



The InvestiGator Club™ Prekindergarten Learning System

Investigation

PARENT'S
EDITION

Integrated Activities for Exploring, Experimenting,
and Making Discoveries

Sensational Seasons



THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPANY™

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This Investigation celebrates the uniqueness of the four seasons. Each new season brings different sights and sounds for children to explore: the howling wind and crackling of colorful leaves in fall; cold temperatures and glistening snow in winter; baby birds, bugs, and colorful blooms in spring; and the blazing sun in summer. The four seasons provide many investigating opportunities for the InvestiGators and for your child, too. Let's investigate the sensational seasons!

Part 3 Winter Wonders

Remind your child that together you have been learning about the four seasons—fall, winter, spring, and summer. You already have learned about summer and fall, and now winter begins. Tell your child: *During this Investigation, you will learn all about the season called winter. You will discover the special changes that happen during wintertime that make this season sensational too. Are you ready to start investigating?*

Oral Language/Science/ Music

Get your child ready for a change in seasons by recognizing the signs of winter.

Materials

- barren tree branch
- paper, marker

All About Winter

Show your child a barren tree branch. Explain: *When the InvestiGator Club took a walk through Circle Forest to go to the clubhouse, they noticed that the trees all looked like this. Can you tell the time of the year by looking at this branch?*

- Reinforce the concept that trees lose their leaves when winter comes. Invite your child to talk about winter. Ask: *Can you think of other signs of winter?* Make a list as your child suggests ideas such as cold weather, dark skies, frost, snow, ice, mittens, hats, boots, scarves, snowmen, ice skating, and sledding.
- Sing with your child the following song to the tune of "Frère Jacques." Hold hands and circle around as you sing.

*Winter's coming. Winter's coming.
This I know. This I know.
Days are getting colder.
Days are getting shorter.
Cold winds blow.
Here comes snow.*

- Winter is not the same for children everywhere. You might want to visit your library to check out and read aloud one of the following books:

When Winter Comes by Nancy Van Laan
Winter Lullaby by Barbara Seuling



**Mathematics/
Oral Language**

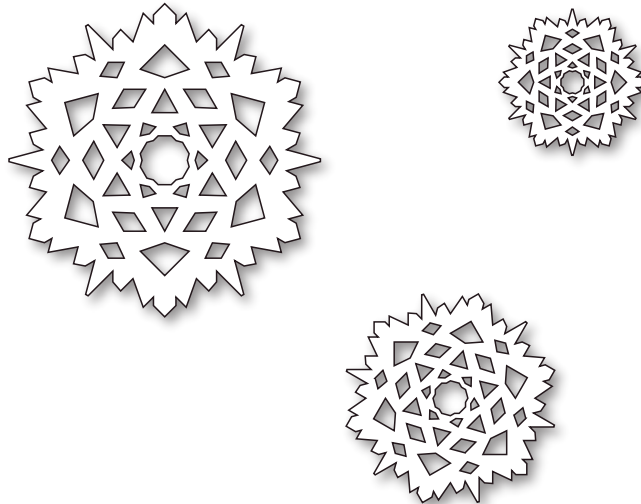
Have your child sort wintry objects and arrange them by size.

Materials

- construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- [Measuring Winter Activity](#)

Measuring Winter

Beforehand cut sets of three wintry objects in different sizes, such as snowballs, snowmen, snowflakes, hats, boots, mittens, and scarves. Explain: *Chuck Wood loves to measure things. He measures when he builds things. He measures things to sort them by size.*



- Mix and display all the cutouts. Pick up an example of each one to identify. Then ask your child to sort the shapes.
- Once the shapes have been sorted, play a game. Start with one set of three shapes. Ask your child to name the shape and show which one is the smallest and which one is the biggest. Then arrange the three from smallest to biggest.
- Repeat with a new set of shapes.
- Print the [Measuring Winter Activity Sheet](#). Have your child look at the three shapes in each row and color either the smallest or the biggest.

Build a snowman with paper circles, and sing about this wintry friend.

Materials

- picture of snowman (optional)
- white drawing paper
- scissors
- construction paper
- glue
- markers or crayons

Build a Snowman

Tell your child: *Great Auntie Lu is a wonderful artist. She is especially good at making sculptures. Great Auntie can make any kind of shape using clay, wood, sand, or even snow!*

- Talk about making a snowman. If you live in an area that does not get snow, show a picture of one.
- Draw three different-sized circles on white paper. Provide scissors for your child to cut out the three circles to build a snowman.
- Your child can paste the circles on colored construction paper. Guide your child to place the circles by size, putting the biggest circle on the bottom and the smallest circle on top.
- Next your child can use markers or crayons to add eyes, nose, mouth, hat, scarf, and branches for arms with mittens on the ends.
- Teach the following song about building a snowman. Sing to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Invite your child to point to each part on the snowman as you sing.

