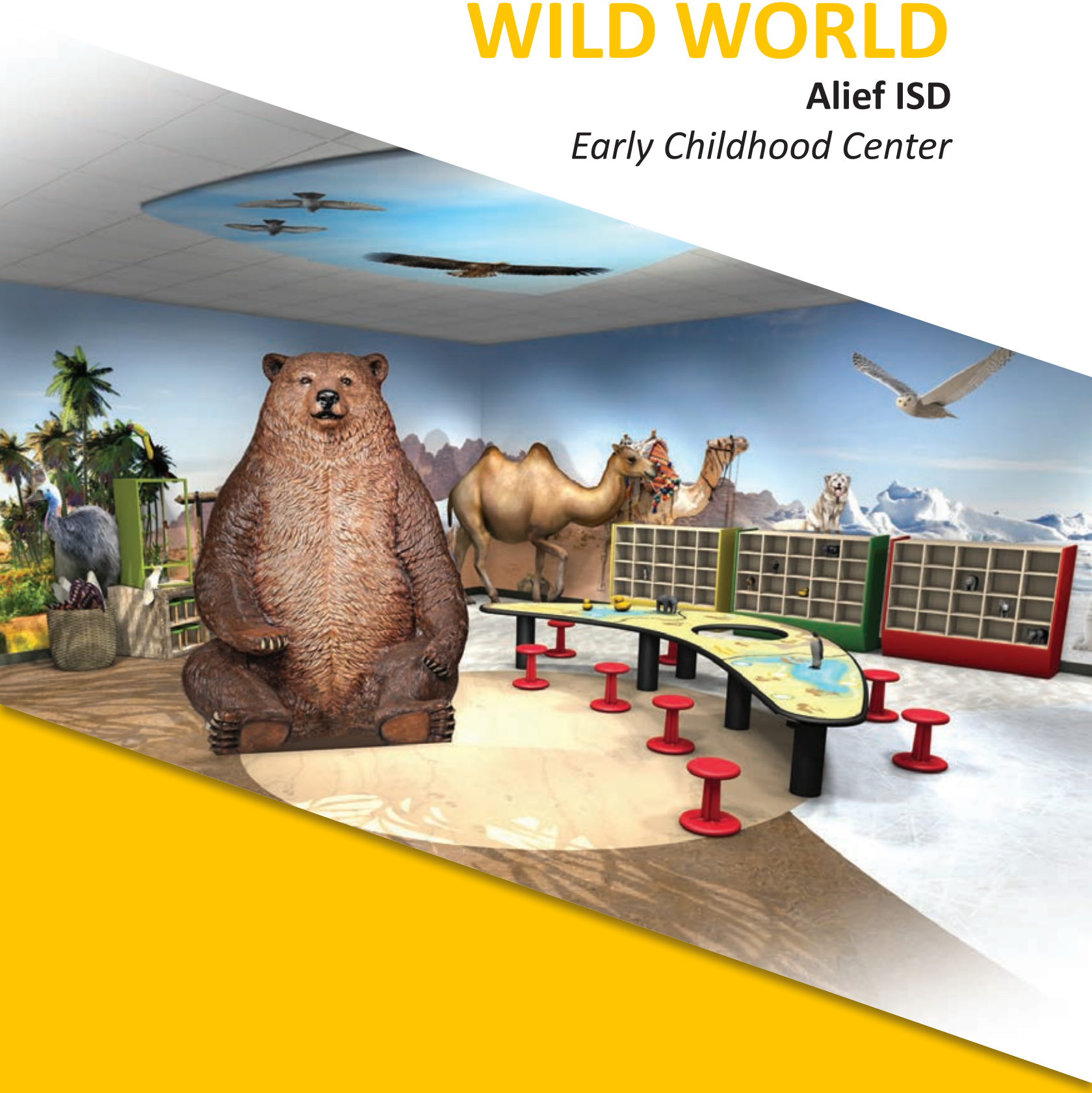
WILD WORLD

Alief ISD

Early Childhood Center



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EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Welcome to your new classroom! You may be experiencing many emotions—excitement, uncertainty, even apprehension. This is completely expected. Experiential learning may be new to you as a concept or theory, but rest assured, many of the principles that bind experiential learning have likely been applied by you for years. Experiential learning embodies the active participation, social engagement, and meaningful connections that we know are the pillars of play-based learning. Play is how young children learn!

This guide is intended to support you as you transition to a new classroom environment. You will find helpful background information on the theory, activity ideas organized by skill domains, experiential learning resources, and tools to assist you in reflective teaching practices. Most importantly, have fun with your students in this new learning environment. The classroom space really is a second teacher and the possibilities are endless!

What is Experiential Education?

Experiential education is a theory that acknowledges humans as active participants in the learning process. In the classroom, students are at the center of the learning process, actively engaging and participating in decision-making. Students' interests and needs drive topics of study with small group and individual projects evolving from their curiosities and real-life events. Experiential learning environments, like museums and zoos, naturally provide opportunities for inquiry-based learning that inspire curiosity and passion. These same features and opportunities are available in experiential learning classrooms.

How does experiential education impact your role as a teacher?

Teachers learn about students by actively listening and observing. You listen to conversations, observe students' choices, and communicate with families. Through this listening and observing, you can make assumptions about what students know and provide new materials, activities, and experiences that help expand upon this knowledge. By asking open-ended questions and encouraging students to make observations, students begin to build a schema that continues to grow.

How does experiential education impact the students' role?

Students are at the center of the learning process. Students' interests and needs drive topics of conversation and participation in activities. Students in experiential learning classrooms make choices and decisions throughout the day. They choose whether they play alone or in a group, they choose activity options that sound most appealing, and they choose to engage with interesting materials and equipment.

How Do I Use an Experiential Education Classroom?

A new classroom can be overwhelming, not only for you, but for your students too. Being prepared can help manage those overwhelming feelings and set you up for success in your new environment. Before introducing the classrooms to your students, take a gallery walk in each classroom, taking in the sights and sounds without interruptions. As you are noticing and observing features in the classroom, think about big ideas or themes that might naturally stem from these features. You can list activities or play-based items that might align with these ideas; several activity ideas and accompanying items are provided in the educator guide to help you get started. Introduce the classrooms to the students by taking a community gallery walk. Ask students to describe what they notice, how they feel, and what they would like to know more about.

What Will I Find in Each Experiential Education Classroom?

Each experiential education classroom includes similar best practices and strategies for working with young children, not only in the design but in the supportive activities. The unique themes and content can lead to new ideas and projects stemming from students' interests and questions. Each classroom includes:

- **A General Supply Kit:** A collection of materials that can be used in open-ended ways
- **Magnetic Boards:** Engagement tools for group learning or individual interactions
- **A Classroom Library:** Developmentally appropriate Spanish and English, non-fiction and fiction books, that support the theme
- **Sensory Exploration:** A station or area that encourages inquiry-based investigations
- **An Educator Guide:** A facilitation tool that includes supportive activities and ideas for assessment

