Carnival Theme for Preschool

From Miss Cheryl at Preschool Plan It

Some of your children may have been to a Carnival—some may not have! Here is a way to bring some Carnival fun & excitement into your classroom!

On the following pages you’ll find over 40 themed activities for all of your Interest Learning Centers—enough for at least a week’s worth of planning!

You’ll also find the following printable items:

- Themed Activities for Your Interest Learning Centers
- Carnival Calendar Pieces (ABC pattern)
- Cotton Candy Counting File Folder Game
- Playdough Recipe: “Fluffy” Playdough
- Playdough Mat #1: Tic-Tac-Toe Game
- Playdough Mat #2: Create A Carnival Mat
- We’re Going To A Carnival Song Poster & Song Card

Let the Carnival Theme Planning Begin!
Classroom Pennants

Materials Needed: triangle shaped poster board (1 for each child); paint, misc. arts & crafts supplies and glue; stamps and stamp pads

Provide the some or all of the materials listed to decorate. Encourage the children to print their name on it as best they can. Hang them around your classroom to theme the room for your carnival theme!

Sand Art

Materials needed: colored sand, plastic teaspoons, cardboard, glue, brushes

Let the children squeeze glue on the cardboard. Ok. Stop here......breathe! YES, let them squeeze and squeeze and squeeze. Don't tell them “Stop! That's enough!” Give them a chance to use their muscles and to just use glue freely!
When done squeezing, let them drop spoonful's of colored sand on the glue. Let sit overnight. Then shake of excess.

Penny Pitch Table Cloth

Materials needed: LARGE sheet of paper that covers the table; bingo daubers of many colors

The children use the daubers to cover the paper with dots. Let dry. Use later today for a gross motor game. See Penny Pitching under Gross Motor activities below.

Cotton Candy Puffy Paint

Materials needed: Shaving cream, white glue, paint, pipettes, craft sticks, cups, brushes, construction paper.

I LOVE puffy paint! Let the children create their own colors! Put equal amounts of glue and shaving cream in their cups. Let them use pipettes to drop color into the cup. They mix with a craft stick until it is all mixed up. (Please, let THEM do this! Who cares how long it takes! It’s fun to do and to watch the ingredients mix together!). When done, they can share their colors and paint on construction paper (their choice of color). This dries puffy and is awesome!
Group Carnival Sign

Materials needed: A large piece of paper (as big as your table); markers, crayons, colored pencils.

In advance, print the word Carnival in bubble or block letters across the paper. That’s it. Let the children decorate the entire paper. They might draw pictures, letters, color, etc. Just let them design it! When done, hang over your classroom door or on the wall in your classroom.

Marble Race

Cut some pool noodles in have so you can see the inside. The children use these to run marbles in. How can they make the marbles run down faster? How can they use the blocks to balance the noodles higher?

Circle Time is such a great time for children to learn the social skills of being together as a large group AND to learn more about your Back to School Preschool Activities theme!

Tunnel Time

This is like a backward leap frog game! The children stand with their legs apart in a row or line. The child from the back crawls on the floor under all the children’s legs to the front of the line. They continue until they have all had a turn!

Variation: Provide a tunnel tube, if you have one, for the children to crawl through to get to Circle Time today!

Balance Beam to a Friend

Place a balance beam at circle and let the children try balancing and walking on it. If you don’t have one, I highly recommend getting one! But, you could use long, wooden unit blocks or a line of tape.
5 Little Hot Dogs

Hot dogs are a staple food at Carnivals……. here’s a fun Circle Time (or any time) chant!

Five little hot dogs frying in a pan,
The grease got hot and one went BAM!
Four little hot dogs frying in a pan,
The grease got hot and one went BAM!
Three little hot dogs frying in a pan,
The grease got hot and one went BAM!
Two little hot dogs frying in a pan,
The grease got hot and one went BAM!
One little hot dog frying in a pan,
The grease got hot and it went BAM!
No little hot dogs frying in a pan.
The grease got hot and the pan went BAM!

Extension: Create flannel pieces. Include 5 hot dogs, a pan, and a flame!

Coin Toss Practice

Place different colors of construction paper in the middle of your Circle Area. Provide the children with some coins to practice tossing! Have them encourage each other along!

Extension: Follow this up with the Penny Pitch Tablecloth art activity and the Penny Pitching Gross motor activity today.

Estimation Jar

In advance, fill a clear container with popcorn, pompoms, etc. (choose one!).

Encourage the children to predict how many items they think are in the jar.

Write down their guesses next to their name.

Count the items out together!
Cooking with children helps develop their math skills and helps them to learn how to follow directions. It also allows for some great conversation! Ask many questions while cooking with your children to encourage conversation! Be sure to ask specific themed questions while making these fun snacks!

**Popcorn**

Materials needed: Popcorn air popper; popcorn kernels, melted butter, salt and toppings if wanted. (we’ve added Parmesan cheese, cinnamon/sugar mix, etc.).

