

DISCOVERY ZONE: SUMMER

Study Investigation:

Community Quests

Toddler and Preschool Edition

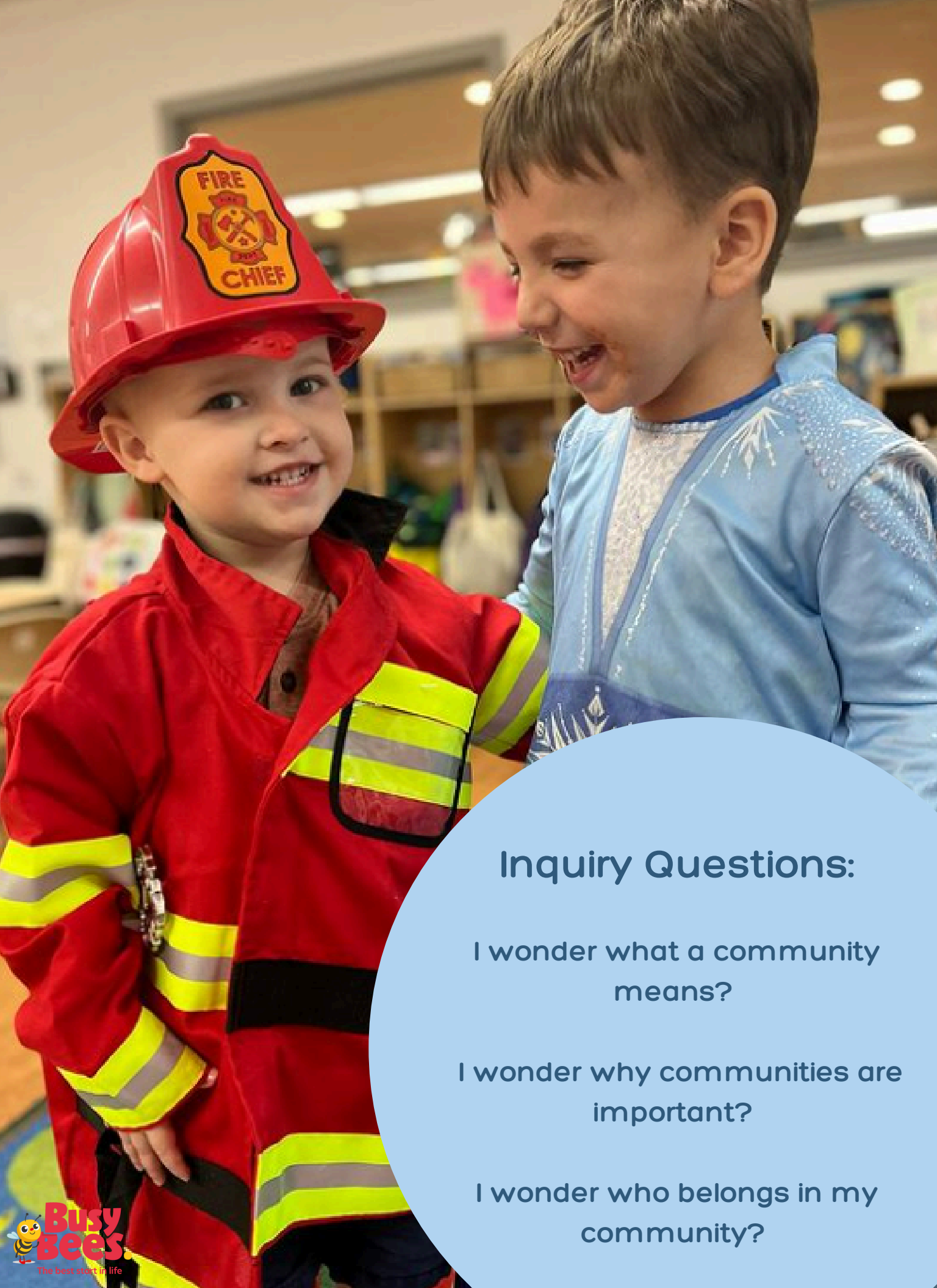


STUDY EXPLANATION

Community Quests

This topic focuses on deepening connections within us and within the community around us. Activities aim to build self-awareness, agency, confidence, and forge a stronger sense of community within our programs. Children will explore the benefits of teamwork by accomplishing big tasks together and celebrating their achievements as a team, creating a sense of spirit and unity within each of our programs. Mindfulness with respect to our communities, our environment, and our personal wellbeing will also be a focus.





Inquiry Questions:

I wonder what a community means?

I wonder why communities are important?

I wonder who belongs in my community?

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Activity One

Title of Activity: Zenergy Chime Exploration Station

Skill(s) Focus: Mindfulness and Body Awareness/Connection

Objectives: Children will understand the concept of a Zenergy chime while strengthening their attention and focus, and learn self-regulation through calming steps.