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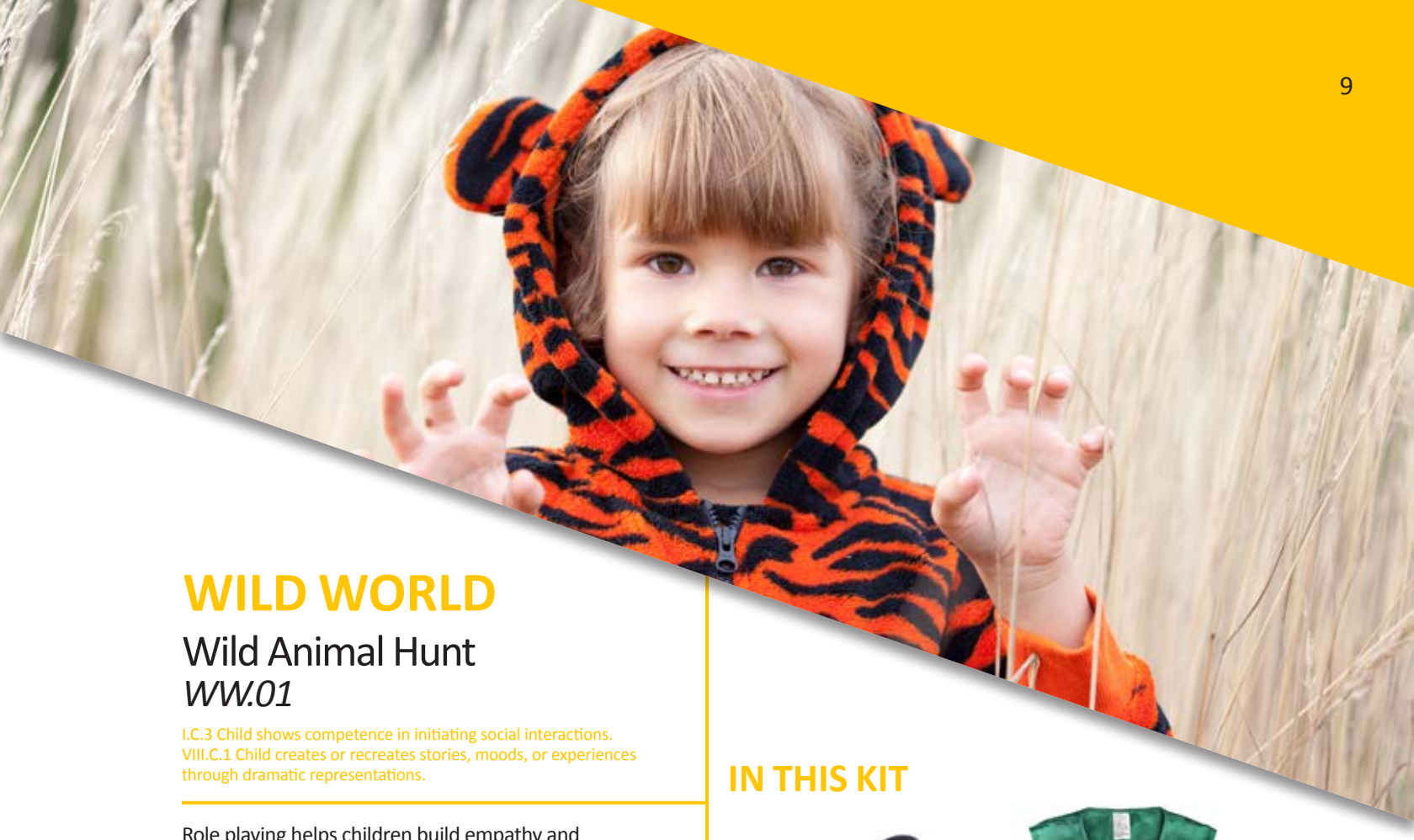
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WILD WORLD

Wild Animal Hunt

WW.01

I.C.3 Child shows competence in initiating social interactions.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Role playing helps children build empathy and encourages cooperative play with peers, allowing growth in expressing emotions. Using an assortment of wild animals and safari gear, students reinforce learned animal behaviors and patterns by taking on animal identities and making observations.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Set the scene for a wild animal safari hunt by introducing the safari gear and wild animal figures. Encourage several students to hide the wild animals. Their peers can search for the wild animals using the safari gear. Add crumpled construction paper rocks to inspire children to make additional scenery.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Enhance the Wild World dramatic play by encouraging children to create Wild World scenery. Children can make sponge painted giant leaves with vines, flowers out of tissue paper, paper plates, and construction paper, and arctic snow out of cotton balls and tissue paper.
- Add a few low-maintenance houseplants like pothos, snake plants, and spider plants to the Wild World classroom. Children can take turns watering the plants while enjoying the addition to dramatic play.
- Make DIY binoculars using paper towel rolls cut in half. Punch or poke holes through the outer sides of each roll and then thread a piece of yarn through the holes, knotting it at the ends.

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WILD WORLD

Animal Puppet Habitats
WW.02

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts and communicates with peers to initiate pretend play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
II.B.1 Child is able to use language for different purposes.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Puppets help students express themselves in different ways while using their imagination and creativity. Students use animal puppets to act out real-life scenarios with peers in the habitats spread throughout the classroom.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Take the students on a gallery walk through the classroom, discussing the embedded habitats throughout. Ask students the following questions: "What habitats do you see and how can you tell?" and "What animals live in this habitat?"
2. Set the puppet theater in a habitat and encourage students to create scenarios of their own or participate in educator-directed scenarios.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- During morning meeting, use a puppet or several puppets to welcome children, lead a morning song, or discuss the events for the day. These simple modeled interactions introduce children to initiating positive conversations.
- Puppets can help make home-school connections. Children can take a puppet home along with a class journal and write/draw about all of their adventures with the puppet at home.
- Create story stones. Draw or paint pictures of characters (puppets), settings, and items on a collection of stones for students to use as prompts in puppet storytelling.

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WILD WORLD

Build an Animal

WW.03

VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
IX.B.2 Child shows increasing control of tasks that require eye-hand coordination.

Students work together to build animals out of magnetic pieces. As they are manipulating the magnetic pieces, students communicate, make verbal predictions, and test their predictions to create a whole animal. Parts to whole magnets encourage imaginative thinking as students can create "new" animals for imaginary environments.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Place the animal magnets on the magnetic wall for free exploration. Encourage students to build animals using the parts, discussing the animal features and unique aspects for adapting to the environment.
2. Continue with habitat discussions. Topics include things wild animals need to survive, how animals get their food in the wild, and habitat descriptions.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

