

Explorers Preschool Curriculum

Let's Explore Farmers' Market



Developed by
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JoAnn Nalley, Director



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Thank you to the following colleagues who supported the development of Explorers Preschool Curriculum.

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Let's Explore Farmers' Market

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If Explorers Preschool Curriculum is new to you, or if you would like to review big ideas about this curriculum, see the Using Explorers section at the end of this packet.

An expanded Getting Started guide can also be found under the resources tab at www.ASUChildhoodServices.org

Let's Explore: Farmers' Market

A farmers' market is a busy place, bustling with people. There are piles of vegetables and fruits in every color, along with jams, fresh flowers, baked goods, and more. Children may be eager to meet farmers, taste samples, and take in all the exciting sights and sounds.

This topic might be a fit for you if...

- Markets, shopping, and cooking are recurrent themes in children's pretend play.
- You've heard children asking questions or wondering aloud about fruits and vegetables.
- You'll have a chance to visit a farmers' market or farm stand with your group or know that many children visit with their families.

Let's Talk About Farmers' Market

Use words like these during everyday conversations with children.

booth
crops
customer
farmer
farm stand
fruit
leaves
market
ripe
root
season
stem
vegetable
vendor

Names of vegetables and fruits, including less familiar ones: bell pepper, cabbage, cantaloupe, and so on.

Words to describe size, weight, and quantity of vegetables and fruits



Farmers' Market Collectibles

Collect some of these interesting objects to investigate with children. Families can help!

pint, peck, and bushel baskets
fresh vegetables and fruits
fresh flowers
honey and jam
chalkboard signs
scales
wooden crates

Preparing to Explore Farmers' Market

1. With your teaching team, think about and discuss the following questions.
 - What experiences have our children had with farmers' market so far? What background knowledge do they most likely have?
 - What resources could be helpful as we explore this topic with children? Are there any special places we might go, or special people who might visit our classroom, as we learn about the farmers' market?
 - What are some things that children might learn and do as we explore the farmers' market? What new words or concepts could they begin to understand?
 - Books, toys, and cartoons can perpetuate stereotypes about farmers and farming. What can we do to help children learn that many different people farm, and there are many different ways to farm?
2. Let families know that the group is interested in the farmers' market. What can they tell you about their family's experiences? Think together about ways that families can be involved. For example, a grandparent or neighbor might be a farmers' market vendor who could talk with children. Or, some parents might be willing to take their children to visit a weekend farmers' market and take photos to share with the class.
3. Gather books and materials to add to learning centers and to use during small group experiences. You'll find suggestions on the pages that follow.



Learning Center Extensions – Farmers' Market

Here are some examples of materials that can be added to your learning centers to support children's exploration of farmers' markets during daily free play times.

Not all materials need to be added at the same time. Choose materials based on what you have available and the ages, interests, and abilities of the children in your group. You may also choose to add more – or different – materials during your investigation. For more information on incorporating materials in your classroom, see the *Learning Everywhere* section in the Getting Started packet.

Dramatic Play Area

Farmers' Market play area including some of the following items.

- Toy or replica vegetables and fruits, silk flowers, miniature pumpkins and gourds
- Small, empty jars labeled as jam and honey
- Pint baskets, shopping baskets, small paper bags
- Sign-making supplies and farmers' market sign/banner
- Cash register and play money, scale
- Sun hats
- Open/closed sign

Give children an active role in planning and preparing this space as part of the **Making a Market** small group learning experience.

Fine Motor/Table Toy Area

- Fruit and vegetable-shaped rubber counters with tongs and sorting bowls or trays
- Hi Ho Cherry-O board game, fruit and vegetable matching game
- Real coin collection* or play money for sorting and counting

Art Area

- Farm/garden magazines and seed catalogs for collage
- Alphabet stamps and other sign-making supplies
- Easel paints inspired by various fruits and vegetables (changed often)

*Wash coins with soapy water and sanitize with a bleach-water solution. Pennies can also be cleaned and polished with a paste of vinegar and salt.

Block Building Area

- Toy tractors and pickup trucks
- Wooden toy fence pieces
- Craft pompoms or felted wool balls in orange, red, and green

Science Area

- Basket of real radishes, sweet potatoes, onions, or gourds; a vase of fresh-cut flowers
- Vegetable seed matching activity: plastic bottles with seeds to match to seed packets
- Plant life cycle sequencing cards or puzzle
- After being introduced to children, plants from the **Sprouts** small group learning experience may also be offered for ongoing observation.
- Photos of vegetables and farmers' markets, such as those available online with this curriculum
- Factual books about vegetables and fruits, such as these:

Carrots Grow Underground

Mari Schuh, Capstone Press, 2011

Pick, Pull, Snap!

Lola M. Schafer and Lindsay Barrett George, Greenwillow Books, 2003

Water Play Area

- Plastic vegetables with scrub brushes for washing
- Watering cans

Sand Play Area

- Plain dirt (not potting soil)
- Gardening gloves, water hose nozzles, trowels and handheld rakes, replica carrots and potatoes, baskets for collecting

Small Worlds Play Area

- Barn playset with props
- Small toy tractors
- Felt vegetables or loose parts to represent crops

Book Area

Add some of these and/or your favorite books about vegetables and fruits, gardening, and farmers' market.

Baby Goes to Market, Atinuke and Angela Brooksbank, Candlewick, 2017

Common Threads: Adam's Day at the Market, Huda Essa and Merce Tou, Sleeping Bear, 2019

Daisy Comes Home, Jan Brett, Puffin Books, 2005

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table,

Jacqueline Briggs Martin and Erik-Shabazz Larkin, Readers to Eaters, 2016

Fresh-Picked Poetry, Michelle Schaub and Amy Huntington, Charlesbridge, 2017

Gigantic Turnip, Aleksei Tolstoy and Niamh Sharkey, Barefoot Books, 2005*

How a Seed Grows, Helene J. Jordan and Loretta Krupinski, HarperCollins, 2015

How Groundhog's Garden Grew, Lynne Cherry, Blue Sky Press, 2003

It All Starts with a Seed, Emily Bone, Usborne, 2017

Meet Me at the Farmers Market, Lisa Pelto and Paula S. Wallace, Reading is Key, 2019*

Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!, Candice Fleming and G. Brian Karas, Atheneum Books, 2002*

On the Farm, At the Market, G. Brian Karas, Henry Holt and Co., 2016

Thank You, Garden, Liz Garton Scanlin and Simone Shin, Beach Lane Books, 2020*

To Market, to Market, Nikki McClure, Harry N. Abrams, 2011

Tops and Bottoms, Janet Stevens, Harcourt Brace, 1995*

Tractor Mac: Farmers' Market, Billy Steers, Farar, Strous, and Giroux, 2015

We Are the Gardeners, Joanna Gaines and Julianna Swaney, HarperCollins, 2019

What Will Grow?, Jennifer Ward and Susie Ghahremani, Bloomsbury USA, 2017*

***Recommended read-aloud to share with groups of children.**

Talking About Books

As you share books with individuals, small groups, or larger groups of children, ask questions like these:

- **Beginning:** Let's look at the cover of this book. What do you notice?
- **Middle:** What do you think (unfamiliar word) might mean?
- **End:** Did you notice the setting of this story? Where did it take place?

Talking together about books is an essential part of every preschool day!

Conversations about Farmers' Market

Use prompts like these as you talk with children throughout the day. For more information on incorporating planned conversations into your daily schedule, see the *Learning Every Day* section in the Getting Started packet.

Farmers' Market Conversations daily - during meals, play times, transitions, or group times

Try asking one or two questions like these when you have opportunities to talk with individuals, small groups, or the larger group of children.

- Have you ever been to a farmers' market? What did you see there?
- Farmers' market vendors sell vegetables and fruits. What else do they sell?
- What is your favorite vegetable to eat?
- Why do you think so many farmers drive pickup trucks?
- How is a farmers' market like a grocery store? How is it different?
- Our farmers' market is closed in the wintertime. Why might that be?
- If you had a garden, what would you plant in it?
- Do you know anyone who has a garden? (If so, ask follow-up questions.)
- I bought a basket of potatoes at the farmers' market. What could I do with them?
- I've never seen anyone selling bananas at our farmers' market. Why do you think that might be?
- We know that vegetables grow from seeds, but where do the seeds come from?

At least once a week, make a chart to write down children's answers to a question. Talk with children one, two, or a few at a time to collect answers. Later, read the responses back to the group. Post the chart where it can be viewed by children and families.

What did you notice at Farmers' Market?

