

TEXAS



EDITION

# Theme Guide

*The Sky  
Above Me*



**Ci**rcle  
**PRE-K**  
**CURRICULUM**

by the  
**Children's Learning Institute**

SAMPLE

**CiRCLe**  
**PRE-K**  
**CURRICULUM**

*by the*  
**Children's Learning Institute**



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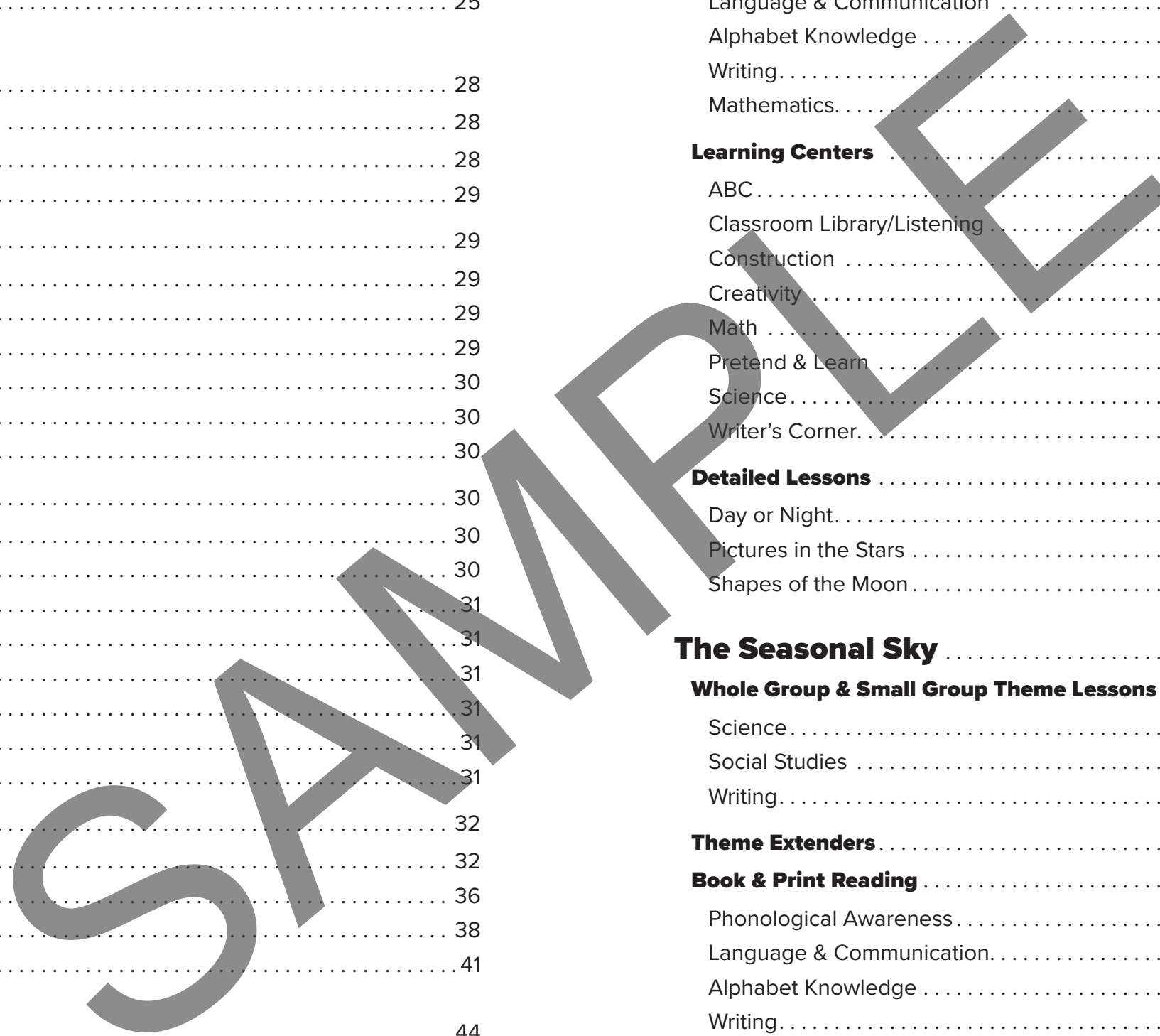
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## Theme Guide Overview

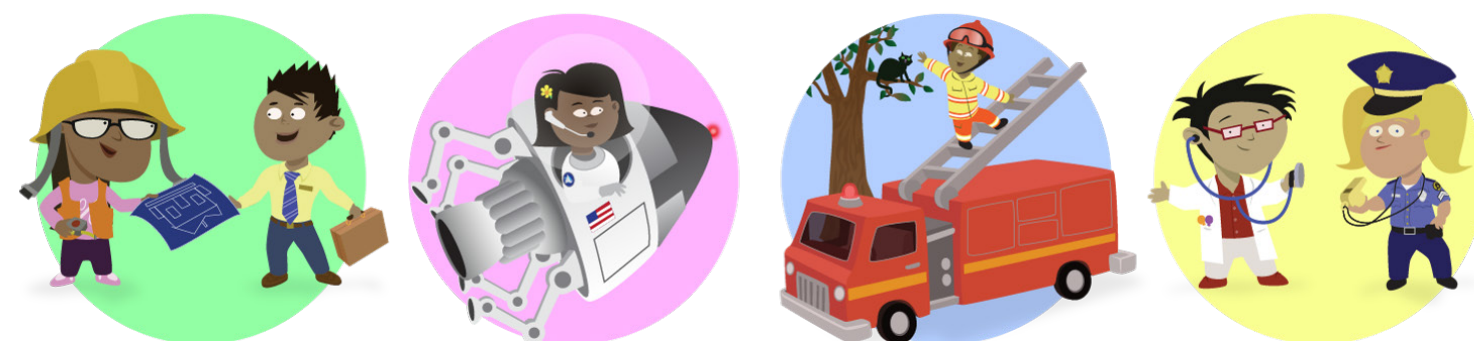
Themes provide rich opportunities for children to make lasting learning connections to a specific topic. They foster a fun and engaging learning environment that encourages children to use new vocabulary in authentic and meaningful ways.

