

POISON PREVENTION LESSON PLANS
for
Pre-School Children

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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Scope of the Poisoning Problem
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Lesson Plan 1—What is a Poison?

- Children will identify containers of poisons.
- Children will identify containers of food.
- Children will determine how to distinguish between poisonous/non-poisonous items.
- Children will participate in discussion about poisonous/non-poisonous items.

Activity—*Pinky the Elephant Video*

Lesson Plan 2—Classifying Poisons and “Just Suppose” Scenarios

- Children will draw an X through substances that they identify as poison, thus clarifying as poison/non-poison.
- Children will determine which of the given pictures identify poisonous substances.
- Children will give sound judgmental answers to “Just Suppose” situations.
- Children will demonstrate how to act in unsafe situations.

Activity—*2 Alike—1 Not Alike Worksheet; Draw an X Through the Poison Worksheet*

Lesson Plan 3—Poisons and the Body

- Children will learn how poisons get in our body.
- Children will identify containers of substances as poison or not poison.
- Children will discuss the importance of the Poison Prevention Golden Rule.
- Children will learn how to call for help.

Activity—*Identifying Safe vs. Unsafe Containers*

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INTRODUCTION

As an educator, you can play a vital role in teaching children about poison prevention. Young children are at greatest risk for unintentional poisoning. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, in cooperation with Department's primary contractor for poison information, the Nebraska Regional Poison Center, have created this lesson plan that makes it fun and easy to teach this important topic.

The lesson plans are designed to provide you with tools to instruct and encourage poison prevention education for pre-school age children and their parents. Many educators choose to use these lesson plans during **National Poison Prevention Week**, which occurs during the third week in March each year.

Scope of the Poisoning Problem

More than two million poisonings are reported each year to poison control centers throughout the United States. Ninety percent of poisonings occur at home and at least 50% involve children under the age of five. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, cosmetics and personal care products, cleaning substances, pain relievers, plants, cough and cold preparations, pesticides, and vitamins are some of the most common exposures to poisons in this age group.

During 2010, approximately 65% of all poison-related calls in Idaho involved a child under the age of five. The majority of these cases, however, were safely managed at home and did not require a trip to the emergency room.

Children are at a significantly greater risk from poisoning than adults because they are less physically able to handle toxic chemicals. In addition, their natural curiosity and desire to put things in their mouth increase their poisoning risk.

Prevention is the Solution

Poison prevention education can be a life saver—and through your classroom, you can teach important safety information. Children, however, can't totally protect themselves from poisons or distinguish poisonous from non-poisonous substances. It's up to adults—parents, teachers, and caregivers to provide a safe environment!

(continued)

Household products are safe to use for the jobs for which they're developed. Some products, however, can cause serious injury if not used properly. That's why *all* products should be handled, used, and stored very carefully.

Likewise, medicines are safe to use as recommended, that is, the right medicine, in the right amount, to the person to which it was prescribed. If these precautions are not taken, medicines can be poisonous.

It's easier and less costly to prevent poisonings than to treat a person who has been poisoned. By assisting with this poison prevention educational effort, you can help provide valuable information to children and their parents about how to prevent a poisoning. Through education we can instill an awareness of the problem learn how to prevent a poisoning and know the steps to take if a poisoning emergency occurs.

As an educator or care giver, you are encouraged to seek the assistance of others in your community about poison prevention education and activities. The Idaho Department of Health & Welfare and the Nebraska Regional Poison Center (phone 1-800-222-1222) are available to assist you in learning more about poison prevention activities. To reach poisoning prevention information on the Department's website, go to:

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov

click on the letter "P" in the A-Z Index on the homepage, then select "Poison" on the next page.

Other sources of poison prevention information in your community may include parent/teacher organizations, local pharmacists, healthcare professionals and emergency medical technicians. It is also a good idea to identify local resources and have important emergency phone numbers for ready access.

