

Static Electricity

Materials needed:

- empty soda cans
- balloons
- salt & pepper

First explain to the children what static electricity is and how it is created. This is easily done by drawing a diagram of the protons and electrons scattered at first, then lined up with the attraction between them.

Next, have the kids play with the balloons for a while, letting them explore how static electricity works and also what kinds of materials are best for creating the static electricity on the balloon. Then show the kids how an empty soda can can be 'lead' across the room by static electricity. First create a charge on the balloon by rubbing it vigorously on a rough surface. Then hold the balloon a couple inches from the surface of the can – the can will be attracted to the balloon and will move. You can have the kids pair up and have races with the soda cans.

Next pour a small amount of the salt and pepper into a small tray, and hold a charged balloon over it. The pepper will spring up to the balloon, leaving the salt behind.