

NATURE PLAY

Cold and Snowy January

Brrr!



JANUARY

Books to Enjoy!

The Snowman Storybook by
Raymond Briggs

All You Need for a Snowman by
Alice Schertle

What your preschooler learned!

In today's lesson we discussed how the month of January can be a cold and snowy time of the year.

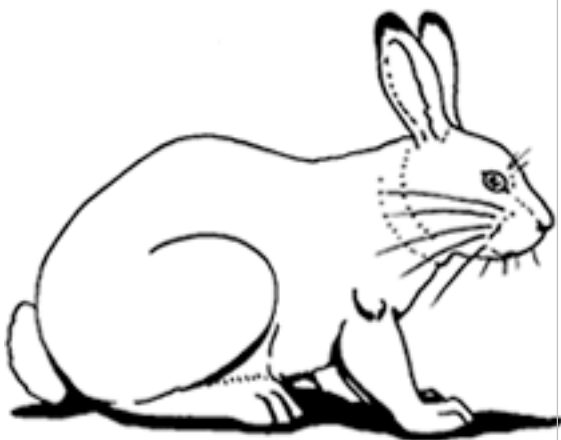
We discussed some of the weather patterns in January and the types of activities that are compatible to cold and snowy weather. We read a story about a snowman and finished by learning a fun song about melting snowmen.

In the second part of our lesson students learned about the January thaw that often occurs in Minnesota in early January. Students made observations and guesses about what happens to snow when temperatures rise.

We finished with an art project drawing pictures of our neighborhoods in winter.

Did you know?

The Snowshoe Hare, an animal native to northeastern and central Minnesota, changes from brown to white during the winter. This helps them blend in better with their snowy surroundings.



Snowmen Song (This can be done with either ten or five snowmen)

Ten happy snowmen dancing all around,
Dancing all around (*spin in place*).
Ten happy snowmen dancing all around,
The sun came out and one melted to the ground
(*make sun with arms, one snowman melts to the ground*).

Nine.... Eight.... Seven.... and so on.

No little snowmen dancing in the sun.
First there were ten and now there are
none!

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!

Psychologists agree that emotion is essential on both the personal and social level. Affect in children involves the development of emotional responses and attitudes. It involves feeling, not action. In the last decade, scientists have demonstrated that particular parts of the brain are associated with different aspects of emotion.¹ The term "emotional intelligence" has been coined to describe attributes and skills related to this concept.² Positive experiences in nature can have correlating positive effects on a child's emotional and social well-being.

Erik Erikson was a psychologist who came up with a Theory of Socioemotional Development. According to Erikson's theory, the toddler years are when children are learning autonomy over shame and doubt. This is when a "child learns what he/she can control and

develops a sense of free will and corresponding sense of regret and sorrow for inappropriate use of self-control".³

Likewise, during the early childhood years, children are in the initiative versus guilt stage. Here, a "child learns to begin action, to explore, to imagine as well as feeling remorse for actions."⁴

Being in nature and playing outdoors can help develop a child's affect. Free play in nature can allow a child to develop their own sense of independence and autonomy. They can choose what they want to do and how they want to play with the resources around them. By exploring the outdoors, a child learns the implications of their actions as well as the sense of wonder about the outdoors.⁵

Go explore the outdoors!

References

¹Reiman, E., Lane, R., Ahern, G., Schwartz, G. and others. (1997). Neuroanatomical correlates of externally and internally generated human emotion. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 154(7), 918-925.

²Koonce, R. (1996). Emotional IQ, a new secret of success? *Training & Development*, 50(2), 19.

³Huitt, W. (2008). Socioemotional development. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved February, 2009, from <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/affsys/erikson.html>.

⁴Huitt, W. (2008). Socioemotional development. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved February, 2009, from <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/affsys/erikson.html>.

⁵Huitt, W. (2003). The affective system. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved February, 2009, from <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/affsys/affsys.html>.

Ideas for Home!

Use a coffee filter and make a snowflake. Decorate it by adding glue and glitter for a finishing touch. Hang from your windows or ceiling.

Build a snowman!

Grate a bar of soap with a grater and build a snowman using soap flakes and a little water.

Make a milkshake from snow by adding a cup of milk, some sugar, and vanilla. Enjoy.



For more craft ideas visit
Preschool Education at
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