

As spring approaches in Georgia, our thoughts turn to being outside in the warm sunshine and exploring the new life around us! This is how I plan to share the April edition of *Let's Find Out* with my children.

PHOTO STORY

I will begin by explaining to the children that a photographer rather than an illustrator produced these pictures. I'll encourage the children to tell about each photo as we discuss how each thing shown is necessary to "Our Earth."

PEOPLE & PLACES

With April comes weather warm enough for us to begin outside explorations. What better way to introduce science for spring than with this pond activity! Using the illustrations, we'll talk about the inhabitants of the pond that are familiar to the children and visit our media center to research those that are unfamiliar.

MINI-BOOK

In two groups, the children will put their books together. I'll read the story to the children as many times as requested, encouraging them to join in as they become familiar with it. The rhyming text and simple sweetness of the story will have the children excited and ready for spring!

SCIENCE

My children are very interested in "critters," especially frogs! We will talk about how each picture shows part of the life cycle of a frog. Then we'll compare the life cycles of a frog, a bird, and a butterfly using the sequencing activity.

Jennifer Johnston
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Time for Nature

by Lynn Cohen

We need to allow children time to observe and experience the natural world. Children need time to work together, test hypotheses, and make mistakes. You help children develop the ability to concentrate when they can wait, watch, talk, and make records. Here are a few suggestions to help children closely examine the world around them:


- Have conversations with children about their interests and curiosities. Adults are often busy, but it is important to answer the children's questions.
- Open-ended questions and statements help children observe, compare and classify, and then communicate their observations. For example: *Tell us something about the tree's size and shape. What does a bird's feather feel like?*
- Create a classroom environment that offers children possibilities to explore nature throughout the year. Provide clear containers or wicker baskets with pinecones, seeds, shells, and rocks. Fill empty soda bottles with water and food coloring for children to observe light. Surround the classroom with plants, seasonal flowers, small animals, and insects.
- Provide occasions for children to communicate scientific findings. Encourage them to write and draw. Young children often use markers when drawing. Different art mediums encourage more reflective observation and help children practice the skills needed to use their hands and fingers with control and dexterity. Try using pens, color pencils, and watercolors, rather than markers. Invite children to look at a daffodil with a magnifying glass, then use a pencil to draw the roots, bulb, stem, leaves, and flower. Then let them paint the daffodil with watercolors.

Children and adults are often in a hurry. Slow down and look at the puddle-rich, flowered beauty of spring.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- *Earthdance* by Joanne Ryder (Holt). This beautiful poem asks readers to imagine that they are the earth.
- *Every Day Is Earth Day* by Kathy Ross (Millbrook). Learn about Earth Day and how to keep our planet healthy while making fun crafts.
- *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming (Scholastic). Lively text and art detail creatures' activities at the pond throughout the year.

- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle (Scholastic). The story of the life cycle of a flower from a tiny seed to maturity.
- *Frogs and Toads and Tadpoles Too!* by Allan Fowler (Rookie Read About Science). Color photos introduce the life cycle of frogs and toads. Audio
- *The Call of Frogs and Toads* by L. Eliot (Chelsea Green Publishing). Listen to the many ways that frogs and toads communicate.



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