

At-Home Guided Learning Plan *featuring the* Trees Study

Trees Study—Exploring the Topic: What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?

This week, we will begin our study of trees. Your child will learn about the characteristics of trees in your community, who lives in trees, what food comes from trees, who takes care of trees, how trees change, and what we can do with parts of trees. As we study trees together, we will learn concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. We'll also use thinking skills to investigate, ask questions, solve problems, make predictions, and test our ideas.

This plan includes activities that introduce the *Trees Study* and related concepts. You and your child will discover

- what he knows about trees and
- what he would like to find out about trees.

Each day of the *Guided Learning Plan* includes the following:

Study Concepts
This study-related activity offers guidance for helping your family explore the topic, investigate questions about it, or celebrate your learning together through hands-on discovery. You'll also find a question here to help you effectively share your child's learning and discoveries with your teacher.

Guided Learning Experience
Here you'll find a suggested 10- to 15-minute activity that's a bit more focused on supporting a specific skill—which is listed next to the title of the activity—in your child's development. You'll also find a question to help you effectively share your child's learning and discoveries with your teacher.

Mighty Minutes®
Use these short chants, games, and rhymes to playfully engage with your child at any time of day!

"Something to Consider" Tips
Reflect on positive guidance and developmental tips and strategies from experts in the field of early childhood.

The Creative Curriculum® *for* Preschool
by TeachingStrategies®

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Exploring the Topic: Day 1

What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?

Describing Trees

- Invite your child to join you near a window and ask him to point to the nearest tree.
- Ask, *What does the tree look like? What do you notice about it?*
- Listen to your child describe the tree. Write down the words he uses on a sheet of paper: *Santiago, I heard you say that the sticks on the tree are long and green. The branches are long and green. I am going to write the words* long *and* green *on this sheet of paper.*
- If your child is interested, look at other trees outside and invite him to describe them.

What words did your child use to describe the trees?

Guided Learning Experience

Which Has More?—*Understands quantities*

- Invite your child to join you in a counting and comparing game. Display two bags filled with different items, such as coins, paper clips, or blocks. Fill the bags with different quantities of items, e.g., three coins in one bag and five coins in the second bag. Talk about the words *more* and *fewer* as your child looks at the bags.
- Read the following rhyme out loud:

  More, fewer, the same—
  Which will it be?
  Line them up,
  Then we'll see.
- Invite your child to guess which bag has *more* or *fewer* items or if the bags have the *same* number of items. After she decides, invite her to line up the items and count them. Talk about whether your child's guess was correct. For example, you might say, *Selma, you think that the first bag has more coins. Let's take out the coins in the first bag and count them. One, two, three, four, five. There are five coins in the first bag. Now let's count the coins in the second bag. One, two, three. You're right! The first bag has more coins.*
- Repeat the activity using a different number of materials.

What words did your child use correctly: *more*, *less*, *fewer*, *the same as*, *equal*?

Mighty Minutes®

Leaping Sounds—*Shows awareness of smaller sounds in language*

1. Explain that you are going to say a letter sound and an action that begins with that sound. Invite your child to make the sound and perform the action along with you: *Let's try /l/-/l/-leaping!*

2. Continue the activity using different letter sounds and actions. Take turns thinking of new actions to try. Emphasize the beginning sound of each action as you do it with your child.



Something to Consider

Exploring the topic provides your child an opportunity to share what she knows about a topic and what she is curious about or would like to find out. As your child shares what she notices about trees, you will gain an understanding of what she already knows about trees and what experiences she has had with trees.

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Exploring the Topic: Day 2

What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?

Going on a Tree Hunt

- Take your child on a walk outside to find trees. Bring a bag for her to collect leaves, pinecones, or any other tree parts she is interested in.
- While on the walk, invite your child to look at different trees and share what she notices.
- After your child shares, point out the leaves, branches, trunk, and roots of the tree: *Look, Claudia, a bird just landed on the branch of that tree! The branches of a tree grow from the trunk, which is the part that grows up from the ground.*
- Save the collection of tree parts to explore on another day.