*Theme Guides* work in partnership with the *Scope and Sequence* to organize meaningful, hands-on lessons and experiences around a common theme. The *Theme Guide* offers guidance for integrating theme vocabulary, books, and activities with the whole group and small group skills and lessons indicated on the weekly *Scope and Sequence*. Supplemental whole group and small group lessons directly connected to the theme are provided, along with recommendations for adding thematic materials and activities to supplement existing center materials. This curriculum is comprised of a variety of resources designed to support teachers' weekly planning and delivery of theme-embedded instruction.

Each theme addresses a set of topics, or subthemes, captured each week. Based on the needs and background knowledge of the children in your classroom, you can adjust the time spent on the different topics. For example, you may plan to spend only three days focusing on a particular topic to allow more time with another topic.

*Theme Guides* are flexibly designed to allow them to be used in any order, or teachers may follow a suggested sequence.

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## Suggested Theme Sequence

Start the school year with Welcome to Pre-K!—an integrated *Scope and Sequence* and *Theme Guide*. Beginning with week 3, themes can be used in any order or teachers may follow the suggested sequence.

| Theme                   | Topics  | Scope & Sequence |
|-------------------------|---|------------------|
| I'm Me! I'm Special!    | My Home and Family<br>My Amazing Body<br>My Five Senses<br>My Important Feelings  | Weeks 3-6        |
| All Around My Community | Places in My Community<br>People and Jobs in My Community<br>Getting Around in My Community<br>Construction in My Community | Weeks 7-10       |
| It's Harvest Time!      | Signs of Fall Harvest<br>Harvesting Crops<br>Bringing the Harvest Home  | Weeks 11-13      |
| The Sky Above Me        | The Cloudy Sky<br>The Sunny Sky<br>The Night Sky<br>The Seasonal Sky  | Weeks 14-17      |
| Animals All Around      | Animal Bodies and Movements<br>Animal Homes and Habitats<br>Animal Babies and Diets<br>Animal Adaptations and Habits        | Weeks 18-21      |
| I'm Healthy! I'm Safe!  | My Safe and Active Body<br>My Safe and Healthy Eating Habits<br>My Healthy Body and Teeth                                   | Weeks 22-24      |
| Get Moving!             | Moving Through Air<br>Moving on Land<br>Moving on Water   | Weeks 25-27      |
| The Earth Around Me     | Land All Around<br>Plants All Around<br>Water All Around<br>Caring All Around   | Weeks 28-31      |
| Creepy Crawly Critters  | Critter Bodies and Movements<br>Critter Homes and Habitats<br>Critter Life Cycle and Diet<br>Critter Adaptations and Habits | Weeks 32-35      |

## Theme Guide Components

### Whole Group and Small Group Theme Lessons

Whole group and small group lessons directly support each theme topic and are intended to supplement the weekly *Scope and Sequence*. When using the suggested theme sequence, you will see that some lessons are indicated in both the *Theme Guide* and the *Scope and Sequence* because they match the target skill(s) for the week and also support the theme. Following the suggested theme sequence offers the benefit of aligning weekly *Scope and Sequence* Target Lessons with theme content.

### Theme Extenders

The Theme Extenders section includes suggestions on how to provide meaningful connections between the learning objectives in the weekly *Scope & Sequence* and the learning objectives in the *Theme Guide*. Begin by looking at the *Scope and Sequence* for skills and lessons to be taught. Compare the *Scope and Sequence* lessons to the Theme Extenders for ideas on how to capture elements of the theme in the *Scope and Sequence* lessons. A variety of Theme Extender ideas are included, and not all ideas will match the focus skill(s) of the *Scope and Sequence*. Select carefully when planning.

### Learning Centers

The *Theme Guide* provides recommendations for eight key learning centers. Each center provides a different purpose for learning:

1. ABC
2. Construction
3. Creativity
4. Library & Listening
5. Math
6. Pretend & Learn
7. Science
8. Writer's Corner

Each theme topic provides activity choices to reinforce and extend learning objectives. The suggested activities are included to assist you with adding to or replacing current center choices. When planning, incorporate lesson activities from the *Theme Guide* as well as the *Scope and Sequence*. Provide choices of activities in centers, and allow children to create, experiment, discover, and ask questions about the activities of their choosing.

Teach new activities during circle time (whole group) or small groups prior to adding to centers. This gives supported opportunities to observe, explore, and practice using new materials in a purposeful way before working independently. You can also plan time to join children in centers with new activities to promote higher levels of learning, language, and engagement. Incorporate theme-related books and writing materials into centers. For more information, refer to the [Writing in Centers](#) lesson in the CIRCLE Activity Collection at [www.CLIEngage.org](http://www.CLIEngage.org).




### More About Pretend and Learn

The *Theme Guide* provides suggestions on how to transform the Pretend and Learn center into a completely new environment inspired by the theme. This change of environment will provide opportunities for play-based, experiential learning while also facilitating children's use of new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Model and role-play the many interactions and experiences possible in that environment. Read books about the environment to help children build background knowledge and learn new vocabulary to integrate into their play. For more

information, refer to [Building Language through the Dramatic Play Center](#) in the CIRCLE Activity Collection.

The Pretend and Learn Center is a play environment that can provide rich opportunities for children to practice and apply new language in a low-risk setting. This can be especially beneficial for children learning English. Thoughtful planning and preparation of this center can facilitate language experiences that benefit English learners and all children.

## Theme Guide Icons

-  Indicates **notes or tips** for preparing and delivering lessons or activities.
-  Identifies lessons with **video examples**. Visit the digital lesson in the CIRCLE Activity Collection at [www.CLIEngage.org](http://www.CLIEngage.org) to view these lessons in action with children.
-  Indicates **songs and rhymes** which can be found in *The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays, and Chants* by Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller. Most songs and rhymes can also be found through an online search.