Materials:

- Zenergy chime or wind chime
- Sound exploration materials:
 - Glass bottle or jars
 - Water
 - Metal spoons
 - Wooden spoons
 - Pots or pans
 - Lidded plastic containers
 - Lightweight materials for making sound
 - Bark chunks, spools, rings, buttons, etc.
 - Large items for toddlers

Process:

- Set up an exploration station by setting out the sound making materials, arranging them in an inviting and accessible way.
- Invite children to experiment with the materials, tapping the items, clanking the materials together, or shaking the dried items.
- Engage the children in a discussion about which sounds are the most soothing and why.
 - Guide children to notice the differences in pitch, tone and volume of the different items.
- Once all children have had a chance to explore, invite them to the circle carpet for a group exploration.
- If educators are able to access a Zenergy chime, present this to the children. As an alternative, hang a windchime above the group and gently tap it.
- Help children recognize the calming quality of the beautiful sounds when struck gently.
- Encourage children to close their eyes and focus their attention on the chiming sounds.
- Begin by ringing the Zenergy chime or wind chime softly, guiding the children to listen carefully to the sound until it fades away completely.
- Repeat the activity several times, allowing different children to take turns striking the chime if they wish.
- Encourage children to breathe deeply and calmly as they listen to the chime.

Toddler Variations:

- Support toddlers to explore the sound making materials, removing choking hazards, while carefully articulating their attributes.
- Ring the chimes softly in smaller groups to allow toddlers more focused support.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Activity Two

Title of Activity: Mirror Me

Skill(s) Focus: Mindfulness/Empathy/Collaboration/Belonging

Objectives: Children will practice mirroring their partner to increase empathy development and connections with others.

Materials:

- Joyful spirit
- Mirrors

Process:

- Educators can start by asking a child to help role model what mirroring should look like.
 - Encourage the child to move in unusual, unpredictable patterns for the educators to replicate as close in time as possible.
 - Consider asking the child to do a quick dance, or move according to any way they feel!
 - Educators can incorporate the use of a mirror, reinforcing the goal of being the reflection in movement their partner is engaging in. .
- Guide children to partner up, ensuring all children respectfully gain a partner!
- Guide the children to move slowly at first and put on some slow music to encourage a leisurely pace.
- As they become better in mirroring their friends, allow them to go faster and make more challenging moves.
- Variations:
 - Invite children to take turns being the leader and support the rest of the children to copy them.
 - Include props such as a hat or a ball to increase difficulty.
 - Challenge older children to make subtle moves, starting with their toes or finger tips, culminating in more dramatic moves from toes to the top of one's head, such as animated facial expressions.

Toddler Variations:

- Invite toddlers to mirror the movements of the educators to start.
- Educators can reference images in mirrors for the children to see their motions.
- When children have practiced and confident at mirroring the educator movements, educators may then invite toddlers to mirror a partner or another educator.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Activity Three

Title of Activity: Friendship Rocks

Skill(s) Focus: Mindfulness/Connections/Belonging/Emotional Expression

Objectives: Children will connect with others and work together to solve problems.

Materials:

- Suggested book:
 - "Ishi: Simple Tips from a Solid Friend" by Akiko Yabuki
- Rocks
 - Large for toddlers
- Large jar
- Paint
- Brushes
- Decorative stickers
 - Large for toddlers

Process:

- Read the book "Ishi" to children if available. The book showcases a rock character named "Ishi" who demonstrates a variety of emotions along with strategies to feel better.
- Explain to children that they can use a special rock as a resource or reminder for ways to help them resolve their conflicts and build stronger relationships.
- Invite children to decorate their rocks using paint and decorative stickers.
- Once dry, allow children to add their rocks to one Classroom Conflict Jar.
- Be sure to display the jar in the classroom where it is visible to all children.
- Explain to the children that when a conflict arises in the classroom, they can select their rocks from the jar as a resource to remind them how to respectfully solve a problem with another.
 - Guide children to understand during this conflict resolution, only one child will hold a rock at a time and share their feelings about the conflict. Following that, the next child will hold their rock and express their feelings.
 - Educators should always remain close to guide children through the process.
- After the conflict is resolved, celebrate the peaceful resolution with the children by giving a high five or a special song to reinforce the importance of kindness and understanding.

Toddler Variations:

- Invite toddlers to select a rock that is big enough to eliminate any choking hazards but not too big that it becomes cumbersome for a toddler to handle.
- Guide toddlers to take care for their rock, handling it gently.
- Ask toddlers to describe what they notice about their rocks
- Encourage toddlers to feel the rock, introducing terms such as smooth or rough, and flat or bumpy.
- Invite toddlers to take part in painting their larger rocks, using a water and paint mixture and larger brushes.
- When complete, take a photo of each toddler holding their rock. Place these photos in a snap frame for toddlers to view to support a sense of belonging and classroom community.
- Place the completed painted rocks in a garden outside of the centre entrance.