Take photos of the trees your child discovered on the walk to share with her teacher.

Guided Learning Experience

Writing Poems—*Uses new words*

- Read some rhyming and non-rhyming poems with your child, such as

  Non-rhyming:
  I step outside and hear the wind;
  I feel the breeze on my face.
  The trees whisper as they sway,
  And I watch the leaves dance on the branches.
  It makes me feel like dancing, too.

  Rhyming:
  Zooming on my scooter,
  See the world go by.
  Pushing with my legs so fast
  I think that I might fly.
- Help your child create their own poems. Invite them to use their five senses and think about their feelings: *What does it sound like when you hear thunder? How does it make you feel?*
- Listen to your child's responses and offer a beginning phrase or sentence for the poem, e.g., "Rumbly thunder makes me feel worried." Encourage your child to add additional lines and illustrate the poem when they are finished.

What descriptive words did your child include in his poem?

Mighty Minutes®

The Green Grass Grows— *Rhymes*

1. First, draw grass and a hole in the ground on a sheet of paper. As you chant, rap, or sing the following to the tune of "The Green Grass Grew All Around," draw the tree.

   There was a tree,
   Deep in the woods.
   The prettiest tree
   That you ever did see.

   Oh, the tree in a hole,
   And the hole in the ground,
   And the green grass grows all around,
   All around.
   The green grass grows all around.

2. Repeat the activity and invite your child to draw a tree as you sing together.



Something to Consider

As your child notices and describes the trees she sees outside, introduce descriptive words such as *tall*, *short*, *wide*, and *skinny*. You can model using these words by repeating what your child says back to her. Your child might say, *That tree is really big! It goes way up into the sky*. You might say, *Yes, that tree is very* tall*; its skinny branches are long and are reaching up* high.

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Exploring the Topic: Day 3

What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?

Looking at Tree Artifacts

- Together, look at the tree parts your child collected on Day 2 or take them outside to collect leaves, pinecones, or acorns.
- Closely examine the tree parts and talk with your child about how the parts are the same and different, e.g., *Sam, you collected a lot of leaves! Do all of the leaves look the same? Yes, that leaf is bigger than that one!*
- Support your child to sort the tree parts in different ways: *Let's put the leaves in this pile and the pinecones in this pile,* or *Let's put the green leaves in this pile and the yellow leaves in this pile.*

How did your child sort the tree parts?

Guided Learning Experience

Lining It Up—*Measures objects*

- Ask your child to help you gather a collection of objects, such as socks, sticks, or clean recyclables. Demonstrate how to line them up according to size. You might say, *If we line them up so they all touch this line on the rug, we can see which is longest*.
- Invite your child to arrange them in a different way, such as longest to shortest or narrowest to widest.
- Encourage your child to explain her arrangements. You might say, *You put the tallest bottle in the middle. Can you tell me how you decided where to put the shorter bottles?* Invite her to make and describe new arrangements.

How did your child place the items in a series?

Mighty Minutes®

A Tree My Size—*Uses new words*

1. Write the poem on a sheet of paper and read it aloud a few times.

   This tree is wide.
   This tree is tall.
   This tree is thin.
   This tree is small.
   Beautiful trees
   I see with my eyes.
   But the one I like best
   Is exactly my size!

2. Invite your child to perform hand motions as you say the size words together.



Something to Consider

Who says a "foot" has to be 12 inches? Encourage your child to use their own foot, hand, or even their favorite toy to measure! Measuring with everyday objects is called "nonstandard measurement." It helps children understand how measurement helps us compare items. You can say things like *I wonder how many of your feet long our sofa is.* What else can your child use to measure items in your home?

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Exploring the Topic: Day 4

What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?

What Do We Know About Trees?