*I roll a big, big ball of snow.
I make it nice and round.
I will build a big snowman.
I'll put it on the ground.*

*A second ball not quite as big
Is placed right on the top.
I still need one more ball to go
So I cannot yet stop.*

*Now I roll the smallest ball.
It will be the head.
I add two eyes, a nose, and mouth.
I'll use a scarf that's red.*

*I'll add two branches for his arms,
A mitten on each end.
I'll put a hat upon his head.
Now meet my snowman friend!*



- Say pairs of words from the song. Ask your child to identify which word pairs rhyme and which do not. Start with these: *round/ground, head/red, ball/mouth, top/stop, big/go, end/friend.*
- Your child might enjoy hearing a story about a snowman friend. Look for these classics in your library:

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

The Snowman by Raymond Briggs (This book is wordless, so invite your child to tell the story in his or her own words.)

Science/Oral Language/ Movement

Help your child discover what skating on ice is like.

Materials

- metal pan
- small toy people figures
- real ice skates or photo of ice skates
- mittens or scarves
- recording of "skating" music



Skating Rink

Explain: *Dilly and her brother JT like to investigate to see what happens when water gets very, very cold. Ask your child what happens when water freezes.*

- Fill a metal pan with water, and place it in a freezer. Talk about what will happen to the water after a while. Have children guess how long it will take before the water freezes and turns into ice.
- Once the ice forms, examine the ice together. Feel how cold and slippery it is.
- Place toy figures on the ice and give them a push across the pan to mimic a skating rink. If your child has been to a real skating rink, talk about what it was like. Show your child what ice skates look like. Use a photograph or real skates if available. Explain how people glide across the ice.
- Play skating music. Together glide around in a circle as if at a rink. Wear mittens or scarves.
- Look for the book *Ice Is...Whee!* by Carol Greene in your library.

Science/Movement

Mold friends or family members into imaginary ice sculptures.

Materials

- recording of music

Ice Statues

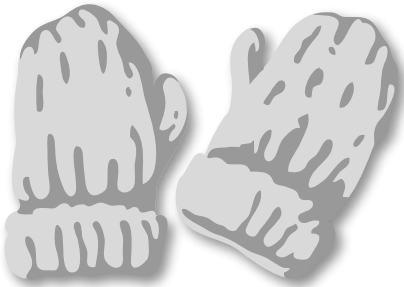
Explain that JT likes to learn about places all over the world. He has learned that some places on his globe get cold enough to have lots of ice and snow. In these places, people carve ice statues outdoors.

- Do this activity with family members or a group of your child's friends. Have everyone pretend they are outdoors in one of these very cold places.
- Have everyone work with a partner. One person can mold the partner into an ice statue by positioning the body, arms, head, and legs.
- Ask each person to explain what his or her ice statue shows. Then play music and have everyone dance with their statues as they remain "frozen."
- When the music stops, have the statues "melt" and become human again.
- Then have partners switch roles and repeat the activity.

Play a mitten-matching game.

Materials

- construction paper
- scissors
- markers or crayons
- objects that come in pairs
- [Matching Mittens Activity Sheet](#)



Matching Mittens

Beforehand cut pairs of mittens from different colors of construction paper. Use markers to draw unique designs on each pair. While your child is occupied, place one mitten from each pair in plain view. Then begin the game!

- Discuss the concept of pairs by showing objects that come in pairs such as shoes, socks, gloves, and mittens. Talk about why it is a problem when one of the two items is missing from a pair.
- Explain: *Bruno Buzzbee is great at helping the other members of the InvestiGator Club find things they have lost because he can fly above and look down. Let's see how good you are at finding things.*
- Show one mitten from each pair to your child. Ask: *What color is this mitten? What shapes do you see on it? Can you find another mitten just like this one?*
- Tell your child to walk around the room to look for the missing mitten.
- Repeat with each mitten. Chant this rhyme as your child searches to make each new mitten match:

One, two, three

Be a busy bee.

Find the missing mitten

That's like the one you see!

- Print the [Matching Mittens Activity Sheet](#). Have your child finish drawing the second mitten in each pair to match the first mitten. Then have him or her color each mitten in a pair the same color.
- Look for the following books about mittens in your library.

The Mystery of the Missing Red Mitten by Steven Kellogg

The Mitten by Jan Brett

Sponge paint to create snow scenes.

