

# Ready or Not, Winter Is Coming!

Winter Ideas for  
The Pre-K Classroom

# Ready or Not, Winter is Coming!!

Introduce these concepts in large group. Be sure to record these on chart paper or have it prepared in advance.

Concepts:

- Winter is the season that comes between fall and spring.
- In winter, the weather turns colder.
- Sometimes it snows.
- Animals adapt to cold weather by hibernating, migrating, growing thicker fur, or storing food.
- To prepare for winter, some plants drop their leaves. Others die back to the roots or die completely.
- People wear warmer clothes.
- You have to turn on the heat in your house and car.
- There are winter sports to enjoy during winter.
- The evergreen trees are the only ones with their leaves. The other ones are bare.

Introduce new vocabulary words. Place the words on chart paper and/or on sentence strips and then place them in your writing area.

Vocabulary:

mitten	glove	hat	coat	scarf	boots
snow	snowman	snowflake	snowball	hot chocolate	marshmallows
winter	ice skating	heater	cold	earmuffs	
hibernate	iceburg	ice	artic		

# Changes you can make to your classroom

Add snowflakes and snowmen all around your room.

Add books about winter to your classroom display.

Add blankets and sleeping bags to your book area.

Add snowmen, snow or winter flannel board stories.

Add winter books and tapes to your listening area.

Add winter clothing to your house area.

Add a thermometer to your science area.

Put out a big welcome sign that says "Welcome Winter".

Keep a bag of cut up tissue paper and throughout the day, randomly sprinkle a handful of flurries down on the children.

Add lots of cotton balls and other white materials to your collage area. Add in small twigs, buttons, scrap material, etc.

Use packing Styrofoam peanuts to make a snowstorm in your class. Throw it on the floor and then give the children gloves, mittens, scarves and hats to wear while they "play" in the snow. It's messy but it is well worth the clean-up time.

Bring in a sled and let the children sit on it. Have the children estimate how many can fit on it before you actually let them sit on it.

Cut large pieces of Styrofoam to resemble blocks of ice and add them to the block area. You can also add penguins and polar bears.

Add pictures of snow, winter animals and other cold places cut from magazines or real photos you may have taken. Encyclopedias and the Internet are also great to find pictures.

Set up a hat shop or winter clothing shop in your house area. Be sure to add shopping bags, a cash register, small notepads and pencils, play money, etc.

**Texture Mittens:** If you have some old mittens or gloves without mates, recycle them for your painting center. Sew on a patch of lace, dust mop, sponge, or other interesting texture to the palm of the mitten or glove. Invite children to use them at the art easel by dipping them into paint and making prints on the paper. When the painting is through, wash the mittens and hang them up to dry.

# Literature

*Winter* by Ron Hirschi  
*The Owl Who Became the Moon* by Johnathan London  
*Winter Harvest* by Jane Chelsea Aragon  
*North Country Night* by Daniel San Souci  
*First Snow* by Kim Lewis  
*Under Your Feet* by Joanne Ryder  
*Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert  
*Amy Loves the Snow* by Julia Hoban  
*Just A Snowy Day* by Mercer Mayer  
*The First Snowfall* by Anne and Harlow Rockwell  
*Snow Is Falling* by Franklyn M. Branley  
*Winter Rabbit* by Patrick Yee  
*Sledding* by Elizabeth Winthrop  
*Chicken Soup with Rice* by Maurice Sendak  
*Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen  
*Dear Rebecca, Winter Is Here* by Jean Craighead George  
*Caps, Hats, Socks and Mittens* by Louise Borden  
*Foxes Dream* by Tejjima  
*Winter's Coming* by Eve Bunting  
*Stopping By The Woods on A Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost  
*The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs  
*Keep Looking!* by Millicent Selsam and Joyce Hunt  
*Goodbye Geese* by Nancy White Carlstrom  
*The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats  
*The Mitten* by Jan Brett  
*Sadie and the Snowman* by Allen Morgan  
*The Big Snow* by Berta and Elmer Hader  
*The Jacket I Wear in the Snow* by Shirly Neitzel  
*The Black Snowman* by Phil Mendez

*Animals in Winter* by Henrietta Bancroft and Richard G. Van Geider

*The Hat* by Jan Brett

*Cuddly Dudley* by Jez Alborough

# Language and Literacy

**Snowman Stories.** Prepare five or six cards that illustrate the steps in making a snowman. The cards might show snow falling from the sky; two children dressed in winter clothes rolling a large snowball; the children putting a medium sized snowball on top of a large one; the children adding a small snowball for a head; the children adding features, arms, and a hat; and the proud children standing beside their completed snowman. Before showing the children the cards, have them tell about snowmen they have built. Introduce the cards and ask the children to find what happens first, second, and so on. Mix up the cards and invite the children to put them in order to explain what is happening.

**Surprise Snow Writing.** Cover the bottoms of several large shallow boxes with the black construction paper. Pour in enough salt to cover the bottom of each box. Encourage children to use their fingers to "write" in the snow. Show the children how to shake the salt around to spread it back out and start all over again.

***Sadie and the Snowman* by Allen Morgan.** After reading this story, build an indoor snowman. First fold a white sheet in half and stitch along two sides. Let the children crumple paper and stuff inside the case. When it is almost full, close the opening with a rubber band. Tie off a head section with a scarf. Pin, hot glue or sew on large button eyes, a carrot nose made from orange felt, and a mouth. Add a hat. If you wish, you can tie off a third section with a belt or a piece of rope. This will also work with a large white trash bag or a white pillowcase.

***The Big Snow* by Berta and Elmer Hader.** After reading this story, help the birds and animals survive by putting food such as seeds, crusts, nuts, and dried cereals outside your classroom. Children will enjoy observing their hungry friends coming to eat.

