



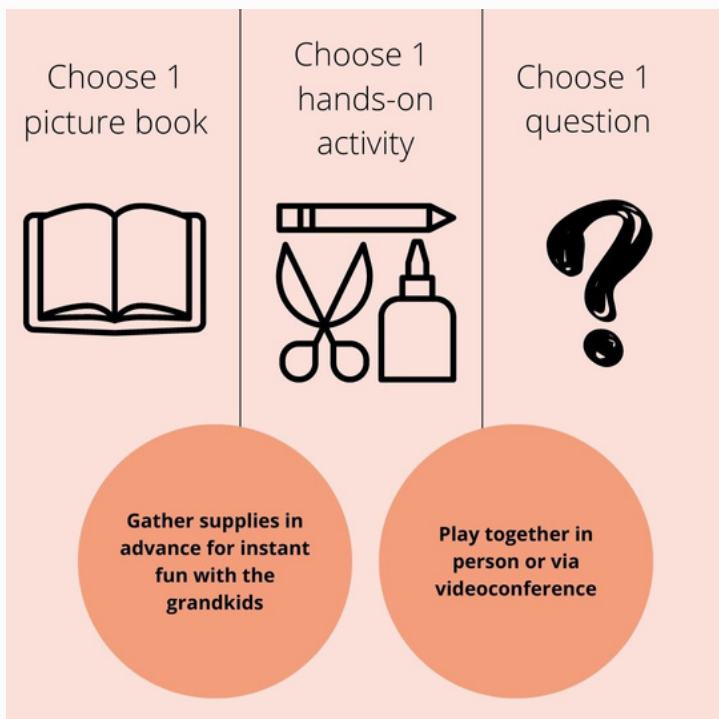
Playdatebox

SNOW CRYSTALS

THE PURPOSE OF A PLAYDATEBOX IS TO CONNECT GENERATIONS THROUGH PLAY



HOW TO BUILD A PLAYDATEBOX



HOW IT WORKS

Develop relationships virtually or in-person

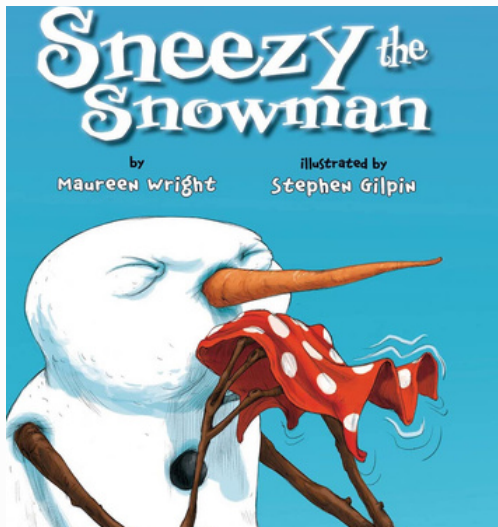
The ***Snow Crystals Playdatebox*** is a themed box of fun designed to get you and a child you love playing together.

The goal of this box is to help grandparents and grandchildren create connections in playful ways, regardless of distance.

This Playdate focuses on a value we think is important to pass on: Curiosity!

We've gathered several ideas for you to choose from. Just choose one book, an activity, and a question that are age-appropriate for your grandchild, gather your supplies, and start playing!

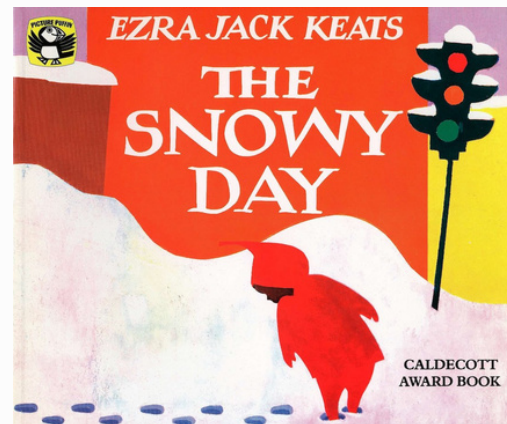
START WITH A FAVORITE PICTURE BOOK:



Sneezy the Snowman

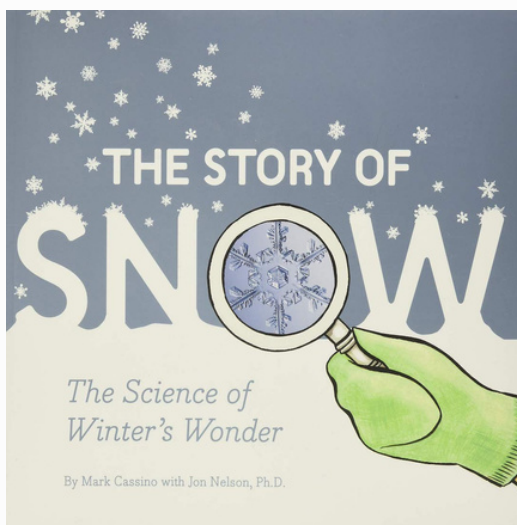
by Maureen Wright and Stephen Gilpin
(3-7 years)

Sneezy is cold, but every time he tries to warm up, he melts. His friends have a solution!