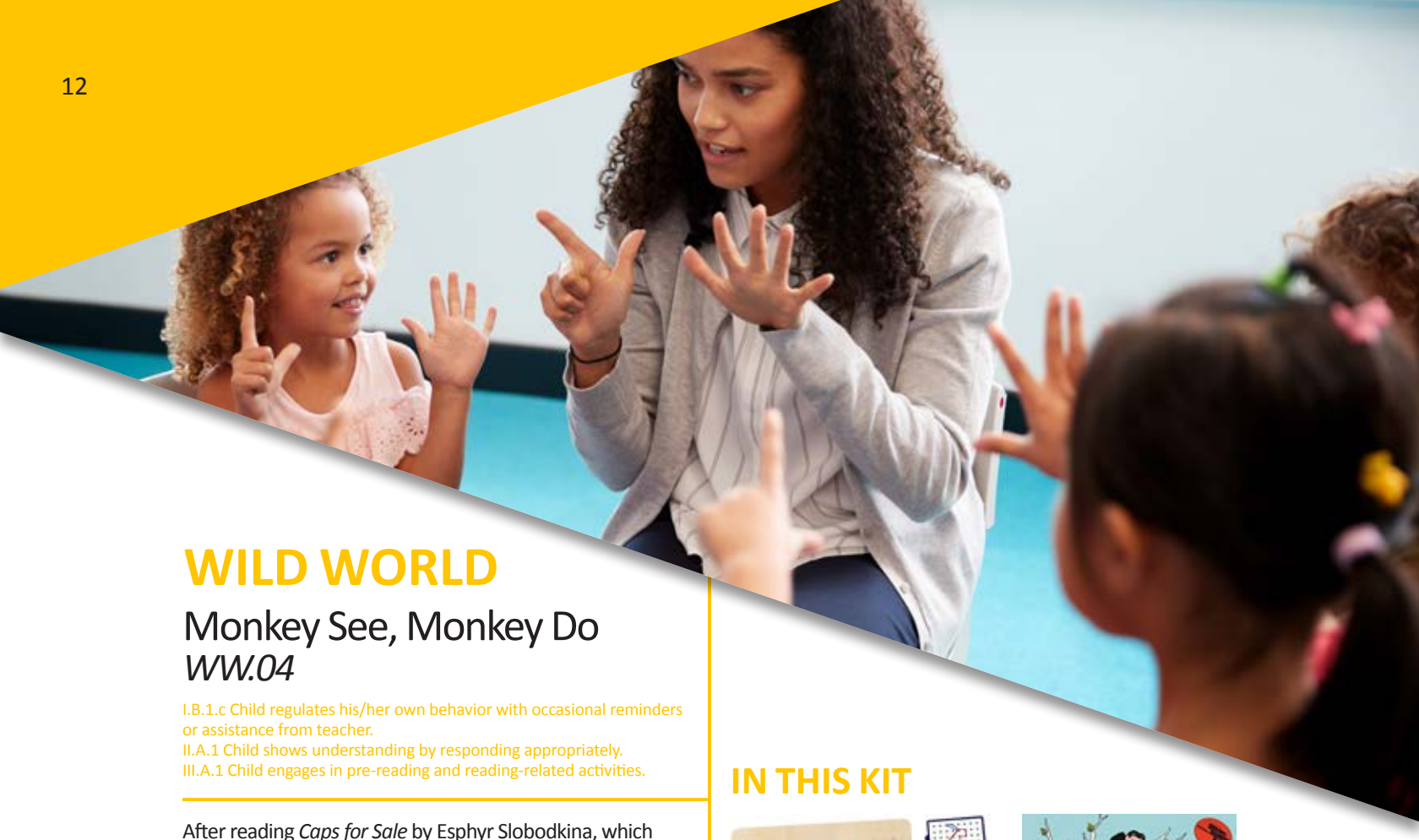
- Expose students to the wide variety of habitats in the world and the diverse animals that live in each through websites and books. National Geographic Kids, Kids Planet, and World Wildlife Fund offer resources, photos, and videos that help students see beyond their own backyard.
- Add the magnets to the writing center to entice tracing. Students can trace the animal magnets and add details, creating a real or imaginary animal.
- Create a classroom community art mural using the magnets. Students can sort the animals by habitat on chart paper, trace the animals, and build a habitat around the animals using art materials.

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WILD WORLD

Monkey See, Monkey Do
WW.04

I.B.1.c Child regulates his/her own behavior with occasional reminders or assistance from teacher.
II.A.1 Child shows understanding by responding appropriately.
III.A.1 Child engages in pre-reading and reading-related activities.

After reading *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina, which emphasizes repetition, patterns, and colors, children participate in guided activities that help develop communication and observation skills. As educator models shape creations using geoboards and bands, students follow simple step-by-step requests and directions.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina, encouraging students to join in on the repetitive parts. During a second reading, encourage students to copy the actions of the monkeys or the actions of the peddler.
2. Ask students what it means to repeat or copy. Tell students they will copy patterns and shapes using geoboards and bands. Begin by creating a simple line or shape on the geoboard such as a circle and move to more complex shapes like rectangles and hexagons. Ask students to create the same shape after you have modeled.

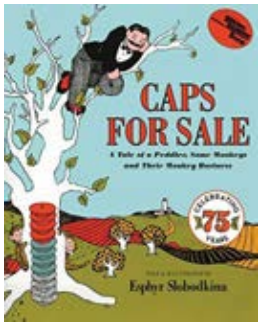
TEACHING STRATEGIES

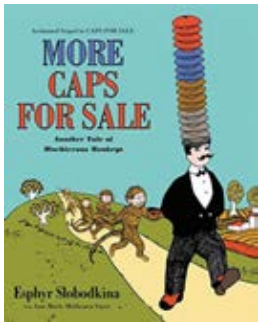
- As a challenge exercise, call out a shape for students to create without the modeling.
- Read *More Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina, focusing on the emotions the monkeys' display. During a second reading, encourage the students to repeat or copy the emotions of the monkeys.
- Leave the geoboards in a free-choice activity center. Include shape cards and ask students to copy the shape using the bands on the geoboard.

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WILD WORLD

Wild World Word Bank: Animal Vocabulary

WW.05

III.A.3 Child recognizes that text has meaning.
III.B.6 Child can recognize rhyming words.
III.C.2 Child recognizes at least 20 distinct letter sounds in the language of instruction.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. **Animal Vocabulary:** Children build vocabulary as active participants in reading and reciting new vocabulary words. Students match tangible letters to letters in animal names using magnetic letters and animal identification cards. Frequent participation in this activity encourages letter-sound correspondence.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Place the magnetic letters on a magnetic board in order. Show students an animal identification card. Ask a student to find the corresponding beginning letter from the line of magnetic letters. This can also be placed in the writing center as a free-choice activity.
2. Reading and reciting new vocabulary regularly helps students learn about word families and teaches students the sound of the English language. Share the word bank words during group time often; provide a rhyming word with each and ask students to think of any additional rhyming words.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Create rhyming rings and place in the writing center. Hook words that rhyme together on a metal ring; include a picture of the word.
- Play rhyming hopscotch. Use tape to create a hopscotch game inside or use chalk for an outside game. Place word bank words with pictures inside each square. Call out a word that rhymes with a word bank word and have a child hop to the appropriate rhyming word.

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WILD WORLD

Daylight, Starlight
WW.06

III.D.2 Child uses information learned from books by describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting.
VI.B.3 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the relationship of organisms to their environment.
VI.C.3 Child observes and describes what happens during changes in the earth and sky.

After reading *Daylight Starlight Wildlife* by Wendell Minor, educator creates a classroom working diurnal/nocturnal chart that students can continue adding to as they engage in classroom experiences. Students use pictures of animals from magazines or draw animals to continue adding to the comparison chart.

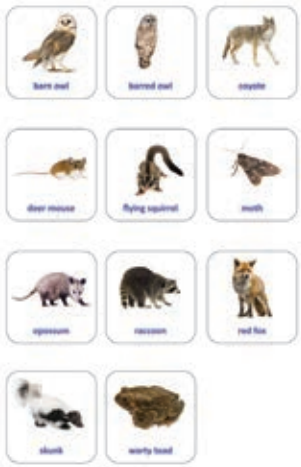
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read *Daylight Starlight Wildlife* by Wendell Minor, focusing on the animals in the story, their habitat, and discussing animals' activity level during the day and during the night. Introduce the terms diurnal (active during the day) and nocturnal (active at night).
2. Use the diurnal/nocturnal sorting board and animals to sort animals from the story and continue holding discussions about the relationship between animals' habitat, appearance, and other features that help them make adaptations.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Create a scavenger hunt with the diurnal/nocturnal animals. Hide the animals around the classroom and ask students to find them and sort according to most active periods.
- Build a simple t-chart with the students and record some typical daytime and nighttime activities such as brush teeth, eat breakfast, go to school, sleep, and take a bath. Continue adding to the t-chart as students think of additional daytime/nighttime activities.