***The Jacket I Wear In the Snow* by Shirley Neitzel.** After reading the story, have children search through magazines to find several articles of clothing. Glue them onto a sheet of white construction paper. Invite each child to dictate a story about the clothing he or she selected. Bind the children's stories together into a class book and display it in your reading area. Read the book aloud during story time.

**Animal Adaptations.** Read aloud the story, *Animal in Winter*, and then read this poem. You can have children use their hands and arms in creative miming gestures to interpret the poem.

Tell me where the animals go  
When it first begins to snow  
Many birds fly far away  
When the snow is here to stay.  
Extra fur, heavy and warm,  
Keeps the deer safe from harm.  
Dressed in snowy winter white,  
Rabbits and owls hide from sight.  
Sleeping the whole winter through  
Is what frogs and turtles do.  
In cozy caves and deep warm nests,  
Bears and ants take winter rests.  
Food that's stored away to eat  
Is the squirrels' winter treat.  
When the spring sun melts the snow  
And the flowers start to grow,  
Our animal friends once more appear  
To share with us another year.

**Mitten Magic.** Read aloud Jan Brett's version of *The Mitten*. After reading the story, have the children take turns reenacting the story using a pup tent as the mitten.

**The Hat by Jan Brett.** Read aloud the Jan Brett story. Then revisit each page of the story. Invite the children to carefully examine the illustrations and pay close attention to the clothesline at the top of each page. (Different articles of clothing keep disappearing!) After discussing the story and illustrations, have student participate in this visual memory game. To prepare, hang a clothesline front of your group. Then use clothespins to hang three or four items of winter clothing on the line. Have students observe the clothing for a moment. Then place a screen or sheet in front of the clothesline and remove one item. Reveal the clothesline again and have students identify the missing article of clothing.

**What is Snow?** Children don't understand the scientific definition of snow - "precipitation in the form of small white ice crystals formed from water vapor at a temperature of less than 32 degrees Fahrenheit" - but they do have definite ideas about what snow is! To find out their ideas about snow, divide a sheet of chart paper into three columns. Label each column with the heading "Snow looks", "Snow feels", or "Other Words About Snow." Encourage your children to describe some things about snow. Ask them to decide in which column each of their descriptions might fit. After completing the chart, share some of these snow facts with them.

- All snowflakes have six sides.
- Snowflakes fall in many different sizes and shapes.
- When snow melts, it becomes water.
- Snow helps protect plants and hibernating animals from winter cold.

## Language Charts

Brainstorm a list of things to do to keep warm outside on a snowy day.

Introduce the concept of pairs. Make a list of things that come in pairs.

Draw a snowman and label his parts.

Make a class story about a snowman, a snowy day, building a snowman, a cold day, etc.

Mittens vs. Gloves - Make a graph of which ones your students like better.

# ART

**Frosty Finger Paintings.** Make soap by beating two cups of soap flakes and one cup of water with an eggbeater or hand mixer until the mixture is thick and frothy but not too stiff. Let the children paint with it on slick paper. Or provide large pieces of butcher paper and let groups paint winter scenes. It can also be used for sponge painting. You can also have children spread it on sticks, twigs, pinecones, rocks, etc. and create snowscapes. These can be mounted on Styrofoam trays.

**Sparkling Snowscapes.** Provide construction paper, crayons, and a cooled mixture of equal parts of Epsom salts and boiling water. Invite the children to draw a simple design or winter scene on their paper. When they are done, have them paint over the scene with the mixture. As the mixture dries, shiny crystals will form on the picture. Add salt to the blue and white paint cups on your art easel. Also add snowflake and other pre-cut shapes for the children to paint. Experiment with different salts (Epson, sea, pickling, table, ice-cream) and have children notice the different effects. You can also experiment by mixing together blue and white paints to create different shades of blue.

**Iceicle Painting.** Provide large pieces of dark construction paper, runny white paint, and three-inch pieces of drinking straws. Encourage children to put several blobs of the white paint on their paper and then blow gently through the straw toward the blobs.

**Balloon Painting Snowman.** Inflate a balloon to about four inches in diameter, and knot the end. Partially fill a shallow pan with white tempera paint. Dip the balloon into the paint; then press it three times onto a sheet of construction paper, re-dipping between the presses. For the large circle, press down on the balloon firmly. For the medium circle, press down less hard, and for the small circle press down lightly. Use a cotton swab or paintbrush to add facial features and twig like arms or add collage materials and let children glue them on after the snowman dries. You can add buttons, wiggly eyes, material scraps, construction paper, etc.

**Winter Snow Pals!** Place white chalk, scissors, glue, and a supply of construction paper scraps at a center. You will also need a 12" x 18" sheet of dark blue construction paper and three white doilies, incrementally sized, for each child. Students use the materials at the center to create personal renditions of Frosty.

**Chalk Scenes.** Let children create winter scenes with chalk on dark construction paper. Use hair spray to set the chalk on the paper.

**Snowball Soap.** Soak ivory soap in water overnight. Then break it in halves. Give it to the children and let them mold it like play dough into a snowball. When it dries it flakes like a real snowball. You can put it in a sandwich bag and send it home with a poem that reads:

My snowball soap,  
I made it just for you.  
To help me learn about winter,  
And keep my hands clean too!

**Shaving Cream Snowman.** Provide each child with a sheet of tagboard. Then briskly mix two parts non-menthol shaving cream with one part white glue. When the mixture is slightly stiff and shiny, drop a small portion on each child's sheet. Have the children use a craft stick to spread the mixture into a snowman shape. While the mixture is wet, have the children use sequins to make the snowman's mouth and eyes; have them add small twigs for arms.

