



CHILDREN'S CORNER

TECHNOLOGY – THE “T” IN STEM IT’S NOT ONLY COMPUTERS

STEM – is a way of looking at science for children of all ages, even the very youngest children.

STEM is a focus on educating students in four specific disciplines in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. —

- **S**cience
- **T**echnology
- **E**ngineering and
- **M**athematics

The “T” in STEM is technology, but NOT electronic technology. When you hear the word technology, you might think of computers and tablets, but in the preschool curriculum, technology refers to using tools that inspire curiosity and problem solving. Tools also help children develop eye-hand coordination and strengthen their hand and finger muscles for writing, typing, and drawing.

You are probably using many of these tools already in your program. STEM asks you to look at these “simple” tools as important equipment for children to explore the world around them. These tools give children ways to observe, measure, explore, and experiment. They lead children ask questions and make hypotheses.

Do you have this Technology in your program? You probably do.

- Magnifying glasses
- Microscopes
- Rulers
- Tongs
- Eyedroppers
- Pumps
- Plastic knives, forks, and spoons
- Sifters
- Funnels
- Small pitchers
- Popsicle sticks
- Scissors
- Scoops
- Wheels
- Shovels
- Rakes
- Hoes
- And more traditional tools like screwdrivers

Play is at the heart of STEM. STEM is “hands-on.” A Please-Touch environment allows children to explore and use their curiosity to problem solve and grow. Children learn about the world when they are playing in it.

And remember to have FUN!

Here are examples of ways to use STEM Technology –

- Let children explore tools like spoons, forks, Popsicle sticks, and plastic shovels and rakes. Have children use the “wrong” tool for the job (e.g., a fork to eat soup or a rake to dig). This helps even young children focus on the function of the “best” tool and about other ways to solve the problem.
- Pouring – Let your children learn how to pour using a small plastic pitcher and a few plastic cups. Tell them that the cups are empty and that they should pour the liquid into the cups until they are full. Try emptying the pitcher to fill the cups, and then try emptying the cups to fill the pitcher. Experiment with different size cups.
- Wheels – Encourage children to explore toys that have wheels and those that do not. Take the wheels off a toy car or find a broken one so children can explore and compare function.

Resources:

1. <http://www.naeyc.org/STEM>
2. <http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/STEMGuide.pdf>
3. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/stem-toolkit-infant-toddler-teachers.pdf>
4. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/stem-toolkit-preschool-teachers.pdf>
5. Exchange Everyday, “The T in STEM,” April 28, 2016
6. *Teaching STEM in the Early Years*, Sally Moomaw