



Published on *mache.org* (<http://www.mache.org>)

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

Taking a Snow Day

Tags: [beginning](#) [elementary](#) [learning styles](#)

Snow days. Even if our children went to school we don't get those here in the Arizona desert, so we decided to create our own—using shaving cream!

Aside from the 3R's, I usually teach to the oldest and let the younger ones pick up what they pick up (which is usually a surprising amount). But sometimes I like to take the day off from our normal routine and just have some good ol' open-ended play specifically geared towards my youngest!

Open-ended play is where there are no expectations, no specific problems to solve, no rules to follow, and no pressure to produce a finished product. This kind of play helps children build knowledge, skills, and creativity at their own pace! It fosters critical thinking instead of merely imitating.

So, after piling on the couch and reading the classic children's book *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, we made our way to the dining room table to play with shaving cream. I let the kids pick out toys that they wanted to bring to our "snow play" and I turned them loose.

What your child brings to the play will spur the creative process. Will they bring something that smooths the material? Or mounds it? Or forms it into play for a doll or toy animal? My three sons brought matchbox cars and found driving through this kind of snow to be a favorite activity.

Sensory activities are so important for little ones. Exploring new sensations teaches kids a lot about how materials work and it sharpens their observation skills.

It is amazing how long they will focus and play when there are no expectations and their imaginations can run wild. These kinds of open-ended, imagination-inspiring activities are essential and I love incorporating them into our days. Given the right environment, even the most active, distractible child can pay attention to their own play for a surprising length of time.

This can also be a wonderful time to dialogue with our children while they play, which is a great way to boost their vocabulary. "Is the shaving cream slimy? Slippery? Smooth? Sticky? Silky?"

The older boys enjoyed spreading out the cream thinly and tracing designs. Our oldest started to write messages in his best handwriting in the shaving cream while son number two drew pictures.

While it looks messy, surprisingly I found the clean up to be considerably easier than paints or playdough. Now I just need to make it to the store and stock up again!

Looking for some other fun sensory play ideas? Check out <http://www.earthskids.com/sensoryrecipes.aspx> for inspiration!

Author: [Heather Haupt](#)

Source URL (retrieved on 05/19/2013 - 11:26am): <http://www.mache.org/resources/article/12-07-2011/taking-snow-day>