

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

Trees Study—Investigation 5: How do trees change?

Over the next several days, you and your child will investigate the question "How do trees change?" As you find the answer to this question together, your child will examine photos of trees and observe trees outdoors to learn more about how trees change and grow over time.

This plan includes hands-on activities in which your child will

- examine how trees grow taller and wider as they get older,
- learn about the stages of a tree's life cycle,
- discover that living things need water and food to grow, and
- explore how weather and insects can damage 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 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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Investigation 5: Day 1

How do trees change?

We Grow, and Trees Grow?

- Show your child a picture of herself when she was a baby. Talk about how she has grown taller over the years.
- Talk about how trees grow taller and change. Say, *When trees are young, they are small and have thin trunks. As they get older, their trunks become wider, and they grow taller and taller just like you*!
- Take your child outside and invite her to notice the different sizes of the trees. Invite your child to share what trees she thinks are older and younger.

How did your child show understanding of how trees grow?

Guided Learning Experience

Guess My Shape—*Understands shapes*

- Invite your child to play a shape game with you. Explain that you will each take turns drawing and naming shapes.
- Draw a simple shape (e.g., circle, square, triangle) on a sheet of paper.
- Ask your child to name the shape you drew. Help them name any shapes they do not know.
- Invite your child to draw a shape. Try to guess what shape your child has drawn and invite them to share what shape it is.

What shapes did your child identify and describe?

Mighty Minutes®

Clap the Missing Word—*Shows awareness of smaller sounds in language*

1. Choose a short, repetitive, familiar song.
2. Sing it through once together.
3. Explain that you are going to leave out one of the words in the song and clap when you should say the word.
4. Choose one repetitive word to omit as you sing the song together, e.g., *The farmer in the [clap], the farmer in the [clap]. Hi-ho, the derry-o, the farmer in the [clap]….*



Something to Consider

As you and your child learn about trees and how they grow, consider planting seeds or a small plant outdoors. After planting the seeds, invite your child to care for the plant and watch how it changes as it grows. Doing this will help reinforce the concepts your child is learning throughout the *Trees Study* and help him make natural comparisons between the plant and the trees he is learning about.

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Investigation 5: Day 2

How do trees change?

Seed, Seeding, and Sapling

- Show your child photos of trees in different stages of their lives (i.e., seed, seedling, sapling, pole, mature tree).
- Invite your child to look at the photos and talk with her about how the trees change over time: *Did you know that trees start out as seeds? Next, they grow into a sapling, and then they grow into a pole.*
- If possible, draw trees or print photos of trees in different stages and cut them out. Mix the tree stages up and support your child to place them in the order in which they occur. For example, you might say, *Bella, which photo do you think comes first? Yes, a tree starts as a seed in the ground. What picture should we choose next?*

How did your child arrange the photos of the tree's life stages? How did you support her to place the photos in the correct order?

Guided Learning Experience

Letters, Letters, Letters—*Identifies and names letters*

- Write a familiar letter on a sheet of paper.
- Ask your child to identify the letter. Talk about the letter's characteristics: *This letter has a straight line down and a straight line at the bottom. Can you tell me what it is? Yes, it's an* L.
- Invite your child to use stickers, coins, or dot markers to cover the lines of the letter.

Which uppercase and lowercase letters was your child able to recognize?

Mighty Minutes®

Find the Letter Sound—*Connects letters to their sounds*

1. Write a few familiar letters, each on a small sheet of paper, and place them on the floor.
2. Say, *Find and stand on the letter that makes the /t/ sound*, or *Find and stand on the letter* t.
3. Together, think of a movement that starts with the same sound. Say, *Tiptoe to the /t/ sound*, or *Roar on the /r/*.
4. Perform the movements with your child as she stands on different letters.



Something to Consider

Teaching your child vocabulary related to mathematical concepts is easy and can take place during any time of day. For example, you can model how to use ordinal numbers (e.g., *first*, *second*, and *third*) when doing a routine or other activity that happens in a specific order. You might say, *Jackson,* first *I am going to put your socks on;* second*, I will put your shoes on; and* third, *I will tie your shoelaces.*

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Investigation 5: Day 3

How do trees change?

Living Things Grow

- Say, *Living things need food and water to grow. I wonder what things are living in our home.*
- Walk with your child around your home and talk about what things are living and nonliving. For example, you might say, *Saba, does your pillow need food and water? Does it grow? No, your pillow is nonliving. Does our dog Rufus need food and water? Yes, Rufus is living!*
- Together, create a list of things you discovered that are living and nonliving in your home: *We found out that our house plant, your sister Jemma, and our dog Rufus are all living! Let's write their names on our list.*

How did your child show understanding of things that were living and nonliving?