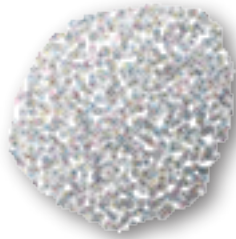
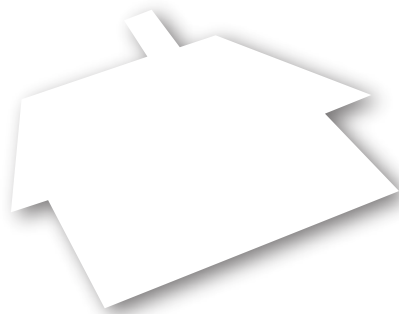
Materials

- blue or black construction paper
- small sponges
- clothespin to hold the sponge (if desired)
- white tempera paint, paint trays
- paper towels
- poster-board cutouts of house, tree, animal, person

Snow Scenes

Beforehand cut basic shapes such as a house, tree, animal, and person from poster board or heavy paper. Make each one large enough so it can be placed on construction paper and your child can sponge paint around it.

- Tell your child: *Great Auntie Lu taught Dilly and JT how to paint using sponges. They thought it was great fun and you will too!*
- Show each shape, and ask your child to identify what it is. Explain that the shapes will be used to do an art project.
- Demonstrate how to place the cutout in the center of a sheet of black or blue construction paper and hold down the shape with one hand. With the other hand, show how to dip a sponge into white paint, wipe off the excess paint on paper towels, and then sponge-paint on the construction paper around the cutout. Remove the cutout; the shape appears to be in a snowstorm.
- Have your child make his or her own snow scene following your directions. Give help as needed.



Help your child observe and chart winter feeding habits of birds.

Materials

- pine cones
- sticks
- peanut butter
- plastic knives
- bird seed
- needles and thread
- popcorn
- cranberries
- fruit slices
- bird books
- [For the Birds Activity Sheet](#)
- crayons or markers

For the Birds

Explain that the members of the InvestiGator Club like to observe birds. They see birds by the water, in the forest, and in the city. Birds must hunt for their own food every day. During winter, birds especially need our help to find food.

- Talk about the kinds of foods birds like to eat, such as seeds and fruit.
- Invite your child to help spread peanut butter on pine cones and roll in bird seed, string cranberries and popcorn, and put fruit slices on sticks.
- If there is enough snow where you live, help your child build a snowman and decorate it with accessories made from food. If there is no snow, set up a bird-feeding station. Place food for the birds in an area where you know they will feed and where your child can observe without disturbing them.
- Have your child observe the birds that come to feed each day and what they eat. Make bird books available to use to identify the birds you see.
- Print the [For the Birds Activity Sheet](#) to provide a way to record your child's observations. Read the chart together and explain that every day you will watch for birds. Tell your child to draw a picture of one bird that is seen each day and draw what the bird eats. Then ask your child to describe what he or she saw.
- If you want to continue the activity for more than one week, print additional charts.
- You also might want to share the book *Have You Seen Birds?* by Joanne Oppenheim.

Learn and sing about
Groundhog Day.

Materials

- pictures of animals that hibernate
- large carton that a child can fit inside (optional)
- flashlight

Groundhog Day

Explain to your child that Chuck Wood is special because he belongs to a family of animals that sleeps during the winter. Say: *Now we will learn more about animals that sleep in winter and what happens on a day called Groundhog Day.*

- Name animals that sleep or hibernate during winter. Show pictures of these animals if available. The list might include gophers, bees, bats, frogs, snakes, chipmunks, wasps, and groundhogs (also known as woodchucks).
- Then explain what February 2, or Groundhog Day, is all about. Share the folklore: The groundhog comes out of his burrow. If he sees his shadow, he is scared and runs back in—and there will be six more weeks of winter. If he does not see his shadow, an early spring is on its way.
- Teach your child the following song to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot.”

*I’m a little groundhog, living in the ground.
I wake up and take a look around.
If I see my shadow, I hide away.
Six weeks of winter are here to stay.*

*I’m a little groundhog, living in the ground.
I wake up and take a look around.
If I see no shadow, I will stay.
Spring is early, so I can play.*

- Use a large carton or have your child scoot under a table to pretend to be the groundhog. Sing the song again. Have your child pop out of the carton or from under the table during the first verse. After the first verse, your child hides inside again. After the second verse, your child climbs out.
- Create a shadow during the first verse by aiming a flashlight at your child. During the second verse, use bright overhead lights to eliminate the shadow.



Name _____

Measuring Winter



Color the **smallest**.



Color the **biggest**.



Investigation: Sensational Seasons/Part 3

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Name _____

Matching Mittens

Look at the first mitten. Make the second mitten look the same.
Color both mittens the same color.



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Name _____

For the Birds

Watch for birds each day. Draw what you see.

Day	Bird I See	Food It Eats
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

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