



Environment

ENVIRONMENT HUNT

Take turns with your child playing “I-Spy” while on a walk, sitting, or standing in line, or even driving a car. While driving, you notice a camper with a child who is waiving his arm out the window. Then you say, “I spy with my little eye, something hanging out the window.” When your child does not guess correctly, give them another clue “I spy with my little eye, something hanging from the window of a truck.”

Take turns finding words that rhyme with:

LAKE	(bake, cake, fake, make)
PLANT	(can't, grant)
TREE	(bee, key, see)
HOME	(comb, fome, rome)

Conversation Starters: Ask your child one of these questions to begin a conversation about the theme

1. Where do bears live?
2. What crawly animals live in the wetlands?
3. Can the wet land animals live in the desert? Why?

Book Topic & Internet Search

Don't forget that you can help your child create their own books by stapling or taping paper together in the form of a book.

Desert Environments People live in what environment? **Lake environments**

What grows in the wetlands? The different environments of the world

The environment of plants **Mountain environments** People live in what environments? A cactus lives where?

TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

It is important for children to acquire emotional and social development during their younger years. Emotional development should range from self-awareness and include the understanding of others and the world around them, such as the environment. It is key to integrate the direct effect and role as a member of society; creating an important sense of belonging, ownership, and self-esteem.

Activity: I CARE!

Materials Needed: Plant seeds, small pot(s), soil, sunlight, water, labels, and markers

Discuss all the different things we need in order to grow strong and healthy, such as food, shelter, exercise, oxygen, people to care for and that care for us, and so forth.

Compare and contrast our human needs to the needs of a growing seed. Follow on by observing the characteristics of the seeds including their different colors, shapes, and sizes.

Plant the seeds in the small pots, labelling each pot and directing your child to the care instructions for each plant, being sure to mention that soil keeps plants in place as well as the source of food for the plant just like sunlight.

If possible, when plants have sprouted, replant them in the garden.

MATH & SCIENCE ACTIVITIES FOR HOME

Beginning math and science skills include classifying, sorting by attributes, theorizing, planning, estimating, and identifying. Each of these skills actually begins in very young infants when they play in their environment. Discuss each activity as you set-up, play and clean-up will allow for reinforced learning and your child's love of learning.

1. Discuss that environment trees need to live and be healthy.
2. Show pictures (online or print) of different trees and where these trees can be found.
3. Discuss why some trees are in the cold (evergreen) and some trees are in the heat (cactus).
4. Sort pictures of different types of trees comparing what areas they can be found in.

*Art is an avenue for liberated self-expression.
Using the environment for self-expression is a creative way to use different materials.
Talk about textures, colors, and shapes and allow your learner to explore and create using a variety of materials.
Encourage them to play with colors and enhance their personal creativity!*

Activity: My Tree Creation

Materials Needed: Twigs, small branches, leaves, glue, large white art paper, sparkles, and cutouts

Together with your child, go on a nature walk to find objects usable for a tree creation.

Have your child glue their findings on a large white art paper in the shape of a tree.

As you assist them in the tree creation, discuss with your child their thoughts and decision processing allowing for maximum creativity and self-expression.

Research says

The incredible plasticity of the child's brain points to the importance of the child's surroundings - a safe and caring social and emotional space coupled with a hands-on interactive environment - in promoting healthy neurological growth. The high metabolic activity in a young child's brain suggests that the child should be exposed to dynamic, creative, and multisensory experience. (Armstrong, 2006)

Bubbly Fun

Open-ended activities are encouraged in early childhood because they promote the development of problem-solving skills as well as critical thinking. Providing your child new and different materials and allowing them to lead the activity will not only empower them but also allow creativity to flourish.

Activity: Bubble Mania

Materials Needed: Baby shampoo, non-toxic soap or bubble liquid, water, straws, food coloring, and paper

Prepare small bowls of water and food coloring along with the straws. Explain to your young learner that they will be using the straw to blow bubbles onto a sheet of paper.

Guide and assist as necessary and encourage the use of different colors and creativity!

The smelly outdoors

Playing outside, smelling the fresh scent of trees and cut grass, feeling the warm sun on their skin is a must on a daily basis for all ages. Weather permitting, go outside and play!

Using simple materials can create wonderful experiences and beautiful memories for your young learner, all while learning about natural resources and developing skills.

Activity: Painting Magic

Materials Needed: Several water buckets, paint brushes, open space, and imagination.

Provide your child with the buckets of water and paintbrushes around a large open area. Concrete pads or wood decks work great. Encourage creativity and discuss how a natural resource, water, can easily become a great tool for creative art.

Time for Fun!

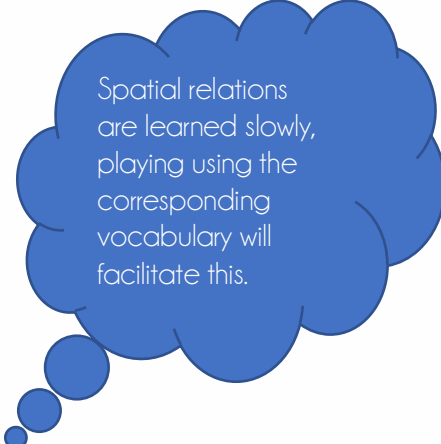
Research says from experience that children who do not develop a foundation of basic motor skills – throwing, catching, kicking, skipping, galloping, and so forth are less likely to participate in physical activity on a daily basis.

It is normal and acceptable for children to develop at different rates. It is important to note that exposing them and allowing them the time to develop their muscles with the right activities and opportunities is our responsibility.

