

Michele Hancock

Preschool teacher/Director

Activity: Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood Trees as Habitats (pg. 88)

Identify opportunities within current program or curriculum to integrate lesson plan:

Fall is a perfect time to explore where the squirrels and birds live within the tree branches. We can make these discoveries as we walk the grounds and enjoy the trees in our playground. This will serve as base knowledge tree habitats in the spring.

Outline use of activity components:

*Identify activity component, when it will be used and how

1. The activity will begin with a short discussion. Look out the window at the tree. What do you notice about the trees you can see? The discussion will lead to the concept of bare branches. What is a habitat?
2. Binoculars- How do they work? Why will they be helpful?
3. "Outside we go!" Look up, look down and look all around. Pack the camera, paper bags, paper and pencils.
 4. During large group through out the week, Let's look for sign of squirrels or birds. We'll locate and take photos of nest in a variety of trees. We can examine the spots that appear to small holes dug in the ground. (Where a squirrel hid an acorn.) We'll count the number of nest we find and photograph each.
 5. During "community time" for the week:
~Each child can examine their collection of small twigs and leaves.
 6. The next day, items will be available for weighting in the bucket scale and to examine with magnifying glasses and a tub of water will be out for sinking and floating of the collected materials.
 7. The following day, We will make a nest out of collected materials.
 8. Rake up a big pile of leaves (like giant square nest) How do you feel in this squirrel house? What do you like about this habitat?
 9. The next day, "We're going on an Acorn Hunt" we will take our collected acorns and hide them. Then the following day try and find them. Talk about how the squirrels find, hide and re-collect their acorns.
 10. Send home a photo of a tree habitat. Encourage the children to share their discoveries with their family.

Description of your outdoor exploration:

*Location: On the grounds of our facility. We'll walk the grounds to find additional trees and acorns for our activities.

*Identify additional preparation needed for exploration: Have the children write their names on their own bags. Some may need assistance. Also get materials needed which are camera, binoculars, paper bags, paper and pencils.

*What will the exploration look like? Searching for a tree nest, take turns with binoculars, taking

photographs and writing notes.

*Draft two open-ended questions to encourage further student investigation: I choose to use open-ended questions at the initial discussion and exploration. “What do you think this is?” “Where do you think we can find more?” Follow up questions? Who else might live in this habitat?

*List activities that could be used as pre/post learning opportunities: Pre-Activities teach “Have you ever made a squirrels nest with leaves, twigs and mud.” to the tune of Lassie. Post Activities: Lay out yards of fabric that represent the materials squirrels would use to build a nest and let them do it.

*Indicate modifications/considerations for children with special needs:

Children in a wheel chair or a child with large or small motor disabilities will need assistance to navigate the un-level ground of hills in addition to get down to pick up the acorns and other materials on the ground. This may also be a great opportunity for a mobile child to be partnered up with a child who may need some assistance or support.

*Indicate and modifications you will make to the activity or components within: (classroom usability)
We used potting soil, water, brown construction paper and flour as our mud.

*List age appropriate literature (books, periodicals, websites) that can be used as part of the activity:

- ~Owl Babies By Martin Waddell (read and did activities)
- ~Birds of Iowa By Stan Tekiela(read and used as a reference)
- ~Squirrels By Melvin and Gilda Berger(read in class)
- ~Nest, Nest, Nest By Susan Canizares and Mary Reid (read in class, retell activity)
- ~Robins By Melvin and Gilda Bergers (read in class)
- ~Animal Homes By Betsey Chesson(additional resources)
- ~First Discoveries: Night Creatures By Gallimand Jeunesse(additional resources)
- ~Incredible Owls By Justin McCoy Martin(read in class)
- ~Le Chuzas By Sally Morgan(read in class) (spanish)
- ~ Owl Moon By Jane Yolen (read in class)

*Identify local natural areas, parks or guest speakers that could be included in this activity:

- Vanderveer Park and Botanical Center- 215 W, Central Park Ave , Davenport, Ia 52803, 563-326-7818;
- West Lake- 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Ia 52804, 563-328-3281
- Scott County Park- 18850 270th St, Eldridge, Ia 52748 563-328-3282
- Bike Path through Davenport and Bettendorf Iowa, Starts at Credit Island ends at Isle of Capri, 8.5 miles
- Jill Vogt- Master Gardner, ISU Scott County Extension Master Gardner Class, 563-332-3482
- Scott County Extension Office.
- All Around Town Landscaping- Tony Behucke, 563-324-6450

*List standards/benchmarks/concepts that were met using components taught:

- 2.A. Curriculum: Essential Characteristics 2.A.10, 2.A.11 and 2.A.12
- 2.B. Social Emotional Development 2.B.01, 2.B.04, 2.B.05, and 2.B.06
- 2.C. Physical Development 2.C.03, 2.C.04 , 2.D.02 and 2.D.06
- 2.D. Language Development 2.D.03 and 2.D.04
- 2.E Early Literacy 2.E.04a 2.E.05 and 2.E.06
- 2.F Early Math 2.F.02, 2.F.05 and 2.E.07

- 2G Science 2.G.03, 2.G.05, 2.G.07, 2.G.04 and 2.G.06
- 2.J Creative Expression and Appreciation for the Arts 2.J.01, 2.J.06 and 2.J.07