## Getting Started with Themes

1. **Using both the *Theme Guide* and the *Scope and Sequence*, strategically embed the theme topics into whole group, small group, and center experiences:**
  - read alouds
  - focus vocabulary
  - lesson activities
  - manipulatives
2. **Prepare and collect materials needed for your theme plans:**
  - books
  - props and decor
  - manipulatives
  - print for display and labeling
  - letter wall vocabulary cards with pictures
3. **Adjust the classroom environment to reflect the theme:**
  - Incorporate theme materials into multiple centers
  - Transform the Pretend and Learn center into a theme-related environment
  - Hang theme decor and print around the classroom

## Book Club

The Book Club is an expansive list of narrative and informational texts that complement themes. This resource is unique for each theme and is located at the front of each *Theme Guide*. You may wish to refer to the Book Club list as you gather books from your school and classroom libraries that address theme topics. A short list of suggested read alouds is also included within each theme topic.

## Book Club: The Sky Above Me

| Narrative   |                     |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| English Title   | English Author      | Spanish Title                                       | Spanish Author      |
| <i>All About Weather: A First Weather Book for Kids</i> | Huda Harajli        |   |                     |
| <i>Bear Feels Scared</i>                                | Karma Wilson        |   |                     |
| <i>The Big Storm: A Very Soggy Counting Book</i>        | Nancy Tafuri        |   |                     |
| <i>City Dog, Country Frog</i>                           | Mo Willems          |   |                     |
| <i>Cloudette</i>  | Tom Lichtenheld     |   |                     |
| <i>Flashlight</i> (wordless book)                       | Lizi Boyd           | <i>Flashlight</i> (wordless book)                   | Lizi Boyd           |
| <i>Float</i> (wordless book)                            | Daniel Miyares      | <i>Float</i> (wordless book)                        | Daniel Miyares      |
| <i>Gilberto and the Wind</i>                            | Marie Hall Ets      | <i>Gilberto y la viento</i>                         | Marie Hall Ets      |
| <i>Good Day, Good Night</i>                             | Margaret Wise Brown | <i>Buen día, buenas noches</i>                      | Margaret Wise Brown |
| <i>Good Morning / Buenos Días</i>                       | Meritxell Martí     | <i>Good Morning / Buenos Días</i>                   | Meritxell Martí     |
| <i>Good Night / Buenas Noches</i>                       | Meritxell Martí     | <i>Good Night / Buenas Noches</i>                   | Meritxell Martí     |
| <i>Good Night, Gorilla</i>                              | Peggy Rathmann      | <i>Buenas noches, Gorila</i>                        | Peggy Rathmann      |
| <i>Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter</i>                     | Kenard Pak          |   |                     |
| <i>Goodnight Moon 123 / Buenas noches, Luna 123</i>     | Margaret Wise Brown | <i>Goodnight Moon 123 / Buenas noches, Luna 123</i> | Margaret Wise Brown |
| <i>Happy Birthday, Moon</i>                             | Frank Asch          | <i>Feliz cumpleaños, Luna</i>                       | Frank Asch          |
| <i>Hello, World! Weather</i>                            | Jill McDonald       |   |                     |

| Narrative  |                        |  |                   |
|--|------------------------|--|-------------------|
| English Title                                      | English Author         | Spanish Title                                      | Spanish Author    |
| <i>How to Catch a Star</i>                         | Oliver Jeffers         | <i>Cómo atrapar una estrella</i>                   | Oliver Jeffers    |
| <i>I am a Bunny</i>                                | Ole Risom              | <i>Soy un conejito</i>                             | Ole Risom         |
| <i>In the Clouds</i>                               | Gilberto Mariscal      | <i>Siempre estoy en las nubes</i>                  | Gilberto Mariscal |
| <i>In the Town All Year 'Round</i>                 | Rotraut Susanne Berner |  |                   |
| <i>It Looked Like Spilt Milk</i>                   | Charles Shaw           |  |                   |
| <i>It's Raining</i>                                | Gail Gibbons           |  |                   |
| <i>Let It Rain</i>                                 | Maryann Cocca-Leffler  |  |                   |
| <i>Little Cloud</i>                                | Eric Carle             | <i>Pequeña nube</i>                                | Eric Carle        |
| <i>Mae Among the Stars</i>                         | Roda Ahmed             |  |                   |
| <i>Matthew and the Color of the Sky</i>            | Rocío Martínez         | <i>Matías y el color del cielo</i>                 | Rocío Martínez    |
| <i>Moonbear's Shadow</i>                           | Frank Asch             |  |                   |
| <i>Moonbear's Skyfire</i>                          | Frank Asch             |  |                   |
| <i>My Shadow</i>                                   | Robert Louis Stevenson |  |                   |
| <i>Night Animals</i>                               | Gianna Marino          | <i>Animales Nocturnos</i>                          | Gianna Marino     |
| <i>Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me</i>            | Eric Carle             | <i>Papá, por favor, bájame la luna</i>             | Eric Carle        |
| <i>Picture the Sky</i>                             | Barbara Reid           |  |                   |
| <i>Quinto, Day and Night / Quinto, Día y noche</i> | Ina Cumpiano           | <i>Quinto, Day and Night / Quinto, Día y noche</i> | Ina Cumpiano      |
| <i>Rain!</i>                                       | Linda Ashman           | <i>¡Lluvia!</i>                                    | Linda Ashman      |
| <i>Rain</i>  | Carol Thompson         | <i>Lluvia</i>                                      | Carol Thompson    |