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Activity One

Title of Activity: Amazing Book of Me!

Skills) Focus: Print Context/Literacy Awareness/Self-Esteem and Belonging/Expression

Objectives: Children will build their own books filled with photos of their choosing, complete with narrated story line.

Materials:

- Journal
 - Notebook/bundled white construction paper
- Photo of each child
- Drawing materials:
 - Crayons, markers, paint, etc.
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue

Process:

- Set out the materials thoughtfully across a work surface and invite children in small groups to engage in the activity.
- Begin by engaging children in a discussion about parts of a book using one of the books from classroom library. Identify the following:
 - Cover: the front of the book showcasing the title.
 - Spine: the part that holds the book together.
 - Pages: where the story is written.
 - Author: name of the person who wrote the book.
 - Illustrator: name of the person who drew the pictures in the book.
- Next, invite children to create their very own book using all of these different parts.
- Invite children to add their own photo and name in the author and Illustrator area.
- For the storyline content, guide children to select pictures from the magazines to glue on to their pages.
- Support children try to articulate a description of each picture from one page to the next. Children may need prompting questions to support this step. Questions such as:
 - What is happening?
 - What do you notice?
 - How can you describe that?
- Educators can support by documenting the narration of the children on the bottom of each page.
- Let children present their story book to other children when finished.

Toddlers Variations:

- Provide toddlers with a bound construction paper journal, and glue their photo onto it.
- For younger toddlers, provide cut out colorful pictures from magazines ready for them to paste in their books.

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Activity Two

Title of Activity: What Lives in the Garden?

Skills) Focus: Print Context/Literacy Awareness/Self-Esteem and Belonging/Expression

Objectives: Children will engage in critical thinking and vocabulary development as they explore a sensory garden.

Materials:

- Child-safe soil
- Miniature plants and trees
 - Large items for toddlers
- Child-safe flowers, petals, grasses
 - Larger for toddlers
- Toy insects & garden dwellers
 - Larger for toddlers
- Garden tools
- Small buckets
- Paper
- Markers
- Cardstock squares:
 - Printed vocabulary words:
 - For example: grasshopper, ladybug, worm, beetle, butterfly, soil, grass, sunflower, tree, etc.
 - Include a photo of each word (toddlers)
- Story book "What Lives in the Garden" by John Woodward

Process:

- Prior to the activity, prepare a series of vocabulary cards showcasing the garden dwellers and tools you want to showcase for the children.
- For toddlers, be sure to include a photo or a drawing to help reinforce their discoveries.
- Ignite excitement for the activity by presenting a story related to gardens and the amazing variety of creatures that live within them. Share the story identified above or something similar.
- Place child-safe soil within a sensory bin or Tuff Tray, and insert a variety of the toy insects and garden dwellers and include the garden tools.
- Invite children in small groups to begin exploring the Tuff Tray.
- Challenge them to find some of the creatures identified within the story and invite them to pull out and place in a bucket.
- Help them to identify the names, articulating the sounds carefully.
- Next, lay out the vocabulary cards on a nearby surface, and challenge children to match the creatures with their corresponding names.

Toddlers Variations:

- Provide toddlers with duplicates of the creatures for shared excitement, and challenge them to match their discoveries with the corresponding photo cards.
- Ensure to remove choking hazards.

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Activity Three

Title of Activity: On the Safari- Scavenger Hunt

Skill(s) Focus: Print Awareness/Joyful Engagement/Collaboration

Objectives: Children will participate in a group scavenger hunt featuring names of animals and items featured in a Safari.

Materials:

- Scavenger hunt checklist:
 - Suggested words:
 - Binoculars, compass, map, lion, giraffe, elephant, zebra, monkey, tiger, snake
- Tangible items from scavenger list
- Poster board (toddlers)
- Photos of Safari items (toddlers)

Process:

- Place safari related items around the room or outdoor learning environment, ensuring items are discoverable and accessible to the children.
- Use Buzz to excite the children, gathering them together to read off the items on the scavenger list.
- Read each word carefully, articulating the sounds clearly and inviting children to mimic the sounds.
- Provide each child with a copy of the scavenger list and marker.
- Invite children to explore their environment, checking off the items as they find them.
- Give children their own checklists and markers to start the hunt.
- Once they find all the items on the checklist, gather the children to celebrate their success.
- Review items they found, their significance in a safari adventure and share information about different safari animals.

Toddler Variations:

- Glue photos of safari items onto a poster board and position in a visible area for toddlers.
- Invite toddlers to explore their surroundings to find the items, guiding them to refer to the poster board.
- Toddlers will likely want to pick up their items and bring it to educators, excited about their findings!
- When this happens, be ready to hide it again for ongoing discoveries!

