

# It Floats!

In class, the children have explored objects that sink or float. Do this activity with your child to make further discoveries.

## WHAT YOU NEED:

- chunk of clay
- tub or sink filled with water
- paper clips

## WHAT TO DO:



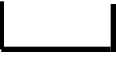

1. Divide the chunk of clay into two pieces, approximately the same size. Make one piece into a solid ball and the other piece into a bowl shape.



2. Ask your child to predict whether the ball-shaped or the bowl-shaped object will sink or float when placed in the water.

3. Using this chart, or one similar to it, draw what you think will happen.

4. Have your child place one object at a time into the tub to test his/her ideas.
5. Use your chart to record what happened to the clay object.
6. Talk about what happened. Ask:
  - Which object sank?
  - Which object floated?
  - Is this what you thought would happen?

Object	Draw what you think will happen	Draw what did happen
Clay ball		
Clay boat		

**SUMMARY:** Changing the shape of an object affects whether it will sink or float.

## EXTENSIONS:

### *Further Investigations:*

- Make the ball of clay into a different shape. Use the paper clips to find out which shape will carry the heavier load.
- Reshape the clay. This time make a snake-like coil and a flat circle like a pancake. Observe what happens when you put them each into a tub of water. Is it what you thought would happen?
- Make these shapes with aluminum foil: ball, bowl, snake, pancake. Tell if you think each shape will sink or float. Try it.

### *Related Excursion:*

Brooklyn Children's Museum  
145 Brooklyn Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York 11213  
718-735-4432

### *Literary Connections:*

- Allen, Pamela. *Who Sank the Boat?* Eco-Clad Books, 1999.
- Holling, Clancy. *Paddle to the Sea.* Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941, 1969.
- Jennings, Terry. *Floating and Sinking.* Gloucester Press, 1988.
- Richards, Jon. *Science Factory: Water & Boats.* Copper Beech Books, 1999.
- Taylor, Barbara. *Sink or Swim! The Science of Water.* Random House, 1991.
- Trumbauer, Lisa. *Sink or Float.* Newbridge Communications Inc., 1997.

### *Related Web Sites:*

<http://www.eecs.umich.edu/~coalitn/sciedoutreach/funexperiments/agesubject/lessons/beakman/float.html>

<http://www.vermontbook.org/mg/sink.html>

<http://www.ipfw.edu/educ/e328jn/wplesson/start.html>