The Snowy Day

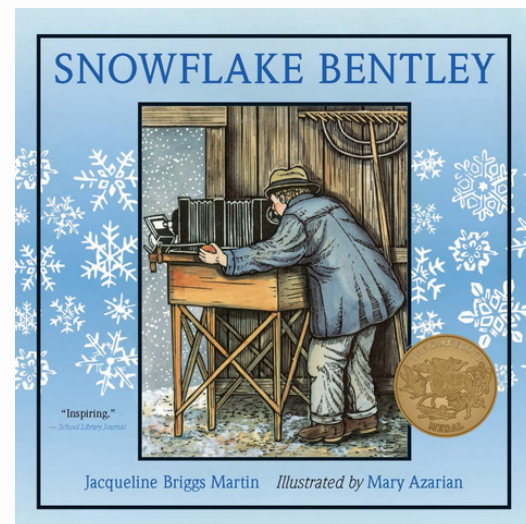
By Ezra Jack Keats (for ages 2-5)
The magic and wonder of winter's first snowfall is perfectly captured in this Caldecott Medal-winning picture book.



The Story of Snow

by Jon Nelson Ph.D. and Mark Cassino
(ages 5-8)

How do snow crystals form? What shapes can they take? These questions and more are answered inside this exploration of the science of snow.



Snowflake Bentley

by Jacqueline Briggs Martin (Author),
Mary Azarian (Illustrator) (ages 4-9)
Wilson Bentley was always fascinated by snow. In childhood and adulthood, he saw each tiny crystal of a snowflake as a little miracle and wanted to understand them.



Values to Hand Down

Curiosity

Snow crystals are fascinating, and you can make the study of how they form into an annual "event" you enjoy with your grandchildren again and again as you help them develop their gift of **curiosity**.

I keep a Snow Crystals Playdatebox in my basement. It's a simple plastic tote I fill with a few age-appropriate books and one or two activities related to snow, snowmen, or snowflakes. The Playdatebox is ready to go any time my grandchildren visit. And if I visit them, all I have to do is throw my Playdatebox supplies into the car and take them along.

My Snowcrystals Playdatebox includes:

- 3 or 4 favorite snow-themed picture books
- Everything we need to make snow slime
- A snowman-building kit (accessories to add to a snowman we build outside)
- A box of brownie mix and a snowflake-shaped cookie cutter (plus frosting, a piping bag, and piping tip)
- Hot chocolate mix, marshmallows, and pretzels

But just as important to me as having fun is the opportunity to open a child's eyes to the wonder of snow crystals. The science can be as simple as freezing and melting different things, or as complex as learning how snow crystals form.

We also take every opportunity to play in the snow, because I am fortunate to live in an area where snow is typically plentiful in the winter months. Sledding, making snowmen, knocking icicles off from the roof, painting the snow, and just playing with a bin of snow indoors are all ways to be curious and learn together. Spending time with grandchildren in the winter is **never** boring!

If you live in a more temperate climate, snow and snow crystals can hold extra fascination. Read about "Snowflake Bentley" and look at snowcrystals.com and see actual photos of individual snowflakes. Learn how then let your imagination lead you to learn more! You can help inspire curiosity in the next generation!



Activity #1

Make A Snow Sensory Bin

Try some easy freezing and melting experiments using a bin of freshly fallen snow.

Prep Time: 5 minutes

You'll need:

- A shallow plastic bin or large mixing bowl
- A few kitchen utensils for digging
- A spray bottle filled with warm, colored water
- Toy cars, waterproof toy people, or animals

Instructions:

We used a bin of snow and just let our curiosity run wild.

- Try squirting the snow with warm water to see what happens.
- Heat up some of your snow with a blow dryer (adult supervision required).
- Squirt a little bit of colored water onto your snow
- Put on a pair of gloves and make roads and tunnels.
- Use kitchen utensils to dig and pack snow.
- Make a mini snowman or pack snow into shapes and cut it with cookie cutters
- Put some snow into a pan on the stove and watch what happens when you heat it up.

How to Do This Remotely:

Grandma or Grandpa can enjoy playing along with their own bin of snow.