So many blueberries - Ajay
Dogs from the shelter - Xander
All kinds of flowers - Mason
Stickers for the prices - Grace
Two people with guitars - Ava C.
Tents but without sides - Ava W.
All different peppers in baskets
-Donovan
Teeny, tiny tomatoes - Eli
A man selling cookies - Ben
Carrots with leaf tops, and even
purple carrots - Bella
A flag in the front - Kaylin
A big pile of string beans - Sam
A lady making baskets - Jervae
There was a sign with a chicken and
they were selling eggs. - Sofia

Conversations about Farmers' Market

Farmers' Market Polls

1-3 times per week – at arrival or group time

Choose a question from the list below or think of one of your own. Make a chart with the question and two possible responses, using picture cues when possible. Invite children to write their names or place name cards to respond.

- Would you rather eat a sweet bell pepper? Or a spicy jalapeño pepper?
- Have you ever eaten a green tomato?
- Which do you prefer, carrots or cucumbers?
- Have you ever tasted cantaloupe?
- What should we do with our blueberries? Make muffins? Or make pancakes?
- Which would you rather do – Work at a farmers' market? Or shop at a farmers' market?

Have you ever eaten  eggplant	
yes	no

Sharing Experiences So Far

Several times a week - during meals or play times

As you talk with individuals and small groups of children, tell about your own positive experience related to farmers' market, gardening, or foods from the garden. You might talk about meeting a friendly vendor, sampling a delicious melon, or grilling fresh corn.

Listen attentively as children talk about their experiences, too. Help children make connections between shared experiences. (“It sounds like all three of you have been to the River Market farmers' market in Little Rock. What did you see there?”)

Songs, Rhymes, and Games about Farmers' Market, Vegetables, and Fruits

These playful songs and rhymes can be incorporated into group times and transition times.

At the Market

Count on fingers as you sing.

One little, two little, three little berries,
Four little, five little, six little berries,
Seven little, eight little, nine little berries,
Ten berries at the market.

Additional verses

- Juicy peaches
- Crunchy cucumbers
- Spicy peppers

Way Up High in the Apple Tree – *traditional rhyme*

Way up high in the apple tree, (stretch hands up high)
Two little apples looked at me. (hold up two fingers)
I shook that tree as hard as I could! (pretend to shake the tree with both hands)
Down came the apples, (downward motion with hands)
And mmmm – were they good! (rub belly)

Down in the Garden– *to the tune of Down by the Station*

Down in the garden,
Early in the morning,
See the little radishes, all in a row.
See the cheerful farmer,
Stoop and pull the roots out –
Tug, tug, pull, pull, up they go!

Carrot Poem

Look at the carrot I just found, (hold out fist as if holding carrot)
Growing in the soil, underground. (crouch down, pat ground)
Now we can wash it and cut it in two, (scrubbing and chopping motions)
Half for me and half for you! (hold out one hand, then the other)

The Farmer Sows His Seeds – to the tune of *The Farmer in the Dell*

The farmer sows his seeds, (stoop to pretend to plant seeds)
The farmer sows his seeds,
Hi-ho, did you know, the farmer sows his seeds.

Additional verses

- The rain begins to fall (move fingers like falling rain)
- The warm sun shines down (raise arms in a circle overhead)
- The corn grows big and tall (raise hands from waist to overhead)
- The combine cuts the corn (pretend to drive a combine harvester)
- It's time to go to market (pretend to pack corn into baskets)

All Morning Long – to the tune of *Wheels on the Bus*

The people at the market walk round and round, (group walks around in a circle)
Round and round, round and round,
The people at the market walk round and round,
All morning long.

Additional verses

- The farmers at the market say, “Glad you’re here!” (wave to one another)
- The dogs at the market bark and wag. (pretend to wag tails, end by barking)
- The bags at the market fill right up. (pretend to pack a bag with both hands)

Repeat the “round and round” verse, walking around the circle, between each of the other verses. What other verses can your group think up?

Nursery Rhymes and Chants

Betty Botter
Blow, Wind, Blow

Oats, Peas, Beans, and Barley Grow
One Potato, Two Potato



Farmers' Market Playlist

Blackberry Pie – Caspar Babypants
Down by the Bay – Raffi
Fruit Salad – The Wiggles
Hola, Hello – Elizabeth Mitchell and Suni Paz
This Little Pig Went to Market – Sesame Street

Small Group Learning Experiences – Farmers' Market

Share learning experiences like the ones on the following pages with small groups of children each day. Groups should usually consist of three to seven children, rather than the whole group at once. Small group experiences may take place as children choose to join a teacher during free play time, or there might be a special small group time included in the daily schedule.

Use these questions to guide you as you choose daily learning experiences.

- **What is it about the farmers' market that these children seem most curious about?**

Children in the group might be especially interested in the many different fruits and vegetables found at the market. Or, they might seem more curious about the roles of vendor and customer. Let your observations and conversations with children be your guide as you choose experiences that invite children to pursue their interests and seek answers to their questions.

- **What are our learning goals for individual children and for the group as a whole?**

Choose experiences that support specific objectives for learning. Strive to create well-rounded plans that support all domains of development.

- **How can we extend children's thinking and learning?**

Choose activities that can be connected to children's experiences so far. Remember that it is often appropriate to "re-run" planned experiences. Offering an experience two or more times over a few days or weeks invites children to gain expertise and deepen their understanding.



Pair planned learning experiences with ample opportunities for open-ended, free choice exploration indoors and outdoors.

Arkansas Produce by Season

Knowing what may be in season at local farmers' markets and farm stands can help you plan learning experiences. Below, you'll find harvest seasons for some of the fruits and vegetables that are grown in Arkansas.

Spring (March-May)

- Asparagus
- Beets
- Cauliflower
- English Peas
- Greens
- Radishes
- Spring Onions
- Strawberries

Summer (June-July)

- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Broccoli
- Butterbeans
- Cabbage
- Cantaloupe
- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Green Beans
- Okra
- Onions
- Peaches
- Peppers
- Plums
- Potatoes
- Raspberries
- Squash
- Sweet Corn
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon

Later Summer/Early Fall (August-September)

- Apples
- Black-Eyed Peas
- Cantaloupe
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Grapes
- Green Beans
- Muscadines
- Okra
- Peaches
- Peppers
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon

Fall (October)

- Apples
- Cantaloupe
- Cucumbers
- Leafy Greens
- Okra
- Pecans
- Peppers
- Pumpkins
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Winter Squash

Making a Market

Let's plan and create a space for imaginative play.

Materials

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large paper and marker for charting | <input type="checkbox"/> Empty space for play (see note below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and markers for children | <input type="checkbox"/> Photos of farmers' markets (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Props for dramatic play | |

Prepare for this experience by creating an empty space for dramatic play. Equip it with an empty table and shelf and add signs that say "Coming Soon." This space will ideally be located next to – or near - your traditional dramatic play area.

Begin the small group experience by showing children the empty play area. Could you work together to transform this space into a farmers' market? Create a web or list of things that you find at a farmer's market. You may use photos of farmers' markets for inspiration if desired. Children can draw pictures to represent what they know about farmers' markets and/or draw ideas for arranging and equipping the new play space.

Explain to children that you have some props that they might want to use. (For ideas, see **Learning Center Extensions** in this curriculum packet.) Show them some of the items. Once children have had a few minutes to play and investigate, invite them to help make checkmarks next to the things on your web/list that are represented by the play objects.

What could you do to add more items to your prop collection?

- Children may want to bring items from home. They can help create a letter to families with a list of things that you are collecting.
- Children may want to use art materials to create props for their play area.
- Children may suggest buying props. It's OK to explain that you do not have money for more dramatic play props and/or that you want to focus on props that you can make or find. However, if you do plan to purchase something, children could talk about options and vote for a most-desired item.

During a brief whole group time, share the lists or webs created by all of the groups. Highlight original or different ideas from each group: "This group remembered that there are often musicians at the farmers' market. They suggested borrowing the guitar from our music area. What do you think about that?"

Making a Market (cont.)

Over the next few days, encourage individuals or small groups of interested children to take part in tasks like making signs, sorting and organizing fruits and vegetables, and arranging shelves. Children will be excited to see their farmers' market take shape!

Helpful Hints

Placing the farmers' market play area next to a traditional dramatic play area invites children to role-play going to market, making purchases, and bringing them home to wash, refrigerate, and cook. Be sure to include purses and wallets in the traditional dramatic play area. If you do not have room for an indoor farmers' market play area, consider an outdoor play area near a playhouse or other space where children engage in housekeeping play.

Remember that the process of creating a play space has value for children. Their ideas may differ from adults' and the finished play space will be unique. It may change over time as children think of new ideas. Consider hanging a sign at adult eye level to explain that this play space was planned and designed by the children.

Including Every Explorer

This experience offers many different ways for children to be involved. Adults can subtly help each child find appealing ways to be engaged that are well-matched to their individual abilities.

Here are some tips for arranging play spaces.

