



It's Springtime

Take a nature walk around the yard with the children. Look for signs of spring. Talk about where animals and birds live. Show the children places that might be homes for them. See if you can find some birds, squirrels, chipmunks, and insects. Look at the trees, bushes, and even the ground. What changes are happening? Teach the children to become observers. Encourage them to be curious about the things around them.

Later on, talk with the children about what they saw outdoors. Have the children draw a picture of the yard and what they saw on the nature walk. They might want to draw the ani-

mals, birds, and insects that they saw. Write down their comments on their drawing.

Talk about where the squirrels, birds, and insects live. You can read stories and have the children do more art projects about the things that interest them the most. They might like to draw pictures of homes for animals and birds. You could give them materials to make the habitats that interest them. Be sure to write down the children's stories about their drawings and their observations from nature walks.

These activities can lead to projects of things that could go on for several weeks.

TEACH THE CHILDREN SOME FINGER PLAYS TO ADD TO THE FUN!

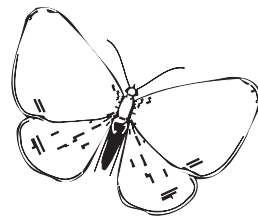
Ant Hill

Once I saw an ant hill
(Fingers curled under.)

With no ants about.
So I said, "Dear little ants,
Won't you come out?"

Then, as if the little ants
Had heard my call,
One, two, three, four,
(Hold up the number of fingers
of the numbers that are called.)

Five came out!
And that was all.



Fuzzy, Wuzzy Caterpillar

Fuzzy, wuzzy caterpillar
Into a corner will creep.
(Make fingers creep.)

He'll spin himself a blanket,
And then go fast asleep.
(Rest head on hands
and close eyes.)

Fuzzy, wuzzy caterpillar
Wakes up by and by
(Children wake up.)

Look! He has beautiful wings.
He's now a butterfly.
(Make flying motions with arms.)

Jump or Jiggle

*This is good for those times
when children need to be active,
indoors or outdoors.*

Frogs jump. Caterpillars hump.
(Suit actions to words.)

Worms wiggle. Bugs jiggle.
Rabbits hop. Horses clop.

Snakes slide. Sea gulls glide.
Mice creep. Deer leap.

Puppies bounce. Kittens
pounce.

Lions stalk —
but I walk!



Spring Planting

Have the children plant seeds in paper cups to grow a classroom garden.

What you need:

- Dirt
- Paper cups
- Seeds — beans, radishes, and lettuce sprout quickly
- Water
- Magnifying glass

What to do:

- Fill each cup with the dirt.
- Place a few seeds in each cup.
- Water gently.
- Place in a sunny spot.
- Water when the soil gets dry — do not over-water.
- Check each day to see if the seeds are sprouting.
- Once the leaves and stems appear, have the children look at them with the magnifying glass.
- Write down their observations.

Once the plants grow and become too big for the paper cups, you can have the children transplant them into a larger container. If you have space,

you might want to try to dig an outdoor garden plot. Then the garden can be an outdoor classroom where the children can take care of their plants, watch them grow, and see what they produce as the vegetables form. If an outdoor garden is not possible, the children can take their plants home once they are too big for the paper cups.



FINGER PLAY

I Dig, Dig, Dig

I dig, dig, dig.

(Pretend to dig.)

And I plant some seeds.

(Stoop down and plant seeds.)

I rake, rake, rake,

(Pretend to rake.)

And I pull some weeds.

(Pull out weeds.)

I wait and watch

(Bend over and look at ground.)

And soon I know.

(Nod head.)

My garden sprouts

(Raise hands from ground as if sprouting.)

And starts to grow.



For more Activity ideas, visit us on the web at: betterkidcare.psu.edu or call the telephone help line: 1-800-859-8340.



Pennsylvania Pathways

Professional Development
for Child Caregivers

PENNSYLVANIA



Cooperative Extension
College of Agricultural Sciences

Developed by: Nancy Wilson, Penn State Better Kid Care

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Program Director

253 Easterly Parkway, State College, PA 16801 • Phone: 1-800-452-9108 • Website: betterkidcare.psu.edu.

Resources: *Ring A Ring O' Roses* — Stories, Games, and Finger Plays for Pre-school Children. Children's Community Service Department, Flint Public Library, Flint Michigan; *Patterns, Projects, and Plans* by Imogene Forte; *Mudpies to Magnets*, by Robert A. Williams, Robert E. Packwood, and Elizabeth A. Sherwood

Supported by funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania Pathways Program.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its work force.

May 2003