Working together we can create a safe environment for children at home as well as when they are in your care. Parental involvement and reinforcement is essential to assure a poison safe home. Please also take a moment to glance over the information included with the lesson plans for you to distribute to parents.

Thank you for your cooperation and your willingness to provide children and their parents with this valuable information.

For more information or to order poison prevention education materials, please call the Idaho CareLine at 2-1-1, or the Nebraska Regional Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Lesson Plan 1

WHAT IS A POISON?

Materials Needed by Teacher

- Clean, empty poison containers or pictures of the same.
- Clean, empty food containers or pictures of the same.
- Activity discussion ideas provided.

Materials needed by Children

- Crayons, glue, scissors, pencils and paper.
- NOTE: DO NOT ask children to bring poison containers from home.

Competencies Addressed

- Taking care of ourselves, matching, comparing, evaluating, discussion in group, drawing, writing, storytelling, role playing, differentiating.

Objectives

- Children will identify containers of poisons.
- Children will identify containers of food.
- Children will determine how to distinguish between poisonous/non-poisonous items.
- Children will participate in discussion about poisonous/non-poisonous items.

Introduction/Motivation

- Ask children to tell what a poison is and what it does.
- Ask how to tell if a substance is a poison or not.
- Present pictures/containers and discuss.

Presentation Outline

- Define poison/non-poison.
- Discuss dangers of poisons.
- Present pictures for discussion.

Activities

- Define poison.
- Identify pictures of food/poison.
- Draw a picture of a poison and write/tell a story about where it can be found.

Evaluation

- Children's participation in the discussion.
- Completion of picture identified in the video.
- Telling/reading a story.

WHAT IS A POISON?

DISCUSSION

Discussion-Grade Level: Preschool

What is a Poison?

Facilitate the discussion by asking the children, **“What is a poison?”** Common responses may be spiders, snakes, poison ivy, etc.

Explain that a poison is something that can make you sick if you taste it, smell it, get it on your skin, or in your eyes. Tell them that something that is useful for cleaning purposes, for example, can be harmful to a person if swallowed. Many products are safe when used as intended, but may be a poison when used in the wrong way.

It’s important for children to understand that poisons come in all shapes and sizes and in many different types of containers. They can be plants, liquids, powders, gases, fumes, or sprays. Something typically regarded as useful or beneficial to us can become a poison if used in a wrong way; like vitamins, medicines, perfumes, cosmetics, or household cleaners.

Activity

Now is a good time to show the *Pinky the Elephant video* to the children. *Pinky* is the mascot of the Nebraska Regional Poison Center. In this video, *Pinky* will teach the children about poison safety. Contact the Idaho 2-1-1 CareLine to receive a DVD of the video or play it directly from the Nebraska Regional Poison Center website at www.nebraskapoison.com (see the Public Education section).

After watching the video, ask the children the following questions:

- **What poisons did Pinky find around the house?**

Poisons they should identify include. . .

- **If you see something and you don’t know what it is or you think it might be poisonous, what do you do?**

Prompt children to say: **“STAY AWAY”** (Remember to simultaneously use the hand action—“Stay Away”—to reinforce the message with the children).

- **“Is a poison a good thing or a bad thing?”** Children should respond in unison that a poison is a bad thing.

- **“Why is it a bad thing?”** Children may respond that a poison will make you sick or hurt your body. Some children may even respond that a poison can kill you.

Note: When children provide a response related to death, remind them that some poisons are so dangerous to your body that they can kill you. Remind them poisons can look like food or drink. Teach children to always ask an adult before eating or drinking anything. If you don't know what it is: **“Always Ask First.”**

Listen to a few responses from the children and then give a summarized definition that they can easily relate to, such as, **“A poison is something that can hurt your body or make you sick if used in the wrong way. Anything can be a poison if it is used in the wrong way.”**

Lesson Plan 2

CLASSIFYING POISONS and “JUST SUPPOSE” SCENARIOS

Materials needed by Teacher

The two worksheets:

1. Draw an X through like pictures in each group
2. Draw an X through the Poisons

Materials Needed by Children

Worksheets, crayon, pencil.