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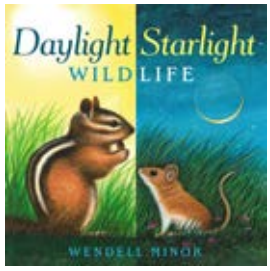




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WILD WORLD

Wild World Alphabet: Pipe Cleaner Letters

WW.07

III.C.1 Child names at least 20 upper and at least 20 lower-case letters in the language of instruction.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. **Pipe Cleaner Letters:** Educator chooses a letter(s) to focus on each day, displaying the letter(s) on the magnetic board. Educator models creating the letter out of pipe cleaners. Students create letters with pipe cleaners with adult support.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Cut the pipe cleaners in a variety of sizes and model how to create letters using the pipe cleaners; include a demonstration on how to bend the pipe cleaners to make curves such as in the letters Cc and Dd. Place the magnetic letters (as a letter guide) and pipe cleaners in the writing center for students to manipulate, guiding as needed.
2. Include Wikki Stix, yarn, and paper straws as manipulatives, depending on students' ability level. Cut the other manipulatives accordingly.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Include other ways to promote emergent writing such as using the manipulatives (pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix, yarn, or paper straws) to write their name or word bank words.
- Provide tagboard or cardboard and glue, and ask students to glue their manipulatives in letter formation, creating letter cards.

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WILD WORLD

Sand Writing Trays

WW.08

III.C.1 Child names at least 20 upper and at least 20 lower-case letters in the language of instruction.
V.A.9 Child recognizes one-digit numerals, 0-9.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.

Sand and sand trays are helpful tools to encourage pre-writing development. Students use sand as a medium to practice writing and reinforcing letters with their finger. Students can relate to animal habitats that include sand.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Pour the sand into the sand tray. Provide students with a brief demonstration and encourage students to write letters, lines, and shapes in the sand using their finger. Students can use the alphabet, line, and shape cards as a guide.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- As an added support, tape several cards onto the bottom of the tray and encourage students to trace the letter, shape, or line.
- Create additional laminated cards to include words (word bank reinforcement) and numbers as students become comfortable with alphabet, line, and shape tracing.

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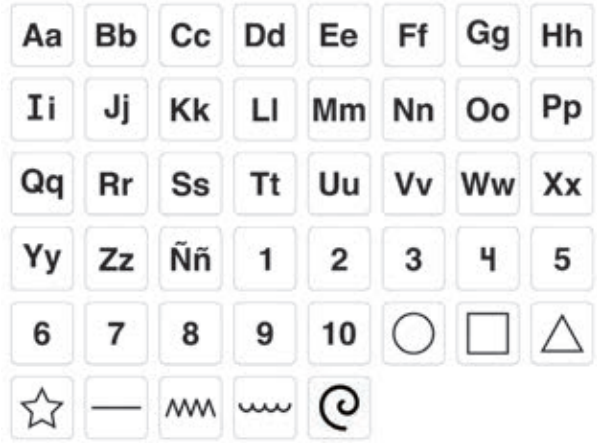






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WILD WORLD

Sorting Wildlife

WW.09

V.E.1 Child sorts objects that are the same and different into groups and uses language to describe how the groups are similar and different.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Wildlife can be sorted in many ways: by habitat, physical features, movement, and more. In preschool classrooms, educators focus on sorting by physical attributes which will help students sort by other categories in the future. Using animals to sort, sorting bins, and sorting cards, students sort animals by physical features and simple classifications like ocean animals and land animals.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

As a free-choice activity, students can naturally sort by habitat on the Animal Habitat activity table. Encourage dramatic play by including foliage and other dramatic play materials.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- You can make your own sorting boards using butcher paper and circle stencils. Trace the appropriate amount of circles for categories on the butcher paper and label. Laminate for long-term use. Students can use the animal figures to sort by educator-initiated categories. Category ideas include sorting by habitat, land/water, classification, and characteristics.
- Use the animals as counting manipulatives or game markers.

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WILD WORLD

Wildlife Graphing

WW.10

II.D.1 Child uses a wide variety of words to label and describe people, places, things, and actions.
V.A.3 Child counts 1-10 items, with one count per item.
V.E.2 Child collects data and organizes it in a graphic representation.

Graphs and charts help students understand that data can be organized visually. Using a dual-sided graphing mat and Venn diagram, students can tally favorite animals from the sorting bins and compare physical features of animals.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the object graph to the students. The object graph can be used to compare amount of items, using math vocabulary such as most, least, and same. Use the object graph to sort animal manipulatives (DD.09) into categories and compare amount.
2. Introduce the Venn diagram to the students. The Venn diagram can be used to compare two animals (or any other items), recording the similarities between the animals in the middle.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- After students become comfortable using the object graph, introduce 1 inch graphing paper. Write numbers 1-10 down the vertical side and provide students with a handful of Unifix Cubes. Ask students to sort by color, making comparisons using math vocabulary.
- Print out pictures of animals; include the animal's identification. Students can graph by animal type, animal color, and by the first letter in the animal's identification.

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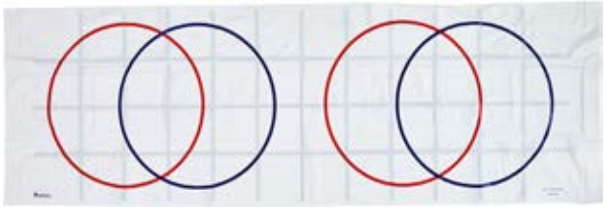




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WILD WORLD

Animal Exploration

WW.11

V.E.1 Child sorts objects that are the same and different into groups and uses language to describe how the groups are similar and different.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.

Students learn about animal coverings and features by making tactile and visual observations of fur, skull, and claw replicas. Educator can help students make comparisons between animal features and help students make connections to animal habitats.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask students why animals have fur, feathers, or scales and reinforce the importance of animal coverings. How are animal coverings similar to body coverings (hair, skin, and clothing) of humans? Share that animals need different coverings to help them survive in different environments. Place the fur, feather, and scale replica in a learning center for students to explore.
2. Include the claw and skull replica in the learning center for continued discussion on animal features. Ask students the following questions: “How is the claw replica the same and different and why?,” “How is the feather replica the same and different and why?,” and “How are these features important to animals?”

TEACHING STRATEGY

Start an “Animal Coverings Collection.” Label sections on chart paper with mammal/fur, reptile/scales, birds/feathers, and other coverings. Ask students to draw or cut out pictures of animals that represent each category as they continue having animal coverings conversations.

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WILD WORLD

Life Cycle Observations

WW.12

VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VI.B.2 Child describes life cycles of organisms.

The Butterfly Life Cycle Enclosure provides an opportunity for students to observe, make predictions, and document the stages of the butterfly life cycle using butterfly life cycle manipulatives. Students can use observation tools like tripod and handheld magnifiers to focus on details.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to describe a caterpillar; use a caterpillar image to help stimulate conversation. Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, discussing how the caterpillar changes in the story.
2. Place the magnifiers and life cycle manipulatives in the learning center for free exploration. Encourage students to make observations about each stage of the butterfly life cycle, noticing details and arranging from stage 1 (egg) to final stage (butterfly).

TEACHING STRATEGY

Have students use their body to demonstrate the butterfly life cycle stages. First, students will become an egg, crouching low and hugging their knees. Next, students become a caterpillar, stretching their body and wriggling. After that, students will become a chrysalis, standing up tall, hugging their body, and standing still. Lastly, students will demonstrate becoming a butterfly, stretching and fluttering their wings.

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WILD WORLD

Light Laboratory

WW.13

I.C.2 Child assumes various roles and responsibilities as part of a classroom community.
VI.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses properties of common objects.
VI.B.3 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the relationship of organisms to their environment.