- To support children with limited communication skills, ensure that there is more than one entrance/exit route.
- To support children with limited mobility, ensure that pathways within the play space are wide and clear. Help peers remember to pick up and put away discarded play objects that could make it hard for their classmate to join in the play. Place heavy items on the floor or on low shelves, rather than on shelf tops.
- To support children with blindness or significant vision differences, provide individualized time for the child to safely become oriented to the new play space.

More to Do (optional)

Revisit your webs/lists after several days of work and play. What would children like to add?

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.1, EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Social Studies – SS 1.1

Do You Know Tomatoes?

Let's challenge what we think we know about a familiar, edible plant.

Materials

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes in a wide variety of shapes, colors, and sizes | <input type="checkbox"/> Scale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basket with a lid (or covered with cloth) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fabric measuring tape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magnifying glasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Large paper and marker for charting |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera (optional) |

Out of sight of children, place a variety of tomatoes in the basket and cover. Place one round, red, conventional-looking tomato in the center of the group table.

As children join you, ask them to identify the tomato and describe how it looks. Do all tomatoes look like this one? Invite children to carefully help you open and unpack the tomatoes in the basket. What are these? Spend a few minutes talking together and gently investigating the tomato collection. Children may want to touch and smell the tomatoes, and they may want to use the magnifying glasses to take a closer look. Let children know that they'll have a chance to taste the tomatoes later - after all of the groups have had an opportunity to investigate them.

How many different ways can children think of to sort the tomatoes? Try sorting by size or color. Can children think of another way that they would like to sort?

Invite children to choose two tomatoes to compare and contrast. Set the other tomatoes aside. Make a chart with two columns. Write the name of your tomatoes at the top of each column. Take a photo or draw a picture of each tomato to add to the chart. Investigate at least three of the following properties, making notes as you go.

- Size (measure with a flexible, cloth measuring tape or a piece of yarn)
- Color (look closely and describe)
- Shape (look closely and describe)
- Weight (use a scale)
- Presence of leaves and/or stem (look closely and describe)
- Other attributes suggested by children

Talk with children about tomatoes at the farmers' market. When they visit a farmers' market, they are likely to see many more *varieties* of fruits and vegetables than they see at the supermarket. This is true for tomatoes and also for peppers, onions, carrots, and more. Farmers choose varieties of plants based on the flavor they want, the size of the plant they want to grow, and other factors.

Do You Know Tomatoes (cont.)

Helpful Hints

Families and friends who garden may be willing to share tomatoes for this investigation. The farmers' market is another excellent source, of course. Some vendors may be willing to donate or sell single tomatoes if you explain the purpose. Note the names of each tomato if possible.

Be sure to rinse tomatoes before investigating and again after children handle the tomatoes, before tasting.

Including Every Explorer

Check with families to ensure that no child in your group is allergic to tomatoes. Substitute an alternative fruit or vegetable if needed.

Adjust the length and complexity of this experience to match the age and abilities of children in the group. Watch for cues that children are engaged; wrap up if they seem restless.

More to Do (optional)

- Cut a tomato in half from top to bottom to create a cross-section. What do children notice? In the days that follow, try making cross-sections of apples, bell peppers, cantaloupe, acorn squash, and/or pumpkins.
- Encourage families to visit the farmers' market with their child to notice the many varieties of vegetables and fruits.
- Plant tomatoes in a hanging "upside-down" planter bag or another container.

Did You Know? (Info for Educators)

From a biological perspective, the fruit is the part of the plant that contains the seeds. That means that tomatoes are fruits. Cucumbers, squash, and okra are fruits, too. A vegetable is any other part of the plant that we eat, such as roots, stems, and leaves. From a culinary perspective, however, we usually think of sweet edible plants as fruits and non-sweet ones as vegetables.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.1, EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Mathematical Thinking – MT 2.1, MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Observational Drawing: Fresh Vegetables and Fruits

Let's look closely at edible plants. We'll notice important details to add to our drawings. This experience can be repeated with several different subjects.

Materials

- Interesting seasonal vegetable or fruit (subject), such as spring onions with roots and tops, leafy cabbage, or pumpkins
- Blank paper
- Drawing tools such as pencils or markers

Focus on one type of fruit or vegetable per session. If your subject is small, have several available for artists to study. Create a comfortable, attractive drawing space where your small group of artists can easily see. A desk lamp can be used for lighting if desired.

Begin by looking together at the vegetable or fruit, describing the lines and shapes that you see. Try leaning in close or looking from different angles. Children may wish to explore with their senses by touching or smelling.

Invite children to draw what they see. An observational drawing is a way to tell about what they notice. Explain that they can look back and forth from their subject to their work. They can draw carefully to show things that feel important to them. What would they like to remember and keep on paper about this vegetable or fruit?

Each child should be allowed to work at their own pace, ending when they feel finished. You might suggest, "Let's look one more time. Is there anything else you would like to add to your drawing?" – but refrain from making specific suggestions.

After children have finished drawing, invite them to tell you about their work. Ask if there are any words that they would like for you to write on their paper, or if they would like to write words of their own. Invite artists to sign their drawings.

Helpful Hints

Introduce children to observational drawing using black markers or regular pencils. Children focus first on replicating the lines and shapes that interest them. Older/more experienced preschoolers can draw with a fine-line permanent marker first before adding color with watercolor paints during a second session.

Some children seem to prefer to draw on index cards or half sheets of paper, while other children prefer full sheets. Consider offering a variety of white papers to choose from.

Observational Drawing (cont.)

Avoid the temptation to show children how to draw. Drawing is far more meaningful for children when their role involves thinking, interpreting, and deciding – rather than merely copying.

Including Every Explorer

Some children's drawings may not be identifiable to adults yet, but every line on the page has meaning to the child. Praise effort and invite all children to talk about their work. Avoid judging or comparing one child's drawing to another's. If you have a child with limited use of hands, offer adaptive tools that are easier to hold and handle.

Some children may become frustrated if their drawing doesn't look "right." It may be helpful to reassure them that drawings don't have to be perfect to be important. Think together about other skills that get easier the more you practice.

More to Do (optional)

- Make space available for children to draw again later if desired. Collect children's first, second, and third drawings created over several days. Look with children at how their work has changed over time.
- Look at examples of labeled diagrams. Would children like to label the parts of the plant in their drawings?

Did You Know?

Often, children engage in *imaginative drawing*. They use art materials to create characters or tell a story. This type of drawing promotes creativity and self-expression. It may also lead to open-ended scientific exploration as children mix and manipulate art materials.

Observational drawing encourages children to draw what they really see. It promotes communication, logical reasoning, and mathematical thinking as children observe and replicate shapes, sizes, textures, and lines.

Both imaginative drawing and observational drawing offer big benefits for learners!

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 1.2, CD 2.1, CD 3.2

Emergent Literacy – EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Mathematical Thinking - MT 1.1, MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 2.1, ST 3.1

Market Visit

Let's visit a farmer's market or farm stand! If a field trip isn't a fit for your program, invite a guest instead. See *Meet the Gardener* in the Flowers curriculum set for suggestions.

Materials

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signed field trip permission slips | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation roster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Pack with wet wipes, tissues, hand sanitizer, small first aid kit, rescue medications - such as EpiPen- if needed by any child, emergency contact information for children, and emergency cell phone –carried by an adult at all times | <input type="checkbox"/> Clipboards with paper and pencil for children (optional) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottles in cooler (optional) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Matching field trip t-shirts (optional) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cameras (optional) |

Before scheduling your field trip, call to talk with the weekday farmers' market coordinator. If there is not a weekday farmers' market near you, call to plan a visit to a local farm stand or produce market. Ask about the best time to visit and where to unload children and park your van/bus. What else would be helpful for you to know?

Secure volunteers to help chaperone the trip. In busy public locations, it is ideal to have at least one adult for every two or three children. Volunteer chaperones – including children's family members - can help with tasks like holding hands to cross the parking lot. They can also engage in positive interactions with children as they take in the sights and sounds of the market. They **cannot** be left alone with children at any time. This includes taking a child (other than their own, if a parent) into a restroom. Talk with volunteers about their roles before the visit.

Begin planning the visit with children several days in advance, too. Talk about what to expect on the day of the trip. What do children anticipate seeing? What are they looking forward to? If some children have never ridden a bus or van before, talk about that, too. You may want to invite children to help plan or review simple rules, focusing on what they can do to stay safe. (For example, "Stay with the group," rather than "Don't wander off.")

Once you arrive at the market, consider dividing into pre-planned, smaller groups. This will give children a more individualized experience and create less disruption for other market-goers. A group of 18 children might divide as outlined below.

Pod 1: Classroom teacher, two family volunteers, and six children

Pod 2: Teaching assistant, two family volunteers, and six children

Pod 3: Program administrator, bus driver, family volunteer, and six children

Each group can follow a different path to navigate the market before meeting back in a shady area.