MATH DISCOVERY

Activity One

Title of Activity: Measuring our Growing Bodies

Skills) Focus: Critical Thinking/Math Skills/Engagement/Belonging

Objectives: Children will explore the concept of measurement, and understand how tall they are in units and in relation to their peers.

Materials:

- Long piece of paper
- Colorful tapes or stickers
 - Large for toddlers
- Markers
- Measuring tape
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons
- Collage materials
 - Ribbon, pompoms, buttons, wool, etc.
 - Larger items for toddlers

Process:

- Excite children for the activity by asking them how tall they think Buzz is. Use your fingers to showcase how wide a centimetre or inch is for reference. Allow children to play with the concept of numbers, and shout out answers.
- Take out a measuring tape and measure Buzz!
- Next, ask them how tall they think they are, using Buzz's height as a reference.
- Next, tape a large piece of butcher paper on the wall and invite children one a time to get measured, placing their back against the wall and feet flat on the floor.
- Use a measuring tape and mark each child's height with colourful tape or marker.
- Write their name and height on the tape.
- Invite children to explore the different heights of children within their classroom, identifying positively who is the tallest and who is the shortest. Be sure to showcase each measurement as a positive attribute.
- Consider the following variation
 - Spread large sheets of paper on the floor and invite children to take turns having their bodies traced.
 - Invite children to measure their lengths with the measuring tape.
 - Invite children to decorate their body tracings when complete, using markers, paint, and collage items.

Toddler Variations:

- Trace the outline of toddlers, and display along a fence panel or wall.
- Invite toddlers to explore the varying heights of their peers.
- Invite toddlers to paint their body outlines!
- Ensure to use chunky loose parts, eliminating choking hazards.

MATH DISCOVERY

Activity Two

Title of Activity: Number Garden

Skills) Focus: Number Recognition/Engagement/Well-being/Collaboration

Objectives: Children will work together in small groups to discover and count natural loose parts hiding in sensory tables.

Materials:

- Child-safe soil
- Number cards:
 - Printed numeral, tally marks and pictures of applicable natural item
- Natural child safe loose parts:
 - Pinecones, tree cookies, shells, rocks, leaves, flower petals, etc.
 - Larger for toddlers
- Digging tools
- Sensory table

Process:

- Prior to the activity, complete a set of number cards that contain both the printed numeral, the matching amount of tally marks and a picture of a natural loose part that will be hidden in a sensory table.
 - Create a variety to ensure engagement.
 - Limit your number cards to numerals between 1 and 10.
 - The numeral and tally marks refer to how many natural loose parts hidden in the table.
- Prior to the activity, fill sensory table with child-safe soil and a variety of assorted natural loose parts.
- Bury these loose parts enough so that they are discoverable by curious, excited children but process focused to keep the engagement going!
- When complete, invite children in small groups to participate.
- Next, invite children to select a number card from an assortment.
 - Support children to identify the numeral, to count the tally marks of the number, and to identify the photo or drawing of the natural item they will work to find.
 - Guide them to start digging to find those loose parts.
 - Be sure that the number of loose parts corresponding to each number cards is the amount that is buried within your sensory table!
 - Children need to work together to uncover as many of like natural items that the card showcases.
 - Children can continue as their interest guides them.

Toddler Variations:

- Bury an assortment of chunky, natural loose parts for toddlers within a sensory table.
- Guide toddlers to select a photo or picture card only, and invite them to dig through the sensory table to discover it.
- Educators can engage in narrative counting as children showcase their findings.

MATH DISCOVERY

Activity Three

Title of Activity: Special Delivery

Skill(s) Focus: Math Concepts/Joyful Engagement/Creative Expression/
Community Role Play

Objectives: Children will work together to build a cardboard box community in their outdoor learning environment complete with a mail delivery system.

Materials:

- Assorted cardboard boxes
- Tricycles (as available)
- Envelopes
- Small packages
- Fabric bags
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, etc.
- Paint brushes
- Paper
- Chalk
- Traffic light props:
 - Paper, printouts, boxes

Process:

- Engage children in a discussion about important buildings that are essential parts of a community, and describe some they have seen.
- Inform children they will be creating a community outdoors using cardboard boxes!
- Spread out materials across an open area, and invite children in small groups to begin preparing their building.
 - Invite them to paint their buildings, and ask them to identify the type of building it is.
 - Support children to place a sign and address on their building.
- When complete, spread out the buildings accordingly and mark out a route using chalk.
- Be sure to include street names where appropriate for authentic engagement.
- Add traffic lights as an option for added dramatic engagement to parts of the route.
- Designate children to take turns being the mail carriers and provide them with a bag of envelopes and small packages with pre-written addresses that match the building addresses.
- Invite children to ride their tricycles or walk to deliver mail to different addresses!
- Note that this activity can turn into a bigger map making activity and can incorporate many role playing possibilities!