The Flora and Fauna Sensory Table encourages investigation of the fundamental properties of light. This light lab can be used as a multi-sensory experience, adding tactile materials, transparent materials, and other materials to enhance color and intensity as part of center-based learning.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

The Flora and Fauna Sensory Table (Light Laboratory) is multifunctional and includes a light panel, messy tray, weaving ring, and marble board. Children can manipulate color, hue, and intensity by turning the dials. Provide ample time for children to explore the light table in self-directed ways by simply switching out the supporting materials.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Use the messy tray for habitat exploration. Use shredded yellow, brown, and green paper to simulate the savannah and include savannah animals. Add sand, rocks, insects, and desert animals to simulate the desert. A polar habitat can be created with water, ice, and arctic animals.
- Add authentic greenery from the school yard and encourage students to make observations using the magnification blocks.
- When using the animal X-rays, encourage students to find the matching animal manipulative in the classroom.
- Encourage children to use the window markers and dry erase crayons to trace the translucent pattern blocks or make drawings of their own.
- Introduce the weaving ring, yarn, and loops of ribbon as a way to make lines, shapes, and geometric designs.

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WILD WORLD

Ice Rescue

WW.14

I.C.2 Child assumes various roles and responsibilities as part of a classroom community.
VI.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses properties of common objects.

Students observe and describe what happens to ice when in room temperature. Educator freezes a variety of polar region animals in ice for exploration in the sensory table. Topics of conversation can include temperature of materials, animal similarities and differences, and the importance of caring for our planet.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Freeze the arctic animals in a bowl(s) of water with liquid watercolor and place in the Flora and Fauna Sensory Table. Provide students with a bowl of warm water, eyedroppers, and tweezers and encourage students to investigate ways to melt the ice. Can they melt the ice without using water?

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Freeze water with arctic animals (or other items) in various shaped containers such as milk cartons, plastic food containers, disposable gloves, balloons, and ice cube molds. Ask students to observe how the ice melts differently depending on shape.
- Freeze water with items found outside like pinecones, leaves, rocks, and feathers.
- Encourage students to make predictions and observations about melting by adding salt, flour, and cornmeal to the ice. Students can have discussions about chemical reactions.

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WILD WORLD

Animal Camouflage

WW.15

III.D.2 Child uses information learned from books by describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VII.C.1 Child identifies and creates common features in the natural environment.

Animals use camouflage to disguise their appearance. Camouflage allows prey to avoid predators. Students can practice the idea of camouflage with puzzles of habitats and animals that camouflage. The children move the animal puzzle pieces around on the habitat to see how they blend and disguise their appearance.

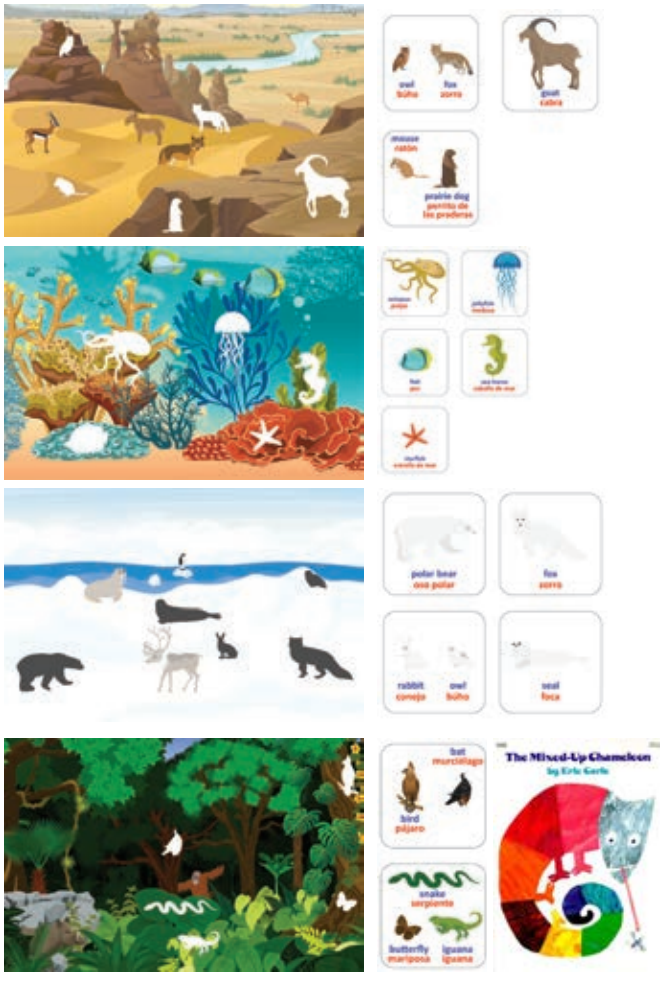
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* by Eric Carle; focus on the changes the chameleon makes throughout the story. Introduce the word camouflage using the words disguise and blend. Ask students if they can think of any animals or insects that camouflage in the wild.
2. Introduce the habitat puzzles in the learning center. Encourage students to move the animal puzzle pieces around in the habitat to find the best location to camouflage. Facilitate discussions around the relationship between habitat and animal features (i.e., the white coat of a polar bear blends with the ice and snow from the animal's natural habitat).

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Using the book, create yoga poses for each chameleon action. For example, the opening page reads, "On a shiny green leaf sat a small green chameleon." Ask students to sit on their heels and bring their forehead to rest in front of their knees.
- Participate in camouflage outfit day. Pick a habitat mural in the classroom and encourage students to come dressed for school in an outfit best to camouflage.

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WILD WORLD

Wildlife in Our Community

WW.16

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts and communicates with peers to initiate pretend play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Students learn that wildlife exists in their own backyard! Students discover Texas wildlife around the classroom in this adaptation of "I Spy." Educator hides photos/images of Texas wildlife around the classroom and students search for the hidden wildlife using a simple photo checklist. Continued discussion around wildlife can include respecting wildlife and their privacy, observing wildlife from afar, and comparing animal and human needs (identifying basic needs of living things).

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Hide one set of Texas wildlife images. Tell students they are going to play a game of I Spy. Show students the photos of Texas wildlife (the other matching set) and have a discussion about each animal's identity. Tell students you hid the matching animals around the classroom and it is their job to find the match.
2. Show students the I Spy checklists and encourage them to look for animal matches with a friend and science tools like binoculars and telescopes. Once animals are found, reiterate each animal's identity and relevance to Texas wildlife.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