Activity: Various

Materials Needed: Balls, tricycles, and chairs

- Encourage your child to ride the tricycle.
- Play “Simon says – do this”. Say the words and perform an action that the child should copy. Be sure to take turns on being Simon.
- Have your child mimic your actions and then reverse the roles. The one who mimics must act as the other shadows and performs simple actions during a walk about.
- Imitate the movement of different animals, creep like a snake, waddle like a duck, hop like a rabbit, and so forth.
- Encourage your child to balance first on one leg, then on the other for as long as possible.
- Have your young learner follow your directions such as, stand in front of a chair, behind a chair, next to the chair, on top of the chair, or crouch under the chair.



Spatial relations are learned slowly, playing using the corresponding vocabulary will facilitate this.

Awareness plays an important role as it is the realization of one's self and the world around them. Providing information about how the world works and what we can do to take care of it creates an invaluable sense of belonging and care for the environment; an empowerment that directly becomes a sense of responsibility and concludes as a positive feeling of accomplishment.

Activity: Cereal Box Puzzles

Materials Needed: Different cereal boxes and scissors

Together with your child, observe the front panel of a cereal box prior to cutting it. Assist and guide your child to cut the front panel of the cereal box and then cutting the panel into pieces – fewer pieces for younger learners and more pieces for the older learners.

Together, work on building the box panel back and proceed with other cereal boxes as time allows.

As educators, we need to ensure a healthy and learning environment for children. The relationships that children sustain from birth are critical for social and emotional development and provide mediators of language and intellectual development. This leads to children understanding and interacting with friends. It provides a balance of learning, guidance, and support for real world experiences.



Research says

Activity: Trees are Awesome!

Suggested reading: *The Great Paper Caper* by Oliver Jeffers

Read and discuss *The Great Paper Caper*. Focus on the following important facts about trees, along with some key questions to promote critical thinking:

1. Trees are an important source of food. They grow many of the fruits we eat. *Can you name some?*
2. Trees are the home of many animals and help provide the shelter and food for them and many plants. *Can you name some animals that live in and need trees?*
3. Trees produce oxygen, something that we need in the air to breathe, so trees help keep the air nice and clean! A tree gives shade in the summer and keeps us cool.
4. Trees are used to build structures, homes and many products that we need like very important medicines.
5. The need to replant trees and take care of them.
6. Trees are not only amongst the largest living things on Earth but can live the longest.
7. A tree trunk is really just a hard, woody stem.
8. Under the protective bark, water and food travel up through the outer layer of wood, called sapwood, to the tree's crown of the branches and leaves.
9. Fine roots take in the water with the large roots anchoring the tree to the ground.
10. Trees grow a new ring of wood every year. With plenty of sunshine and rainfall, that year's ring is wide.

The above facts should be given at the appropriate time, in order to promote opportunity for the information to be well absorbed and comprehended.

HANDS ON MATERIALS MAKE LEARNING FUN

Use safe household items to enhance the development of mathematical reasoning and thinking. Focus on the enjoyment of the moment rather than just doing a math activity. Provide safety, warmth, and a loving environment so that the learning will automatically happen when your child feels safe and valued.

Activity: Flashcard Game

Materials Needed: Numbered flashcards, recycled bottle caps, glue, recycled construction paper or cardstock

Allow your child to pick a flashcard and tell you the number they have chosen. Have them count out the selected number of recycled bottle caps. Repeat as necessary.

Follow on by encouraging your child to create a design using the bottle caps. Gluing the backs of the caps is the best way for the caps to stick.

Research says

Movement along with music is the best way for children to develop physical skills, direct energy, stimulate imagination, and encourage creativity. Creative movement uses all of their motor, thinking, and emotion with body movement to emulate wind blowing, how the sun feels on their face, rolling in grass, or the paint brushing wisped on the back of their hands.

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Activity: Litter Patrol

Materials Needed: Bag for litter, gloves, and labeled bins

Walk with your child around your property for a litter patrol. You both should have plastic gloves on.

Explain that no piece of litter should be picked up without your consent.

Discuss the effect of garbage in our environment if not picked up and the importance of disposing of trash and listen to your child's ideas.

Research says

Play facilitates a child's physical and sensorimotor development as they run, jump, dig, act, paint, draw, and in other ways that has direct contact with the living earth and culture around. Play promotes social learning as your child plays with other kids, creating roles based on what they see in the social world around them, adjusting their play behavior to the needs and demands of peers. It supports emotional growth as your child is able to project their own fears, joys, jealousies, angers, and ambitions onto toys, puppets, and other playthings, and work out their feelings about a wide range of concerns in constructive ways. (Armstrong, 2006)

Activity: The Three R's – Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce!

Materials Needed: Large craft paper, glue, newspaper or magazine cutouts, leaves, cans, alphabet, and caps

Begin by reciting the alphabet with your child.

Explain each of the "Three R's" with your child in the following way:

- Each word begins with the letter "R" – Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce
- Each word has a special meaning

Recycle: People should not throw cans, bottles, and newspapers into landfills. Explain landfills. Emphasize the fact that the above-mentioned items may be recycled. Brainstorm together with your child ideas on how to recycle.

Reuse: Explain how people don't always need a brand new t-shirt or piece of paper. Focus on how it is acceptable to erase, turn the paper over, or reuse what we already have. Discuss ways to reuse materials such as newspaper comics to wrap a gift, old t-shirt as doll clothing, cleaning rag, or even a quilt.

Reduce: Discuss how people can reduce at home the amount of garbage it produces and the energy it uses.

Together, use cut outs of different objects to create "Reduce", "Recycle", and "Reuse" collage and display proudly in your home in appropriate areas.