

Lightning Safety Lesson Plan for Pre-School (3-5 Year Olds)

- Have colorful lightning safety posters or pictures on display for kids to look at.
- Pass around an anemometer so they can spin a propeller while you talk about what weather forecasters do and how this is the way we measure the winds.
- Have the kids sit as a group while you lead them through a thunderstorm lifecycle.
 - Pat top of legs/clap hands to imitate rain drops, lightly and slow at first, then growing in volume and speed.
 - Speak (don't yell) the word "boom" for thunder, first a little, then more as the "thunderstorm" peaks.
 - Decrease the thunder volume and speed as the "thunderstorm" dies out.
 - Decrease the volume and speed of rain as the "thunderstorm" continues to die.
 - Make one last surprise boom at the end just for fun. It also plants the idea that lightning can happen away from the thunderstorm.
- Teach the rule "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Have the kids repeat it a few times in unison. "I can't heeeeeaaaaarr you. Oh, I think you can do better than that."
- Ask them what they do outside in the summer. If no one answers, have some suggestions: swimming, bicycling, playground, soccer, etc.
 - Select 2-3 kids who suggested an activity pretend they are outside swimming, playing, etc. Tell the standing kids that "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors" and designate a playhouse or corner as the place to go inside. You might also pick another set of kids to be the "house," standing up facing each other, with arms reaching up and forward to be the roof.
 - Quickly lead the sitting kids through the thunderstorm again.
 - If the outdoor activities kids don't react to the first boom of thunder, remind them to go "inside."
 - Quickly chase around just behind them with crackling noises and outstretched arms with wiggling fingers, "I'm lightning, you're outside where I can get you!" But make sure they know it's play. If anyone is getting scared, back off.
 - Once inside, again act like lightning is trying to get them, but the house stops you and you fall to the ground too tired to do anything more because you bumped into the house.
 - Have the kids through repeat the rule in unison again. Then repeat all of #4 by choosing another outdoor activity. As much as possible, give every kid a chance to do an outdoor activity.
- Once done, have them repeat the rule again: "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!"
- Ask for questions about lightning and lightning safety. Be prepared for lightning stories that aren't questions. I usually pick a point out of the story, make a lightning safety blurb out of it, tying it back to "The Rule," and then refocus the group on questions. If one child tells a story of a tree that got destroyed by lightning, say, "Boy, that must have been scary. Being under trees is NOT a good place to be when you hear thunder. Remember our lightning safety rule, "If Thunder Roars, Go Indoors." Now does anyone have a question, not just a story, about lightning?"
- Close with more round of repeating the rule in unison, "If Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!"