Competencies Addressed

Classifying, comparing, recalling, group interactions, role-playing, developing judgment and determining how to behave in unsafe situations.

Objectives

- Children will draw an X through substances that they identify as poison, thus clarifying as poison/non-poison.
- Children will determine which of the given pictures identify poisonous substances.
- Children will give sound judgmental answers to “Just Suppose” situations.
- Children will demonstrate how to act in unsafe situations.

Introduction/Motivation

- Use “2 Alike, 1 Not Alike” worksheet to advance comparison and identification.
- Have children mark an X through poisonous items on the “Draw an X through the Poison” worksheet.
- Present “Just Suppose” stories as presented in the Activities section below.
- Ask children for responses as to how they would behave.
- Children may supply their own “Just Suppose” stories.
- Teacher presents “Just Suppose” stories and then calls on individual children to tell what they would do.
- As experience with the game develops, understanding increases.

Presentation Outline

- Have children work on worksheets.
- Present individual stories.
- Elicit student feedback.

Activities

- Suppose you were playing at home and found an open box of pills or a bottle of medicine with the safety cap off. What would you do? Tell why.
- Suppose you found your baby brother or sister playing with a can of cleaning powder. What would you do? Tell why.
- Suppose someone left a bottle of medicine on the table and forgot it. What would you do? Tell why.
- Suppose you saw another child accidentally eat or drink something you thought might harm him/her or make him/her sick. What would you do? Why?

Evaluation

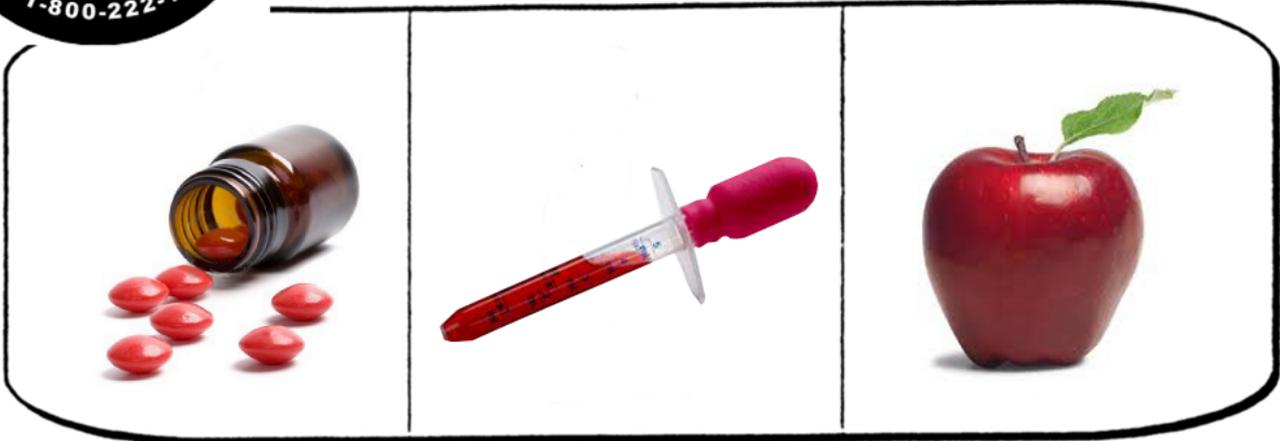
- Completion of worksheets 1 and 2.
- Children participation in supplying endings to “Just Suppose” stories.

Note: *In above activities, children should be reminded to always tell a parent or teacher, that is, Always Ask First.*



2 Alike, 1 Not Alike

In each group, draw a CIRCLE around the those that are Alike.
Draw an X through the one that is Not Alike





Draw an X through the Poisons. . .



Lesson Plan 3

POISONS AND THE BODY

Materials needed by Teacher

- Baking soda, vinegar, and container.
- Picture of body and organs.
- Invite healthcare professionals and emergency personnel to class for a visit or have pictures available.
- Mr. Yuk stickers.