Toddler Variations:

- Use only single numbers for the addresses on the cardboard buildings created by the toddlers as well as the envelopes or small packages.
- Encourage toddlers to deliver packages and envelopes to the building with the matching number!

STEM DISCOVERY

Activity One

Title of Activity: Community Garden

Skill(s) Focus: Critical Thinking/Collaboration/Community/Environmental Awareness/ Sustainability

Objectives: Children will work together to collaboratively plant a community garden, while appreciating the life cycle of seed to seedling to plant.

Materials:

- Story about gardening
- Child-safe soil
- Leafy green (lettuce varieties) seedling plants
 - Allergy aware
- Plant labels
- Garden box or bin
- Gardening tools
- Compostable planting pots

Process:

- At a small group gathering, present the story "From Seed to Plant" by Gail Gibbons or a similar story, showcasing the life cycle of seeds to plants.
- Engage children in a discussion about seeds and seedlings and define the difference.
- Allow children to explore the seedlings and explain they are baby plants that need attention and nurturance to grow.
- Next, present the vegetable seedlings, and reinforce they are young plants that need stronger roots to grow larger. Explain they have already grown from the seed, and are ready to be planted into a garden!
- Carefully separate the young plants by gently breaking apart the smaller root clumps, explaining to children these roots will become stronger and longer once they are planted.
- Invite children to fill their compostable pots part way with the soil and select a seedling to plant. Guide them to fill the remaining space with soil.
- Use plant labels to insert into the pots and group like seedlings into distinct areas on a work surface.
- Next, bring out a larger gardening box, and support children on where to plant the seedlings in relation to each other.
- Help them to identify the size of the vegetables that will grow and how much space needs to be maintained between each plant.
- When the group, supported by the educators, is confident on the final arrangement, place the plants in their compostable containers directly into the garden box.
- Invite children to water their plants daily, taking care to pour water directly on the soil and avoiding contact with the leaves. This will help to avoid damage from the sun.
- Encourage children to observe the changes, and to take photos.
- When ready, invite children to harvest their vegetables and use in a snack.

Toddler Variations:

- Invite toddlers to smell and observe the leafy green seedlings while holding them, ensuring careful supervision.
- Provide toddlers with chunky markers and cardstock to decorate a sign for their community garden.
- Educators can plant and place in a location where toddlers can observe the growth of the seedlings.

STEM DISCOVERY

Activity Two

Title of Activity: Classroom Newspaper Fun!

Skill(s) Focus: Community Awareness/Collaboration/Environmental Stewardship/Critical Thinking

Objectives: Children will work together to create their own paper for a classroom newspaper!

Materials:

- Recycled paper:
 - Old newspapers, magazines, used paper, etc.
- Blender (educator to use)
- Rectangular tray
- Fine mesh screen
- Sponges
- Towel
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, pencils, etc.

Process:

- Engage children in a discussion about what a newspaper is, guiding them to understand that it shares important updates about the community.
- Share an example of what one looks like, allowing children to explore the print, photos, and headlines. Be sure to remove any inappropriate content prior to the activity.
- Involve children in a discussion about recycling, supporting them to identify the reasons for the practice.
- Inform children that they will be creating their own newspaper out of recycled newspapers and magazines!
 - As educators start this process, ensure there are sufficient paper remnants to create enough new pieces of paper for active use by each child.
- Guide children to tear paper into small pieces as their first step.
- Soak the paper pieces in water overnight to help break down its consistency even more.
- On the following morning, place this water soaked mixture into an older blender, and mix until it becomes a pulp like consistency. This is a step only for educators.
- Access the rectangular tray and place a mesh screen over it.
- Pour the paper pulp onto the mesh screen and encourage children to spread it evenly and press gently with hands to, remove as much water as possible.
- Place a towel over the pulp and press down further to remove excess water, repeating this step until most of the water is squeezed out.
- Remove the paper from the mesh screen carefully and lay it on a flat dry surface to air dry for a day or two.
- Once the paper is dry, it is ready to use!
- Collaborate with the children to think of 2 to 3 headlines they want to share about the events of their week.
- Support children to print the headlines, and a brief narrative of the event.
- Allow children to draw pictures to support the communication.
- Display in the centre lobby for family viewing!

Toddler Variations:

- Invite toddlers to participate in the tearing of the paper, and the squishing out of the water!
- Invite them to draw pictures and marker designs on their newly created paper!

STEM DISCOVERY

Activity Three

Title of Activity: Landfill Adventure

Skill(s) Focus: Critical Thinking/Community Engagement/Collaboration/
Environmental Stewardship

Objectives: Children will work together to create their own model of a landfill informing the decomposition process and the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling to take care of the environment.