**Snowflake Flurry.** To prepare, mix a small amount of liquid dish detergent in the paint at the art center. Next, place a supply of aluminum foil sheets near the area. Help each child clip a sheet of foil to the easel; then invite the child to paint snowflakes on the foil. When the paint is dry, mount the foil to a sheet of construction paper. Hang them near windows or on your windows. The children can use hand mirrors to explore the light and color reflected from the foil.

**Snowflake Ornaments.** Glue three pretzels together to resemble a snowflake. When the glue has dried completely, place the pretzel ornament on a piece of waxed paper and paint both sides white. Once again, let the ornament dry again. Later dip the painted ornament into glue, then into a shallow container of fake snow. To complete the ornament, tie a satin ribbon around it for hanging.

**A Snowball to Keep: *A Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats.** Peter wanted to keep a snowball as a remembrance of the snowy day. After reading the story, help your children create their own snowball keepsakes with three -inch Styrofoam balls, white and blue one-inch tissue paper squares, glue brushes, and thinned white glue. To make an imitation snowball, place a Styrofoam ball in the bottom part of an egg carton to prevent the ball from rolling. Brush the upper half of the ball with thinned white glue; then place tissue paper squares on the glue. Brush glue on the tissue paper and add additional squares so that they overlap the others. Sprinkle silver or clear glitter sparingly over the wet surface. Allow the glue to dry and repeat the process to complete the other half of the ball.

**Tumbling Winter Pictures.** Let the children paint a strip of white paint across the bottom of the construction paper to make the snowy ground. Next, glue on one or more small twigs to make bare winter trees. Finally dip their thumbs in the paint and print "falling snowflakes" all over the paper.

**Winter Scenes.** Materials: Old Christmas cards with outdoor scenes, white glue and iridescent glitter. Students select an old Christmas card with an outdoor scene. Then brush on some watery glue over the whole picture. Then sprinkle the picture with iridescent glitter! Amazing - now it is snowing!

**Snowflake Surprise.** To make one snowflake, write a child's name on the back of a small paper plate. Then tape a six inch doily to the front of the plate. Place a drop of fingerpaint on the doily; then use fingers to spread the paint over the doily. Carefully un-tape the doily and remove it from the plate. Surprise! There's a snowflake print on the plate. To display, punch a hole in the top of each plate and tie a length of yarn through each hole and then hang them around your room!

**Fantasy Flakes.** To make a snowflake, draw a large X on a piece of waxed paper. Then draw a line across the x to make a six -pointed figure. Have the children trace the lines with streams of white glue. Encourage them to sprinkle glitter on his/her own unique snowflake design. Let the snowflakes dry for several days and then peel off the wax paper and punch a hole in the snowflake and tie with a length of ribbon. Hang all around your room!

**Sensory Snowmen.** To prepare, cut a snowman shape for each child from white construction paper. Then cut the snowman's clothing from various materials. For example, you might cut mittens from sandpaper, a hat from felt, a nose from craft foam, and boots from ribbed packing material. Use sticky dots for eyes and a silky ribbon for a scarf. Invite the children to explore the materials and then dress their snowman anyway they like. Be sure to discuss the different shapes, colors and textures.

**Winter Snow Scene.** Materials: Brown construction paper rectangles, green triangles, large sheet of blue construction paper for each child, white paint, empty thread spools. Let children glue on trees to paper and then dip one end of the empty thread spool into white tempera paint and press it onto the scene to make a snowflake. Use spools in various sizes to add as much snow, as they like.

**Snowflake Rubbing.** To prepare, cut or die-cut snowflake shapes from thick paper. Tape a snowflake pattern to a tabletop; then tape a sheet of blue copy paper over it. Invite the children to rub the side of the unwrapped white crayon over the paper, revealing the shape beneath it. Use one large snowflake or scatter several smaller snowflakes, and use various shades of blue or purple paper to create wintry works of art.

# Math

**Mitten Match.** Make 15 to 20 pairs of poster board mittens for a classification game. Pairs may be matching colors, shapes, numbers or dots. Scatter the mittens on the floor. Students find pairs that match and hang them on a clothesline with clip clothespins.

**Winter Fishing.** Make a fishing pole by attaching a string and a magnet to the end of a dowel rod or branch. Cut a hole in the top of a copier paper box. Cover the box with contact paper or paint it to represent a block of ice. Slide a paper clip onto each of a supply of laminated fish. Attach a few fish to the outside of the box. Program the rest of the fish with skills of your choice. Place the box on the floor with the hole facing up; then add the fish. To fish, a child drops her line into the ice and fishes around until the magnet on the pole adheres to a paper clip on a fish. What kind of fish did you catch? (number identification, color identification, shape identification, etc.)

**Polar Fishing Expedition.** Using white construction paper, make several copies of the polar bear and sled pattern. Program each sled with a numeral or number word. Cut out the patterns and laminate. Store the cards in a zipper-lock plastic bag and place in a center or use as a small group. Be sure to include a supply of goldfish crackers. As a child removes a bear from the bag, he puts the number of matching goldfish onto the sled that corresponds with the number. When the fishing expedition is over, each child can eat his catch!

**Snowman Math.** Cut 10 six-inch to eight-inch snowmen from white construction paper. Mount each on a piece of tagboard. Draw on facial features, scarves, twig arms, etc. Cut out ten hats from brightly colored construction paper. Label each hat with a number from 1 to 10. Glue one on each snowman's head. Laminate the snowmen or cover them with clear contact paper. Provide the children with a container of 55 small buttons. Challenge them to decorate each snowman with the number of buttons indicated on its hat.

**Snowman Games.** Cut out six snowmen, scarves, and hats and color the hats and scarves the same colors. Let children match the hat and scarf for each snowman. Be sure to write in the color word on the snowman for your more advanced learners.