Guided Learning Experience

Dinnertime—*Understands quantities*

- Offer your child dishes, utensils, napkins, and cups. Explain that he is going to pretend to have friends over for dinner.
- Encourage your child to share who he will invite to dinner and what food he will serve.
- Share different story problems that encourage your child to count, add, and subtract objects. You might say, *We have five friends coming for dinner. Let's count five plates to put on the table. There are six plates on the table, and I take away one. How many plates are left?*

How did your child solve the story problem? How many items did he count accurately?

Mighty Minutes®

Dinky Doo—*Uses alliteration*

1. Sing the following nonsense words to the tune of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

   Dinky, dinky, dinky, doo.
   Willy, willy, willy, woo.
   Dinky, dinky, dinky, doo.
   Willy, willy, willy, woo.
   Dinky, dinky, dinky, doo.
   Willy, willy, willy, woo.

2. Repeat the song with your child using nonsense words that start with the letter *T*.

   Tinky, tinky, tinky, too.
   Tilly, tilly, tilly, too.



Something to Consider

Children need many experiences to learn a new skill or concept. Consider using a wide variety of activities to encourage your child to explore letters. For example, make up a silly song with words that all start with the same letter, ask her to use sticks or crayons to create the letters you name, write a letter poem using as many words that start with the same letter sound as possible, or "skate" the letter on the kitchen floor! When you make learning letters fun, your child will explore and learn for much longer!

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Investigation 5: Day 4

How do trees change?

Tree Poems

- Write the following poem on a sheet of paper. Explain to your child that he will close his eyes and think about the words as you read the poem to imagine what you are reading.

  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!
- After you read, ask your child to open his eyes and tell you what he imagined during the poem.
- Read the poem again and, after you read, give your child a sheet of paper and crayons and invite him to draw what he imagined.

Take a photo of the picture your child drew to share with his teacher.

Guided Learning Experience

Dramatic Story Retelling—*Retells stories*

- Read a familiar storybook to your child.
- Work together to gather or make props related to the story to represent each character, such as a towel for Little Red Riding Hood's cape or a crown for Max in *Where the Wild Things Are*.
- Retell the story with your child and act out the different characters together.

How did your child retell the story?

Mighty Minutes®

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

1. Recite the following 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

Most children love to play with water! The sound it makes, the way it feels, the way it changes (e.g., from ice to water), and the way it moves fascinate children. Encourage your child to experiment with water throughout the day. For example, you can boil water and show your child how it becomes steam or freeze water in plastic containers and see how long it takes for the water to become ice. Watching how water changes builds your child's observation skills and her ability to make and test predictions.

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Investigation 5: Day 5

How do trees change?

Tree Damage

- Talk with your child about how trees can become damaged, such as wind blowing a tree down, insects and animals creating holes in the bark, or people digging and damaging tree roots.
- Go outside on a walk around your neighborhood. Invite your child to point out any damage they see on a tree.
- Encourage your child to share what they think caused damage to the tree: *Mo, you found a hole in this tree. What do you think caused it?*

What tree damage did your child discover on your walk? What do they think damaged the tree?

Guided Learning Experience

Storytelling—*Retells Stories*

- Show your child a familiar picture book.
- Before reading, show your child the cover of the book. Read the title of the story, pointing out each word as you say it aloud.
- Open the book to any page and invite your child to look at the illustration on the page and recall what happens in the story. Ask questions about details in the picture and encourage her to elaborate on the story: *It looks like this character is holding something. What is in his hand?*

Was your child able to remember and retell parts of the story?

Mighty Minutes®

Three Rowdy Children—*Counts*

1. Chant or sing as you show your child how to finger count.

2. After each verse, ask*, How many children are left outside?*

   [Three rowdy children] went out to play [hold up three fingers].
   They stayed outside and played all day.
   [Grandma] called [two children] home from their fun[put down two fingers].
   [She] said, "Come home, there's work to be done."

3. Say the rhyme together again using other number combinations.



Something to Consider

As your child prepares to wash her body, encourage her to make a lather with the soap and washcloth and spread it up and down her arms and legs. Spreading the lather will ensure a deep clean. It also presents a great opportunity to use vocabulary to describe the bubbles (such as *slippery* and *foamy*) and directionality (such as *up* and *down*).

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