Materials:

- Plastic soda bottles
 - Tops cut off
- Scissors
- Child-safe soil
- Spoons
- Recyclable materials:
 - Paper pieces, cardboard, plastic lids, small fabric scraps
 - Large for toddlers
- Non recyclable materials:
 - Small pieces of metal, wax coated paper, non-recyclable plastics etc.
 - Large for toddlers
- Tape
- Glue
- Markers
- Sorting bins (toddlers)

Process:

- Engage children in a discussion about what a landfill is.
- Help children understand that a community produces garbage and requires a set place where it can be safely stored as it decomposes.
- Explain that landfills typically have a protective layer so that items with harmful chemicals do not leak into our environment.
- Inform children they will be creating their own miniature landfills.
- Set out materials thoughtfully on a table and invite children in small groups to explore.
 - Prior, cut off the tops of the plastic bottles ensuring smooth edges.
- Talk to children about the layers of a landfill and how different materials are buried in layers to give them the best opportunity to decompose without harming the environment.
- Support children to add soil to the bottom of their bottles.
- Invite children to sort materials, determining which items can be recycled and which must be diverted to a landfill.
- During this process, be sure to discuss reducing waste by recycling.
- Add recyclable materials to the bottle and encourage children to predict what will happen to them, discussing the potential impact on the environment.
- Add a layer of soil on top of these materials and add some non-recyclable materials. Engage children in a discussion about what will happen to these materials and the impact on the environment. This is an opportunity to talk about decomposition.
- Invite children to add a plant on the top to close the landfill.

Toddler Variations:

- Invite younger toddlers to sort child safe garbage and recycling materials and dump it in black and blue bins.

PHYSICAL LITERACY

Activity One

Title of Activity: Friendship Circle

Skill Focus: Well-being/Physical Movement/Collaboration/Connection/Expression

Objectives: Children will participate in a ball rolling activity in which they will make a positive statement about a friend before rolling the ball.

Materials:

- Ball
- Music player

Process:

- Engage children in a discussion about the importance of being kind, and recognizing that everyone has strengths and each are an important part of our classroom community.
- Educators can start the positive recognition process by sharing one positive attribute about each child within the program.
- Invite children to come and sit down in a circle, within the indoor or outdoor learning environment.
- Explain that the goal of the game will be to continuously pass a ball to each other while the music is playing.
- However, when the music stops, the child holding the ball will need to say something positive about the child sitting next to them on their right.
- Once all children have shared a positive statement and received a positive statement, the movement skill can be elevated with complexity.
 - Instead of rolling the ball, consider the following:
 - Tossing the ball with one bounce.
 - Rolling the ball with the opposite hand.
 - Rolling the ball through one's legs.
 - Educators can also switch between slow and fast music to create excitement.

Toddler Variations:

- Invite younger children to say the name of a peer prior to rolling the ball to them.
- Alternatively, younger children can give a high five to the child sitting next to them.

PHYSICAL LITERACY

Activity Two

Title of Activity: Music Parade

Skill Focus: Physical Well-being/Collaboration/Joyful Engagement

Objectives: Children will work together to perform a music parade for their classrooms!

Materials:

- Musical Instruments
- Assorted outdoor materials to create music:
 - Bucket and shovel
 - Mud kitchen accessories
 - Loose parts for microphones
- Outdoor music player
- Dancing props
- Scarves
- Ribbons/ribbon wands
- Boxes/crates
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, etc.

Process:

- Engage children in a discussion about whether they have ever been to a parade, and ask them about their favourite parts of the parade march.
- Challenge children to explore the materials in their outdoor environment that could turn into a musical instrument.
- Play some music to allow some practice time, and to inspire the children to keep collecting items that could become musical loose parts.
- Next, ask children if they remember the decorated cars and trucks that are often a part of parades, and invite them to decorate the boxes or crates.
- Encourage children to paint or colour the boxes, and decorate the crates with ribbons!
- Educators can support children to loop a ribbon handle in the boxes or crates to allow for easy pulling.
- Stuffed animals or other favourite props can be brought out to be placed in these boxes.
- Invite children to march through the outdoor spaces as a band and perform for their other programs!
- Guide some children to be the musical performers, some to be the drivers of the parade cars, and some to be the dancers and entertainers!
- Educators leading and following the parade can also add to the excitement by blowing bubbles.

Toddler Variations:

- Bring out tangible instruments for toddlers to use outside.
- Adjust music selections to appeal to younger learners, such as nursery rhymes and traditional songs.

PHYSICAL LITERACY

Activity Three

Title of Activity: Car Wash Station

Skill Focus: Physical Well-being/Collaboration/Joyful Engagement

Objectives: Children will work together to create a car washing station for the outdoor ride-ons at the centre.

