

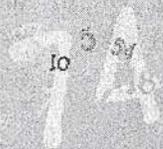
Learning Areas



These learning areas extend learning about the space the children occupy. Activities can be done in conjunction with the proposed "Activity Plans" in order to reinforce the concepts of mapping, measurement, and exploration.

Helpful Hint: If you are not in a classroom, you can set up a few things from each learning area and let the children explore during one of your meetings.

Math



- Graph the number of different animals you see on your walks
- Measure how far it would be for a small animal to get between the food, water, and shelter sources in the yard
- Weigh out how much dog food you should feed a small, medium, and large-sized dog
- Make a chart of the birds you see and mark down which ones you see most often

Literacy



- Make a Big Book with each child contributing a page about their favorite animal
- Write name poems for different animals
- Dictate a short story about a pet you have at home or that you play with sometimes

Books



- *In the Nest* by Anna Milbourne
- *A House is a House for Me* by Mary Ann Hoberman
- *Salamander Room* by Anne Mazer

Sensory



- Collect articles of clothing made out of different types of wool—alpaca, cashmere, etc—and have the children describe the differences between them. Discuss where they come from
- Play different bird calls and see if the children can imitate them

Science



- Make a bird identification guide to go along with your bird feeders
- Compare the ingredients in different dog and cat foods
- Borrow some skulls from a local nature center and compare the teeth of herbivores, omnivores, and carnivores
- Gather a lot of plastic animals or animal pictures and sort them into meat eaters, plant eaters, and everything eaters. Or, sort them into live in the water and live on land

Artistic



- Make up your own animals and decide what they eat, where they sleep, and how they move. Make them out of clay, draw or paint them
- Draw the animals you see out a window or as you sit outside
- Use paper mache to make animal masks and use them in a short play

**Dramatic
Play/Movement**



- Act out the different types of animals that the children see every day
- Make animal masks and have the children write their own little story plays about the animals
- Act out how to behave around animals—those you know and those you do not

Sharing Circles



- Bring in someone from a local nature center or zoo that has traveling animals to help the children learn the difference between a pet and a wild animal
- Contact your local bird store to see if someone can come out and help the children learn about birds in the area
- Have a “Bring Your Pet” to class day and invite the parents to bring a family pet for a few minutes. If you can’t have animals in the room, have children bring in photos of their pets to share

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Learning Areas



The learning areas in this section can be extended into their own units. Here, we are trying to provide some specific ideas as to what can be done so children can feel part of the community they are exploring.

Math



- Make counting boards using seeds
- Bring in flowers, ferns, a cactus or another type of plant and have the children look for patterns in the petals or the foliage

Literacy



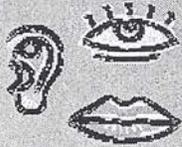
- Make a set of cards that have plant words on them. Challenge the children to come up with words that rhyme with the plant terms
- Write a poem to describe a plant that lives in the room or outside the building

Books



- *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart
- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
- *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss
- *How Groundhog's Garden Grew* by Lynne Cherry
- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- *Linnea's Windowsill Garden* by Christine Bjork and Lena Anderson
- *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert
- *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert
- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert

Sensory



- Place some different herbs and spices into film canisters with holes punched in the lids. Have the children smell and then describe what they smell
- Listen to and sing songs about plants
- Bring in a few different fruits and vegetables that the children may never have tried before. Do a taste test and describe what the produce tastes like and if it is similar to something else the children eat often
- Prepare some simple foods like fruit salad, lettuce salad with lots of different types of lettuce, and "ants on a log" with celery and raisins. Tie this into the earlier study of healthy eating

Science



- Plant a runner bean in a pot and put a piece of paper up on the wall next to it. Once every few days, mark the height of the plant. Measure it to make a math connection
- Put some grapes out in the sun and see how long it takes them to become raisins
- Set up plant experiments to see how they are impacted by clean water, salty water, lack of sunlight, constant light, etc.

Artistic



- Make leaf and bark rubbings
- Make paper using old newspaper and pieces of plants that you have collected from the ground or purchased at the store

Dramatic Play/Movement



- Have the children act out different types of plants: grass in the wind, trees in a storm, cactus in the desert, a tree being pecked by a woodpecker, a leaf blowing in the wind, a tumbleweed rolling down the street, a growing seed, etc.

Sharing Circles



- Have children bring in a plant part from near their home. Compare and contrast them by having the children sort them into categories
- Let children share their favorite "Plant Food." Put a pin on a world map to show where their favorite foods come from

Learning Areas



These basic activities can be done by a single child or a small group. By linking learning areas activities to the full activity plan, teachers and leaders reinforce the learning of the whole group. Learning areas are good places to place some of the loose parts, with the understanding that the children may move the parts around to further their own exploration. Integrating the activities that take place at different learning areas is an excellent way to help children learn real-world skills and connections.

Math



- Use beans and rice as counters
- Practice separating fruits into sections/quarters
- Set up a shopping area with money amounts on food items
- Count the recommended number of servings per day of different foods
- Measure how tall a doll is and build a house for it

Literacy



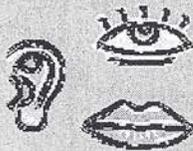
- Provide food labels with easy-to-read ingredients for the children to practice their reading
- Write up favorite “Healthy Snack” recipes and make a class cookbook
- Practice the alphabet using different foods for the letters

Books



- *Houses and Homes* by Ann Morris
- *That's What Friends Do* by Kathryn Cave
- *Stone Soup* by various authors
- *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
- *Sam and the Lucky Money* by Karen Chinn
- *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by Dyanne Disalvo-Ryan (older children)
- *The Eagle and the Wren* by Jane Goodall

Sensory



- Provide different kinds of beans and rice for the children to touch and compare
- Give children different tools to move the beans and rice from one place to another—tweezers, small spoons, slotted spoons, tongs, chopsticks
- Do a “taste test” of different kinds of pasta, bread, exotic fruit and other food items

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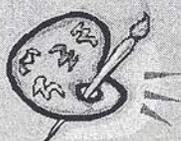
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Science



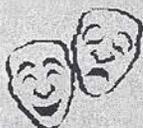
- Provide a simple beam balance and different types of rice and beans for children to practice balancing weights. Guide them to see if some foods are heavier than others
- Provide measuring cups and different types of rice and beans, flours, etc. for children to practice measuring different amounts
- Put out some feathers and hand lenses (small magnifying glasses) for the children to observe in connection with *The Eagle and the Wren* by Jane Goodall
- Make flat pieces out of clay, straw, rocks, etc. and put water on top of them to see how long it takes the water to drip through

Artistic



- Make a Favorite Foods book with each child making her own page
- Have the children draw what it feels like to be hungry, cold, thirsty, lonely
- Make teddy bears out of fabric to give to shelters for children

Dramatic Play/Movement



- Have children act out being hungry, cold, thirsty, lonely and see if other children can guess what the actors are feeling
- Pretend you are different types of food—apples growing on trees, eggs frying, strawberry vines growing across the ground, etc.
- Set up a shopping area for children to practice buying food

Sharing Circles



- Have each child bring in a small sample of his/her favorite food to share
- Have each child share a time when she was hungry, thirsty, too cold or too hot—how did she feel? How did she deal with the problem? -
- Invite someone from the local *Meals on Wheels* program or local food bank to talk with the children about what they do to make people's lives better

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