

In our classes, we use various magnets to teach cause and effect, explore, and build. Sometimes we will create with magnet shapes at the table for group time. Other times we have magnet wands and different items to test in the sensory table. We also have 'fishing' with a pole and fish in class. Below are a few different ways to play with magnets with your child.



Remember – magnet play needs to be supervised by an adult. There can be small pieces/choking hazards.



1. **Materials Needed:** Magnets – various sizes, shapes. There are Magna tiles in different forms, ABC magnets, and magnets on wands. Metal and non-metal items to test with include: jingle bells, matchbox cars, silverware, pom poms, paper, cookie cutters (plastic and metal).

2. **How to:** If you are building/exploring, make sure you have a sturdy place to build – a table or hard floor. If you are using small wands or magnets, you may want to use a tote to contain the testing pieces. Another fun way to test is to use a water bottle. Fill with items like paper clips or cut up pipe cleaners and water. Glue the lid on and put magnets up to the sides and see what happens

SIDE NOTE – Fishing with magnets is also a fun activity – put paper clips on the end of paper fish. Create a fishing pole using a stick, broom, small doweling. Tie some string to the end of the rod with a magnet on the end to catch the fish. Scatter fish on the ground and try to pick them up with your fishing pole.

Developmentally this activity encourages a tremendous amount of language opportunities. Magnets are exciting – they stick to each other; they push away from each other. Pull, Push. Magnets can pick things up – so exciting! You can test different items to see if they stick or not. Modeling how to test and using simple 1-2 word phrases as you explore. "oh wow!", "I wonder," "You did it!", "try this one," "oh, no." "It's STUCK!". If using sensory bags or bottles with a magnet, can your child move the items in the container? (This requires eye-hand coordination, motor planning, and, again, lots of language opportunities.)

Links below have examples of how to set up for magnet play:

<https://preschoolinspirations.com/rust-resistant-magnetic-discovery-bottle/>
<https://frugalfun4boys.com/preschool-play-with-magnets-and-pipe-cleaners/>
<https://busytoddler.com/2015/11/magnet-sort/>