



## Practicing Science

Your child was born to be an explorer! Starting at birth, your child observes and discovers new things. This is a basic part of scientific thinking, and you can nurture it in your infant, toddler or preschooler. Your child's science skills will be strengthened by practicing science - by observing, exploring and asking questions. Science is easy and it's fun. Try these suggestions:

### INFANT:

- Encourage your infant to gaze into your face. Smile, laugh and talk to him. Encourage your infant to make the same sounds you are.
- Point out the different features on your face. "Now I'm touching my ears; now my nose. You have ears. They are right here. You have a nose too. It's right here." You are teaching your child about her senses.
- Give you infant soft, colorful toys to hold and play with. Describe the color, shape and touch of the toys to your child.

### TODDLER:

- Give your preschooler a magnifying glass. Go outside and go on a bug hunt together. Encourage your child to look at the bugs carefully and tell you what he or she sees. Then, suggest he use the magnifying glass. Ask him what is different? Ask him to describe the bug; its size, its color and how it moves.
- Set up a rain gauge on rainy days using a clear plastic cup or wide-mouth bottle. Let your child mark the level of the rain one day, empty it, and then set it back outside. Check it again the next day. Is there more or less rainwater in it? Help make a simple bar graph to record daily observations.

### PRESCHOOLERS:

- Give your child journals, clipboards, and writing tools to engage in recording observations, gathering data, and communicating their findings to others.
- Show your child a thermometer. Count the numbers and discuss what a thermometer is and how and why it's used. Ask your child questions such as, "When have you seen a thermometer." Ask her to describe it. Talk about what a thermometer does and why it is important to use. For example, say to your child, "We use a thermometer to see if it is hot or cold outside. We use a thermometer to see if you are sick. We also use a thermometer when cooking."

#### Book Suggestions:

*You Can Use a Magnifying Glass.* Wiley Blevins. Childrens Press, 2003.

*What Is a Thermometer?* Lisa Trumbauer. Childrens Press, 2003.

*ParentTips* is a monthly resource for parents with young children.

Want more suggestions? Visit [www.readyatfive.org](http://www.readyatfive.org)