Which is the smallest? Give each child a dark piece of construction paper and 3 white circles of different sizes. Ask which is the largest, and which is the smallest? What are the shapes of the snowballs? How many do you have?

Have them build a snowman by listening to your oral directions using directionality and placement words.

Find your largest snowball and place it on the bottom, etc. until the children have built a snowman. Let them have markers to add on the features.

**Counting Activity:** "Snow Peanuts" Give each child a 16 ounce plastic cup. Have them count how many "snow peanuts" it takes to fill up their cups. To add fun, you can invite children to wear their mittens or gloves while picking up the "snow". You could first have the children estimate how many it will take to fill up the cup and record their responses.

**Snowpeople Patterns.** On white construction paper, duplicate several copies of snowpeople patterns. Color the patterns so that each same sized set is identical. Laminate and cut out the patterns. To use them, have children create a pattern with the sets of cutouts, or invite them to sequence them by size: from smallest to largest or largest to smallest.

**Find the Snowball.** Place several knit caps and a small Styrofoam ball at a table. Invite a pair of children to the area. One child closes her eyes while the other hides the ball in one of the hats. The first child opens her eyes and then tries to find the ball by feeling each of the caps. After she finds it, the children switch roles and play again.

**In Stitches.** Cut out several mitten and hat patterns on tagboard. Punch holes around the edge of the shape after laminating or covering with clear contact paper. Then tie a length of ribbon through one of the holes. For easier lacing, wrap the end of the ribbon with tape. Make several cards in a variety of colors and with a variety of laces, such as satin, raffia, and velvet.

**Hat Graphing.** Prepare hats by collecting a supply of old baby socks in a variety of colors. Follow the directions under "Hats in the Snow" under Sensory Table Ideas to make a supply of miniature hats. Next, use masking tape to create a graphing grid on your flannel board. Place the hats in a container or in a stocking hat near your flannel board. To use the center, a child sorts the hats by color, places each set in a row or column on the graph, and then counts the number of hats in each row.

**Snowball Sorting.** Set up a center where your children can sort Styrofoam balls by size. Fill a sensory table or tub with three different sizes of Styrofoam balls. Provide three different sized buckets nearby and have children drop the small balls into the small bucket, etc. You can invite the children to wear gloves or mittens while they work.

**Fine Motor Snowball Sorting.** Set up a center where children can sort snowballs by size. Add small containers with all different sizes of white pom-poms. Add tweezers or ice tongs and have children pick out the snowballs from the container and sort into a tray.

**Flannelboard Activity.** Prepare three snowmen in three different sizes complete with the appropriately sized accessories. Put the accessories with the snowman by the flannel board and encourage children to match the accessories until all three snowmen are dressed.

# Outdoor Activities

You can do these activities outdoors, weather permitting, or use them indoors during your outside time or on a special day:

## Snowball Winter Games

**Snowball Spooning.** Each child carries a small Styrofoam ball from one point to another on a spoon.

**Snowball Drop.** Children are challenged to drop Styrofoam balls from waist height down into a coffee can.

**Snowball Shoot.** Children toss beanbags into baskets.

**Snow Bucket Relay.** Children take turns loading Styrofoam balls into a bucket, carrying the bucket to a specified mark, and returning to the starting point to unload the bucket before passing it to the next team member.

**Snowman Knockdown.** Place small stand-up cardboard snowmen a distance away from children and challenge them to knock over the snowmen by tossing beanbags at them.

**Freeze! Melt!** Increase your children's muscle control. In advance duplicate the sun and snowflake patterns. Explain to the children that when the air is cold, water in the air can freeze and turn to snow. Continue to explain that the sun's heat makes the air warm so that the snow melts. Show children the sun and snowflake patterns. Demonstrate how to freeze when the snowflake is displayed and how to begin moving slowly when the sun is displayed. To increase the children's abilities to focus on visual cues, play the game using the snowflake and sun patterns without giving verbal cues. Or try a variation using sound cues. Using a set of bells, establish one tone to indicate "freeze" and a different tone to indicate "melt". The children should move or stand still based on the tone they hear.

**Pitch and Catch.** Practice large muscle skills with sock snowballs! (Roll white socks into snowballs) Have the children form two equal lines that face each other and that are about two feet apart. Give each child in one line a snowball. On your signal, have each child carefully pitch the snowball to the opposite child. Then have the child step back one small step and have the other line pitch. On another day, challenge the children to toss their snowballs into buckets or "a snowman's hat".

**Indoor Snowball Fights.** This activity begins with an indoor snow fight and ends up creating a snowman. Talk about small, medium, and large sizes of plastic bags. Materials: White plastic bags in three different sizes, discarded white printed- paper, and materials for eyes, nose, mouth, and arms. Teacher takes the discarded paper and wads them up into dozens of different sizes of balls. The children then use the paper "snow" balls to have indoor snowball fights. After the children get tired of that, have the children gather the balls and put them into the white plastic bags and stack them into an indoor snowman. You can also make a race to encourage them to pick up the "snow" balls more quickly.

# Science

## **Brrr! It's Frosty!**

Step 1: Ask your little ones have they ever seen frost on windows on cold days. Next explain that you have found out Jack Frost's secret for making frost. To begin the activity, give each child in a small group a can to fill with crushed ice. Ask the students to observe how the outsides of their cans feel.

Step 2. Help each child measure one cup of water to pour over the crushed ice. Ask the children to watch the outsides of their cans for several minutes.

Step 3. When water forms on the outsides of the cans, ask some questions: What did the water do to the crushed ice? How does the outside of the can feel now? What do you think makes the water on the outside of the can? Record each child's ideas.