Market Visit (cont.)

An open-ended visit to the market offers plenty to see and do and affords children a chance to follow their interests in the moment. If children are already familiar with the market and you would like to focus on a specific goal, consider one of these:

- Invite each group to look for - and investigate - vegetables and fruits of a specific color. Take photos for a book or wall display.
- Give each pair or small group of children an equal amount of money to spend. After looking at everything, they decide on something to purchase to bring back to share with the class.
- Encourage each group to especially observe and talk with a different kind of vendor. (For example, someone selling vegetables, someone selling a craft, and someone selling baked goods.) What would they like to find out to share with everyone later?

After the visit, debrief by talking together about the experience. What did children notice and learn?

Helpful Hints

Field trip t-shirts don't have to be expensive. Some programs make matching shirts using white t-shirt style undershirts and fabric dye or a tie-dye kit. Local printing shops are another source for matching shirts. Field trip t-shirts help adults spot group members at a glance.

Some experts recommend *not* using name tags or putting names on shirts. Young children may assume that any adult who knows their name knows them and can be trusted. A safer alternative may be to put a tag with school contact information inside the shirt or on the underside of a Tyvek wristband.

Including Every Explorer

Provide one-on-one support as needed to help children with special needs have a successful and satisfying experience.

If your group includes a child who uses a wheelchair or walker, visit the site during the planning phase to consider accessibility.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development – SE 1.1, SE 1.2, SE 2.1, SE 3.1, SE 3.2

Physical Development and Health – PH 2.2, PH 3.1, PH 3.2, 3.4

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Social Studies – SS 1.1, SS 2.1, SS 2.2

Peach Parfaits

Let's use a picture and word recipe to make a fruity treat. Always wash hands and tables before food experiences.

Materials

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh peaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Small zipper bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult knife (keep out of reach of children) | <input type="checkbox"/> Vanilla yogurt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butter knives | <input type="checkbox"/> ¼ cup measuring cup or small scoop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plates or cutting boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Spoons for crumbs and for eating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bowls or cups for serving | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of the peach parfait recipe in this curriculum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graham crackers | |

Before using the recipe, work with children to prepare peaches and crumbs. Give each child a halved, pitted peach to slice into wedges with a butter knife. Remind children of proper knife-handling technique:

- **Knives stay at the table.** Children may stand up or sit down to work, but should not carry knives around the room.
- **Knives are tools, not toys.** It is not safe to play with knives.
- **We use two hands to cut.** One hand holds the knife, and the other hand holds the food. Show children how to make a “C” shape with the hand that holds the food.

To prepare crumbs, have each child place a graham cracker in a zipper bag; seal tightly. Use fingers to crumble the graham crackers.

Look together at the recipe. Suggest, “It is always helpful to read all the way through a recipe once before we begin. That way, we know what to expect.” Invite children to read through the recipe with you, involving them in several engaging ways. Look at the numbered steps and sequence of the recipe and identify symbols on the page.

Pay special attention to the last step of the recipe: “Repeat the layers.” What might that mean? Involve children in strategizing: Should they put all their peaches in during the second step? Why or why not? This provides an excellent opportunity to explore the concept of equal portions and *half*.

Once parfaits are assembled, have children touch each layer in their cups as you touch and read the words in the diagram: yogurt, peaches, crumbs, yogurt, peaches, crumbs. Hey – that’s a pattern! If you wanted to add more layers, which ingredient would you add first?

Peach Parfaits (cont.)

Helpful Hints

You may substitute canned peach halves if you don't have fresh peaches. You can also make parfaits with berries.

Including Every Explorer

If a child in your group has a dairy allergy or sensitivity, look for non-dairy yogurt.

If a child in your group has a gluten sensitivity, substitute rice cereal or gluten-free graham crackers.

For children with limited use of hands, try crushing the crackers with a rolling pin or block. Granola can also be substituted for cracker crumbs.

More to Do (optional)

- Invite children to draw diagrams of their parfaits, or of their imaginative ideas for other parfaits. Work together to label the diagrams.
- You made a pattern with the ingredients in this recipe. Call children's attention to patterning toys and materials, such as lacing beads and Unifix cubes with pattern cards. Look for patterns on clothing and around your environment.
- Share the peach parfait recipe with families. Explain that graham crackers, cereal, or cookies can be used for crumbs.
- Fresh vegetables and fruits offer many possibilities for cooking with children. If you're able, try one or more of these:
 - Applesauce
 - Blueberry muffins
 - Dip for carrots and cucumbers
 - Fruit salad
 - Vegetable soup (can be cooked in a slow cooker)
 - Watermelon puree popsicles
 - Zucchini bread

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 2.4, CD 3.1

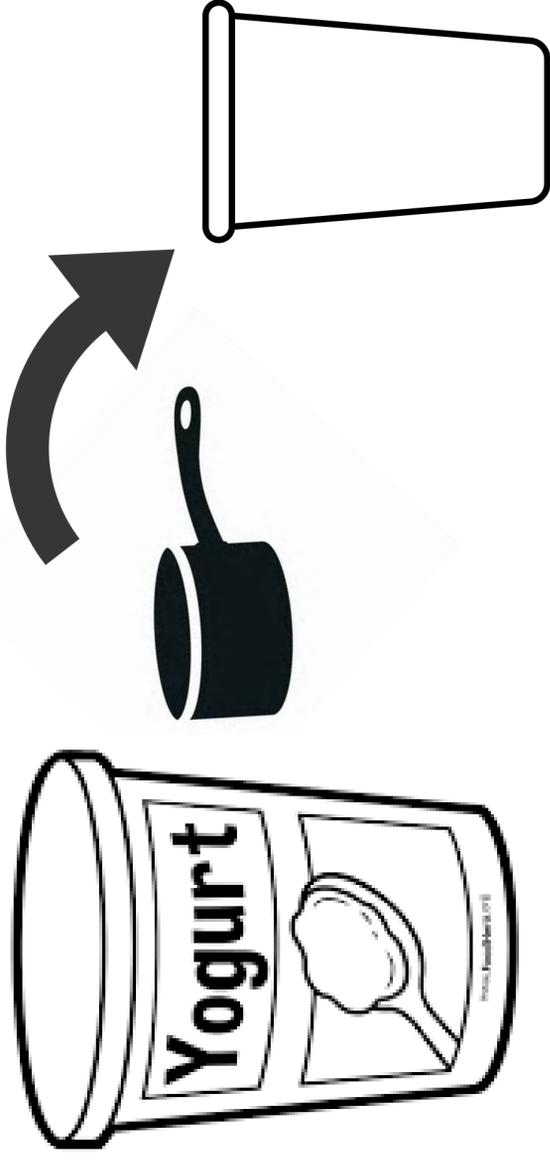
Physical Development and Health – PH 2.1, PH 2.2, PH 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.1, EL 3.1, EL 3.2

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1, MT 1.2, MT 2.1, MT 3.1

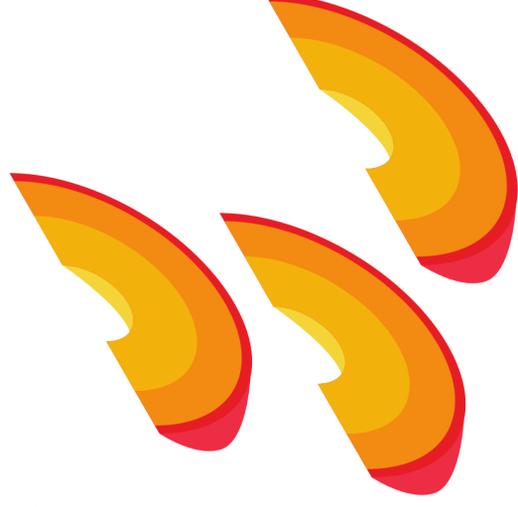
Peach Parfaits

1.



First add 1 scoop of
yogurt.

2.



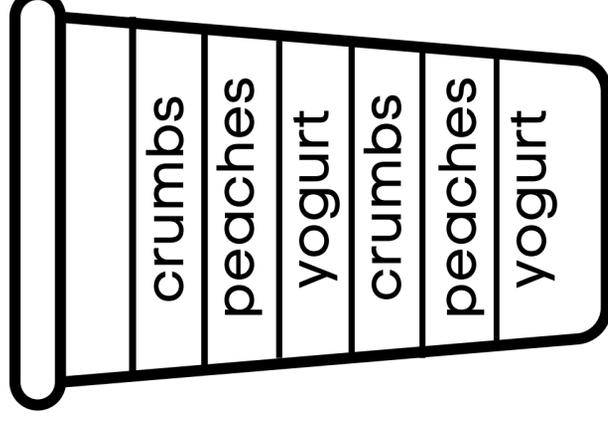
Next, put peaches on top
of the yogurt.