| Narrative                             |                               |   |                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| English Title                         | English Author                | Spanish Title                               | Spanish Author      |
| <i>Rain</i>                           | Sam Usher                     |   |                     |
| <i>The Rain Came Down</i>             | David Shannon                 | <i>Y siguió lloviendo</i>                   | David Shannon       |
| <i>A Rainbow of My Own</i>            | Don Freeman                   |   |                     |
| <i>Raindrop, Plop!</i>                | Wendy Cheyette Lewison        |   |                     |
| <i>Shapes in the Sky</i>              | Josepha Sherman               |   |                     |
| <i>Skip Through the Seasons</i>       | Stella Blackstone             | <i>Un recorrido por las estaciones</i>      | Stella Blackstone   |
| <i>Sky Color</i>                      | Peter H. Reynolds             |   |                     |
| <i>Snow</i>                           | Sam Usher                     |   |                     |
| <i>The Snowy Day</i>                  | Ezra Jack Keats               | <i>Un día de nieve</i>                      | Ezra Jack Keats     |
| <i>Stars</i>                          | Mary Lyn Ray and Marla Frazee |   |                     |
| <i>Storm is Coming</i>                | Heather Tekavec               |   |                     |
| <i>Sun</i>                            | Carol Thompson                | <i>Sol</i>                                  | Carol Thompson      |
| <i>Sun</i>                            | Sam Usher                     |   |                     |
| <i>Sunshine and Snowballs</i>         | Margaret Wise Brown           | <i>Rayos de sol y copos de nieve</i>        | Margaret Wise Brown |
| <i>Touch the Brightest Star</i>       | Christie Matheson             |   |                     |
| <i>Tree: Seasons Come, Seasons Go</i> | Britta Teckentrup             | <i>Las 4 estaciones desde el gran árbol</i> | Britta Teckentrup   |
| <i>One Rainy Day</i>                  | Valeri Gorbachev              | <i>Un Día de Lluvia</i>                     | Valeri Gorbachev    |
| <i>The Way Back Home</i>              | Oliver Jeffers                | <i>De vuelta a casa</i>                     | Oliver Jeffers      |
| <i>The Weather</i>                    | Gladys Rosa-Mendoza           | <i>El tiempo</i>                            | Gladys Rosa-Mendoza |



| Narrative                    |                |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| English Title                | English Author | Spanish Title                      | Spanish Author                |
| <i>What Kind of Weather?</i> | Dona Rice      | <i>¿Qué tipo de tiempo?</i>        | Dona Rice                     |
| <i>The Wind Blew</i>         | Pat Hutchinson |                                    |                               |
| <i>Worm Weather</i>          | Jean Taft      |                                    |                               |
|                              |                | <i>Las estaciones</i>              | Amy White                     |
|                              |                | <i>Linus y las estaciones</i>      | Susanna Isern y Glòria Falcón |
|                              |                | <i>Luna</i>                        | Antonio Rubio                 |
|                              |                | <i>Matías dibuja el sol</i>        | Rocío Martínez                |
|                              |                | <i>Matías y el color del cielo</i> | Rocío Martínez                |

| Informational                        |                       |                                  |                |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| English Title                        | English Author        | Spanish Title                    | Spanish Author |
| <i>All the Colors of the Rainbow</i> | Allan Fowler          |                                  |                |
| <i>Changing Seasons</i>              | Sian Smith            |                                  |                |
| <i>Clouds</i>                        | Erin Edison           | <i>Nubes/Clouds</i>              | Erin Edison    |
| <i>A Cloudy Day</i>                  | Robin Nelson          | <i>Un día nublado</i>            | Robin Nelson   |
| <i>Day and Night</i>                 | Robin Nelson          | <i>Día y noche</i>               | Robin Nelson   |
| <i>Explore My World: Clouds</i>      | Marfe Ferguson Delano |                                  |                |
| <i>I Feel Fall Weather</i>           | Mari Schuh            |                                  |                |
| <i>Let's Explore the Stars</i>       | Walt K. Moon          | <i>Exploremos las estrellas</i>  | Walt K. Moon   |
| <i>Light Makes a Rainbow</i>         | Sharon Coan           | <i>La luz forma un arco iris</i> | Sharon Coan    |

| Informational                               |                             |  |                     |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|
| English Title                               | English Author              | Spanish Title                                | Spanish Author      |
| <i>The Little Raindrop</i>                  | Joanna Gray                 |  |                     |
| <i>Me and my Shadow: A Book about Light</i> | Buffy Silverman             | <i>Mi sombra y yo: Un libro sobre la luz</i> | Buffy Silverman     |
| <i>Moon</i>                                 | Melanie Mitchell            |  |                     |
| <i>The Moon</i>                             | Carmen Bredeson             |  |                     |
| <i>The Moon</i>                             | Martha E. H. Rustad         | <i>La luna</i>                               | Martha E. H. Rustad |
| <i>The Moon</i>                             | Thomas K. Adamson           | <i>La luna</i>                               | Thomas K. Adamson   |
| <i>The Night Sky</i>                        | Robin Nelson                | <i>El cielo de noche</i>                     | Robin Nelson        |
| <i>Our Stars</i>                            | Anne Rockwell               |  |                     |
| <i>Rainbow</i>                              | Marion Dane Bauer           |  |                     |
| <i>Rainbows</i>                             | Martha E. H. Rustad         |  |                     |
| <i>Rainbows</i>                             | Precious McKenzie           | <i>Arco iris</i>                             | Precious McKenzie   |
| <i>Raindrops Roll</i>                       | April Pulley Sayre          |  |                     |
| <i>Seasons</i>                              | Robin Nelson                | <i>Estaciones</i>                            | Robin Nelson        |
| <i>The Seasons</i>                          | William Rice                | <i>Las estaciones</i>                        | William Rice        |
| <i>Shadows</i>                              | Sharon Coan                 | <i>Sombras</i>                               | Sharon Coan         |
| <i>A Stroll Through the Seasons</i>         | Kay Barnham                 |  |                     |
| <i>Summer Days and Nights</i>               | Wong Herbert Yee            |  |                     |
| <i>Sun</i>                                  | Marion Dane Bauer           |  |                     |
| <i>The Sun and the Moon</i>                 | Carolyn Cinami DeCristofano |  |                     |
| <i>The Sunlight</i>                         | Erin Edison                 | <i>Luz del sol</i>                           | Erin Edison         |
| <i>A Sunny Day</i>                          | Robin Nelson                |  |                     |

| Informational                                |                          |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| English Title                                | English Author           | Spanish Title                                    | Spanish Author           |
| <i>Weather (National Geographic Readers)</i> | Kristin Baird Rattini    |  |                          |
| <i>Weather (TIME for Kids)</i>               | Dona Herweck Rice        | <i>El tiempo (TIME for Kids)</i>                 | Dona Herweck Rice        |
| <i>Weather in Spring</i>                     | Martha E. H. Rustad      |  |                          |
| <i>Weather in Winter</i>                     | Jenny Fretland VanVoorst | <i>El clima en el invierno</i>                   | Jenny Fretland VanVoorst |
| <i>What Does Sunlight Do?</i>                | Jennifer Boothroyd       |  |                          |
| <i>What is the Weather?</i>                  | Nellie Wilder            | <i>¿Cómo está el tiempo?</i>                     | Nellie Wilder            |
| <i>What Makes a Shadow?</i>                  | Clyde Robert Bulla       |  |                          |
| <i>What the Sun Can Do (TIME for Kids)</i>   | Sharon Coan              | <i>Lo que puede hacer el sol (TIME for Kids)</i> | Sharon Coan              |
| <i>What's the Weather Today?</i>             | Allan Fowler             |  |                          |
| <i>Who Likes Rain?</i>                       | Wong Herbert Yee         |  |                          |
| <i>Wind</i>                                  | Erin Edison              | <i>Viento</i>                                    | Erin Edison              |
|  |                          | <i>Lluvia (Learn to Read)</i>                    | Rozanne Williams         |