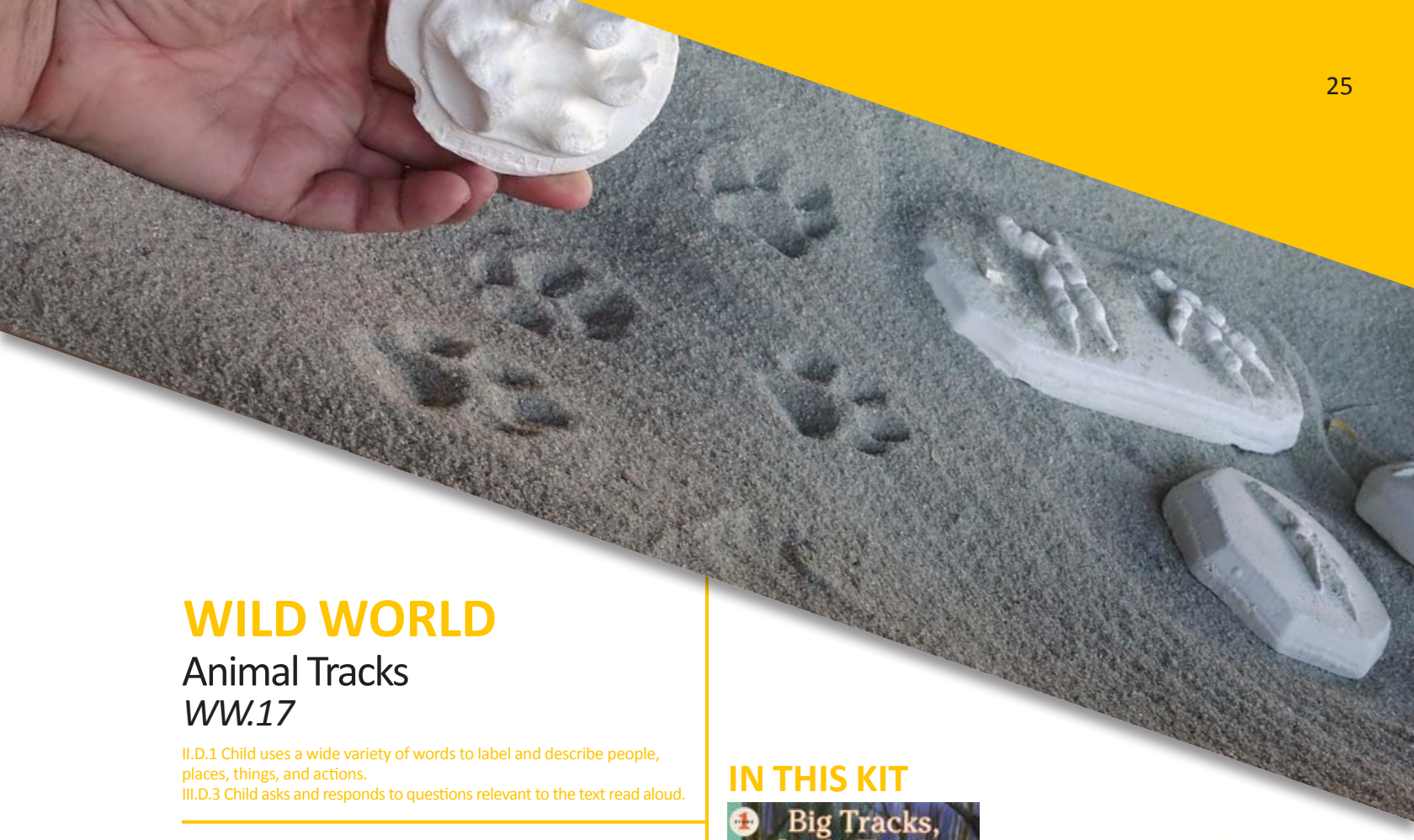
- Take students on daily nature walks to observe animals (and insects) in the community. Students can record observations through drawings and keep tally marks on the number of animals they see.
- Explore Texas wildlife web cams. Talk about animal behaviors and patterns as you view the same animals over an extended period. Several resources include West Texas Feeders and Bat World Sanctuary. Other live cams from around the world include Kenya African River Wildlife, Kenya Watering Hole Manitoba Tundra, Manitoba Wapusk National Park, and Saskatchewan Plains and Watering Hole.

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WILD WORLD

Animal Tracks

WW.17

II.D.1 Child uses a wide variety of words to label and describe people, places, things, and actions.
III.D.3 Child asks and responds to questions relevant to the text read aloud.

We learn a lot about animals as members of our community by observing their tracks in sand, mud, and snow. Students can share animal tracks they have seen in their own community and create animal tracks using classroom animals, stamp pads, and sand, and compare to their own prints.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

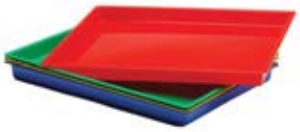
1. Read *Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints* by Millicent E Selsam. Ask students to make predictions as you read the book, asking questions like, "What animal could have made the tracks?" and "How do you know?"
2. After reading the book, encourage students to make animal prints in a variety of ways. They can use animal manipulatives and stamp pads or sand to make tracks, or animal track stamps and stamp pads to make tracks. Ask students to make comparisons to their own prints, using the sand and sand trays. What details do students notice between the prints?

TEACHING STRATEGY

Take students on daily nature walks to observe animals (and insects) in the community. Students can record observations through drawings and keep tally marks of the number of animals they see and number of times they see the same animal.

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WILD WORLD

Animal Environment Murals

WW.18

IV.B.1 Child discusses and contributes ideas for drafts composed in whole/small group writing activities.
IV.B.2 Child interacts and provides suggestions to revise and edit class-made drafts.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VIII.A.2 Child uses art as a form of creative representation.

Social art builds confidence and encourages students to build art pieces on their own. Students create community art pieces as they build habitats collectively for animal manipulatives. These art pieces can be displayed around the classroom, used during school curriculum nights, or even displayed around the school.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Brainstorm animal habitats with your students; record on chart paper. Encourage students to look around the classroom (view permanent murals) and view the classroom globe for inspiration.
2. Draw habitat foundations on butcher paper and ask students to fill in features like animals, trees, and other vegetation. Provide non-fiction books and other photos for continued inspiration. Educators and students can continue adding features and elements to the collective art piece.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Tape the mural onto a table or floor for students to use as a play mat. Students can use the animal manipulatives in their respective habitats.
- Add items like washi tape, sequins, and stickers to evolve the mural into a 3D art piece.
- Make smaller murals that can be laminated when finished. Turn the murals into play mats and/or piece the murals together to display in the school or community.

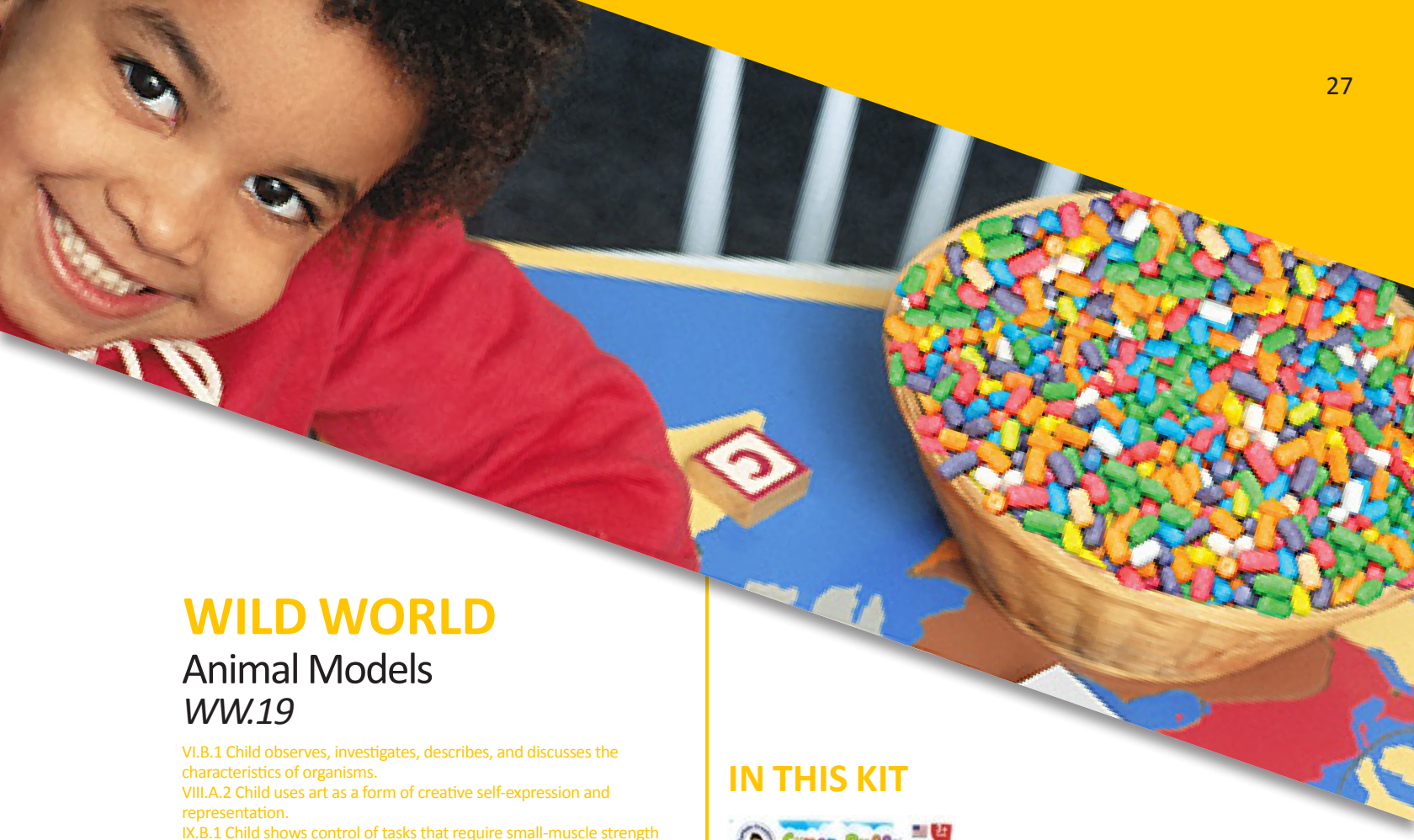
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WILD WORLD

