

Parachute Play

Primary Objectives

- 5. Demonstrates traveling skills
- 21a. Understands spatial relationships

Why It's Important

Cooperative group experiences that engage your child also encourage him to interact with others. Using parachutes in a variety of play experiences provides a fun way to support your child's participation in group activities.

Materials

Water; plastic tub; child-sized pitcher; small cups

What You Do

1. Look for an opportunity to include your child in a group activity with other children. Before going outside, explain to your child and the other children what the parachute or sheet is and how it will be used. Once outside, spread out the parachute on the ground.
2. Invite your child and the others to each hold on to one of the handles. Explain that the air will lift the parachute if everyone lifts their arms up and down at the same time. *Lift your arms up high in the air.*
3. Describe what happens to the parachute. *It lost all of its air and came back down.*
4. After you have repeated this several times, tell the children that they may take turns running under the center of the parachute and back out if they wish when you call their names. *Listen carefully for your name! When you hear your name, that means that it is your turn to run under the parachute and back out.*
5. When the parachute is up in the air, call out your child's name and encourage him to run to the center and run back out. It may take a few tries for the children to understand that one person goes at a time. Reinforce the concept of taking turns. *Let go and run into the middle only when I say your name.*
6. Make sure that everyone gets a turn. Some children may not want to run underneath the parachute. They may shake their heads or do nothing when you call their names. Acknowledge this behavior as well. *You don't want to run in the middle right now. That's okay.*
7. You can extend this activity by throwing large, bouncy balls onto the parachute as the children lift it up and down. Talk about the movement of the balls as they fly up and down on the parachute.