Our kids love making popcorn. We put many kernels in the popper, take the cover off and see how far the popcorn pops in the air. We have also given the children dot stickers to place on the floor where they think the popcorn will land.

*Be certain to have the children sit back from the popper. The popper can get very warm and if the kernels pop out before they are actually popped, they are HOT and can burn.

**Snow Cones**

Materials needed: If you have a snow cone maker it would be an awesome activity!

**Drama**

**Welcome to The Carnival**

Place a large box in Dramatic play for a ticket booth for the children to decorate.

Provide all (or rotate) the games listed throughout this packet in this area for the children to play.

Provide prizes if desired.
Easel

Use Homemade finger paint…forget the brushes

See science activity below for instructions on how to make with the kids!

Gross Motor

Wet Sponge Toss

Materials needed: buckets & bins, some with water some without; large sponges
The children toss the wet sponges into an empty bin!

Penny Drop
Materials needed: a large clear container (like a plastic fish tank), 3 clear glasses (that are shorter than the fish tank); water, bowl of pennies

Fill the fish tank or bin. Insert 3 glasses so they are submerged in the fish tank with the openings of the glasses facing up.

The children drop or toss pennies into the fish tank trying to get them into the glasses.

Penny Pitching

Materials needed: penny pitch table cloth made by the children (see Penny Pitch Table Cloth activity above under the Art section); a bowl of pennies, blue painters’ tape

Tape lines on the floor. Encourage the children to stand behind one of the lines and toss a penny onto the table cloth. Did they get it on one of the dots?!

Balloon Stomp
(if you can use balloons in your program). Blow up balloons and let the children try to pop them by stomping on them or sitting on them!

Bean Bag Toss & Ring Tossing Games

Provide bean bags and bowls as well as 16-ounce water bottles (with a little water still in them) and rings. Let the children have some tossing fun!
Library

Book Suggestions for the Library

At The Carnival by Kirsten Hall

The Berenstain Bears at Big Fun Park by Stan & Jan Berenstain

Carnival of the Animals by Jack Prelutsky (Book AND CD!)

Paddington Bear and the Busy Bee Carnival by Michael Bond

Spot and His Grandparents Go To The Carnival by Eric Hill

Math & Manips

Carnival Match File Folder Game*

Materials needed: File folder game from this packet. Print 2 sets. Cut and laminate the pieces. Follow instructions in this packet to put game together.

Color Bottles

Materials needed: mini pom poms, plastic tweezers, small water bottles (with tops cut off and taped)

Provide the above materials for the children to fill the bottles with pom poms.

Variations: Cover the cut portion of the bottles with different colors of tape. The children then sort the corresponding colored pom poms into each bottle.

Add a printed numeral to the outside of each bottle for the children to use the tweezers to pick up and sort a specific number AND color into each bottle.
Clown Patterns

Materials needed: Pictures of many different clowns. Print and laminate 2 sets. Create a pattern with one set for the children to continue and/or copy. Encourage them to create their own patterns and discuss the differences and similarities between the pictures.

Tic Tac Toe Mat*

Materials needed: Tic Tac Toe mat from this packet. Use the pieces that go with this packet or use playdough or dry erase markers!

Fluffy Playdough*

Materials needed: The recipe card for Cotton Candy playdough from this packet!

Fluffy Playdough Mat*

Materials needed: The Fluffy Playdough Mat from this packet and playdough

Music & Move

We’re Going To The Carnival*
Sung to Farmer in the Dell

Act out the verses of this song as you sing!

We’re going to a carnival!
We’re going to a carnival!
Hi Ho and off we go!
We’re going to a carnival!

We’ll ride the merry-go-round
We’ll ride the merry-go-round
Hi Ho and off we go!
We’ll ride the merry-go-round!

Additional verses:
We’ll slide down a big slide…….
We’ll eat some yummy popcorn…..
We’ll toss a ring on a bottle…….
We’ll eat some cotton candy…….
We’ll go on a Ferris wheel…….
Bouncing Balloons

This is the way we bounce balloons, bounce balloons bounce balloons.
This is the way we bounce balloons up high in the air!
This is the way we push balloons, push balloons, push balloons.
This is the way we push balloons across the floor with our hand!
This is the way we kick balloons, kick balloons, kick balloons.
This is the way we kick balloons across the floor with our feet!
This is the way we catch balloons, catch balloons, catch balloons.
This is the way we catch balloons when tossed to us from our friend!

Carnival of the Animals

Get a copy of Carnival of the Animals by Camille Saint-Saens. This is an awesome CD!
Different classical music is played for each animal—the children can try to act them out!

Sand & Water

Buried Prize Dig

In your sand table, hide fun prizes for the children to find and then bury again such as: glass jewels, stickers, animal counters/sorters and other fun items.