Animal Models

WW.19

VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VIII.A.2 Child uses art as a form of creative self-expression and representation.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.

Using the classroom sorting animals as inspiration, students build animal models using Super Puffs, which help to reinforce their understanding of animal body parts. Super Puffs require a damp paper towel or sponge, and are simple to manipulate and stick together.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to choose an animal manipulative to recreate. Ask students to think about the features and characteristics they can observe on the animal.
2. Provide each student with a tray, a handful of Super Puffs (various sizes), and a damp sponge. Demonstrate adhering the Super Puffs together using the sponge. Ask students to recreate their animal using the Super Puffs, keeping in mind the animal's features and characteristics.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Add water and discarded Super Puffs to the sensory table. Super Puffs are biodegradable and react with large amounts of water. Ask students to make observations.
- Leave Super Puffs and a damp sponge in a free choice center. Encourage students to open-end build.

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WILD WORLD

Nature's Footsteps

WW.20

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts and communicates with peers to initiate pretend play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.
IX.A.1 Child demonstrates coordination and balance.

Students practice coordination and balance skills by manipulating photographic rubber-backed mats of various faux forest leaves, stones, and logs. Educator can encourage students to create a pathway from the Giant Bear Reading Nook to the book rack and jump from forest footstep to forest footstep. Students can also use the forest footsteps as reading mats as they gather around the Giant Bear.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Review what it means to create and participate in an obstacle course. Model a simple obstacle course for students to participate in. For example, include simple steps like crawling under a chair, hopping on a leaf mat five times, walking on a balance block, and going under a wooden block bridge.
2. Ask a small group of students to create an obstacle course. Students can model participation for their peers.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Use the nature-based mats during group meeting as a classroom management tool. Using a mat as a guide, students can work on personal space and self-control.
- Students can use the forest footsteps as reading mats, gathering around the Giant Bear to share books or read independently.

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WILD WORLD

Animal Charades

WW.21

I.B.3.a Child sustains attention to personally chosen or routine (teacher-directed) tasks until competed.
I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts and communicates with peers to initiate pretend play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.
X.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

Using animal charade cards that provide direction, students recreate animal behaviors and movements using their body in animal charades. The observing students make predictions about the animal's identity.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Review animal behaviors using the charade cards. Decide how you will determine whose turn it is to perform a charade. One suggestion is to write students' names on craft sticks and pick from a container.
2. Draw a name and ask the student to choose a card without showing their peers. Student demonstrates the behavior as the other students guess the animal's identity. Offer suggestions to the demonstrator, if needed, until the animal's identity is guessed correctly. Continue until all students have a turn.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Incorporate animal sounds in adaptations of charades.
- Incorporate animal movements into routines and transitions. For example, ask students to hop like a kangaroo over to a learning center or fly like a hawk to the lunch table.

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WILD WORLD

Wildlife Yoga

WW.22

I.A.1 Child is aware of where own body is in space and respects personal boundaries.
I.B.1.c Child regulates his/her own behavior with occasional reminders or assistance from teacher.
IX.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

Yoga helps students learn to concentrate, control their body, and practice patience as well as help develop gross motor skills like flexibility, strength, and balance. Through wildlife yoga, students have fun learning yoga poses that simulate animal behaviors and patterns.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Yoga in the classroom is wonderful as it can be used in many different ways. As a large group activity, provide students with an item that designates their personal space, such as a sticker or piece of paper. As a small group activity, pass out individual yoga mats to work on specific body movements. Incorporate yoga into daily routines and transitions to help build confidence and find a sense of calm.
2. Display animal yoga poses, one at a time, starting with small intervals of 15-20 seconds. As students because accustomed to the routine and practice, slowly increase the amount of time engaged in a pose.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Plan on modeling yoga poses for your students. If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with yoga poses, introduce child-friendly demonstration videos.
- Have students move and make sounds like pets as they are practicing yoga poses.
- Follow yoga with an activity that is quiet and reflective, like journaling, independent reading, or rest time.

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WILD WORLD

Magic Mirror Exploration
WW.23

I.A.2 Child shows self-awareness and can express pride in age appropriate abilities and skills.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
X.A.2 Child uses, operates, and names a variety of digital tools.

The classroom Magic Mirror provides visual insight into animal features and behaviors. Children can extend that learning by participating in animal charades using charade cards and exploring/comparing their own facial features in the Edushape Magic Mirror Shapes.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. The classroom Magic Mirror is a technology tool that helps students see into the movements and behaviors of animals. After students explore the Magic Mirror in an open-ended way, facilitate a group discussion, asking students to describe how the different types of animals move.
2. Ask students to look into a mirror and describe what they see. Ask animal comparison questions such as, "How are you similar to a ____?," "How are you different than a ____?," and "What makes you unique?"

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Use music to accompany student-directed animal movements in the Magic Mirror.
- During transitions, play "Move Like an Animal," where one child is the leader, and moves from one activity to another while imitating an animal movement, and their peers follow.
- Use the mirrors to talk about feelings. Ask students to change their faces to show they are happy, sad, and so on.

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WILD WORLD

Digital Documentation

WW.24

I.A.2 Child shows self-awareness and can express pride in age appropriate abilities and skills.
VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
X.A.3 Child uses digital learning applications and programs to create digital products and express own ideas.

Digital tools can be creatively incorporated into early learning classrooms with guidance and education. A digital camera (Vtech KidiZoom) may support the documentation of the stages of development in the Butterfly Lifecycle Enclosure in the classroom or assist students' ability to track animal prints outside.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Young children use digital tools with the support and guidance of adults. Introduce the camera to the students, demonstrating basic use and pointing out the features.
2. Provide students with ample opportunities to use the camera freely, gaining insight into students' perspectives and allowing them to document what is important to them. You can also encourage students to take pictures of the butterfly life cycle, print out the pictures, and use the pictures in sorting activities.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Display the printing process, from connecting to a device, to selecting photos to print. Students can "see" the trajectory of the images they captured.
- Ask students to take pictures of each other, throughout a period of time, to observe how people change. How does human change compare to the changes animals go through?

