



Helping Hands

Offering a helping hand to School Readiness Providers
A publication from Childcare Resource & Referral



Flower Fun Peggy Daveline, Education Specialist

Episcopal Children's Services

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ATTENTION HH READERS...



If you have a question, comment, or concern you would like addressed in an upcoming issue of *Helping Hands*, please send an e-mail to: hdunn@ecs4kids.org. We will do our best to find the answer, post the comment, and address the concern. Thanks! =)
Heather Dunn, Editor

Resources: allkidsnetwork.com, perpetualpreschool.com, learningaswearegrowing.blogspot.com

April showers bring May flowers, so let the flowery fun begin! Below are some activities to help make your classrooms and children bloom.

Five Spring Flowers

Five spring flowers, all in a row.
The first one said, "We need rain to grow!"
The second one said, "Oh my, we need water!"
The third one said, "Yes, it is getting hotter!"
The fourth one said, "I see clouds in the sky."
The fifth one said, "I wonder why?"
Then BOOM went the thunder!
And ZAP went the lightning!
That springtime storm was really frightening!
But the flowers weren't worried— no, no, no, no!
The rain helped them to grow, grow, GROW!

A Song of Flowers

Sung to: "Sing a Song of Sixpence"

Sing a song of flowers,
flowers all around.
Flowers that are growing,
growing in the ground.
Flowers of each color
make a pretty view.
Red and orange and yellow.
And blue and purple, too.



Flowers

Sung to: "Farmer in the Dell"

The flower has some roots,
the flower has some roots.
The roots will carry food and drink,
the flower has some roots.
The flower has a stem,
the flower has a stem.
The stem will make it stand up tall,
the flower has a stem.
The flower has some leaves,
the flower has some leaves.
The leaves will catch the rain and sun,
the flower has some leaves.
The flower has some petals,
the flower has some petals.
The petals call the birds and bees,
the flower has some petals.

Lemon Flower Cookies

Use any commercial round lemon flavored cookies or make your own as a cooking project. Spread lemon icing on top of the cookies and then arrange candy corn around the top of the cookie, as if the pieces of candy



Flowering Hands and Feet



Place your hands and feet as shown and then draw on the stems.

How Does Your Garden Grow? Jena Waters, Education Specialist

Resource: *Budding Gardeners*

I have gotten my hands dirty on many things, but gardening has been a hit and a miss for me. I *hit* mosquitos and bugs and *miss* lying in a hammock! But, I will not let that stop me from sharing a great activity for those that have a built-in green thumb, or like our small friends, are in the process of growing one!

From the book *Budding Gardeners*, it states that gardening with your children can be as small and simple as sprinkling grass seed on a damp sponge or as large and complicated as growing a vegetable garden that will feed the neighborhood. No matters where or how you begin, gardening cultivates observation, patience and responsibility, and offers rewards beyond measure. It suggests that you start with something that appeals to you and your children and the amount of space you have to work with. Then, let nature take its course!

That being said, I have decided to do just that and have found a choice activity that will lead you down the garden path of fun. Happy Gardening!

Miniature Garden

What You'll Need:

Rocks, sticks, moss, sand, wood chips (as desired), shade-loving plants, shallow plastic bowl, small, shady garden spot, toy figures and animals, trowel, old spoons, old forks (anything that can be used as a miniature tool).

What to Do:

Remember, your children's imaginations are the guide here. There are no rules!

1. Find the perfect spot for your miniature garden. Mark the edges with a small wall made of rocks or sticks.
2. Make paths and roads through your garden with small rocks, sand and woodchips, or simply smooth the dirt with your hands and rake it with a fork.
3. Build some miniature log cabins by stacking sticks together. Cover the roofs with moss. Use a little white glue if needed.
4. Add some shade-loving plants such as impatiens, coleus and violas.
5. Dig a small hole and put a shallow plastic bowl into it. Fill the bowl with water for a pond.
6. Enjoy imaginary play in your miniature garden using the toy animals and figures.



TRY THIS: Using the ideas above, create a *Fairy Garden*!

Explain to the children that you are making a fairy garden to attract fairies to come and play. Ask what they think the fairies would like and then add those things to your garden. Explain to the children when it is all set up, that the fairies are shy and will not come until the children are napping. While the children are napping create a few fairies by using small silk butterflies and gluing them on a small figure. Place the fairies in the garden before the children wake up and when they go outside to check... it's magic!

Working Together Deanna Williams, Inclusion Specialist

It is very important for teachers and families to work together. The majority of a child's day is spent either with parents or the child care provider. Sharing information is beneficial to the child. This is especially true when there are behavior issues. Arranging a conference with parents is an important step in the sharing process. There are a few things to remember in this process:

1. Arrange to meet at a time and in a private place that is agreeable to all parties. If a parent is feeling rushed or uncomfortable with the privacy of the conference, the positive tone can be compromised.
2. Come to the conference knowing that you and the family share the common goal of doing what is best for the child. Be prepared to discuss the whole child. Talk about the child's skills, friendships, and accomplishments; not just the challenging behavior. You can bring documentation to show some of the child's work.
3. Be prepared to discuss the challenging behavior using facts without over analyzing what you have observed. Bring questions to the conference that you feel will help you to understand the child better.
4. Listen to the family. Allow them to share their observations and ideas. Do not approach the family as if you have already decided how to resolve the issue. Work with the family to decide how you all can work as a team toward resolving the concerns.