Materials:

- Poster board
- Markers
- Buckets
- Gently, child safe dish soap
- Sponges
- Cloths
- Spray bottles
- Scrub brushes
- Water source
- Pylons
- Chalk
- Ride-ons
- Cars and trucks

Process:

- Engage children in a discussion about what materials they need to create a "Car Washing" station in their outdoor environment.
- Challenge them to think about elements of an official one they may have driven through with their families.
- Guide children to consider making signs for their car wash station using the poster board and markers.
 - Consider signs such as the name of the car wash and "Drive-Through" or "Open".
- Guide them to create a marked pathway for their customers to drive on.
 - Cones and chalk could be used to support this.
- Educators should ensure that there are multiple buckets and washing materials as children will want to jump in and get wet!
- Spray bottles can also be used.
- When ready, invite children to ride their bikes or trikes and push their wagons or push-toys through the car wash station.
- Children can also walk some of the sand play vehicles through the station for added fun!
- For added complexity and role play, invite children to role play different experiences, such as the caretaker or attendant, asking drivers what kind of wash they would like.
 - Play money or cards can be introduced for payment role play!

Toddler Variations:

- Set up a small world area for toddlers, engaging them in the washing of toy vehicles.
- Limit the amount of water placed in buckets to ensure safe exploration.

CREATIVE DISCOVERY

Activity One

Title of Activity: Nature Weaving Activity

Skill(s) Focus: Creative Expression/Joyful Engagement/Appreciation of Nature

Objectives: Children will assemble their own weaving loom and insert natural loose parts to create a beautiful nature display

Materials:

- Loom frame:
- Child-safe fallen sticks, twigs, dowels, etc.
- Natural child safe loose parts:
 - Flower petals, flower tops, twigs, leaves, etc.
 - Larger for toddlers
- Yarn

Process:

- On a prior day, take children on a walk throughout the neighbourhood looking for fallen sticks or branches, ensuring clear supervision and safety parameters. Collect these and bring back to the centre.
- Set up a creative work station in your outdoor environment, arranging materials thoughtfully to provoke a curiosity to engage.
- Invite children in small groups to participate in the weaving activity.
 - The following assembly steps for the weaving frames may need to be completed prior depending on the developmental levels of the children.
 - Guide children to select four branches to create a square shaped frame.
 - Support children to tie the branches together at each corner.
 - Next, guide children to select multiple lengths of yarn and help attach to the top and bottom sticks, forming the 'warps' of the weaving loom.
- Invite children to explore their outdoor learning environments looking for loose parts to thread in.
- Be sure to have a collection of items on hand for children to also select from.
- Invite children to weave their collected natural items through the looms.
- Encourage them to experiment with weaving over and under the warps, and explore with colour and texture presentations.
- When finished, display beautiful collaborative nature weaving creation.

Toddler Variations:

- Create one weaving loom for all toddlers to use.
- Provide toddlers with a collection of chunkier natural loose parts to select from, and support them to place into the display frame. Items such as longer leaves, dandelions, and grasses will work great.
- Hang the weaving loom in the outdoor environment for all to see!

CREATIVE DISCOVERY

Activity Two

Title of Activity: Community Drip Painting

Skill(s) Focus: Community Building/Collaboration/Expression/Engagement

Objectives: Children will work together to create a collaborative display in the style of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings.

Materials:

- Large paper
 - Poster board
 - Butcher paper
 - Canvas
- Cardboard base
- Tuff Tray
- Paint
- Brushes
- Pots
- Smocks

Process:

- Introduce a few of Jackson Pollock's pieces of drip painting and demonstrate how Pollock would make his works of art by dripping the paint onto a canvas.
- Let children know this will be a staggered group art, and children will take turns adding to the masterpiece.
- Lay the paper down into a Tuff tray, and ideally set up outside.
- Provide children with paint pots and paint.
- Invite them to dip their brushes to coat with paint, and then flick drops onto the paper or canvas.
- Allow children to cycle through this engagement, creating a layered drip effect.
- Play relaxing music, and direct children to notice the sound the paint makes when it hits the surface of the paper or canvas.
- Allow children to drip as much or as little paint as they choose to contribute to this unique creation.
- Programs with large numbers of children will want to resource a few different poster boards or canvasses.
- When the paper or canvas is saturated, set on a cardboard sheet to dry, and place an additional paper or canvas within the Tuff Tray.
- When dry, set aside space within your centre to display for all children, educators and families.
- Children that worked together on each display can team together to title their completed masterpiece.

Toddler Variations:

- Set up a long sheet of butcher paper along a fence panel and invite toddlers in small groups to paint together, ensuring they are wearing smocks.

CREATIVE DISCOVERY

Activity Three

Title of Activity: Clay Pendant Mobile

Skill(s) Focus: Community Building/Collaboration/Expression/Engagement

Objectives: Children will work together to create their own clay works of art to be featured within a classroom mobile.

