



Children are scientists from the moment they are born. They use their senses to observe and collect information about the world around them. As they get older, they become better at making predictions and trying to solve problems. Children are naturally interested in living things and interesting materials. It is important to encourage them to explore and think about what they see, to ask lots of questions, and to figure out how to find the answers.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Scientific Inquiry: Children learn to explore and investigate ideas they are interested in, to collect information, and to think and talk about their ideas.

Knowledge of Science Concepts: Children explore living and non-living things and materials that are both man-made and made by nature.

SCIENCE

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Where is Baby's Belly Button *by Karen Katz*

Goodnight Gorilla *by Peggy Rathman**

Dear Zoo *by Rod Campbell*

Haiku Baby *by Betsy Snyder*

I See *by Rachel Isadora*

What Can You Do In The Snow? *by Anna Grossnickle*

PRESCHOOLERS

Dig Wait Listen *by April Pulley Sayre*

In the Woods: Who's Been Here?
by Lindsay Barrett George

Raccoon on His Own *by Jim Arnosky*

Under Ground *by Denise Fleming*

I Love Bugs *by Philemon Sturges*

Alexander and the Wind Up Mouse *by Leo Lionni*

Animals Should Definitely NOT Wear Clothing
by Judy and Ronald Barrett

Up, Down and Around *by Katherine Ayres*

My Five Senses *by Alike**

Seven Blind Mice *by Ed Young**

** Available in Spanish*

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Explore, Discuss, Document

Encourage your child to observe and explore interesting things, to talk about them, and to share what they have learned.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Provide interesting things to look at and play with, like toys or materials that have different textures (soft, hard, smooth, rough), different shapes, and different sounds.

Talk to your child about how things look, feel, and sound. Encourage you baby to shake, bang, and pick up or drop toys to see what happens.



TODDLERS

Everything is exciting for toddlers! They love to point out what they know and ask you to label things they don't know. Take advantage of your child's natural curiosity by allowing time to stop, look, and listen. Ask your child to tell you about what is seen or heard. Share in the excitement and expand on the descriptions (e.g., "Yes! I see the bird! He's sitting on top of the fence! I can hear him chirping!")



PRESCHOOLERS

Older children become very good at observing things and then telling you what they think about what they know. Encourage your child to share ideas—even if they do not make a lot of sense! Give your preschooler a notebook to take on walks together. You and your child can draw pictures or write words describing what you observe.

SCIENCE

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Babies learn a lot about their world by putting things in their mouths. This is how babies explore toys. Be sure to always watch babies as they play, and keep small toys and hazardous materials out of reach!
- Make an "exploration box" that has different types of objects and materials in it. Change the materials often, so there are always new things to find. Materials can include leaves or sticks, interesting toys or objects, stickers, pipe cleaners, play dough, etc.
- Help your child to become aware of the world using all of five senses. Talk about what your child sees, hears, feels, smells or tastes. Use describing words that may be new to your child.
- Preschoolers can make simple predictions about effects or results of their actions. Have your child guess what will happen if the big blocks are piled on top of the little blocks. Then have your child try it.

REFLECTIONS

- What opportunities for exploration and investigation are available in your neighborhood? For example, taking a nature walk, visiting a construction site, watching the garbage truck or observing airplanes, boats and buses. Use the back of this card to write down the things your child expresses interest in and some questions you can ask.

Exploring Nature

Encourage your child to explore and think about things that are living, non-living, man-made or naturally occurring materials.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Infants are very observant of the world around them and they depend on adults to help them make connections and label what they observe. When you are outside, point out the things in nature that you observe, like birds flying by, trees and flowers, dogs barking, or the wind blowing the leaves. Older babies enjoy touching some natural objects, like leaves, grass, flowers, etc.



TODDLERS

Children at this age become very aware of and interested in nature. Their main way of exploring nature is through their senses. Encourage them to touch, smell, taste and listen as they explore. Point out and name objects you see, like flowers and bugs. When you are out for a walk or at the park, allow your child to stop and look at things that are interesting, like weeds growing between cracks in the sidewalk, dogs walking across the street, or butterflies floating by. Use words to describe what your child notices and share in the excitement.



PRESCHOOLERS

Older children become aware of the fact that things are either living or non-living. They develop an interest in what things need to grow. Ask your child to think about what both plants and people need to grow. Talk about non-living things like rocks and dirt that do not need food, water, and light and how they are similar or different. Plants are a great way to teach children about how things grow. You can either buy a plant or plant seeds and make a plan together for helping the plant to grow.

SCIENCE

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Keep a box in your house or outside where your child can collect things from nature. Materials that may appear boring or typical to you might be very exciting to your child. Take the time to look through the box together. Talk about the ways materials are the same or different, how they feel, or where they came from.
- Talk with your child about changes in the. For example, dark clouds warn us that rain might be coming. The wind getting stronger will make the trees move. Or, when it gets colder, it is important to put on a coat before going outside. You can talk about how much rain or snow fell or point out the frost on the grass or ice on the car windshield.
- Think about ways you can explore nature in your own neighborhood. Even in cities, there are parks with squirrels and birds, and flowers and trees. To find other ways to explore nature within your community see the Resources section of these cards.

REFLECTIONS

- What are your favorite things to do in nature? Do you have a favorite season because of the weather? Think about ways you can share your interests with your child.