Step 4. Tell your children that you have Jack Frost's secret ingredient for making frost. Then help each child add three tablespoons of salt to the can. Have her gently stir the salt into the ice water. Wait about five minutes.

Step 5. Once a thin layer of frost forms on the outside of each child's can, ask youngsters what they think Jack's secret is. How was the frost made? Record their ideas.

Step 6. Use the information in "This is Why" to explain how Jack Frost's secret ingredient (salt) made the water on the outsides of the cans turn to frost. Then sing this silly song to the tune of "Mr. Sun" to wrap up this chilly lesson.

**This Is Why.** So what is Jack Frost's secret? When the salt is added to the ice water, it makes the water inside the can get colder. When the water gets colder, the can gets colder. The water on the outside of the can freezes, covering the can with frost.

## **Song**

Mister Frost, Frost, Mister Jack Frost,  
Oh, we know your secret now.  
Mister Frost, Frost, Mister Jack Frost,  
Oh, we know your secret now.  
Salt makes the water very, very cold.  
So cold it turns to ice- that is what we're told.  
Mister Frost, Frost, Mister Jack Frost,  
Oh, we know your secret now.

**What Now?** Here's another one of Jack's secrets for making frost. Slather petroleum jelly on a glass pan. Invite several children to use their fingers to make squiggly designs on the jelly. Place the pan in the freezer for two hours. When the pan is removed from the freezer, youngsters will find that a frosty coating has formed on their drawings.

**The Big Chill.** Chill Out: Which takes up more space, water or ice? Have children predict and record on chart paper. Fill several different-size clear plastic containers halfway with water. Put them on a tray and use a permanent marker to mark the water level. Ask your children what they think will happen when you put the cups in the freezer? Record children's responses on chart paper. Freeze the containers in the freezer overnight. Check them in the morning. Ask the children - Why is the ice higher than the mark? Record responses. Allow the ice to melt and see whether it goes down to the line. Explain that water expands (gets bigger) when it freezes. That's why big fluffy snowflakes are larger than tiny raindrops.

**Meltdown:** Discuss what happens when you bring snow inside. Hold some snow or ice in your hand to show how it begins to melt. Give each child a small cup with snow or an ice cube in it. Encourage children to try different ways to get the ice/snow to melt: breathing on it, cupping their hands around it, putting it under their shirt, holding their hand over the top of the cup and shaking it gently, or putting it near a heater. Ask what made the snow/ice melt the fastest. Provide children with materials such as waxed paper, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, a plastic sandwich bag, tissues, foam packing peanuts, felt, cotton balls, scraps of material or different kinds of fabric. Let each child choose a material. Wrap the ice cube in the chosen material and place it in a paper cup. Which ice cube melts first? Which would be the best to make a jacket out of? or to save an ice cream treat? Record responses.

**Watching the Mercury Rise and Fall.** Let your children observe firsthand how thermometers work. Place two bowls of water on the tabletop. Partially fill one bowl with cold water, and the other with warm water. Have a student place a large outdoor thermometer in one bowl of water. When the mercury rests, help the student read the temperature. Have another student move the thermometer to the other bowl and, has his classmates look on; help him to read the new temperature. Permit students to take turns moving the thermometer from one bowl to the other.

**Melting Snowfolk.** Use biodegradable packing peanuts and a let each child draw on facial features with a marker to resemble a snowman. Ask the children to pretend that it is a warm, sunny day; then have them put their snowfolk in a tub of water. Watch as the snowmen melt away.

**Ice Is Nice.** Materials: a bucket partially filled with water, two sheets of chart paper, a marker, a freezer or freezing temperature outside, an empty water table, a "magic melting mixture" that is one part warm water and two parts salt, small containers, several eyedroppers, food coloring

Step One: Invite children to put their hands into the bucket of water. Ask the students to make observations about the water. As the ideas flow, record on chart paper.

Step Two: Ask, "How can we change the water in the bucket into ice?" After discussing the children's ideas, suggest that the bucket be placed in the freezer. If the temperature is below freezing outside, set the bucket outside and let it remain there overnight.

Step Three: The next day, rinse the outside of the bucket in warm water; then plop the giant ice cube into an empty water table or tub. Refill the bucket with water.

Step Four: Invite small groups of students to feel the ice and the water. Ask some questions to help "melt" the mystery:

Which feels colder, the water or the ice?

How did the water change in the freezer (outside)?

How is the ice changing in the table?

Record their observations on chart paper.

Step Five: Prepare the "magic melting mixture." Divide the mixture into small containers. Add a different color of food coloring to each container. Demonstrate how to use the eyedroppers to lightly tap the giant ice cube and squirt the mixture. Ask the children to assist you and watch as shallow caverns of color begin to appear. (Rinse the eyedroppers should they become clogged.) Encourage children to describe the changes.

Step Six: Write as youngsters predict what will happen if the ice cube remains in the water table overnight. The next day, have them observe the changes to see if they can confirm or disprove their predictions.

Extensions:

(1) Serve cups of ice water to the children so they can observe ice floating in water. Ask them to predict if a giant cube of ice would float in water. Make another giant cube as before; then put it into a large tub of water. Ask youngsters to compare the ice that floated in their cups of water to the floating ice in the tub.

(2) Ask the children to bring molds for ice making to school. (shaped cake pans, cookie cutters, muffin pans, and empty milk cartons all make interesting molds.) Have each child fill his mold with water; then put the

molds in the freezer or outside. When the water is frozen, pop the ice shapes into a water table filled with water.

**Walking in A Winter Storm.** Go to a local packaging supply store and get rolls of bubble wrap and spread out on the floor. Let children walk on it. It sounds just like walking on crunchy snow. Children can compare walking with bare feet versus walking with shoes. Be sure to chart the differences and similarities the children note.

