

Theme: Baskets

Gross Motor (Indoor & Outdoor):

Ball toss – throw balls into laundry baskets
Children can dance and weave in-and-out of each other's clasped arms while singing fingerplays and action songs, like "A Tisket, A Tasket."

Musical chairs – put a paper basket cut-out on one chair.

Use plastic cable ties to tie plastic berry baskets to the front of the children's tricycles so they can carry items in their baskets.

Nature walk – let children carry their own baskets to put their "treasures" found on the nature walk.

Math, Small Motor, and Manipulatives:

- Sorting – Provide a variety of things for children to sort into baskets: paper clothes cutouts (sort by color for the wash), plastic fruits and vegetables (which is it?), etc. Have children count the items after they are sorted. Older children can create a graph to show how many were in each basket.
- Picnic Basket Fill & Spill by Melissa & Doug, available May 1, 2008 (available for preorder at Barnes & Noble).
- Art activities count as small motor activities, especially those requiring some cutting and weaving. Younger children may not be able to cut with scissors—remember, this is a skill that usually doesn't manifest itself very well until age 5, but children should have exposure to the skill and the opportunity to develop it as their hands mature.
- Make puzzles from pictures or coloring pages (you can find lots of them free on the internet) by cutting the pictures into 2 or more pieces; let children put the puzzles together.
- Play Basket Bingo – make bingo cards with basket clipart available at www.fotosearch.com.

Science & Geography Activities:

- ❑ On the science table, display different items that are typically used to make baskets. Let children discover how stiff some of those items are, then soak them in water overnight and see how soft and pliable the materials become.
- ❑ Look on a globe or world map to see where Africa is compared to Michigan. Relate this to the stories in the books about African baskets.

Snacks:

- ❖ Serve warm bread in a cloth-covered basket.
- ❖ Serve fish sticks and string cheese in baskets.
- ❖ Serve strawberry pie with a lattice weave top crust.
- ❖ Pizza Cups: Let children line a muffin cup with prepared biscuit dough. They can add their own cheese, meat, and pizza trimmings to the top before baking. These look like little baskets!
- ❖ Fill bathroom-size paper cups with trail mix and tape little paper "handles" across the top of the "basket."
- ❖ Serve apples from a basket. Slice them for the children. Provide caramel dip, if desired.

Special Visual Aids/Room Set-Up/Field Trips:

Have a local artist come demonstrate basket weaving to the children, or take a field trip to a local college/university's art department to observe basketry being made or on display.
Serve meals in baskets.

Songs & Fingerplays: These are difficult to find, but you can find a few if you Google "basket fingerplays" or "songs about baskets."

Books:

Basket Moon by Mary Lyn Ray
Birthday Basket for Tia by Pat Mora
Beauty, Her Basket by Sandra Belton
A Sweet, Sweet Basket by Margie Willis Clary
Cherokee: Native Basket Weavers by Therese DeAngelis
Circle Unbroken by Margot Theis Raven
I, Doko: A Basket's Tale by Ed Young
The Moses Basket by Jenny Koralek
The Village of Basketweavers by Lynda Gene Rymond
Basic Baskets by Mara Cary

Mice and the Flying Basket by Rodney Peppe
Basket Maker and the Spinner by Beatrice Siegel
Basket Weaver and Catches Many Mice by Janet Gill
Baskets by Meryl Doney
Jack's Basket by Alison Catley
How to Weave a Pine Needle Basket by Ginger Jolley
Benjamin's Basket by Robyn Wild
Chicken in a Basket by Debbie White
Chicky Basket by Jan Lebeyka
Grandmother Five Baskets by Lisa Larrabee
In My Basket by Serena Feneziani

Dramatic Play:

Put out a couple of laundry baskets, clothes, a basket doll or baby carrier and a doll, foam balls that children can toss into an empty basket, inexpensive baskets that the children can carry things in.... You can get a nice assortment of them really cheap at places like the Salvation Army or Goodwill. Old Easter baskets are also good to use, and some of those plastic Easter eggs... along with stuffed animals, like a hen.

Art:

- On a basket cut-out, children can put their fingerprints on the basket (use water-based colored inks or tempera paint) and decorate them to look like flowers!
- Weave strips of paper to make a basket placemat to use at snack time.
- Paper Plate Lunches – let children cut pictures of foods out of magazines and make collages on paper plates. They can put these into a large basket for the group to have a “pretend” picnic!
- Staple or glue two paper plate halves together; let children decorate them to look like baskets. Add a paper handle or a pipe cleaner for a handle. Children can stuff their baskets with “flowers” made from milk/paint mixture dripped onto white coffee filters. (For a fun twist, let children drip the paint with a section of plastic straw, rather than the usual eye dropper.)
- Have children paint by dipping plastic berry baskets into paint and pressing them onto paper.
- Weave ribbons through plastic berry baskets and add pipe cleaner handles!

Circle Time Activities:

- Spend one day talking about materials used to make baskets. Have someone come in to demonstrate basket weaving, or take the children on a field trip to visit someone who makes baskets. A local college or university's art department is a good resource. See Science activity above.
- Spend one day talking about baskets around the world and how they are used, such as Africa. There are several books listed in the “Book” section above that can be read to the children. Turn a book into a flannel board story by tracing pictures from the book onto Pellon (interfacing) and coloring them. (Pellon figures stick well to flannel boards.)
- Spend another day or two talking about different uses for baskets. Talk about what we use baskets for on a daily basis, such as for laundry, storage, toys, etc. Let children share what baskets are used for in their individual homes. This is a great way to help children develop their thinking skills. You could even have a show-and-tell day and let children bring a basket from home to show the group....
- Have a picnic! If the weather is great, have an outdoor picnic, complete with checked tablecloth and a picnic basket loaded with sandwiches and favorite goodies. If the weather is bad, have a picnic indoors!
- Talk about Native American baskets and their history. (See “Book” section of this folder for a list of books.)
- Talk about shopping basket/cart safety with the children. Many of them sit in their mothers' shopping baskets, so this is a great time to talk about how to be safe while riding in the basket!