold the magnifying glass (children tend to bring them up too close to their face), so have your child practice holding the magnifying glass near and farther away to see where she gets the clearest view.
- Join in the fun and use your own magnifying glass. Use descriptive language when you tell your child what you observe. “I see two little hairy things poking out from under the leaf. There are tiny holes all over this shell!”
- When your child discovers something interesting about her object, it is a good time to ask “what” questions: “What do you think the black specks are for?” Your child’s answer is not as important as getting her to think about what she is seeing. She may draw on past experience (two black dots on top must mean eyes), or come up with a wild guess (they keep the top on); there is no wrong answer as long as your child is exploring and observing. You can help your child think more deeply: “What do you think a leaf would have ‘fur’ for? Could it be to hold on to more water?”
- If your child wants to know what magnifying glasses are made of, you can explain that it’s a special type of glass or plastic lens that is made in a curved (“convex”) shape and has magnifying properties. Searching the Internet will help you find an appropriate answer for your child. Encourage your child to talk about her observations and what she experienced. “Was there anything that surprised you? Confused you? What else would you like to do with your magnifying glass?” Share what you learned as well.

MATERIALS

- * Magnifying glasses (the stronger the lens, the more you will be able to see)
- * Assorted objects with tiny parts to view, such as flowers, bark, shells, textured paper, and cloth.

Learning Guideline:

PreK-LS1-4: Use their five senses in their exploration and play to gather information.



**BOSTON
CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM**

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(continued from side 1)

DO MORE OF IT!

- **Looking Up Close.** Collect items that look the same but may have very different details. Look at them with your child through the magnifying glasses. See if you and your child can find any differences and describe them. Salt and sugar are good examples of this. Have your child spoon a little salt and a little sugar in separate piles on black paper and describe what she sees.
- **Collecting Walk.** Take a collecting walk outside or through your house. Bring a small basket or box and a pair of tweezers to pick up delicate things. See if you or your child can find any dried insects. These are very interesting to children and are full of tiny parts to examine and try to identify. If your child is particularly excited about some of her objects and what she sees, get books out of the library or use the Internet to follow up on her interest. Play a game where you both guess what the tiny parts are or what they might be for, and then look them up. Be sure to collect a variety of leaves, dried plants, seed cases, rocks, and other complex natural objects.

BOOKS

- *Some Bugs* by Angela DiTerlizzi
- *Miffy's Magnifying Glass* by Dick Bruna
- *What Do You See? Magnifying Glass and Storybook Set* by Publications International and Eric Carle
- *You Can Use a Magnifying Glass* by Wiley Blevins

OTHER RESOURCES

- Visit your local library.
- Visit your local museum, nature center, zoo, or aquarium.
- Check out Brain Building Zones for local events in Massachusetts at <http://brainbuildinginprogress.org/event-calendar>.
- Check out www.resourcesforearlylearning.org and www.peepandthebigwideworld.org.

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