

Activity Guide: December

Items in *green* are included in your PBL kit from CMNH

Ages 0-24 months:

- **Unwrap "presents":**

- Wrap a *lightweight scarf* around one of the *bath buddies*. Show (without speaking) babies how to unwrap the buddy. Wrap it up again and hand it to them—see what they do.

Show not tell: This helps babies/young toddlers take in what is going on with an activity without being distracted/over stimulated by someone talking at the same time. This little game/activity will help make opening presents around the holidays more familiar to very little ones.

- **Sing a seasonal song with the *egg shakers*:**

- Jingle Bells works great with a rhythm section!
- Collect some egg cartons and let babies explore putting the shaker eggs in and taking them out. Try showing, not telling to begin with—or let them explore on their own.



Ronan, son of Museum staffer Colie, is 9 months old.

"I actually think he liked exploring the egg carton itself best—he'd never seen one before!"

Ages 2-3 years:

- **Drive on salty roads!***

- Put out a tray or bin with some coarse kosher salt on it next to **the trucks**. See what children do!
 - This is a fun sensory experience. Once children are exploring—ask open ended questions: “How does it feel when the trucks are driving on the salty roads?” “I wonder what would happen if we made a mountain of salt for the trucks to drive over?”

**Make sure to observe this activity closely and make sure nobody is eating salt for a snack...!*

Sensory play is a great way to introduce new vocabulary. As children play they may ask questions about salty roads. Talk about ice, changes in weather, the kinds of trucks that spread salt, etc. If children are very interested, you could also read a book about the changing seasons that would introduce more vocabulary.

- *Although not related to trucks driving on salty roads, we love the book [Over and Under the Snow](#). A perfect pick for an engaging read with a group or one on one. Without even reading the words, children can find the different animals on the pages, talk about what they're doing/where they spend the winter and be introduced to the magical world that exists under the snow. A full read aloud of the book introduces plenty of new words and ideas for young children.*

- **Make shelters or other structures for animals**

- Put out the **Duplo blocks** and other building supplies as well as **the safari animals** or other animal figurines you have in the classroom.
- Build an example shelter for an animal for the children to observe.
- Wait and see what the children do/how/what they build for the animals.
 - Add in a sensory element by giving them some cotton balls or pieces of felt to make snow on top of structures, or to have animals living in the special world under the snow. The cotton balls/felt will likely turn into other things too!



Jules, daughter of Museum staffer Meredith, is 2 years old.

“She loves trucks and had fun pushing the salt around—we talked about the difference between pushing & pulling!”

Ages 4-5 years:

● Make forts!

- Put together chairs and other items in the classroom and clip some of the **large play silks** on them using the **clothespins**. Leave out the rest of the play silks and other clothespins and see how the children play.
 - Watch the dramatic play that happens in this fun new play space!
- If you are looking to inspire children in this space, read some books about building forts (we like [Fort Building Time](#) by Megan Wagner Lloyd!), animal homes, or the book included above—*Over and Under the Snow!* See how/if this changes the way they play in the space.

● Sensory Play:

- Put some ice in a shallow bin! You could also use a tray. Put out the **sensory scoopers, tongs**, and some salt. Observe and see how children play.
 - Fun guided play activity: If you put salt on top of one ice cube, wait a bit and then put another ice cube on top—they will freeze together due to the salt melting the first ice cube a bit. Make tall towers! (“I wonder why this works?!”)
 - It’s also fun to add some watercolor paint and paint the ice (“We can use this watercolor without adding water from a cup! Why do you think that is?”) or add some of the **little counting manipulatives** (dinosaurs, animals, or transportation—it’s up to you!) and see what kind of play happens.

This activity may inspire some conversations about ice, salt, and melting. A fun process art activity to do alongside this one is watercolor & salt painting to view the effects of how salt interacts with water. Invite children to paint with watercolors (heavy on the water) and then sprinkle salt on top. The salt will dissolve and make interesting patterns! Ask children how they think the two projects are connected? How are they similar/different? (The salt also dissolves on the ice and causes it to melt—making water—and that’s how the other ice cube is able to stick!)



Naomi, granddaughter of Museum volunteer Cindel, is 4 years old.

"I was amazed at all the ways she came up with to play with the ice, salt & little creatures!"