**Mother Nature will
provide the
supplies!**



Activity #2

Make Fluffy Snow Slime

This fun concoction is adapted from a recipe on lookwerelearning.com

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup white school glue
- 2 Tablespoons artificial snow mix (no water added yet)
- 1 1/2 cups foam shaving cream (avoid the menthol kind if kids are sensitive to odors)
- 1-2 Tablespoons contact lens solution
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, add the glue, shaving cream, contact lens solution, and baking soda, and artificial snow.
2. Mix together with a wooden spoon until mixture pulls away from the sides of the bowl. If it remains too sticky, add more contact lens solution 1 teaspoon at a time.
3. Remove the mixture from the bowl and knead with your hands until smooth.

How to Do This Remotely:

If you are a little brave and the grandchildren have a willing grownup supervising on their end of the call, this project is mondo fun over a Zoom call!

Because instant snow and contact solution aren't in every pantry, you can purchase small empty containers at a dollar store to fill up with ingredients from your own stash and mail them. (Or, send needed supplies via your Amazon.com account). We pre-measure all of the ingredients before we ship them. Tape all lids closed and enclose everything in a zip-top bag. You can purchase shaving cream in travel sizes.



This stuff is so fluffy, you will want your own batch!



Activity #3

Make "Freezy the Snowman"

Use the templates below to cut out felt shapes for your "melting snowman"

Materials:

- Felt (suggested colors: White (eyeballs), orange (nose), brown (stick arms) multi-colors for buttons, scarf and hat.
- Scissors
- Markers
- Disposable food storage container (any size)
- Water



Directions:

- Using the templates provided below, cut 2 eyeballs, 3 buttons, 1 nose, 1 scarf, 1 hat, 2 stick arms.
- Draw pupils on the eyeballs, and any other details on the other pieces as desired
- Create a "snowman" by placing all the felt pieces on the bottom of a disposable food storage container.
- Note: Use googly eyes, a small carrot, real buttons, and small twigs for arms in lieu of the felt pieces.
- Fill the container with water. (Your felt pieces may float, that's OK!)
- Place the container in a freezer (or outside if it's below freezing) until the water has frozen to a solid block of ice.
- Remove "Freezy" from the freezer and see how long it takes for him to melt. You could use a stopwatch/timer to see how long it takes. Family members can make "predictions" about how long it will take for him to melt. See if you can find ways to "speed" up the melting process. Talk about concepts such as heat, freeze, cold, melt.

EYEBALLS



STICK ARMS



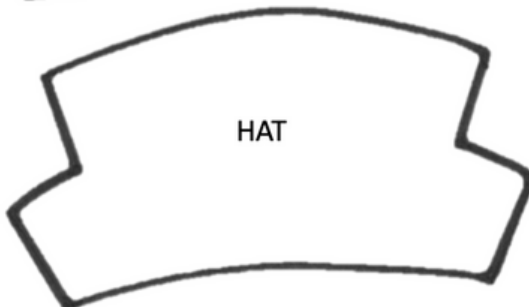
BUTTONS



NOSE



HAT



SCARF



Activity #4

Hot Cocoa Melting Snowman



After you read *Sneezy the Snowman* together, this project will make even more sense. This hot-tubbing snowman can help extend your conversation about freezing and melting, and he's easy to make.

You'll need

- marshmallows
- pretzel sticks
- a tube of dark decorator icing (or some melted chocolate chips dabbed on with a toothpick)
- a candy corn
- Hot chocolate mix
- A large microwave-safe mug or cup

How to Do This Remotely

Gather ingredients on both sides of your call and work together to assemble a few marshmallow snowmen. What else melts in a warm liquid?

Activity #5

Outdoor Snow Painting



If you happen to live in an area that gets snow, this fun activity gives you a painting canvas as big as all outdoors.

Using small squirt bottles — we used some from our tie-dye stash — add warm water, and then mix in a few drops of liquid acrylic craft paint. Food coloring will also work, but colors will not be as vibrant.

Cover childrens' clothing with an apron and let the kids make designs in the snow. Avoid concrete or hard surfaces areas, since the paint will likely leave a residue. You will most likely be washing splattered paint off from footwear, so rubber snow boots are a great option.

How to Do This Remotely:

Use FaceTime as you paint together and show off one another's creations!



Resources:

Where to Find It:

Instant Snow Powder

Also called artificial snow, this concoction is usually made with Sodium Polyacrylate, and you can find it in craft shops and even department stores. We keep a jar on hand in the Grandma Pantry because it's fun to play with all by itself, even if you aren't making slime. Adult supervision is required!

Visit playdatebox.com/pengins for more instant snow fun!