3.



Then put crumbs on top of
the peaches.

4.



Repeat all three layers:
yogurt, peaches, crumbs.

Mixed Berries

Let's sort and investigate a basket of berries.

Materials

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least 3 kinds of fresh, washed berries such as blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Small zipper bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cups | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools for investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra baskets of berries | ○ Magnifying glasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plates for sorting and serving | ○ Rulers |
| | ○ Pencils and paper |

Prepare for this activity by dividing mixed berries into cups for each child in the small group. You'll need a cup of 10 mixed berries per child in the small group, plus a cup of 10 mixed berries for yourself. Also, prepare separate baskets of berries. (For example, a basket of only strawberries, and a basket of only blueberries.) These are berries that you can handle together for investigation. They can be washed later and shared with children or families at another time.

As children join you, show them the containers berries. Are they familiar with any of them? As you identify each type of berry, invite children to talk about their experiences. For example, one child might recall picking blackberries while another might be reminded that strawberries are her sister's favorite food. Children may be interested in exploring berries in some of the following ways:

- Look closely at the berries using magnifying glasses. What do children notice? What do they wonder? Children can handle and smell the berries as part of this investigation. Assure them that they'll get to taste the berries soon.
- Place two different berries side by side to compare color, size, and features. Try tracing around the berries with pencils.
- Work together to line up two different kinds of berries on either side of a ruler. How many blueberries do children predict that it will take to stretch from one end of the ruler to the other? How many does it actually take? How about strawberries? How could you document your work?

After investigating the shared berries, wash hands. Set the shared (handled) berries aside as you introduce the cups of clean, mixed berries. Invite children to empty their berries onto plates to count and sort in their own way. How many berries do they have all total? Which kind of berry do they have the most of? The least? How can they tell?

Mixed Berries (cont.)

Help children notice one another's sorting and counting strategies. One child might line out berries along the edge of their plate, while another child groups berries in small piles.

There's more than one way to figure something out!

Predict: If you ate one berry, how many would you have left? If you ate two, how many would you have left? Invite children to pick out one, two, or three berries to eat now. They can count as they pack their leftover berries into zipper bags labeled with their names. Send these home at the end of the day.

Helpful Hints

Because all of the berries you want to use may not be in season at the same time, you may need to purchase some berries at the supermarket.

You might prefer to have a berry feast, rather than sending berries home. Your decision may depend on the size of your berries. If you have lots of blueberries in your mix, 10 may not seem like a lot. If your mix is mostly strawberries, nibbling a few is likely to satisfy children.

Including Every Explorer

Ensure that no child has a berry allergy before planning this experience. You'll also want to be sure to let families know if you send berries home, in case a sibling or other family member has an allergy.

Simplify and shorten this activity for younger and/or less experienced groups. Watch children's body language for signs of engagement or weariness.

More to Do (optional)

- Try pressing a berry against a white paper plate or napkin. What do you notice? Work together to pick out berry-inspired paints for the easel.
- Which berry is your favorite? Create a graph.
- Invite families to share their favorite berry recipes. Create a cookbook with family recipes and children's drawings.
- If your group takes field trips, visit a pick-your-own berry farm.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 1.1, CD1.2, CD 2.1, CD 2.3

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1, MT 1.2, MT 2.1, MT 3.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 3.1

Roots, Fruits, Stems, and Leaves

Let's consider the different parts of plants that we eat.

Materials

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parts of Plants cards from this curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> A real ear of corn in the husk (optional, recommended) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tops and Bottoms</i> by Janet Stevens | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional real fruits and vegetables to match the book and/or cards (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookmark (strip of paper) | |

Introduce the book to children and read through the first harvest. Stop at the end of the page that reads, "Hare plucked off all the tops, tossed them in a pile for Bear, and put the bottoms aside for himself." After talking together about the story so far, use a bookmark to save your place for later.

Introduce the Parts of Plants cards. Identify the plants together. These are all vegetables and fruits that we can eat. Which cards show vegetables that grow underground? Put these cards in a group. Vegetables that grow underground are **roots** that we can eat! Were any of these vegetables in the story?

What about the other vegetables and fruits on the cards? A **fruit** is the part of the plant that holds seeds. Can children find any fruits on the cards? Put these cards in a second pile.

What do children notice about the remaining cards? One of these cards shows **stems** that we eat, and the others show **leaves** that we eat. Sort these cards into two more piles. Count and compare quantities of cards in each set.

Turn your attention back to the book. What do children recall about the story so far? What do they predict will happen next? Pick up where you left off to finish the story, pausing to have conversations:

- Do any other fruits and vegetables on the cards appear in the story?
- Which of the cards would Hare want to plant when Bear wanted "bottoms"?
- Why is Bear angry?
- Is Hare being fair? Or is he tricking Bear?
- If you have an ear of corn, handle and look at it together when you come to this part of the book. Think together about top, middle, and bottom as described near the end of the story.

Roots, Fruits, Stems, and Leaves (cont.)

Helpful Hints

This activity helps children interpret and understand the story while connecting illustrations, photos, and real fruits and vegetables.

Color copies of the cards can be printed from the curriculum website. The cards can be mounted to chipboard and/or covered with contact paper to make them more durable.

Including Every Explorer

This is a longer story, especially when combined with an activity. You may want to condense the text or read the story in two or more sessions. (For example, you might begin the story at small group time and finish it at whole group storytime.)

Offering real fruits and vegetables to match the cards is interesting for all learners, while also providing a meaningful adaptation for children with blindness or visual disabilities, children with cognitive disabilities, and children with limited experience with fruits and vegetables.

More to Do (optional)

- Hare, Bear – what other rhyming animal names can you think of?
- Create a flannel board story to retell *Tops and Bottoms*.
- Continue the conversation about roots, fruits, stems, and leaves as you notice foods on your lunch plates.
- Make a tossed salad with roots (carrots), fruits (cucumber and tomato), stems (celery), and leaves (lettuce).
- During this small group time or a subsequent one, try sorting the cards in other ways:
 - Sort by color and compare quantities. What other fruits and vegetables can children think of for each color category?
 - Count the number of vegetables or fruits in each photo. The cucumber may prompt a debate. Can children explain their reasoning?
 - And, a riddle: One of these plants isn't usually grown in a garden. Which one is it, and where does it grow?

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.1, EL 1.2, EL 3.1

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1, MT 1.2, MT 2.1, MT 3.1



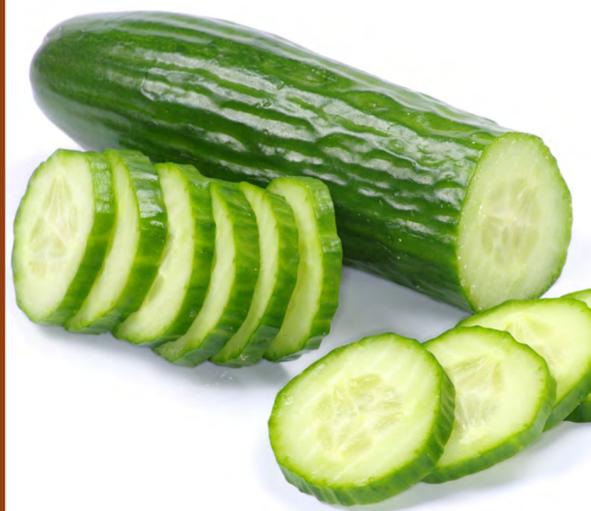
lettuce



tomato



apple



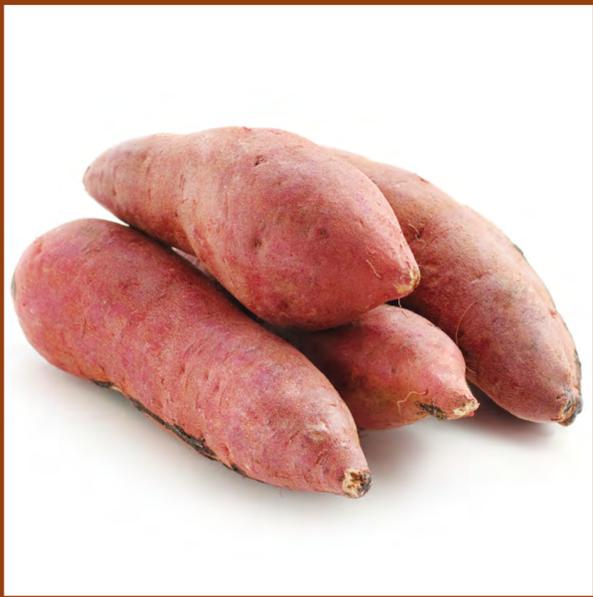
cucumber



carrots



radish



sweet potatoes



celery



strawberries



cabbage



onions



bell pepper

A Gigantic Story

Let's compare versions of a funny folktale.

