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| **It’s Spring! Explore Your Great Outdoors** |
| *These project activities are meant to build upon each other and be completed over the course of a week or so. They incorporate learning opportunities from multiple content areas such as: Science, Math, Language and Literacy, Physical Activity, Social Studies, Health, World Languages, Career Exploration and Visual and Performing Arts. Some activities are also focused on spending time outdoors. Parents and caregivers need to make appropriate decisions for each child, based on their location and availability of materials. The most important thing you can do for your child is to talk with them during each aspect of their day. Explain what you’re doing, let them be involved and assure them that they are loved and safe every day.* |
| **Introduction**  The following Activity Guide is meant for use by students in the Prek – 2nd grade span along with their parents or families. Through a spring and outdoor exploration theme, children will be learning skills related to science, mapping and distance, making predictions and classifying through a hands-on approach while exploring the outside world! **Bolded** vocabulary found throughout the activities signal words that children may need to have explained. A glossary is provided toward the end of this document that includes definitions of the terms. |
| **Materials**   * Paper and writing tools * Materials for building * Items/area for outdoor scavenger hunt * Small tub of water * An outdoor space for collection of items for activities: sticks, small rocks, leaves, pinecones, acorns, etc. |
| **Activities**  **Activity 1**: Spring in **Bloom**: Logging Change Over Time  Locate a plant/flowers/bare tree that are just **sprouting** or getting their leaves back now that the snow is melting. **Observe** the same plant every 4-5 days and draw, color/**graph** or take a picture of your plant each day. Before making your next observation, **predict** what changes you think you will observe. Older children can label parts of the plant, write simple observations about the changes they noticed over the 4-5 days, and/or make **hypotheses** about how much change. Over time, you will see the transformations in your plant – and in your drawings!  **Activity 2**: Map your Great Outdoors   * Walk around your yard, driveway, or outdoor space and draw a map of what you see, and where you see it. A map is a type of model that describes a place and some of the features found in that space. Older children can label the items they draw, such as a house, driveway, shed, tree, lawn, sandbox, etc. * Read and discuss What Do You Find in a Backyard? by Megan Kopp (currently available from Crabtree as a free ebook – username = read, password = free) with child(ren). * Using your map (maybe the next day) walk/jump/hop from one thing to another (e.g. house to tree) and count your steps or hops! Have your child record or **chart** the number or you can help them do this. Older children can add up the steps for a total number of steps! · Read Parts of a Map by Kate Torpie (currently available from Crabtree as a free ebook – username = read, password = free) with child(ren). * Watch this video: How to Make a Map by Red Cat Books: * Link here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSnVCV4uGGQ> * Read Hop, Throw, and Play: Build Your Skills Everyday by Rebecca Sjonger (currently available from Crabtree as a free ebook – username = read, password = free) with child(ren). Have your child make **predictions** about which **distance** is longer/shorter than another. * Use your map during the next activity, the scavenger hunt; mark on your map where you found your items. Older children can write names on the map of the items found.   **Activity 3**: Outdoor Scavenger Hunt  Give your child a bag or container and ask them to collect 2-3 samples of the following items:   * Something alive or living? (plant, animal) (using small paper and markers, pencil, crayon) draw a picture * Something not alive or non-living? (rock, sand, can, etc.) * Something green (add it to your collection) * Something soft (add to your collection) * Something hard (add it to your collection) * Something brown (add it to your collection) * Something you hear (bird, vehicle, human, animal) (write it down or draw a picture) * A piece of **litter**   Children can count their items, sort their items etc. and save them for activity 4  **Activity 4**: **Sink** or **Float** science experiment  Use the items from your scavenger hunt. Set up a chart like this one below:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Sink?** | **Float?** | **Observation:** | | Rock |  |  |  | | Stick |  |  |  | | Feather |  |  |  |   Ask students to **predict** if each object will sink or float. Have them place an X or a sticker in one of the first 2 columns for each row. Then, have them experiment and **identify** whether his/her prediction was correct by recording Yes or No in the actual column. Ask children their thoughts about why the item ended up in the column it did, and record or help them write their **observations**.  **Activity 5**: Building with Natural Materials  Have children collect items outside such as sticks, branches, rocks, pinecones, etc. Provide them with glue, tape or other materials that will help them build their **structures**. If children struggle for ideas, offer guidance. For example, “What if we turn this acorn into a little friend. Let's build him a home.”  Option 1: Ask if they can draw a picture of what they want their structure to look like, and then build it from the picture. Have them count how many items they used to build their structures.  Option 2: Let them build their own creations using the materials they have collected. Ask them to draw what they have created and tell you a story about how they created it.  Next ask the child to take apart his/her structure and rebuild a new structure using all of the same materials. This is an important foundation for later understanding that the same atoms get rearranged to form new molecules.  **Activity 6**: Sorting/Arranging items  Have your child collect 10 pieces of different items (e.g. rocks, sticks, acorns, seeds, etc.). They could also do this with scavenger hunt items! Ask them to **arrange** the items in **various** ways: longest to shortest; darkest to lightest; tallest to smallest. They can create simple to complex **patterns** (stick, rock, stick, or rock, rock, stick, stick). An adult or older sibling could take the items and lay them out in a given pattern, e.g. leaf, green, leaf, green. Ask your child to **predict** what the next item in the pattern would be and then **identify** the pattern. Repeat with a different pattern. Next ask the child to create a new pattern that the adult or older sibling will identify. Read Patterning by Minta Berry (currently available as a free ebook – username = read, password = free) with child(ren).  **Activity 7**: Play I Spy  Tell the child/ren that you’re thinking of an object and provide clues for them. For example, “I spy something that lives in a tree” “It has two eyes and a tail” “It cannot fly”  “it has four legs and a stripe down its back.” “It’s a chipmunk!” Giving special attention to the **attributes** of the object and providing specific descriptions.  Take this activity further by allowing the child to ask yes/no questions about your object. |
| **Glossary**  **Observe:** To inspect or take note of something  **Sprouting:** When a plant begins to show shoots out of the ground  **Hypothesis:** To make a guess about something using information you have observed  **Graph:** A drawing showing the relations of items  **Glossary, continued**  **Predict:** To guess that a specific thing will happen (or not happen)  **Chart:** A sheet of information in the form of a graph (or diagram)  **Distance:** The amount of space between two things  **Identify:** Establish who or what something is  **Litter:** Trash, such as paper, cans, etc. that is left lying in an open space  **Sink:** To become submerged in liquid (go below the surface)  **Float:** Rest or move, on the surface of a liquid without sinking  **Structures:** An arrangement of parts and pieces (materials) into an organized object  **Arrange:** To put things in a neat, attractive or required order  **Various:** More than one, many  **Patterns:** A repeated design, such as stick, rock, stick, rock, stick rock  **Attributes:** Features or characteristics of someone or something |
| **Additional Readings/Links**  **Shape Spotters** by Megan Bryant  Or hear it read aloud here**:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAqSiJsdmsA> |
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