Materials Needed by Children

None.

Competencies Addressed

Discussion, oral language, communicating, hypothesizing.

Objectives

- Children will learn how poisons get in our body.
- Children will identify containers of substances as poison or not poison.
- Children will discuss the importance of the Poison Prevention Golden Rule.
- Children will learn how to call for help.

Introduction/Motivation

- In a group, discuss ways to identify poisons and where they can be found in the home, on the way to school, in the neighborhood and at school.
- Use pictures of the body to discuss ways poison can enter the body, for example the picture of lungs to demonstrate inhalation, stomach for ingestion, an arm for skin contact, and an eye.
- For science demonstration, mix vinegar (1cup) and baking soda (1 tablespoonful) to demonstrate a chemical reaction. This is one way chemicals can interact. Poisons are chemical substances that can cause similar reactions.
- If healthcare or emergency personnel are present, introduce and explain their role. Have them talk about their profession and their role and how to contact them if appropriate.
- If a healthcare professional or emergency personnel are not present, use pictures to identify and explain roles. Discuss how to contact them in case of emergency.
- Remind children to place emergency numbers close to the phone.

Presentation Outline

- Group discussion.
- Healthcare/emergency personnel.
- How to call for assistance.

Activities

- Children receive Poison Prevention stickers
- Call for emergency assistance. Children can practice calling for help vocally or by telephone. Explain the importance of keeping the 1-800-222-1222 number near the phone. Note that emergency 9-1-1 service will also connect you directly to your regional poison center during a poisoning emergency.

Evaluation

- Children's participation in the discussion.
- Children demonstrate knowledge of how to locate emergency phone numbers.

HOW DO POISONS ENTER OUR BODY?

DISCUSSION

Discussion-Grade Level: **Preschool**

How Do Poisons Enter Our Body?

Facilitate a discussion to teach children how poisons may enter the body. Emphasize the four ways that poisons enter the body:

- **Eyes**—Anything entering the eye (i.e. sprays, powders, dust)
- **Nose**—Breathing (i.e., fumes or mists from harsh cleaners, carbon monoxide)
- **Mouth**—Eating, drinking, tasting or swallowing (i.e., mouthwash, perfumes, medicines)
- **Skin**—Enters through pores or open wound (i.e., bites, stings)

Teacher or Care Giver: Now let’s talk about how poisons can get inside our bodies. The first way is through your eyes. Raise your hands if you have ever gotten something in your eyes. Did it burn or did your eyes water? (Let children share their experiences.) Well, that is one way. Other ways can be through your nose if you smell something; or through your mouth if you eat, drink, or taste something. Some poisons can even enter your body through your skin if you touch them.

What is the *Poison Prevention Golden Rule*?

If you see something and you don’t know what it is or you think it might be poison (have children repeat in unison):

STAY AWAY!

DON’T TOUCH IT!

DON’T TASTE IT!

DON’T SMELL IT!

What can a poison do to me if I eat, drink or even taste it?

Poisons can make you sick or hurt your body. Even a small amount of some poisons can be very dangerous and cause great harm. The way your body reacts to the poison depends on many things: like your age, how much you weigh and how healthy you are. But it depends most on how much of the substance you ate, drank or tasted. So remember, **ALWAYS ASK FIRST!**

ACTIVITY

Mix empty safe and unsafe containers (representing poisons and non-poisons) together in a separate box or bag labeled with a question mark “?”. Also place two boxes in front of the room—one box labeled with a bold red “X” or the word “NO” and the other with a bold green check mark “✓” or “OK”. Pull out items one by one from box or bag labeled with a question mark “?” and choose a volunteer to place the item in the appropriate box. Unsafe items (poisons) are to be placed in the box marked with the “X” and safe items are to be placed in the box marked with the “✓” or “OK”. The teacher may ask each child to discuss why he or she considers an item a poison or a non-poison.