Materials

- 2 or more versions of the folktale (see list)
- Large paper and markers for charting
- Drawing materials
- Index cards or pieces of paper cut to size

This small group experience focuses on variations of a Russian folktale about a giant turnip. Many children's books have been inspired by this story. Prepare by gathering two or more of these books.

- The Enormous Carrot* by Vladimir Vagen
- The Enormous Potato* by Aubrey Davis
- The Giant Cabbage* by Cherie Stihler
- The Giant Carrot* by Jan Peck
- The Gigantic Sweet Potato* by Dianne De Las Casas
- The Gigantic Turnip* by Aleksei Tolstoy
- Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* by Denia Lewis Hester
- The Turnip* by Jan Brett

For each book you plan to use, prepare a chart that looks like the diagram at the right.

Title:							
Setting:							
Sequence:							
<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>							
We noticed:							

Invite a small group of children to choose one of the folktales to read together. When you finish, explain that children can make a chart to tell friends and family about the story. Look together at the book's cover to find the title. Encourage children to help you look at the letters on the cover as you write the title on your chart. Say each letter as you write: "G-i-a-n-t, giant." Look for authentic and engaging opportunities to talk about upper and lowercase letters and letter sounds without losing the momentum of the activity.

Next, explain that the setting is where the story takes place. Look again at the book's illustrations as you decide together about the setting of the story.

A Gigantic Story (cont.)

Who helped pull the vegetable? These were the characters in the story. Invite each child to choose one of the characters to draw on an index card or small piece of paper.

The sequence is the order of things that happened in the story. What happened first? What happened next? Explain that you'll focus on the sequence of events that occurred when it was time to harvest the vegetable. Draw the vegetable in the first box on the chart.

Who was the first to try to pull the vegetable? Write, or help children write, the numeral 1 and the character's name under the box closest to the vegetable. Attach the drawing of this character. Continue until all characters have been added in sequential order.

Ask children what else felt important about this story. This could be a character's recurrent line: "The farmer says, 'Oh, fiddlesticks!' every time." Or, it could be the main idea from the story or something else that stood out to children. Write children's statements on your chart in the section titled "We noticed."

Plan a brief whole group gathering where children can share their books and charts with classmates. Read the folktales again during storytimes, focusing on setting, characters, sequence, and similarities and differences between versions.

Helpful Hints

Match the number of boxes on each chart to the books you'll be using: one box for the vegetable, and one box for each character. If there are more characters than children in the small group, solicit volunteers to draw the missing characters later.

Including Every Explorer

In a typical preschool group, you may have some children who aren't yet drawing representationally and other children who draw identifiable pictures. Scribbled pictures can convey powerful ideas. Meet each child where they are with acceptance and encouragement. If you hear children make critical comments about a classmate "scribbling," remind them that everyone contributes in his/her own way.

More to Do (optional)

- Giant, gigantic, enormous – invite children and families to contribute to a collection of words that mean *very large*. Include words from children's home languages.
- Try retelling your favorite version of the folk tale as a skit.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.1, EL 1.2, EL 2.1, EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1

Sprouts

Let's investigate how seeds sprout and grow.

Materials

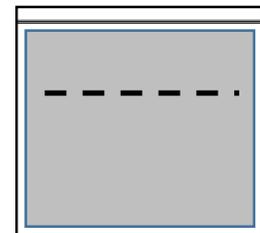
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry lima beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper towels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich size zip-top storage bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Spray bottles with water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-sized staplers | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and marker for chart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent markers, such as Sharpie | <input type="checkbox"/> Tape or clothespins and line |

Soak the dry beans in a bowl of water overnight. This will soften them so that they grow more quickly. Save a few un-soaked beans for comparison.

Examine the lima beans with children in a small group. Look at the package that beans came in and handle a few of the soaked and un-soaked beans. What do children notice? What do they know about beans? A bean is a seed that we can eat. Beans are dried during and/or after harvesting so that they can be planted or stored to eat.

Invite each child to use a permanent marker to write their names along the bottom edges of the bags. Fold paper towels so that they fit in the bags. Soak the paper towels with water and place them carefully in the bags. The towel should lie flat and fill the bag, rather than being crumpled in the bottom. What purpose do children think that the wet paper towel might serve?

Demonstrate how to use a stapler to make a row of staples through the bag and towels. Staples should be placed about 2-3 inches from the top seal of the bag. The staples will act like shelves, elevating the beans. Place a bean on top of each staple.



Seal the bags and tape them to a window. Or, use clothespins to hang them from a line. What do children predict will happen? Write down children's responses to questions like these: "How will you know if your seed is growing?" And, "How long will it take for the seeds to grow?"

Check the beans for growth each day. If the towels seem to be drying out, use eyedroppers or a spoon to add water. Reseal tightly. As the beans begin to sprout, notice how the seed coat splits as roots and shoots emerge. Notice how the stem is curved at first but straightens out as the tiny plant grows. What else do children notice?

Sprouts (cont.)

Helpful Hints

Avoid beans that say “treated by irradiation” on the label. Irradiation extends the shelf life of beans, but irradiated beans won’t germinate and grow.

Having several staplers, spray bottles, and permanent markers will reduce waiting time for children. If you can’t find/borrow duplicates of these items, keep the group size very small.

Including Every Explorer

For children with limited use of hands, offer name stickers (names written on address labels) to peel and apply. Paper towels can be dipped in a bowl of water by the child, with extra water squeezed out by the child or an adult. Work hand-over-hand to add staples if the child is comfortable doing so. Our goal is to help every child take the most active role possible.

Challenge older, more experienced children to mark the date that seeds were prepared on a calendar. How many days do they think it will take for seeds to sprout? Mark predictions with initials. When seed growth is spotted, mark this on the calendar, too. Did anyone predict correctly? How close were children’s predictions?

More to Do (optional)

- Take close-up photos of the bean plants on planting day and every other day after that. These can be used for sequencing cards or a book.
- Once the leaves of your plants reach the top of the bag, remove the seedlings very carefully and plant them in prepared soil.
- Ask a friend or colleague who gardens to bring fresh and dried bean pods for the children to investigate. Can they talk with children about how they start seeds?
- Use a slow cooker to make a pot of beans. How do dry beans change as they cook?
- Look online for instructions for sprouting one or more of the following:
 - Dried corn cob and/or carrot tops in a dish of water
 - Chia or alfalfa seeds on a damp sponge
 - Sweet potato half and/or root-ends of green onions in a jar of water

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 1.1, CD 1.2, CD 2.4, CD 3.1

Physical Health and Development – PH 2.1, PH 2.2

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1, MT 3.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 2.1, ST 3.1

Surveying Customers

Let's talk with others about their food preferences. This small group experience works best with groups of up to four children.

Materials

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clipboards and paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and marker for making charts | <input type="checkbox"/> Dot stickers or non-toxic dot daubers |

Begin by talking with children about what they remember about foods at the farmers' market. How do vendors decide what to make and sell? They might talk with customers and notice what customers like to buy.

In this small group activity, children will talk to classmates or others to find out about their food preferences. Help the group decide on a question they can investigate, such as:

- Which do you like better – Fresh berries? Or berry jam?
- Which do you prefer – Spicy peppers? Or sweet peppers?
- Which do you like better – Cookies? Or muffins?
- Which do you prefer – Carrots? Or tomatoes?
- Which do you like better – Applesauce? Or apple cider?

Use words and pictures to create a survey form with two response columns. If children can safely go with you to use a copying machine, work together to figure out how many copies you need.

Place the survey forms on clipboards. Help children think about and practice the words they can use to ask their questions to others. Show children how to use pencils to make a checkmark to record each answer.

Depending on your circumstances, try one of these survey options.

- Work with a partner to move around the room to survey classmates. One pair can survey girls, while the other pair surveys boys.
- Survey children and teachers from another class in their room or on the playground.
- With an adult, walk around the building to survey staff in the office and elsewhere.
- Survey families at home or during arrival or departure time.

Surveying Customers (cont.)

Once children have completed their surveys, talk about the survey process. Were children surprised by the results? Did they hear any interesting stories as they took surveys? Work together to count the responses in each column. Make a larger chart with dots to represent responses. Count and write numerals at the bottom of each column.

Think together with children: If we were farmers preparing for the market, how would this data guide our choices? Hang the charts where children can look at and talk about them with their classmates and families.

Helpful Hints

Your survey sheets may resemble the polls in the **Conversations** section of this curriculum.

You may want to share this experience with children over several days, with one or two small groups completing surveys each day.

