

Nature Walks

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Early Childhood Boeing Grant

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Foundations

California Department of Education Preschool Learning Foundations

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoollf.pdf>

Social-Emotional Development Domain

2. Social Interaction, which focuses on interactions with familiar adults, interactions with peers, group participation, and cooperation and responsibility

Language and Literacy Domain

1. Listening and Speaking, which includes language use and conventions, vocabulary, and grammar

English-Language Development Domain

1. Listening, which includes understanding words, requests and directions, and basic and advanced concepts

2. Speaking, which focuses on using English to communicate needs, expand vocabulary, become skillful at engaging in conversations, use increasingly complex grammatical constructions when speaking, understand grammar, ask questions, use social conventions, and tell personal stories

Mathematics Domain

1. Number Sense, which includes understanding of counting, number relationships, and operations

Children Input/ Purpose

Children show an extreme interest in the things that are occurring outdoors in natural environments. This extends past gardening, but also observing what is

happening in other parts of their environment, such as finding ladybugs in the grass, looking at the bees that stay in the sand, and birds that land or fly over the environment. Children often bring in flowers or leaves to the classroom on their way to school. This lesson encourages children to observe their environment and also can show the value of natural objects in the classroom.

Theme/Main Goals

The main goal is to introduce more natural materials into the classroom on a regular basis. The reasoning behind this is to help let families know that the things that children have access to is always a valuable educational resource. Other goals are for children to have the opportunity to collect, sort, count, and distinguish among things found on their walk. Another goal is to use the materials brought back to the classroom to engage in activities during free play as children choose to use them.

Instructional Sequence

LISTENING/DIALOGUE/ACTION

1. Gather children into small groups and explain to them that the class will be taking a walk and will be looking for natural objects to bring back to the classroom. The children can be told that the objects they find can be given to their teacher to be put into a bag to bring back to the classroom.
2. While children walk and look, teachers can talk with them about the variety of things to be found as well as what the object could be used for in nature as well as how it might be used in the classroom.

3. When returning to the classroom teachers can sit with their small group of children and go through the things in the bag that the children found. The teacher will let them know that the materials can be found in the art and science areas and can be used throughout the classroom as the children need and want.

Materials/Organization

Bags for collection of finds
First aid backpack

While no other particular materials are needed, safety is a concern since this is a field trip. If unable to take children from school grounds, a walk around the grounds may suffice. Children should be organized by their small groups and guided by their lead teacher.

Student Assessment (Learning Story Format)

Assessment was conducted through anecdotal records, both taken during the activity and post activity. Photos were also taken for documentation. These were used to help create learning stories. Learning stories help to tell the story of what a child is working on, analyzes this learning, and then plans what is next for the child in their learning.