

Perhaps you have been using an [ocean theme](#) this summer?



I often wait for the beginning of the school year to do an ocean dance. By then, many children have visited the ocean or studied it. This plan has lots of action, ocean animal content, and a quiet transition to whatever you want to do next.



Ocean Dance



Needed:

- a variety of ocean/water music, fast and slow, classical and popular
- one **large blue rayon scarf or other light fabric** (the size of a table cloth)
- for extension activities: a variety of colors of scarves.

Safety:

- an open space free of obstructions and a not too slippery floor
- wash scarves frequently
- review children of dancing rules: whatever personal space techniques you use are important to avoid bumps when dancing. Mine is: we don't touch people, we don't touch things or whatever personal

Play a song about animals. Dance with the children*, acting out the animals. Occasionally ask them about the animals in the song:

You: "Does a cat live in the ocean?"

Kids: "NO!"

You, or maybe a child, says: "But there is a catfish!"

This can lead to a discussion or just keep dancing....

Play more animal songs: (Does a horse live in the water? NO! But there are seahorses!)
When the song is over, brainstorm with the children about what lives in the ocean. Let the children develop movements for each animal: jiggle like a jellyfish, glide like a sting ray, leap like a dolphin. Put on some ocean music and swim, dive, wiggle, glide, float, dance like ocean animals to any upbeat summertime or ocean music you like. (*Aquarium, from the Carnival of Animals by Camille Saint-Saens is one suggestion.*)

End with quiet music (*a Chopin nocturne is good for this*). Have the children lie on the floor like sea stars (starfish) and gently float the large blue scarf over them like a wave, back and forth.

The children love the feel of the scarf sliding over them.

*Do dance with them! They love it and you can use the movement to stretch your own shoulders, back, arms, and neck!



Extensions:

A. When in doubt, add scarves! Play some ocean music and ask, "What color is the ocean?" As the children yell out blue I toss out light blue, dark blue, royal blue scarves. Everyone grabs a scarf and soon you have a live moving ocean in the classroom. Toss out some green scarves: "What else is in the ocean?" Seaweed! Toss out other colored scarves for coral and plants and fish and continue dancing.

B. Divide the class in half. One half has blue scarves and together they move back (into the deep ocean), form a large wave and sweep forward getting smaller and smaller and bring their scarves down to touch the ground.

The other half can be sandpipers pretending to dig for clams at the edge of the ocean until the waves roll in at which point they run away. As the "wave" goes back out to sea the sandpipers return to digging. Repeat.

OR

The other half can be people sitting on the beach and the "wave" tickles their toes with the scarves before going back out to sea

c. After dancing have the class sit and learn (to the tune of My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean):

I'd like to go swim in the ocean

I'd like to go swim in the bay

I'd swim with the dolphins and mermaids *(let the children suggest what to swim with)*

I'd like to go swimming all day.

Swim, swim, swim, swim, I'd swim in the ocean and ba-a-ay...

Swim, swim, swim, swim, I'd like to go swimming all day !