Materials:

- Air-dry clay
- Sculpting tools
- Natural child-safe loose parts:
 - Leaves, flower petals, twigs, etc.
 - Larger for toddlers
- Textured items for prints
- Paint
- Brushes
- Poking tool
- String/ribbon
- Glue
- Mobile base
 - hula hoop
 - branch
 - etc.

Process:

- Set up an appropriate work space to allow children time to engage in this process fueled activity.
- Let children know they will be creating their own clay pendant that will be added to a mobile showcasing the classroom community.
- Provide each child with a clump of clay or dough, and invite them to start using the sculpting tools and shape it into a design that inspires them.
- When children are content with their shape, invite them to use a poking tool to form a hole at the top to hang their artwork.
- Next, invite children to make patterns in their clay by pressing textured items into it to create a 3-d effect. Consider items like bubble wrap, fabric placemats, or even a 'clean' shoe print!
- Children can be guided to embed natural loose parts into their clay creations for even more effect.
- Children can then paint their clay creation as desired.
- Set aside all items to dry.
- Educators may choose to paint a layer of glue onto the clay features for lasting integrity.
- When dry, invite children to thread their clay creations with ribbon or string, and support them to tie them onto a hula hoop or branch that can be suspended from the ceiling.

Toddler Variations:

- Provide toddlers with a clump of clay and gentle sculpting tools to explore with.
- Support toddlers to keep the clay moist for easier manipulation.
- Provide toddlers with some chunky, natural loose parts to poke into their clay clump, and insert a small hole into the top of each.
- Set aside to dry, and when ready hang all pieces together.

Educator Reflections: *optional*

I wonder if I successfully observed, listened and allowed the interests of the children to lead further investigations?

I wonder how I could improve upon my teaching practices in the future?

I wonder what support I may need to better foster child inquiry in my learning environment?

I wonder what went well, and what could be improved upon regarding child-led learning?

Investigation Materials

Building Connections

- Zenergy or wind chime
- Glass bottles/jars
- Metal/wooden spoons
- Pots/pans
- Lidded plastic containers
- Dry ingredients: bark chunks, rings, spools (larger for toddlers)
- Mirrors
- Suggested book: "Ishi: Simple Tips From a Solid Friend" by Akiko Yabuki
- Rocks (larger for toddlers)
- Jar
- Paint
- Brushes
- Decorative tape and stickers (larger for toddlers)

Language and Literacy

- Journal or pre-made notepad
- Photo of children
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, etc.
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Scavenger hunt Safari checklist
- Tangible items from Safari checklist
- Poster board
- Photos of Safari items

Math Discovery

- Long piece of paper
- Colourful tape/stickers (larger for toddlers)
- Measuring tape
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, etc.
- Collage materials:
 - Ribbons, pompoms, buttons, wool, (larger for toddlers)
- Child-safe soil
- Number cards with pictures
- Natural child-safe loose parts:
 - Pine cones, tree cookies, shells, leaves, (larger for toddlers)
- Digging tools
- Sensory table/bin
- Assorted cardboard boxes
- Tricycles
- Small packages/fabric bags/envelopes
- Paint brushes

Math Discovery Continued

- Paper
- Chalk
- Traffic light props
 - Photos, printouts, boxes, etc.

STEM Discovery

- Story about gardening
- Child safe soil
- Seed samples
- Lettuce/leafy green seedling plants:
- Plant labels
- Garden box/bin
- Garden tools
- Compostable pots
- Recycled paper:
 - Newspaper, magazines, paper scraps
- Old blender (educators only)
- Fine mesh screen
- Sponges
- Towels
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, etc.
- Plastic soda bottles (pre-cut)
- Scissors
- Spoons
- Recyclable remnants:
 - Paper, plastic, cardboard, lids, fabric, (larger for toddlers)
- Non recyclable remnants:
 - Metal, wax coated paper, plastics, (larger for toddlers)
- Tape/glue

Physical Literacy

- Balls
- Music player
- Musical Instruments
- Assorted outdoor materials:
 - Buckets, shovels, mud kitchen accessories, loose parts for microphones
- Scarves
- Ribbon/ribbon wands
- Boxes/crates
- Drawing materials:
 - Paint, markers, crayons, etc.
- Poster board
- Sponges/cloths/spray bottles/scrub brushes

Investigation Materials

Physical Literacy Continued

- Pylons
- Chalk
- Ride-ons
- Cars and trucks

Creative Discovery

- Loom frame:
- Child-safe fallen sticks, twigs, dowels, etc.
- Natural child-safe loose parts:
 - Flower petals, flower tops, twigs, long grasses, etc.
- Yarn
- Large painting surfaces:
 - Poster paper, butcher paper, canvas, etc.
- Cardboard base
- Tuff tray
- Paint
- Brushes
- Pots
- Smocks
- Air dry clay
- Sculpting tools
- Textured items for prints
- Poking tool
- String
- Glue
- Mobile base:
 - Hula hoop, branch, dowel, etc.