



MINIS AT HOME

volume 1, issue 24

Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!

Welcome to issue 24 of Minis at Home newsletter. Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

This week's theme = Mud!

Piggybacking on last week's newsletter, we are going to talk about MUD! How many of you like mud? Well, if you do, that's good news because there is a lot of it around.

Mud means spring is on its way. When the ground thaws after being frozen all winter, the water inside "melts," which makes the ground soft and wet. So here's the recipe: **dirt** + water = mud! It often rains in the beginning of spring, which makes the ground extra wet. The result is squishy, gooey, amazing mud!



Another word for dirt is **soil**, which is a loose layer of crushed up rock, minerals, water and air that covers much of the ground almost everywhere on Earth. If the Earth did not have soil, it would be difficult to grow food. Soil contains living and dead **organic matter** such as **bacteria**, plants, leaves, and insects. All this organic matter makes the soil healthy and is great for growing plants. The soil holds many wonderful nutrients that plants need in order to grow, which is why seeds are planted in soil. When the soil dries out because there is no rain, it is important to water it. Sun is also needed for the healthy growth of plants.



Soil is home to many small animals, such as worms and small rodents, as well as larger animals who make their dens in the ground.

Earthworms are one of the most important animals for good healthy soil. They burrow into the soil, making holes that let in light, water and air.

So, if you find a worm, please keep it in the soil so it can continue its important job.

There are many different kinds of soil depending on where you live in the world. Some places have reddish soil, while in other places the soil is dark black. What color is the soil in your yard? Go outside and check. Soil color and texture vary from place to place because of different types of rock, sand and clay that have contributed to the dirt over millions of years.

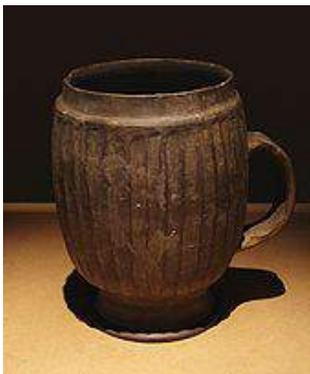
Splashing in mud puddles, making mud pies, "painting" with mud or giving yourself a mud bath are all really fun, and dirty, ways to enjoy mud. Animals also love mud. Why do we all love it?

Believe it or not, mud makes you happy! Scientists have discovered that playing in the mud actually makes you happier because mud has microscopic (you cannot see them without using a **microscope**) bacteria that causes our brains to feel happier.



If it weren't for mud, people in many ancient civilizations would not have had homes. In many parts of the world, people today still make houses using mud bricks. When mud is shaped into blocks and then left in the sun to dry, the bricks become hard. It's amazing to think that for over 10,000 years people have been using mud to build their homes!

Want to watch someone make a brick from mud? Check out this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfcbtZcpWrA>



Clay, which is a **component** of mud, has also been used for thousands of years. It's used to make pots, dishes, mugs, beads and other ceramic objects.

Clay hardens and gets solid when it is heated up in a really hot oven called a **kiln**.

This clay cup is over 4000 years old! It was found in China.

Imagine filling up your bathtub with mud! Mud that come from **volcanoes** is full of vitamins and minerals and other things that are really good for your skin and hair. There are many places where you can take a special mud bath.

Animals use mud for many reasons. Pigs, elephants, rhinos and other animals roll in mud to cool off on hot summer days. The cool, wet mud feels good on their skin. Other animals roll in the mud to soothe their skin from fly bites. If there are no mud puddles around, animals will use their hooves and snouts to move the wet dirt around to make them.



There are also animals that use mud to make their homes, such as the mud dauber wasp (see picture above left). Beaver dams are held together with sticks and mud. Some turtles, snakes and other water creatures hibernate in the mud during wintertime. Termites—which are small flying insects—make huge homes out of mud (see picture above right). These mud towers can be as tall as 2 large humans standing on top of each other! Worms, clams, frogs and some crabs also burrow into the mud to eat, live and hide from seagulls and other birds who might want a meal.

Grownups also love to play in the mud. There are actually sports that involve mud such as running races in the mud, dirt biking through the mud, and racing trucks through giant mud puddles. This is called mud bogging. Playing in the mud is not only fun, but it is good for your health. Just as in dirt, the germs that live in the mud, are good for you!



These important germs help your body's immune system grow and stay strong, which helps to keep you healthy. Playing in mud also connects you with nature, and being outdoors in nature is one of the most important things you can do to stay happy and healthy. (Don't play in the mud if you have a cut, though; wait for it to heal.)



Of course, mud is also fun to simply squish and build with. Everyone should have a mud kitchen in their backyard. To make a mud kitchen, gather some non-breakable pots, pans, pie plates, spoons, scoops and forks. Grab some dirt from the ground, add water and mix! A wheel barrow, outdoor picnic bench or old coffee table make great mud kitchen work spaces. Add beans, pasta, rocks, sticks, stones, and other things you may find in your yard, to decorate your mud creations (don't eat them, though). So, get muddy, be happy and have fun!

Activity: Craft

Muddy Piggy



This craft offers great scissors practice!

Materials:

Construction paper or card stock for the background

Brown paint or use real mud (dirt + water = mud)

Pink construction paper (in 2 shades)

Glue stick

2 Small googly eyes

Marker

Small piece of pink yarn for the tail

Aleene's tacky glue

Small sponge for dabbing paint

Procedure:

Cut out the following from the **light pink** paper:

- 1 oval for the body (or you can make multiple pigs)
- 1 smaller circle for the head
- 2 small rectangles for feet

Cut out the following from the **dark pink** paper:

- 2 small rounded triangles for ears
- 1 small oval for the snout
- Cut a small piece of yarn for the tail

Assemble and glue your piggy onto the background paper (have your child identify shapes as they glue)

Use googly eyes or marker for the eyes

Use marker for nostrils and mouth

Attach the yarn for the tail with Aleene's glue

Use your sponge and brown paint—or real mud—to dab "mud" all over your piggy, making a **big mud puddle** under his feet.

