



OIL SPILL CLEAN UP

Materials you need:

- A tub or deep tray of water (or 3-4 if you have a large group)
- Blue Edicol Dye or Food Colouring (optional but adds to the effect!)
- Vegetable oil (just the budget variety is fine)
- Cotton Balls
- Feathers
- Kitchen or bath sponges
- Soap
- Spoons

Setup for play:

- Fill trays/tubs with water. Add the blue dye to the water to help make the distinction between the water and the oil more obvious. Spread out the other materials close by the water tray.
- Ask the children to slowly pour about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oil into the water trays
- Now experiment using different materials to try to remove the oil from the water. Some ideas to try include spooning the oil out, using cotton balls, feathers and a sponge. Ask the children if they have some other ideas for how to remove the 'oil spill'.
- Take a vote on what material seemed to work the best. It is usually the spoon, but it still takes a long time and illustrates just how difficult it can be to clean up after a real oil spill.
- You could also point out how the oil seems to stick to the feathers and what this means for birdlife caught in an oil spill in the ocean. Try to clean the feathers using the soap – it works but again it takes a lot of effort!

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children experiment with this environmental activity they are learning to:

- Explore, infer, predict and problem solve.
- The skill of transference and representation.
- Recognise symbols and how things can represent other things.
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control.
- Respect and care for natural living things.
- Persevere and experience the satisfaction of a job done well and sense of achievement.
- The importance of keeping our environment clean and safe.
- Understand the interdependence between land, ocean, animals and people.

Extending the play:

- Watch videos of real-life oil spills, the impact they have, and the methods used to clean the ocean, birds and other sea life.
- Turn the feathers into paintbrushes and paint onto paper using the blue water to create patterns.