# Sensory Table Ideas

**Ice Chunks.** Fill your sensory table with chunks and different sizes of ice. Have the children feel of the ice with their hands and then with their mittens. What differences do they notice? Have children observe the ice in the morning and then later in the day. Does the ice look the same? What is happening? Are the chunks the same size as before? You can add salt to the ice chunks and let children observe what happens. You can add food coloring to the salt so the children can actually see the salt as it melts down into the ice.

**Hidden Objects.** Freeze different objects from your classroom in small bowls, trays, etc. Before class begins, pop out the ice with the frozen objects inside and provide tools (spoons, small hammers, etc.) for children to chisel out the hidden objects. You can use small animals, rocks, shells, letters, numbers, etc.

**Ice Castles.** Freeze water in castle shaped sand buckets. Empty and place the frozen castles in the sensory table and provide the children with eyedroppers and liquid food coloring to which salt has been added. It is a wonderful fine motor activity as the children practice with the eyedroppers, science as we observe melting ice and also color mixing as the blue and red became purple and the salt also creates holes in the ice!

**Hats in the Snow.** To prepare for this center, ask parents to donate old, white baby socks. Cut off the toe of each sock right below the heel. Roll the cut edge of the toe to create a miniature hat; then use craft glue to attach a small white pom-pom to the top of the hat. Fill your sensory table with the hats in the snow for your students to find.

For added fine-motor fun, create a milk jug snowman for each hat in the table. To make one snowman, remove the label from a small, clean plastic milk bottle. Next, remove the lid and hot glue a small Styrofoam ball over the bottle opening. When the glue is dry, use paint pens or permanent markers to draw snowman features on the ball. Wrap a brown pipe cleaner around the neck of the bottle to create two arms. Then twist a two-inch length of pipe cleaner around the end of each arm. Finally, glue a felt scarf around the snowman's neck. Set the snowmen near the table; then invite students to find the hats and place them on their frosty friends.

**Faux Snow:** Squirt shaving cream into your sensory table or tub. Then add ice cubes.

**Arctic Wonderland.** Turn your water table into a pretend icy ocean. Fill a few large bowls with colored water and freeze them. Then remove these frozen icebergs from the bowls and put them in your water table. Add some plastic polar bears and penguins and other arctic animals.

**Styrofoam Peanuts.** Add Styrofoam peanuts or fake snow to your sensory table.

# Songs and Fingerplays

## **Snowflake Flurry**

*Encourage children to whirl and twirl like snowflakes as they sing the following song.*

Whirling, twirling, soft and white,  
Snowflakes flurry day and night.  
Whirling, twirling, high then low.  
Whirling, twirling, fast then slow.  
Whirling, twirling, soft and white,  
Snowflakes flurry day and night.

## **Five Fat Walruses**

Five fat walruses were at the North Pole. (Hold up 5 fingers)  
One climbed upon the ice and fell into a hole.  
Four fat walruses swam toward the ice. (Hold up 4 fingers)  
One bumped an iceberg, which wasn't very nice.  
Three fat walruses had whiskers on their faces, (Hold up 3 fingers)  
One got bored and went to sleep; he didn't like the places.  
Two fat walruses went to look for food. (Hold up 2 fingers)  
One swam far, far away; he wasn't in the mood.  
One fat walrus was tired of the play. (Hold up 1 finger)  
She flipped a good-bye with her tail and then she swam away.

## **Six Little Snowmen**

Six proud snowmen standing straight and tall,  
Dressed in hats and scarves as the snow begins to fall  
The first snowman's hat was new and bright.  
The second snowman's hat was quite a sight.  
The third snowman's hat was taken by a crow.  
The fourth snowman's hat got covered with snow.  
The fifth snowman's hat fell on the ground.  
The sixth snowman's hat blew away without a sound.  
Ooooooooooooo went the wind. Down came the snow.  
But the six proud snowmen stood grandly in a row.

Remove each snowman's hat in turn.

## **Winter's Coming**

(to the tune of "Frere Jacques")  
Winter's coming. Winter's coming.  
It is dark. It is cold.  
I am bundled snug and warm.  
Animals sleep safe from harm.  
Sleds and snow.  
Cold winds blow.

## **Winter**

(to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel")

Down and round the snowflakes swirl.

(flutter hands downwards)

The animals are hiding.

(hide face in hands)

Snowmen stand guard silently.

(sit up tall)

Whoosh go the skaters!

(make sliding motions with hands)

## **Making A Snowman**

Roll it, roll it, get a pile of snow,

Rolling, rolling, rolling, rolling, rolling, here we go.

Pat it, pat it, face it to the south.

Now my little snowman's done, eyes and nose and mouth.

## **Fun in the Snow**

It's fun to play in the snow.

Bundled warm as toast.

It's fun to play in the snow.

Take your sled and coast.

## **I'm a Little Penguin**

(to the tune of I'm a Little Teapot)

I'm a little penguin on the ice.

I think cold is very nice.

I can hop around first once, then twice.

I think ice is very nice.

## **Think Snow!**

(to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush")

What shall we do in wintertime?

In wintertime, in wintertime?

What shall we do in wintertime?

On (Monday) when it's snowing?

We'll build a snowman round and fat,

Round and fat, round and fat!

We'll build a snowman round and fat

On (Monday) when it's snowing!