Activity: Counting and Movement

5 Little Piggies

(sung to the same tune as *5 little ducks*)

(original author unknown)

5 little piggies were rolling in the mud (hold up 5 fingers)

Squishy, squashy, squishy, squashy, it was so much fun (roll hands around each other)

The Farmer named (child's name) **took one pig out** (wave one thumb over your shoulder)

"Oink, oink, oink, oink" that piggy did shout! (open and close fingers and thumbs on oinks)

(repeat the verse counting down from 4 to 1)

No little piggies were rolling in the mud (hold out hands to gesture none)

They looked so clean but missed the fun (make sad face)

The farmer turned his back and did not see

They jumped back in the mud and rolled with glee!

I'm a Little Dirt Patch

(sung to the same tune as *I'm a Little Teapot*)

(original source unknown)

I'm a little dirt patch

On the ground

The driest dirt you've ever found

When I feel the raindrops fall on me

I turn to mud and say "yippee!"



Muddy Puddle Song

(sung to the same tune as *Goodnight Ladies*)

(adapted from the original by Cathy Cronin)

Hello mud, how are you?

What splashing and squishing could we do?

Mom says, "STOP! Don't get all wet!"

But I don't hear, and I don't fret

My legs run fast

I take a leap

Both feet sink in so super deep

Squish squash, splish splash so much fun

Oh, muddy puddle

Who needs the sun?



**Splishy splash
muddy dash
what a way to have fun!**

Literacy: **POEMS TO SHARE**

Several Short Poems about Mud

by Constance Del Nero

**Mud, mud,
it looks like fudge,
but eat it not:
it tastes like crud.**

**Mud might look
like a chocolatey treat,
but do not—I repeat—
do not eat!**

**Mud is made
from dirt and rain
Playing with it
is good for your brain.**

**Smush mud in a dish
and place in the sun,
bake for an hour
or till it's done.**

**Mud on your hands
and your face, oh yes!
Get creative
and make a mess!**

**Squish, squash
mud on my shirt:
I'm completely
caked with dirt.**

**Have a minute?
Want some fun?
Grab a buddy
and go get muddy.**

**Dig in the mud
to form a heart
fill with water
and make some art**



Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together

Dirty Gert by Tedd Arnold

Mudkin by Stephen Gammell

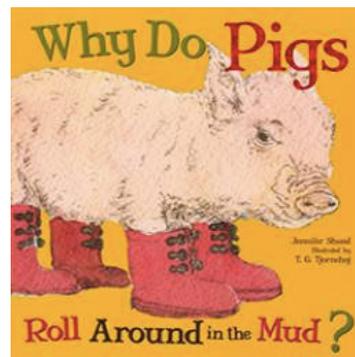
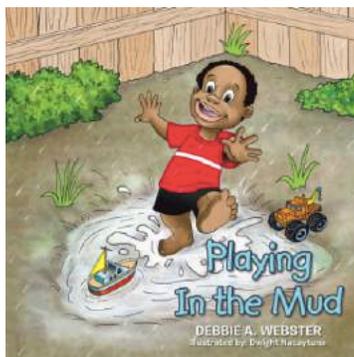
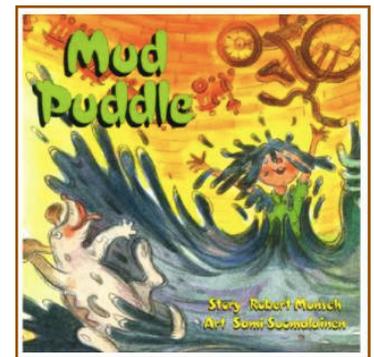
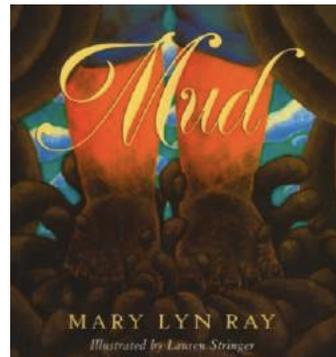
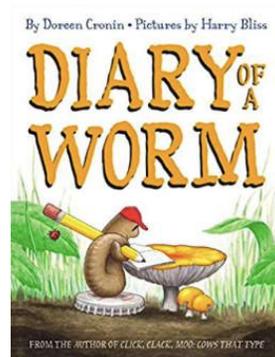
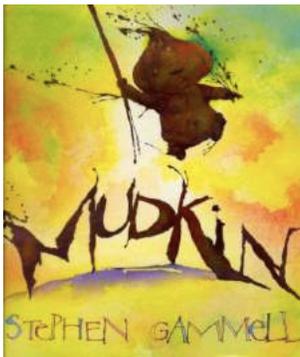
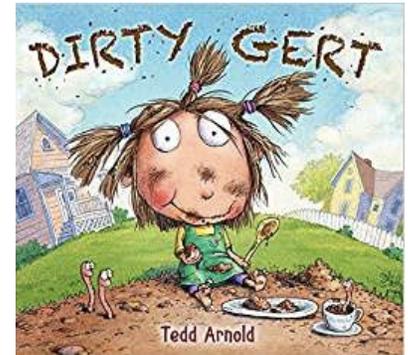
Diary of a Worm by Doreen Cronin

Mud by Mary Lyn Ray

Mud Puddle by Robert Munsch

Playing in the Mud by Debbie Webster

Why Do Pigs Roll Around in the Mud? by Jennifer Shand



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See you next week with issue 25 of **Minis at Home!**

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

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