Including Every Explorer

Some children are naturally more hesitant to approach and talk with unfamiliar people. Pairing children offers some support; a child who feels shy can record responses while their partner asks questions. As with all learning experiences, encourage – but never force – participation.

If your group includes children who cannot yet make checkmarks, create a survey form with large grids in each column. Children can use crayons or adaptive writing tools to make marks in boxes as they record responses.

More to Do (optional)

- Use survey results to inspire a cooking project or other food experience. For example, children might make muffins to share with the office staff. Or, surveys might guide decisions about refreshments at an upcoming family engagement event.
- Older children may be interested in working with an adult to create an online survey to share with families. Notice how data can be organized in pie charts and bar graphs.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development – SE 1.1, SE 1.2, SE 3.1, SE 3.2

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1, MT 1.2, MT 3.1

Active Physical Play – Farmers' Market

Invite children to join in activities such as these during outdoor playtimes. Some children will want to come and play, while others will prefer to continue with their free choice activities. Some activities found in this section may also be appropriate for indoor gross motor play or active group gatherings.

Pie Pan Toss

Try flinging aluminum foil pie pans into a hula hoop target. Or, toss and catch with a partner. The shiny, reflective pie pans will make fascinating loose parts for outdoor play once you've finished using them for your games. They aren't especially durable but can be recycled when they wear out.

Fun fact: Frisbee flying toys were inspired by pie pans from the Frisbie Pie Company in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Local schoolchildren began the tradition of using the pie tins for tossing and catching.

Bean Bag Games

Try these playful bean bag challenges.

- Balance a bean bag on your head. How far can you walk?
- Balance a bean bag on the top of one foot while you stand on the other foot. Can you count to three before the bean bag drops? How about five?
- Stand in a circle with a few friends. Place one hand behind your back. Use the other hand to help pass a bean bag around the circle first one way, then the other. Can your group pass two bean bags at the same time?

Gathering and Transporting

Add lots of small, real pumpkins and gourds to your outdoor play area. Also offer buckets, tubs, and baskets with handles, and/or wagons. On the first day of play, an adult can hide pumpkins and gourds around the outdoor play space. Show children the tools for gathering and suggest, "Let's find them and bring them to (designated area.)"

Notice the strategies that children use to gather and transport the pumpkins and gourds. Collaboration and teamwork may emerge as children work together. How does play evolve and change in the days to come? What happens if larger pumpkins are added?

Active Physical Play – Farmers' Market (cont.)

Rabbits in the Garden

In this preschool version of the traditional Four Corners game, no one sits “out”; simply play again and again. Use cones or other markers to create four rabbit warrens (dens) along the perimeter of the play space. Use tape or sticky notes to label these 1, 2, 3, and 4.

One child is the farmer. This child turns his/her back to the play space, covers his/her eyes, and counts to 10 (younger children, with support) or 20 (older children). The other children are rabbits who hop around the play space pretending to nibble crops.

When the farmer finishes counting, they chant, “Ready or not, here I come!” The rabbits quickly and quietly race back to one of the dens. With back still turned, the farmer listens carefully to try to figure out which warren sounds like it has the most rabbits. They call out a warren number (1, 2, 3, or 4) and turn around to see.

Look and count together. If the farmer picked the warren with the most rabbits, the farmer wins. If there are more rabbits in a different warren, the rabbits win. Choose another farmer and play again.

Eggs and Spoons

Add sand or pebbles to plastic Easter eggs for weight and tape closed – all the way around – with clear packing tape. Children can try to balance eggs in spoons without touching the egg with their hands.

You may have played this game as a relay as a child. In early childhood settings, we want everyone to be as active as possible, as often as possible. Rather than having children wait in line for a turn, have enough materials for everyone to play at once.

Here are some ways to play.

- Moving as quickly as possible between a starting line and finish line and back again
- Zig-zagging through cones or other markers
- Lining up in two lines facing one another. One side has eggs, the other does not. Children run to meet in the middle. Each child with an egg carefully transfers it to another child's empty spoon. Then, everyone runs “home” to their starting lines.

Growing Every Day Supporting Social and Emotional Development

Carol Evans, A-State Conscious Discipline Coach

The pretend Farmers' Market has been thriving for a couple of days in Mr. Spencer's class. One of the children, Luis, hovers at the edge of the play area. He's shaking his head and shrugging. Mr. Spencer hears him say something about "tomatoes."



Luis, a 4-year-old with some developmental differences, often watches other children play. Mr. Spencer has learned that Luis is eager to join when he moves like he is a part of the scenario from a distance. "Hey Luis, did you see Jax try to sell Jax tomatoes?" Mr. Spencer asks, chuckling. "Yes, Jax does not like tomatoes, he didn't want any," Luis responds in a serious tone. He's been watching from a distance, but he hasn't missed a thing!

Luis nods when Mr. Spencer asks if he would like to play. "What would you like to do," the teacher prompts, "buy something, or sell something?" Luis is quick to respond: "I want to sell peaches! My grandmother sells her peaches at the market by her house. I help her."

Mr. Spencer suggests, "It looks like there is some space by Lily. Can you ask her if there is room for you to sell peaches there?" Luis jumps into action, asking Lily and picking out what he will use for his peaches and baskets. Mr. Spencer has coached other children to invite Luis into their play. He is pleased to see Jax and several of the other children form a line to buy peaches. In-depth conversations develop about the cost of peaches and what children will make with them. Luis, now a busy peach vendor, smiles.

Mr. Spencer comments, "Luis, you joined the play with your friends, adding to their play! That was helpful." He makes a note to check in with Luis' mother to share this success story and to ask about a new idea. The next morning, Mr. Spencer asks Luis if he and his grandmother might be willing to be experts for the class to interview about working at a real Farmers' Market. Luis beams as he tells his teacher how they have to get up so early and pick fresh peaches before they set up their market tables and tent. Mr. Spencer asks again, "Would you like to be our expert with your grandmother close by to help?"

Mr. Spencer supported social-emotional development when he

- Learned to recognize Luis's individual cues and needs;
- Observed and waited for Luis to show he was ready;
- Suggested a way to enter play and offered words Luis could try;
- Guided classmates to create an inclusive classroom community; and
- Connected Luis's family to the school family.

Even More Farmers' Market Experiences

- If some children are unable to experience a firsthand visit to a farmers' market, use short [video clips](#) to provide a glimpse of a busy marketplace. Talk about what children see, hear, and wonder.
- Use fabric crayons or acrylic paints to decorate fabric bags that families can take to market. If desired, you can even create [tote bags from t-shirts](#).
- Grow something! Plant a full-sized garden or try one of these smaller-scale ideas.
 - Bean teepee
 - Strawberry pots
 - Containers of herbs - such as mint, basil, and rosemary - to share with families.

Involve children in as many ways as possible, including preparing the soil, starting seeds, planting, making garden markers, watering, weeding, and harvesting.

Recommend reading for educators who are interested in gardening with young children:

Early Sprouts: Cultivating Healthy Food Choices in Young Children

Karrie Kalice, Dottie Bauer, and Deirdre McPartlin, Redleaf Press, 2009

Gardening with Children: BBG Guides for a Greener Planet

Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, 2011

Notes:

Concluding Your Farmers' Market Exploration

1. With your teaching team, think about and discuss the following questions.

What experiences have our children had with farmers' market, gardening, and farm foods during this exploration? What new knowledge and skills have developed?

Do the children seem ready to conclude this exploration? Have their questions been answered? Is their interest waning? If children are still excited about this topic, think about ways to continue and extend the exploration.

How can we document children's learning and help children share what they have learned with others?

Your farmers' market exploration might end with one of these activities.

- Creating a book of photos and children's drawings. The book can be added to the classroom library and/or copies can be made for each family.
- Sharing knowledge with others by creating a farmers' market prop box to share with other classrooms or for children to use next year.
- Hosting a family engagement event. For example, children might help plan and create their own small market, lemonade stand, or bake sale. Children could use proceeds to support a classroom goal – such as buying plants for a container garden – or donate to a local charity. Consult your Child Care Licensing Specialist and municipal authorities for clarification about guidelines.

2. Talk with children about their favorite memories about farmers' market and gardening. Model gratitude by creating thank you cards or letters to the families, school members, and community members who supported your exploration.
3. Where will you go next? Use your observations and conversations with children to help you plan your next exploration!

Using Explorers Preschool Curriculum

Explorers Preschool Curriculum (EPC) is designed for early childhood educators and preschool-aged children. It can be used in any setting, including private preschool programs, public school programs, and family child care homes.

EPC Guiding Principles

1. Children are naturally curious and eager to understand their world.

The *Explorers* curriculum promotes authentic, enjoyable, first-hand experiences in a vibrant and encouraging environment.

2. Domains of child development are interrelated and are all important.

Physical, cognitive, communicative, social, and emotional development are all vital for success in school and life. *Explorers* supports the *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards (CDELS)* with engaging experiences that promote learning across all domains.