# The Sky Above Me

Suggested time: 4 weeks

## Purpose:

This theme unfolds across four topics:

- 1 The Cloudy Sky
- 2 The Sunny Sky
- 3 The Night Sky
- 4 The Seasonal Sky

Topics in *The Sky Above Me* focus on the importance of each object in the sky and how these objects impact our lives. Children will investigate the different types of clouds and the weather they bring, the important role of the sun in providing light and heat for the Earth, how the moon lights up the night sky, and seasonal changes that occur each year.

Depending on the needs of the children in your class, the length of time that you spend on each topic may vary. For example, it may take a little longer to teach the essential ideas in “The Sunny Sky” than those in “The Seasonal Sky.” Adjust and plan for what will work best in your class.

## Pretend and Learn Center:

During this theme, the Pretend and Learn Center will be transformed into a TV station’s weather reporting stage. Guidance has been provided for creating fun and meaningful play experiences to reinforce vocabulary and key ideas about the sky, weather, and seasons.



# The Cloudy Sky

## Essential Ideas:

- Clouds are made of tiny droplets of water.
- Clouds can be seen during the day and during the night.
- The wind moves clouds and can change their shapes.
- Different types of clouds bring different types of weather.

## Whole Group & Small Group Theme Lessons

Select from these whole and small group lessons to supplement those indicated on the *Scope and Sequence*.

### Math

- **Recording the Weather:** This activity can be adapted to focus on any kind of weather. You might also collect weather data every day throughout the theme, graphing each week or at the end of the theme.

TPG V.A.3, V.A.5, V.A.8, V.E.2

### Science

- **Cloud in a Jar**
- **Head in the Clouds**
- Read a book about weather and discuss the types of weather clouds can bring. Create a list, with pictures, of types of weather discussed. Examples: wind, snow, rain, thunder, fog
- ★ Children learning English can benefit by repeating the names of various types of weather, while looking at the pictures. This can be turned into a game after teaching the words:

point at a picture and have children name the type of weather, or vice versa.

- **Wind Investigation:** One at a time, place different objects in front of a small table fan to determine if the items will move in the wind. Discuss the characteristics of the objects that are easily moved by the wind versus the objects that do not move in the wind, and how clouds can also be moved by the wind. Examples: rock, marker, piece of wood, paper, feather, leaf

- ★ Provide pictures of each object in the investigation, yes/thumbs up header card, and no/thumbs down header card. Display each object on a chart under the correct header card to show whether it was moved by the fan.

TPG VI.A.1, VI.A.2, VI.A.4, VI.C.2, VI.C.3, VIII.A.1, VIII.B.1

### Social Studies

- Explain the job of a meteorologist and elaborate by showing pictures or short video clips of meteorologists in action. Point out the different tools that meteorologists use. Examples: maps, pointers, thermometers
- ★ In selecting clips, be sensitive to children's past experiences with weather. For example, if children have experienced hurricanes or tornadoes, do not include clips that show extreme weather events.

- Have children take turns role-playing as meteorologists, using appropriate props and materials. Refer to the Pretend and Learn Center information for ideas.

TPG VII.B.3, VIII.C.1

## Theme Extenders

Consider ways to use theme-related materials and vocabulary during whole group and small group lessons from the *Scope and Sequence*. Suggestions are included below.

### Book & Print Reading

#### Suggested Read Aloud Titles:

- *Cloudette* by Tom Lichtenheld
- *Explore My World—Clouds* by Marfe Ferguson Delano
- *The Little Raindrop* by Joanna Gray
- *What's the Weather Today?* by Allan Fowler
- *The Wind Blew* by Pat Hutchins
- ★ See Book Club list for a more expansive selection of theme-related books.

#### Read Together:

- Copy "Cloud" onto chart paper. Read and reread it over several days, having children act it out. Use a pointer to track the words while reading.
- ★ Add a picture for at least one word per line to help children remember the words as you read together.

TPG II.A.1, II.B.1, II.D.1, III.A.1, III.A.3, III.D.3

### Phonological Awareness

Use theme-related vocabulary with the activities from the *Scope and Sequence* to practice PA skills.

Children can:

- Blend onset and rime  
Examples: cl-oud, w-ind, st-orm
- Blend phonemes  
Examples: s-k-y, r-ai-n

- ★ When pronouncing phonemes, remember to pronounce each sound rather than each letter. Practice saying sounds crisply and cleanly, without an added schwa (an uh) after the sound.

TPG III.B.8, III.B.9

### Language & Communication

#### Vocabulary:

|         |               |
|---------|---------------|
| cloud   | meteorologist |
| rain    | storm         |
| sky     | wind          |
| weather |               |
| droplet |               |
| float   |               |

## Songs, Rhymes, & Chants:

From *The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays and Chants* by Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller

- “April Clouds”
- “Cloud”
- “It’s Raining”
- “Itsy Bitsy Spider”
- “A Thunderstorm”

## Other Activities:

- Give clues about a specific type of weather for children to name. If needed, display pictures to use as hints. Example: “I come out of the clouds and make the ground wet” (rain).

TPG I.C.2, II.A.1, II.D.1, VIII.B.1

## Alphabet Knowledge

- Raindrop Match: Draw 2-3 clouds on construction paper and label each with a different review letter. Draw and cut out raindrops labeled with corresponding uppercase and lowercase letters. Children can then match raindrops to the correct clouds.