Sing the song again, using different days of the week

And activities such as the following:

Tuesday, take a sled ride down a hill

Wednesday, find some food to feed the birds

Thursday, skate around a frozen pond

Friday, pack some snowballs round and tight

Saturday, make some angels in the snow

Sunday, build a snow fort in the yard

### **The Flakes**

Three white snowflakes, fancy-free,  
Each as pretty as can be.  
The first one said, "I'm so small-  
The smallest snowflake of us all."  
The second one said, with a twinkle in his eyes,  
"I'm bigger than you, I'm medium size."  
The third one said, "Hey, this is fun!  
Can you see I'm the biggest one?"  
Three white snowflakes in the sky,  
Small, medium, and large all say, "Good-bye!"  
*Use this with three snowflake cutouts of different sizes.*

### **Red Mittens**

Ten red mittens, hanging on the line,  
This one blew away, and then there were nine.  
Nine red mittens, each one had a mate,  
This one fell down, and then there were eight.  
Eight red mittens, one belonged to Evan,  
This one found its boy, and then there were seven.  
Seven red mittens, doing fancy tricks,  
This one found a girl, and then there were six.  
Six red mittens, looking so alive,  
This one found a baby, then there were five.  
Five red mittens, as pretty as before,  
This one floated off, and then there were four.  
Four red mittens, waving wild and free,  
This one lost a clothespin, then there were three.  
Three red mittens, looking very new,  
This one fell in the mud, then there were two.  
Two red mittens, left in the sun,  
This one faded away, and then there was one.  
One red mitten, left all alone,  
It blew up in the air, and then there were none.  
*Cut out mittens and use as a flannel board story.*

### **Jack Frost**

The temperature is freezing. It's less than thirty-two.  
Cause look who's on my window. It's Jack Frost, that's who!

### **Zippers**

Three little zippers on my snowsuit. Fasten up snug as snug can be.  
It's a very easy thing, as you can see, Just zip! Zip! Zip!

I work zippers on my snowsuit. Zippers really do save time for me.  
I can fasten them myself, with one, two, three. Just zip! Zip! Zip!

### **The Snowman and The Bunny**

A chubby little snowman (make a fist)  
Had a carrot nose (poke thumb out)  
Along came a bunny  
And what do you suppose? (other hand - make rabbit ears)  
That hungry little bunny,  
Looking for his lunch (bunny hops around)  
Ate that snowman's carrot nose (bunny nibbles at thumb)  
Crunch, crunch, crunch.

### **Snowman Countdown**

Three little men made of snow  
Out came the sun and stayed all day  
One little snowman melted away.  
*Use the appropriate number of fingers for each verse and continue until none are left.*

### **Build a Snowman**

First you make a snowball  
Big and fat and round.  
Then you roll the snowball,  
All along the ground.  
Then you build the snowman-  
One - two - three!  
Then you have a snowman,  
Don't you see?  
Then the sun shines all around and  
Melts the snowman to the ground.

### **The Mitten Song**

"Thumb in the thumb place,  
Fingers all together!"  
This is the song we sing in mitten weather.  
When it's cold  
It doesn't matter whether  
Mittens are wool  
Or made of the finest leather.  
This is the song we sing in mitten weather;  
"Thumb in the thumb place,  
Fingers all together!"

### **Five Little Snowmen**

Five little snowmen all in a row  
Each with a big tall hat and a big red bow  
Now they are ready but where will they go?  
Down through the fields with the melting snow.

### **Five Fat Snowmen**

Five little snowmen fat  
Each had a pointed hat

Out came the sun  
And melted one  
What a sad thing was that  
Four little snowmen fat  
Etc.

*Use felt snowmen for math experience*

### **Put on Your Snow Clothes!**

Outside there's snow! The cold winds blow!  
Let's bundle up and go, go, go!  
Put on socks and long johns too.  
The cold out there won't bother you.  
Put on pants and a nice warm shirt.  
Now that icy wind won't hurt!  
Put on mittens and a hat.  
You'll be comfy dressed like that!  
Put on your boots. Your gear's complete!  
You'll be warm down to your feet!  
Outside there's snow! The cold winds blow!  
We're bundled up! Let's go, go, go!

### **I'm a Little Snowman**

(sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")  
I'm a little snowman, short and stout,  
Sticks for arms and a carrot snout.  
When the weather warms up, gosh, oh gee!  
I melt and there's no more of me!

### **Look at the Snowflakes**

(sung to the tune of "Up on the Housetop")  
Look at the snowflakes swirl around.  
Look how they fall to the ground.  
Soon every tree will be dressed in white.  
Oh, what a beautiful snowy sight!  
Snow, snow, snow! We love it so!  
Snow, snow, snow! We love it so!  
Let's go outside now! Run, run, run!  
Let's (catch a snowflake). It's lots of fun!

*Repeat substituting the underlined phrase with build a snowman, toss a snowball, and take a sleigh ride.*

### **Snowing All Around**

Way up high  
In the winter sky,  
Two little snowflakes  
Caught my eye.  
Down to the ground  
They fell without a sound  
And before very long,  
It was snowing all around.

### **Three Little Kittens**

Three little kittens lost their mittens,  
And they began to cry,  
"Oh, Mother Dear, we greatly fear  
That we have lost our mittens."  
"Lost your mittens! You naughty kittens!  
Then you shall have no pie."  
"Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,  
No, you shall have no pie."  
The three little kittens found their mittens,  
And they began to cry,  
"Oh, Mother Dear, see here, see here,  
We have found our mittens, "  
"Put on your mittens, you darling kittens,  
You may have some pie."  
"Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,  
Yes, we will have some pie!"

# Cooking Experiences

**Banana Blizzards.** To make a blizzard that serves about 10 children, blend together one cup of cold milk with two or three bananas in a blender. Ask the children to count aloud as you add ten snowballs (scoops of vanilla frozen yogurt) into the blender. Then invite each child to turn the blender on and off again to help create the blizzard. Serve the blizzards in five-ounce cups.