Playdates with Older Kids

Frozen Bubbles

If you happen to live in Canada, or 5-degree weather is the norm in winter where you live, you can go outside on a frigid day and freeze your own bubble. Use regular old bubble solution and carefully transfer your bubble from your wand to the snow.

If you prefer to stay indoors in that kind of weather or live in a more tropical climate, you can find lots of these images on YouTube and Instagram. I can't wait to try this out with the grandkids someday!

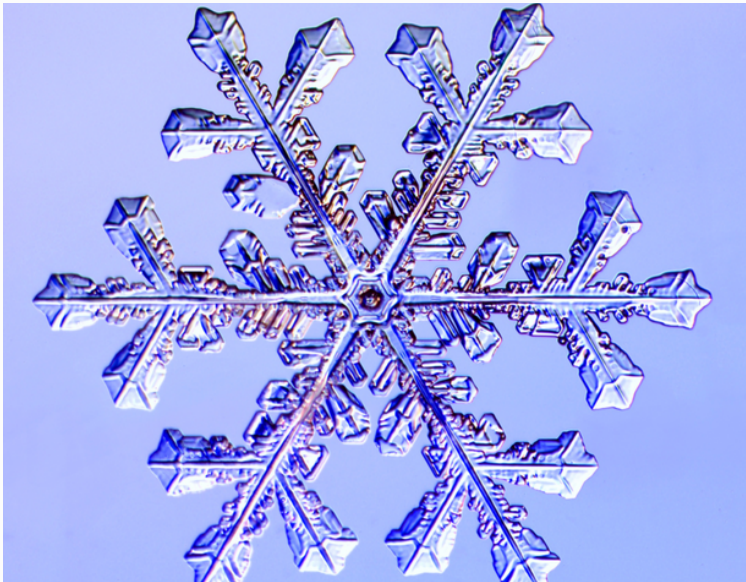
You'll find all kinds of melting and freezing science experiments online. Try a couple with the older grandkids. Homemade ice cream is always a big hit!



Activity #6

Make Snowflake Brownies

Use a packaged brownie mix and a snowflake-shaped cookie cutter to cut snowflake brownies. A pastry bag with a piping tip makes it easy to pipe frosting onto the brownie. Just pipe six lines from the center, and then add on branches of additional icing to turn your creation into a delicious snowflake brownie!



Activity #7

Study Snow Crystals Online

Dr. Kenneth D. Libbrecht has been following in the footsteps of Snowflake Bentley and making photographs of snow crystals for the world to see.

How to Do This Remotely:

Both you and your grandchildren will be fascinated by his gorgeous photos of snowflakes, plus interesting experiments you can try to learn more about them. Visit www.snowcrystals.com.



Activity #8

Cut six-sided snowflakes

Cutting paper snowflakes is great fun, but you really ought to make them six-sided, like real snowflakes. You'll find simple YouTube instructions here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeR5p8OocUE>

How to Do This Remotely:

Teach your older grandkids how and then cut several together while you video chat.

Connection Question:

When you were little, what was your favorite thing to do when it snowed outside?

Connection Questions help create bridges of connection between you and your grandchild. Take turns answering any of these questions, and when possible, record or write down the answers!



Some additional questions:

- If you grew up in a warm climate, do you remember the first time you ever saw snow? What was it like?
- Did you ever have a snow day from school when you were little? What is the deepest snow you have ever seen?
- What were your favorite activities to do in the snow or in the cold when you were a child?

If you are meeting remotely with your grandchild, hit "record" to record these conversations using the "Voice Memos" app or a similar recording app on your phone. Then use a transcribing application such as [otranscribe.com](https://otter.ai), temi.com or otter.ai to preserve the answers to these questions. Save them in a binder or journal and add photos if you have them.



Playdatebox

If you are new at playing with grandchildren, and feel a little overwhelmed after looking at all of these ideas, don't worry. Just simplify your activities as directed. Choose one book, plus one activity, plus one question. That's all you need for a Playdate!

Our vision is that you will use the contents of this newsletter to help you connect with a child you love, regardless of distance! Most Playdatebox activities are designed so that they can also be enjoyed "remotely" via videoconferencing software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Just assemble supplies on both sides of the call so that you can play "together." Visit our website, Playdatebox.com for lots of ideas on how to do this in creative ways.

If you enjoy these ideas, please let others know, and tag us on social media with a photo of you enjoying a Playdatebox activity.

We love to engage with our customers and give away free Playdateboxes every month on our Instagram feed. Find us at @playdate_box and follow us for your chance to win. We share all of our best ideas about creating family fun.



facebook.com/playdatebox



@playdate_box



Playdatebox



etsy.com/shop/MyPlaydateBox



Playdatebox