- ★ Encourage verbalization of letter names and sounds as children sort and match letters.

TPG III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.3

## Learning Centers

Suggestions are included below to assist with adding to or replacing current center choices. Any activities from the *Scope and Sequence* may also be added to centers.

### ABC

- Add Raindrop Match (see Theme Extenders for description) after introducing to class.
- Provide letters written on raindrop or cloud cutouts, to be used in playing

## Writing

For modeled/shared writing lessons, use topics related to clouds, rain, and weather.

Examples:

- Looking at the clouds and finding different shapes or objects
- Playing outside/inside on a rainy day
- Flying a kite or windsock on a windy day

TPG IV.B.1, IV.B.2

## Mathematics

Provide theme-related opportunities to practice target math skills from the *Scope and Sequence*.

For example, children can:

- Create shape clouds using stretched or unrolled large cotton balls
- Sort clouds formed like basic shapes
- Create patterns or sort using cutouts of weather icons such as clouds, raindrops, or lightning

TPG V.C.1, V.C.2, V.E.1, V.E.3

## Classroom Library/Listening

- Provide a variety of narrative and informational texts about clouds and weather. Be sure to include books from read alouds.
- Encourage children to look through books to locate and name different types of weather that clouds can bring.
- ★ Attach different weather pictures to craft sticks for children to select and use as visual reminders when locating and naming types of weather.

- ★ Place the chart of “Cloud” in the center so children can read and act it out. Provide a pointer to track print.

TPG II.B.1, II.D.1, III.A.1, III.A.2, III.A.3

## Construction

Cloud Scenes:

- Provide materials to construct different weather scenes using white and gray cotton balls (clouds or snow), yellow pipe cleaners (lightning), and blue or clear gems or snap cubes (rain or snow).
- Include pictures of different types of weather for children to reference.
- Provide writing materials so children can draw weather scenes they have created, if desired.

TPG I.C.2, I.C.7, II.B.2, IV.A.1, VII.C.1, IX.B.1, IX.B.2

## Creativity

- Rainy-Day Umbrella: Provide paper plates cut in half, markers, paint, pipe cleaners, and other craft items for children to create and decorate rainy-day umbrellas.
- Windsock: Provide markers, crayons, construction paper, paper streamers, glue sticks, tape, and yarn. Demonstrate how to decorate and personalize the construction paper, roll it, and tape it. Then show how to attach streamers to

the bottom with glue sticks. Yarn may be used for a handle at the top.

- ★ Allow children to take their windsocks outside to explore how they move in the wind.

TPG VIII.A.1, VIII.A.2, IX.B.1

## Math

Add math activities from Theme Extenders once they have been introduced to the class.

TPG V.C.1, V.C.2, V.E.1, V.E.3

## Pretend & Learn

Props to create a TV station at a weather channel:

- microphone
- keyboard
- video camera (real or pretend)
- pointers
- dresses
- dress shirts and ties/blazers
- glasses
- notepads and pens
- weather books
- large map
- five-day forecast board
- ★ The board can be created by using painters’ tape on an area of wall or white board. Section off five rectangles and label with the days of the week.
- cloudy, stormy, windy, rainy, foggy, and snowy weather icons to attach to map and forecast board
- ★ Use hook-and-loop fasteners so children can easily attach and detach icons, as desired.

## Activities:

Children can role-play as people working at the TV station. Possibilities include:

- Camera Operators: setting up microphones and cameras, filming meteorologists giving weather

name games and practicing alphabet activities from the *Scope and Sequence*.

TPG III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.3, IV.C.1

reports, moving camera to follow meteorologists

- Meteorologists: dressing in professional clothing, using microphones to give weather reports, changing weather icons on map and forecast board, writing or typing out notes for weather reports
- Director: giving instructions to meteorologists and camera operators, telling the meteorologists when to begin/stop reporting, asking meteorologists to give the report a new way  
Examples: Give the report more slowly; use a louder voice.

**TPG** I.C.4, I.C.7, II.B.2, III.A.3, IV.A.1, VII.B.2, VII.B.3, VIII.C.1

## Science

- Add materials from **Head in the Clouds** and **Cloud in a Jar** (see Whole Group and Small Group Lessons) after introducing them to the class.
- ★ Be sure to reinforce appropriate use and safety of materials before placing them in the center.
- Provide books about the shapes of clouds and different cloud types.  
Examples: *Shapes in the Sky* by Josepha Sherman, *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle, *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles Shaw

**TPG** VI.A.1, VI.C.2, VIII.A.1, VIII.B.1

## Writer's Corner

- Prompt children to draw/write about times they played in or got wet in the rain.
- ★ Add topic word cards with pictures to use as references for drawing and adding labels, as appropriate. To add interest, provide pens and pencils with different weather icons glued to the top.  
Examples: raindrop pen, lightning pencil

**TPG** IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.C.2, IV.C.3

# Cloud in a Jar

Children will observe, record, discuss, and identify some of the conditions that cause clouds to form by investigating a model of a cloud in a jar.

## Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines: PK4 Outcomes

- VI.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses characteristics of common objects.
- VI.C.2 Child identifies, observes, describes, and discusses objects in the sky.
- VIII.B.1 Child participates in classroom music activities including singing, playing musical instruments, and moving to rhythms.

## Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

- P-ATL 11. Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.
- P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms, and events).
- P-SCI 2. Child engages in scientific talk.
- P-SCI 4. Child asks a question, gathers information, and makes predictions.
- P-SCI 5. Child plans and conducts investigations and experiments.
- P-SCI 6. Child analyzes results, draws conclusions, and communicates results.

## Materials

- one clear 16- to 32-ounce glass jar with lid
- one-third to one-half cup of hot water (not boiling)
- microwave-safe pitcher/measuring cup
- aerosol hairspray\*
- ice
- paper towels
- blue food coloring (optional)

\*hairspray must be aerosol

## Preparation

Before doing this activity with children, read through the teacher background information, try the activity, and practice the song with hand gestures.

Background information for teachers:

For a cloud to form you need three things:

warm, moist air or water vapor

a cooling process

SAMPLE

a cloud condensation nucleus or something for a water droplet to condense onto like a dust particle (a place for a water droplets to land)

How this activity works:

The warm moist air or water vapor is created when you trap the hot water in the jar. Because warm air rises, the water vapor rises to the top of the jar and meets up with the cool air made by the ice cubes.