3. Children are trustworthy partners in learning.

Explorers is inquiry-driven, guided by children's interests, questions, and ideas. Children take on meaningful decision-making roles and responsibilities as a part of each investigation. The child's right to play is protected and supported as a fundamental component of every day.

4. Each child, and each group of children, are unique.

Explorers offers choices and flexibility for children and adults. Individualization to include children with developmental differences and special needs is integral to the curriculum.

5. Learning happens best within the context of family, community, and the natural world.

Explorers strives to promote positive connection between preschool-aged children and their school, community, and environment. Diverse and meaningful opportunities for family engagement are given special importance.

For professional development support with Explorers Preschool Curriculum, please contact Marcy White, MWhite@AState.edu

Big Ideas from EPC

Explorers may be different from other curricula you've used in several ways. Understanding these differences will help you use the curriculum successfully.

Explorers includes a collection of topics for investigation. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Bubbles
- Day and Night
- Farmers' Market
- Insects
- Making Music
- Ramps and Tunnels
- Songbirds and Squirrels
- Trees

Each topic supports children's real-life, firsthand experiences.

Topics of learning – known as investigations – do not have to occur in a predetermined order. Instead, educators are urged to observe, talk with, and think about children in their group. Which of the topics would be most interesting and engaging to this group of children? Decisions may also be guided by the resources that are accessible to the program. Programs may choose to participate in any of the investigations, in any order.

Within broad topics, individual groups are urged to “zoom in” and focus most intently on areas of special interest. For example, one group taking part in a *day and night* investigation might be most interested in city lights that shine though the dark. A second group might be more interested in nighttime creatures like crickets and moths. Although both groups have the same, broad focus, conversations and planned activities in the two rooms may differ greatly. Some activities in the topic packet may be skipped, and different high-value activities may be offered to support children's interests.

Educators are expected to “re-run” books and activities that especially interest children. That means that the same activity will be shared again over the course of several days or weeks. Through repeated opportunities to explore, children gain expertise, test new ideas, and work in increasingly complex ways. Repetition helps children build confidence and construct knowledge.

Investigations are not limited to one week. In fact, groups may focus on the same topic for two, three, or four weeks – or more! It is believed that deep, comprehensive investigation of any interesting topic is more beneficial to young thinkers and learners than a “sprinkling” of many different topics. Thus, children and adults are invited to continue their investigation as long as it sustains children's interest. An investigation concludes when educators observe that children's questions have been answered. Children seem satisfied and ready to move on to other topics of interest.

EPC Daily Practices

A resource packet is available to support each investigation topic. These packets support learning throughout the day in these eight ways:

1. Learning Center Extensions

Free play is a crucial part of every day! Learning Center Extensions are play objects and other materials that support the topic. These can be added to the indoor play areas that children use every day. The items in this section are examples. Educators may implement their own ideas, as well.

2. Books for Sharing with Groups

Suggestions for books are listed in each packet. It is not expected that programs will purchase the entire book list. Rather, the list may provide guidance and inspiration as educators select books from their storage area and/or their local children's library.

These may be added to classroom book areas and can be shared informally with one or a few children at a time during play times. Some of the books on the list are also designated as *** recommended read-alouds** for sharing with larger groups of children.

3. Topical Conversations

Conversations can occur within the context of play or daily routines. Especially with older preschoolers, some conversations may also occur during whole group meeting times. In addition to informal conversations throughout the day, *Explorers* encourages educators to routinely use two additional strategies each week:

Response Charts

The educator talks individually with each child and writes down exactly what they say. This interview process takes place during play time or other informal times. Once all of the children have had a chance to respond, the chart is posted where everyone can easily see it. The educator reads all of the responses aloud during a group meeting. Written response charts are recommended at least once a week.

Polls

Children and adults respond to a question by writing their name under one of two choices on a chart. Younger or less experienced groups may opt to place name cards on the chart instead. The polling process takes place with one, or a few, children at a time – perhaps as part of the morning arrival routine or as children finish breakfast.

During a group meeting, children and adults look together at the chart. It is recommended that children are invited to complete polls 1-3 times per week.

4. Playful Songs, Rhymes, and Games

These simple activities may be incorporated into group gathering times or used as transition activities. Many are “piggyback songs” – meaning that they offer new words to tunes that children may already know.

5. Active, Physical Play

Most of these activities are intended for the outdoor play area. Some are also suited for indoor gross motor spaces – such as gyms – or active group gatherings.

Educators are encouraged to invite children to join in activities such as these daily. Many children will want to participate, while others would rather continue with their own, free choice gross motor play. When two or more adults are present, one can lead the activity while others supervise children elsewhere in the play area.

6. Growing Every Day

These vignettes highlight strong, positive guidance practices. Educators are reminded that the most valuable learning occurs when adults model, coach, guide, and encourage children in the context of everyday interactions.

7. Small Group Learning Experiences

Ideas for small group learning experiences make up the bulk of each resource packet. These learning experiences are intended to be carried out with groups of 3 – 5 children at a time.

This means that educators will complete each activity with several small groups. For some activities, some children may participate in the morning and some may participate in the afternoon. A few activities may even take place over the course of several days. Using lists or sign-up sheets can reassure children that everyone will have a turn.

You'll find a key to small group learning experiences on the following page.

8. Concluding Your Exploration

This final section of each resource packet invites educators to reflect about whether children are ready to wrap up and move on to another topic of investigation. It includes ideas for culminating events and documentation.

Key to Small Group Learning Experiences

Each double-sided small group learning experiences idea sheet has specific components to assist you with planning and facilitation:

<p>Exploring with Flashlights Let's investigate flashlights and go on a low light adventure!</p> <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Basket of assorted flashlights (at least one or two more flashlights than children in the small group) <p>Talk with children about what they know about flashlights. Flashlights are lights that we can carry in our hand. They are usually powered by batteries, and they are tools that let us see in dark places. What experiences have children had with flashlights? They might talk about using flashlights when camping or when the lights go out during a thunderstorm.</p> <p>Invite children to investigate the flashlights in the basket. Notice together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How flashlights switch on and off.• Which ones are brightest, and which are dim.• Which ones have a narrow beam, and which ones have a wide beam.• Other differences and similarities related to size, shape, color, and function. <p>This may be a good time to support children as they learn to ask for turns and trade materials – "May I use the tiny flashlight next?", and, "I'll trade you the blue flashlight for the green one."</p> <p>After a period of open-ended exploration, invite each child to choose a flashlight to take on a walk. You'll go together to another area where the lights are dim, but not totally dark. This could be another room, a hallway, a gymnasium, or any other child-safe space where you can turn out the lights. Invite children to investigate by walking around and shining their lights on things that interest them.</p> <p>When you return to the classroom, talk with children about what they noticed while exploring with flashlights.</p> <p>Helpful Hints Ask colleagues for help building a collection of flashlights. Families may be happy to help, too.</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Materials: Things to gather and prepare</p> <p>Procedure: How to facilitate the activity with children</p> <p>Helpful Hints: Tips for a smooth, successful experience.</p>
<p>front of page</p> <p>Including Every Explorer: Ways to individualize and adapt for children with special needs.</p> <p>More to Do: Suggestions for extending learning, creating displays, and engaging families.</p> <p>Did You Know?: Fun facts and/or background information for teachers.</p> <p>Build and Strengthen: Connection to AR Early Learning Standards (CDELS)</p>	<p>back of page</p> <p>Exploring with Flashlights, cont.</p> <p>Including Every Explorer Some children are frightened by dark places. If a child seems worried, invite them to hold your hand or walk next to you.</p> <p>Some children may require one-on-one support to have a safe, satisfying experience outside their familiar classroom. If this is not possible, find a way to explore inside the classroom.</p> <p>More to Do (optional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hang pictures of nighttime (nocturnal) creatures in the place where children will explore. Have fun spotting owls, bats, opossums, and more!• Create a flashlight exploration space in your classroom with the basket of flashlights and a large, open appliance box that children can crawl inside.• To challenge older or more experienced preschoolers, place one flashlight without batteries in the basket with the working flashlights. When children discover the non-working light, encourage them to investigate. Offer two different sizes of batteries when they realize that batteries are needed. They'll figure out which size is correct and install them in the flashlight. "I fixed it!" <p>Did You Know? This exploration may seem simple to adults, but we have far more experience with flashlights and dim places than children do! Children may investigate many different things, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How a flashlight beam moves when they move their arm.• What happens when light shines on a window or mirror.• How a beam of light changes as it moves closer to a surface that it is shining on. <p>This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social and Emotional Development – SE 1.2, SE 2.1, SE 2.2• Cognitive Development – CD 1.1, CD 2.1• Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 3.2