Numbered Ducks on Water

Print numbers, letters or place colored dots on the bottoms of rubber ducks.
Create pairs (2 ducks with the number 1, 2 ducks with the number 2, etc.).
Float them in the water.
The children try and match the numbers.
This is like a floating memory game!
Mystery Guess Box
Materials needed: a deep, cardboard box, items for guessing (bar of soap, Lego, comb, cereal, cooked spaghetti, etc.)

Cut a circular hole into the box for the children to reach their arm into. Without the children seeing, place an item in the box. They take turns feeling the item and guessing what it is!

Make Finger Paint!
Make finger paint with the children to use at the Easel this week!

In a bowl, mix:
3 T sugar
½ t salt
½ c corn starch
2 c water
Once mixed, separate into paint cups. Let the children add a drop of paint to it and mix in!

Make Tickets
Provide paper, scissors, pens, markers, stamps, stamp pads and colored pencils. Let the children create tickets for all the games and activities you will have this week! They can give them to their friends in Dramatic Play!

Decorate Popcorn Bags
Provide white lunch bags and let each child decorate a bag using crayons and colored pencils. Encourage them to print their name on their bag. Do this on the day you are going to make popcorn in class!
Photo Board
In advance of this theme, create (or ask a parent to create) a photo board for picture taking!

They create a face and/or body on a large piece of poster board (perhaps clown or a Ferris wheel, etc.) and then cut a hole out where the face would be. The children stand behind the board and put their face in the hole for a fun picture. In the case of a Ferris wheel, 2 or three children can be in the same picture with it looking like they are on a Ferris wheel).

Face Paint
Invite a parent to come in and face paint the children (allergy permitting).
Print and laminate all of these pieces. Use a dry erase marker to print the month on the card below (after you have laminated it). You can then erase and use again any month you’d like!
How to make the file folder game:

- Print out all pages.
- Cut out game title and the instructions from this page.
- Glue title onto tab of file folder & instructions on the front.
- Laminate cotton candy picture page and attach inside the file folder.
- Cut out 1 or 2 sets of the colored cotton candy page & 1 set of the number pages. Laminate and place in envelope.

**Instructions:**

Children place a number on the cone. Children then count out that many pieces of cotton candy onto the page.

Variation: Use pom poms instead of the paper counters!
Cotton Candy Counting File Folder Game Pieces
“Fluffy” Playdough Recipe

3 cups flour  \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup oil  water (approx. 1 cup)
2 Tablespoons powdered tempera paint

1. Children help you to add the flour, paint and oil. (I used liquid tempera paint as we don’t have powered paint!)
2. Take turns mixing.
3. Now add water a little at a time until it is elastic-like in texture.

Our children called this playdough “fluffy”……hence the name! 😊

This texture is fun. It works a little like putty in that as you stretch it, it shrinks a bit.

Recipe makes enough for 4-6 children.


Use this playdough by itself or with the activity mats in this packet!
Fluffy Playdough Mat

The “Fluffy” Playdough recipe in this packet is a bit different. It is stretchy or “fluffy” as one of my students called it!

Because of its elasticity, it is a challenge to get the dough to stay in one shape!

Let the children have fun with this dough on the mat on the next page.

They can use the dough to create their own Carnival scenes by creating:

Rides (Ferris Wheel, Merry-Go-Round, etc.)
Carnival Games
Carnival Food (fried dough, popcorn, cotton candy, etc.)

Try making several different colors of this recipe OR provide other playdough colors for more fun!

VARIATION: Give the children dry-erase markers to draw their Carnival scene!

(Skills: muscle development; fine motor control; eye-hand coordination)
What would be at YOUR Carnival? Create rides, games & more!
Activity Mat- Tic Tac Toe

There are so many fun games at the Carnival.

Here’s one for your children to play in your Classroom!

Tic-Tac-Toe!

Print and laminate the following game board page and then:

- Provide dry erase markers and an eraser.

- Provide playdough to make and use as “X”s (to playdough snakes put together) and “O”s (a circular playdough snake OR a rolled up ball of playdough).

- Print, laminate and use the pieces below as markers for the game.

(Skills: muscle development; fine motor control; eye-hand coordination, turn-taking)
Song Card & Song Poster

How to use:
• Print and laminate the song card below (it is 5” X 3”).
• Place in a can or box with other cards of songs your children love!
• In transitional times (waiting to go outside or wash hands, etc.), pull out your song box or song can (I use a decorated coffee can!).
• Shuffle the cards in your hands saying “Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle” and your children yell “STOP”!
• When they yell stop, whichever card is on top is the one you sing! The kids LOVE this!

Each month you’ll receive one of these cards that correspond with the song poster for the month to add to your Song Card Collection!

On the next page, you’ll find the Song Poster! Print and laminate for use over the years!
The Carnival

We’re going to the carnival!
We’re going to the carnival!

Hi Ho and off we go!

We’re going to the carnival!

We’ll ride a Merry-Go-Round...

We’ll eat some yummy popcorn...

We’ll toss a ring on a bottle...

We’ll eat some cotton candy...

We’ll go on a Ferris Wheel...
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Thanks!  ~~Miss Cheryl

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