The ice cubes represent the cooling process. The top of the jar is like the colder temperatures in the upper atmosphere. As the air gets colder, the tiny droplets of water in the air move slower.

The water droplets attach to or land on even tinier tiny particles of dust, smoke, pollution etc. The microscopic particles in the aerosol hairspray provide a place for water droplets to collect and form cloud droplets. When you have enough cloud droplets, you can see a cloud!

### Directions

**“Did you know that every cloud you see in the sky is made of very tiny droplets of water that attach to even tinier things high up in the sky like dust, smoke, and pollen? But how do those tiny droplets make a cloud?”**

**“First, let’s learn a song about how those water droplets *form*, or make, a cloud.”** See the hand gestures that follow. Teach the song with the hand gestures and sing it several times with the children.

#### “The Cloud Song”

Sung to the tune of “Are You Sleeping?”/“Frère Jacques”

Warm air rises, warm air rises

(Are you sleeping, are you sleeping)

With water in it, with water in it.

(Brother John, Brother John)

As the air gets cooler, droplets land on dust

(Morning bells are ringing, Morning bells are ringing)

To form a cloud. To form a cloud.

(Ding ding dong, ding ding dong)

**“This song tells us a little about how a cloud is made. But let’s think like scientists now. As scientists, we can *investigate* or look closely at things to learn about them. Before scientists investigate something, they have a question they try to answer. Today, as scientists, we will ask this question: How does a cloud form? Say that question with me: How does a cloud form?”**

**“To help us answer our question of how a cloud forms, we will make a cloud in a jar.”**

Before beginning the investigation, explain what happens in real life when a cloud forms. Use the verses from the song and the hand gestures to make this connection.

| You might say  | Song verse   | Hand gestures  |
|--|--|--|
| “The cloud that will form in the jar is like what happens in real life. But it’s very hard to see a real cloud form. In the real world, warm air is carrying water droplets up into the sky every day.”  | Warm air rises, warm air rises<br><br>With water in it, with water in it | hands palm down gently sway back and forth at hip level and rise slowly<br><br>as hands reach chest level, wiggle fingers as hands sway left to right to represent the water droplets in the air |
| “As the warm air rises higher and higher, it starts to cool off because the sky is cold.”  | As the air gets cooler   | cross arms and shiver  |
| “As the warm air cools, the droplets of water start to land on even tinier bits of things floating in the air like smoke and dust.”  | Droplets land on dust  | with hands slightly above head level, pinch index finger tip and thumb together forming an okay sign; alternate one hand and then the other doing this randomly in the air                       |
| “At first you can’t really see a cloud forming. But as more and more water droplets attach to more and more bits of things like smoke and dust in the sky, we begin to see a cloud forming and getting bigger as more droplets of water attach to those tiny bits of things in the air.” | To form a cloud, to form a cloud   | with hands still above head level, cup hands as if holding a beach ball; make slow, exaggerated movements as if the ball is getting blown bigger breath by breath                                |

**“Now let’s do the investigation!”**

**“First, I’ll put some water in this jar. This water is very hot so that the water droplets can rise in the jar. If the water were cold, it would stay at the bottom of the jar.”**

**“Next, I’ll quickly spray hairspray inside the jar and put the lid on. The hairspray will be like the smoke or dust on which tiny droplets of water will form.”**

**“Then, we will put ice on the top of the jar. The ice will make the air in the top of the jar cold like the cold air up high in the sky where we see clouds.”**

**“As we make the cloud in a jar, things will happen quickly. We need to look closely and talk about what we see happening.”**

Investigation Steps:

Pour hot water into the jar.

Quickly spray in hairspray for a count of two seconds and screw on the lid.

Allow children to place several cubes of ice on the lid. Encourage children to make observations. Remind children that as the warm air gets cooler, the water droplets in the air can land on the tiny bits of hairspray.

You might ask:

**“What do you think the air in the jar near the water feels like?”**

**“What do you think the air in the jar near the lid covered in ice feels like?”**

**“What is moving up from the water?”**

**“As the water droplets get cooler, what can they land on?”**

**“Do you see anything moving in the jar? Tell me what you see.”**

**“What do you notice about the cloud forming?”**

After about one minute, open the lid and release the cloud. Allow children to touch the cloud. Avoid blowing on it as it will dissipate quickly.

**“We just saw a cloud form in a jar! This helped us learn about how clouds form in the sky. Let’s sing the song again to help us remember how a cloud is made.”** Lead children in singing “The Cloud Song.”

### Scaffolding

Provide the “just right” amount of help to make it possible for the child to get to the next skill level. Based on a child’s response, you can adjust your level of assistance by simplifying or adding challenge.

Upward scaffold: **“What do you think would happen if we used cold water instead of hot water in this investigation?”**

Upward scaffold: **“What do you think would happen if we didn’t put any ice on top of the jar?”**

Downward scaffold: If the child does not know what a cloud is, point to one outside the window or show a picture on a computer.

Downward scaffold: If a child has difficulty with the concept that warm air rises, pour hot water into one cup and room temperature water in another cup. Have the child put their hands over the openings and feel the difference. Explain that the hand over the hot water feels wet because the warm air rose and stuck to their hand.

### Teacher Tips

How does this model of a cloud forming work? Some of the warm water that you poured into the jar turned to water vapor and rose to the top of the jar. The top of the jar is cool because of the ice on top. This mimics the cold atmosphere in the sky. As the water vapor cools, it condenses. A cloud can form if the tiny droplets of condensation have a particle to attach to, like the tiny particles in the hairspray. Outside of this experiment, water droplets would condense onto microscopic particles of dust, pollen, volcanic ash, pollution, etc.

We recommend doing this investigation during small group time so that all children get an opportunity to see the cloud form. You could sing the song in whole group before moving to small groups. You could do the investigation in whole group if you have help from other adults to pour the water, spray the hairspray, and facilitate the discussion.

Consider reading aloud a book about clouds during a different part of the day or the day before this activity.