At the end of the conference, set up a time to meet again to discuss how well your ideas are working and to compare notes.

Toddler Zoo Fun Peggy Daveline, Education Specialist

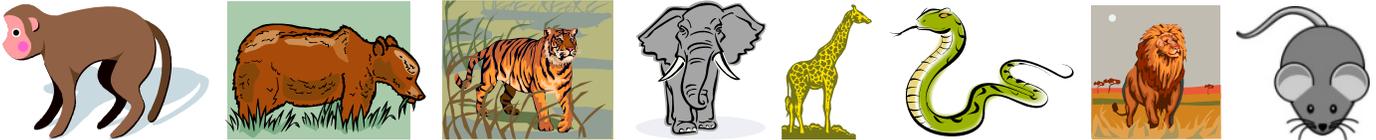
Resource: brighthubeducation.com

Lions, and tigers, and bears! All toddlers are fascinated with zoo animals. So bring the excitement into the classroom!

Animals in the Zoo

"The children choose the animal"

All the animals in the zoo went to sleep. They were so tired and snoring, but when they woke in the morning, they...



This activity is a good transition activity to get the children settled on the carpet. When the children are told to go to the carpet the teacher recites the poem. The children pretend to go to sleep and then when the teacher says wake up one child chooses which animal everyone should be. The children then go back to sleep and the fun continues with more sleeping and snoring until the teacher wakes them up again. Continue as long as the children are interested. A good idea is to end with the mouse so the children are quite again.

The Animals in the Zoo

Sung to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus"

The lions in the zoo go roar, roar, roar
Roar, roar, roar,
Roar, roar, roar,

The lions in the zoo go roar, roar, roar,
All through the day.

The bears in the zoo go growl, growl, growl,
Growl, growl, growl,
Growl, growl, growl,

The bears in the zoo go growl, growl, growl,
All through the day.

The alligators at the zoo go chomp, chomp, chomp,
Chomp, chomp, chomp,
Chomp, chomp, chomp,

The alligators at the zoo go chomp, chomp, chomp,
All through the day.

(You can continue this song with other zoo animals!)



Start with a small paper plate. Next, paint them with a mixture of yellow and orange paint with a splash of glue. Before the paint/glue mixture has a chance to dry, put on Rotini noodles. After it dries, add the eyes and a nose. Super cute!



Local Professional Development Opportunities (Training Calendar)

To register for one of our great training opportunities, please visit our website:

www.ecs4kids.org

Click on "Training" and follow the directions to register.

Direct Link: http://www.ecs4kids.org/training_main



The website provides a complete list of trainings and descriptions offered each quarter.

VPK Corner *Rebecca Barbour, Manager of VPK Services*

VPK Enrollments

As a reminder, providers cannot accept new VPK enrollments or transfer VPK children if there is less than 10% left in the provider's VPK program.

VPK Assessment 2013-14

Please remember that administering and recording VPK assessment data is required of all VPK providers. ECS and the ELC of North Florida will **NOT** be able to contract with VPK providers for the 2014-15 program year if the data for 2013-14 is not recorded on the Bright Beginnings website. A help desk has been set up if you are having difficulties.

Online- <https://brightbeginningsfl.org/RequestAssistance/RequestAssistance.aspx>

By E-mail- vpkassessment@fcr.org

By Phone- Local: 1-850-645-0835; Toll-Free: 1-844-545-4777

Hours- Monday-Thursday: 7am to 5pm; Friday: 7am to 4pm

Provider Verification Reports

As your 2013-14 school year VPK programs are ending, the VPK department will be sending a letter and verification report with your final payment detail. Please be sure to look over this report for accuracy and fax, e-mail, or mail the verification letter in to us. We will not be able to release your final VPK check until this has been received. Any corrections that would result in a change of hours and/or absences will need to be accompanied by supporting documentation.

VPK Assessment Materials for summer 2014 and school year 2014-15

Starting with this year's summer program, providers will be responsible for requesting current assessment materials online at: <https://marcomcentral.app.pti.com/graphiccommunicationscorp/earlylearning>

or by calling Drummond Press at: 1-800-247-5361. A guide will be sent with your approval letter with detailed instructions. If your program has been approved and you do not have this guide, please contact the VPK department at: 1-800-238-3463 so that we can get a copy to you. As a reminder, this assessment is required in order to participate in the VPK program and the data collected must be entered on the Bright Beginnings website.

VPK Department * 8443 Baymeadows Rd, Suite 1 * Jacksonville, FL 32256

Toll Free: 1-800-238-3463 * Fax: 904-726-1522

vpkinfo@ecs4kids.org * www.ecs4kids.org



Warm Line 1-800-238-3463

Ext. 212 (CNBB)

Ext. 284 (PSJ)



Do you have a concern about the health, development, disability, or special needs of a child? If so, call the Warm Line. The purpose of the warm line is to provide advice to child care personnel concerning strategies, curriculum, and environmental adaptations that allow a child to derive maximum benefit from the child care experience.