**Play Dough Snow People.** Materials: 1 cup salt, 6 tsp. Alum, 1 cup water, 2 cups sifted flour, 2 tbs. salad oil. Mix together until smooth. The play dough will stay soft for several weeks if it is kept in a plastic bag. Show the children how to form balls with the play dough to make snow people. Use small stones, fabric, etc. to add facial features, buttons, hat, and scarf.

### **Hot Chocolate**

Let each student measure these ingredients into a zipper-lock plastic bag.

Measure 3 Tablespoons of Nestle Quik

Measure 2 Tablespoons of Creamer

Measure 1 Tablespoon of dry milk

Measure 1 Tablespoon of powdered sugar

Add one cup of warm water and stir!

Let children enjoy the experience of making instant hot chocolate. Just be sure to warm the water enough to melt the hot chocolate and not burn their mouths. Before the children enjoy their hot chocolate and while it is cooling, do this to teach placement directionality. Give each child one large marshmallow and explain to them that they have to listen to your directions:

Put the marshmallow above your cup.

Put the marshmallow on the left side of your cup.

Put the marshmallow on the right side of your cup.

Put the marshmallow beside your cup.

Put the marshmallow under the cup.

Put the marshmallow over your cup.

Next, have the children tell you where they have placed their marshmallows.

Last but not least, tell the children to place their marshmallow in their cup! Drink and enjoy!

### **Snow Balls**

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup marshmallow cream

3 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips

2 cups peanut butter

shredded coconut

Mix the first three ingredients and roll into small balls. Then roll in coconut - refrigerate

### **Banana Snowman**

2 cups raisins

2 bananas

shredded coconut

Chop bananas and raisins in blender. Put in bowl and refrigerate until mixture can be handled. Roll into balls and into shredded coconut. Stack three balls and fasten with toothpick.

### **Chicken Soup 1,2,3**

Ingredients for One:

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. chicken broth, heated

1 tbsp. canned chicken

2 tbsp. Cooked rice

3 oyster crackers

Utensils and supplies:

Styrofoam bowl per child

Plastic spoon per child

1-cup measuring cup

2 Tablespoons

Arrange a class supply of the ingredients and supplies near a step-by-step recipe.

**Frosty's Favorites.** Snow cones: Pour orange juice, apple juice, and grape juice into separate ice cube trays. Ask the children which they think will freeze first; last. Why? Put the trays on a cookie sheet and put them in the freezer. Check on them one to two hours later. Which one has started to solidify? Leave them in the freezer overnight. Place five of the juice cubes in a blender and start and stop it several times. What is happening? Pack the flavored crushed ice cubes into small three-ounce cups and provide each child with a spoon for the children to eat this treat. While the children are eating - record conversations about the experiment.

**Popcorn Snowballs.** Pop popcorn and melt butter and marshmallows (follow as you would for making rice cereal treats). Once the butter and marshmallows are melted pour the mixture over the popcorn and mix well. After the mixture has cooled, have the children to take two handfuls of the mixture, one smaller than the other one, then shape them into balls and place the smaller one on top of the larger one. They can then decorate their snowmen with raisins and gumdrops. Place the snowmen on wax paper when finished.

**Stone Soup.** Make stone soup according to the story. This activity requires close teacher supervision and should involve the entire class. This day would be a great day to ask for parent volunteers.

**Soup.** Let children sample different kinds of soup and then make a class chart to graph their favorites.

**Gelatin Ice.** It looks like ice, but it feels like gelatin. This recipe provides a tactile experience for your children to enjoy. Mix 32 envelopes of unflavored gelatin (four envelopes are in a box) with 22 cups of hot

water. Stir until dissolved; then pour the mixture into small plastic containers and chill. Once the mixture has jelled, pop the gelatin forms out of the containers and give one to each child. The children can use pipe cleaners, bowls, spoons, etc. to freely explore.

### **Snow Ice Cream**

Snow

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

1 c. milk

1 egg

1 tsp. Vanilla

Put snow in a clean container outside to catch the new snow. Then mix the remaining ingredients together. Add snow mixture until it is the consistency of sherbet. Put in paper cups. Delicious!

**Snowman Cookies.** Give each child a ball of refrigerated sugar-cookie dough. Have him/her separate it into three smaller balls. Then have him/her flatten the balls onto the cookie sheet, overlapping them to resemble a snowman. Invite the children to add chocolate chips to represent eyes, nose, and buttons. Bake the cookies and enjoy!

**Snowman Snack.** For each snack you will need a mini round cracker, a regular-sized round cracker, and a larger round cracker, such as a wafer cracker. To make the snack, spread soft cream cheese on each of the three crackers; then arrange them on a plate or napkin to resemble a snowman. Break a pretzel stick in half and one half to each side to make arms.

# Music and Movement

**Creative Movement.** Playing all types of music (jazz, classical, modern, etc.) have the children move to the music according to how they would feel dancing hot and dancing cold.

**Indoor Ice-Skating.** Let the children glide around the room as if on ice skates by placing a piece of waxed paper under each child's shoes. Play music to enhance the ice skating experience.

**Deep Freeze Dance.** Give the children white scarves or white crepe paper streamers. Play fast music and have the children pretend to be swirling snowflakes on a blustery day. Play slow music and have them pretend to be softly falling snowflakes on a calm day. Interrupt the music and have the children "freeze" in position until the music begins again.

**Meltdown Merriment.** Tell the children to pretend to be snowmen. As the warm sun shines on them, they slowly begin to thaw. Call out body parts, starting with at the head and proceeding downwards. As a part is called out, the children begin to move it. As the sun shines more brightly, the children gradually melt down to the floor.

*Winter lesson plan created by the Pre-K Division of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.*