- Talk with your child about what she knows about trees. Say, *You already know so much about trees! You described and looked for trees outside, collected tree parts, and sorted them in different ways.*
- Write "What we know about trees" on a sheet of paper. Add the things your child did or shared with you about what she already knows about trees.
- Save and add to the list throughout the study.

Take a picture of the list of things your child knows about trees. Send the list to your child's teacher.

Guided Learning Experience

Describing Art—*Writes to convey meaning*

- After your child creates a work of art, encourage him to examine his artwork and describe it.
- You can ask questions, such as *I see you used lots of red. Can you tell me about your drawing? or In your drawing, I see someone walking on the sidewalk. Where is that person going? What will she do when she gets there?*
- Offer pencils or crayons for your child to write about his artwork or record his dictation on the bottom or back of the page.
- Accepting any marks your child makes encourages him to feel proud of his emerging writing skills!

How was your child able to write words to describe his art?

Mighty Minutes®

Say It, Show It—*Connects numerals with quantities*

1. Recite the chant and snap, tap, or clap the beat.

   Appy, tappy, tappy.
   Appy, tappy, too.
   Appy, tappy, tappy.
   I'll show my card to you!

2. Hold up a numeral card from *1–10*.
3. Ask your child to name the numeral.
4. Invite your child to perform a simple motion to demonstrate their knowledge of the quantity that it represents. Ask, *Can you hold up four fingers? Can you jump four times?*



Something to Consider

Reading aloud to your child is not a skill that comes naturally to everyone, but it can be developed over time. As you read, think of ways you can make the story come alive! You can change the tone of your voice for each character, show expression in your face as you read, and ask questions that invite your child to actively participate. Practicing these skills will make read-aloud experiences more meaningful and fun for both you and your child.

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Exploring the Topic: Day 5

What do we know about trees? What do we want to find out?

What Do We Want to Find Out About Trees?

- Ask, *What are some things you are curious about or want to learn about trees?*
- Support your child to think of a few questions: *Remember when you asked how the tree outside got so big? Should we ask, "How do trees grow and change?"* or *You were curious about the birds we saw in the trees. Should we ask, "What lives in trees?"*
- Write your child's questions on a sheet of paper titled *What do we want to find out about trees?*
- Save and add to the list throughout the study.

Send the list of things your child wanted to learn about trees to his teacher.

Guided Learning Experience

Measure & Compare—*Measures objects*

- Invite your child to play a measuring game with you. Show them how to measure the length of an object using nonstandard measuring tools, such as feet, hands, blocks, or paper clips. Say, *I'm going to use my feet to measure how long the table is. I'll start counting at one end of the table and stop at the other end. One, two, three, four. The table is as long as four of my feet.*
- Encourage your child to measure two objects in the room using nonstandard measuring tools. After they measure the objects, support your child to find the length: *Caleb, you measured the toy chest and dresser using blocks. Let's count how many blocks you used to measure your toy chest and dresser*.
- Ask your child to compare the two lengths: *Your toy chest was three blocks long, and your dresser was four. Which object is the longest? Which one is the shortest?*

How did your child explain his measuring methods, e.g., *I used my shoes to count how long my bed was?*

Mighty Minutes®

The Name Dance—*Shows awareness of smaller sounds in language*

1. Help your child determine the number of syllables in her name by clapping each syllable.
2. Say your child's name. Clap and move your body rhythmically for each syllable.
3. Sing, *[Car-ly, Car-ly], let's try the [Car-ly] dance.*
4. Ask your child to join you in making up her name dance.
5. Repeat this game with your or other family members' names.



Something to Consider

You can help your child develop persistence by offering positive encouragement and by helping them work through difficult challenges. When you notice your child beginning to get frustrated, you might say, *You've been working hard for a long time on that sign for your fire station drawing. It can be hard to spell new words! You can find the word you're looking for in this book. Let's take a look together.*

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