*El ciclo del agua/The Water Cycle* by Helen Frost

*Clouds* by Marion D. Bauer

*Water is Water* by Miranda Paul

Consider setting up a smartphone or tablet with a camera and recording what happens inside the jar. This way, children can watch it multiple times as you discuss or before they draw what happened in the jar.

You may choose to repeat the investigation. You can pour the old water back in the measuring cup and reheat it or heat fresh water. For differing results, use cold water or just slightly warmed water. Using warm water or cold water will result in little to no cloud formation. Allow children to experience this and compare the different results.

Warn children that the jar will get hot at the bottom. Explain that you will pour the hot water and handle the jar. Encourage the children to stay still while you are handling the hot water. Cup your hand around the mouth of the jar as you spray the hairspray in order to keep it aimed inside the jar and away from the children. Also, place your hand over the mouth of the jar after spraying until you can quickly put the lid to the jar. Screw the lid securely but not too tightly. At this time, children can help place ice cubes on top of the lid.

If the cloud does not form in the jar, you have either not enough water or too much water, the water is not hot enough, or you did not use enough hairspray.

# Head in the Clouds

Children will observe clouds and recreate the cloud shapes they see.

## Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines: PK4 Outcomes

VI.C.2 Child identifies, observes, describes, and discusses objects in the sky.  
VIII.A.1 Child uses a variety of art materials for sensory experiences and exploration.

## Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

P-ATL 11. Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.  
P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.  
P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms, and events).  
P-SCI 2. Child engages in scientific talk.

## Materials

- paper or science journals
- pencils
- blue or black construction paper
- white paint
- paintbrushes
- glue
- cotton balls

## Preparation

Prepare tables or the art center with materials. If children do not have journals for daily writing, make them a science journal with a few sheets of paper. Become familiar with clouds by reading the table.

| Common cloud types   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Cirrus</i>  | <i>Cumulus</i>   | <i>Stratus</i>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thin and wispy sheets</li> <li>• look white because they are made of ice crystals</li> <li>• a clue that bad weather is coming</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large</li> <li>• fluffy like cotton</li> <li>• bright white</li> <li>• can be thick and tall</li> <li>• flat bottoms</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thick</li> <li>• gray</li> <li>• look like fog</li> <li>• produce light, drizzly rain or snow</li> </ul> |

Note: The prefix *nimbo* and suffix *nimbus* indicate a rain cloud (for example, *cumulonimbus* clouds are large, fluffy rain clouds).

Children have many misconceptions about clouds.

Clouds are made of cotton, wool, or smoke. (They are made of water droplets.)

Rain comes out of holes in clouds.

Rain is clouds sweating.

It rains when clouds melt.

Clouds move because we move.

Clouds come from above the sky.

## Directions

On a day with many *cumulus* clouds, take children outside to observe clouds. If children do not know what a cloud is, point to one and explain to that clouds are the white fluffy things that we see in the sky. Then talk about clouds: **“Look at the clouds! Sometimes we see white fluffy clouds in the sky, but other times we see dark and stormy clouds. Every cloud you see is made of tiny droplets of water. When clouds get too full of water, the water falls from the clouds. We call that falling water, *rain*. Clouds are very important because they bring people, plants, and animals water to drink. Sometimes when you look at clouds, you can see shapes that look like animals or people! Let’s look at the clouds. When you see an interesting cloud, draw it in your science journal. Good scientists always write down or draw what they see. When we get back inside, we’ll do an art project to recreate what you saw!”**

Give children time to look at the clouds, but watch carefully to make sure children aren’t staring into the sun. Model describing what you see using words like *fluffy, thin, feathery, layered, big, small, flat, white, gray*. Circulate and support children as they observe and draw. Even if you don’t see the figure the child is describing, show interest in their ideas. Have children record their observations in their science journals.

Back inside, have children recreate the cloud shapes. Allow time for children to draw and paint, or make a picture with cotton balls. Encourage children to describe the clouds using some of the vocabulary words you modeled. You might ask, **“Elora, is your cloud fluffy or flat? Is it white or gray?”**

While children work, ask questions such as:

**“What do you think makes the clouds move?”**

**“If a cloud keeps getting darker, what do you think will happen next?”**

**“What are clouds made of?”**

**“What does it mean when there are no clouds?”**

**“What happens to clouds at night?”**

Allow time for children to share their observations and artwork in the Author’s Chair. Compare their journal drawing to their final project.



## Scaffolding

Provide the “just right” amount of help to make it possible for the child to get to the next skill level. Based on a child’s response, you can adjust your level of assistance by simplifying or adding challenge.

Upward scaffold: “If there are no clouds in the sky, could it rain?”

Downward scaffold: “Can you point to the clouds you are looking at? Does it look like a shape you know?” or “Do your clouds look like an animal or person?”

## Teacher Tips

Read a book to engage children in learning about clouds.

*Shapes in the Sky* by Josepha Sherman

*It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw

Carefully shredding cotton balls will give the appearance of cirrus clouds.

# Recording the Weather

Children will collect data to create a picture graph.

## Marco de Head Start sobre los resultados del aprendizaje temprano

V.A.3 Child counts up to 10 items and demonstrates cardinality by communicating that the last number indicates how many items are in the set.  
V.A.8 Child compares sets of objects up to 10 using comparative language (e.g., greater/more than, less/fewer than, equal to/same number of...).  
V.E.2 Child collects data and organizes it in a graphic representation.

## Marco de Head Start sobre los resultados del aprendizaje temprano

P-LC 3. Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.  
P-MATH 3. Child understands the relationship between numbers and quantities.  
P-MATH 4. Child compares numbers.  
P-MATH 5. Child associates a quantity with written numerals up to 5 and begins to write numbers.  
P-SCI 5. Child plans and conducts investigations and experiments.

## Materials

- chart/butcher paper
- markers

## Preparation

Before presenting this activity, be sure that the children have collected one to three weeks, worth of data for the type of weather that you would like to graph.

## Introduce

“For the past few weeks we have been keeping track of our sunny days. Today we are going to use that information to create a picture graph based on the sunny weather that we recorded.”

## Model and Explain

“Let’s look at the data we collected on the weather and count how many sunny days we had for each week.” Count the number of sunny days and list them on a chart.