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NON-FICTION



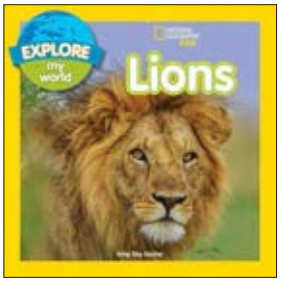
A Walk in the Forest



De la Oruga a la Mariposa



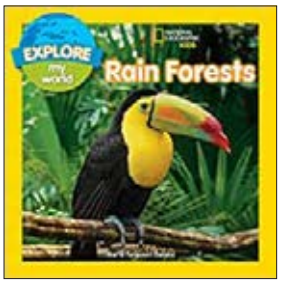
Explore my World: Butterflies



Explore my World: Lions



Explore my World: Penguins



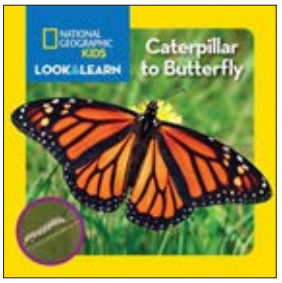
Explore my World: Rain Forests



Explore my World: Snow Leopards



Explore my World: Tigers



Look and Learn: Caterpillar to Butterfly



Mi Primer Gran Libro de los Animales



Los Pigüinos



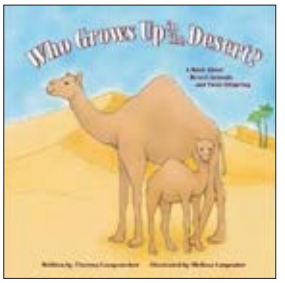
Rainforest Animals



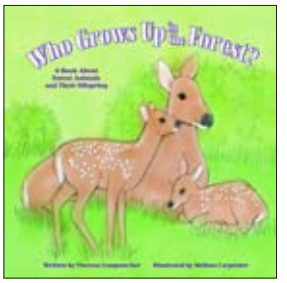
La Selva Amazónica



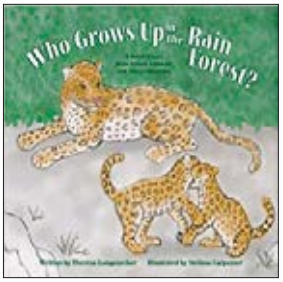
Weird and Wild Animal Facts



Who Grows Up in the Desert



Who Grows Up in the Forest

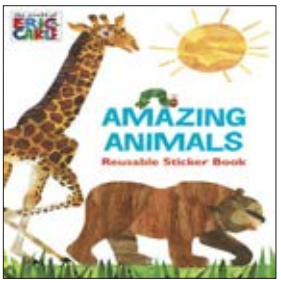


Who Grows Up in the Rain Forest

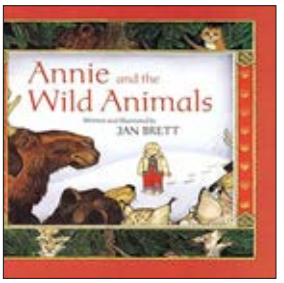
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FICTION



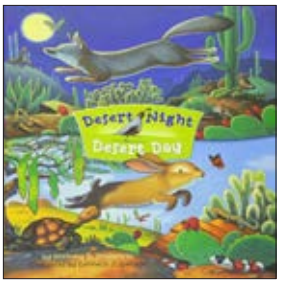
Amazing Animals



Annie and the Wild Animals



El Bosqu de la Serenidad: Cuentso Para Educar en la Calma



Desert Night Desert Day



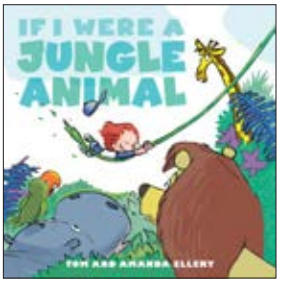
Diez Amigos de la Jungle



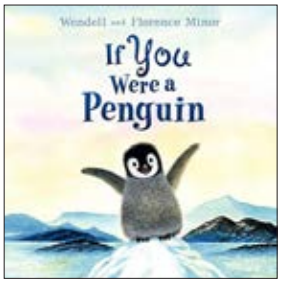
En lo Profundo del Desierto



Everybody's Welcome



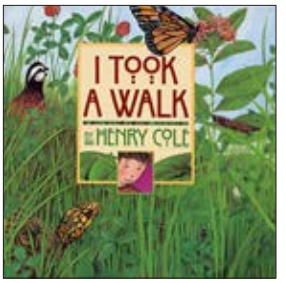
If I Were a Jungle Animal



If You Were a Penguin



I'm the Scariest Thing in the Jungle!



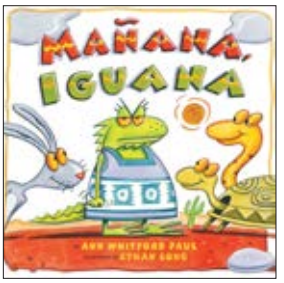
I Took a Walk



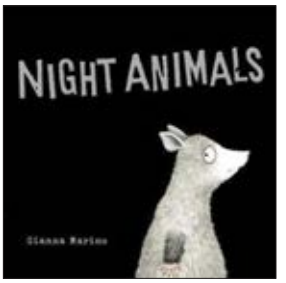
El Libro de la Selva



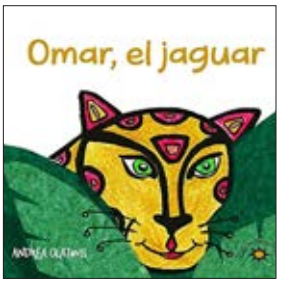
Malty the Blue Tiger Marita la Tigresita Azul



Mañana, Iguana



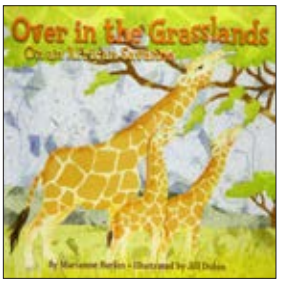
Night Animals



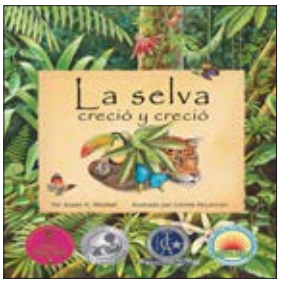
Omar, el Jaguar

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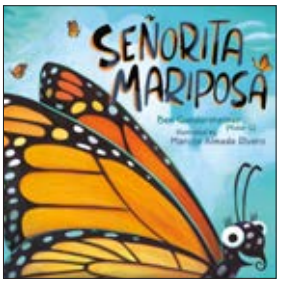
FICTION



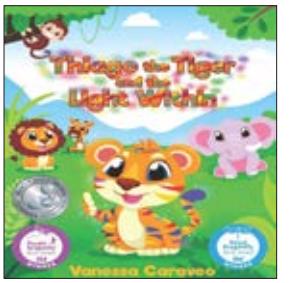
Over in the Grasslands: On an African Savanna



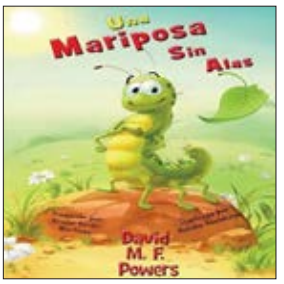
La Selva Creció



Señorita Mariposa



Thiago the Tiger and the Light Within



Una Mariposa Sin Alas



Waiting for Wings



Welcome Home, Bear: A Book of Animal Habitats

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GENERAL SUPPLY KIT



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ASSESSMENT TOOLS



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WILD WORLD

Activity Rubric Scale

Student:_____ Class:_____

Date:_____

Activity or Skill:_____

_____

4 **Achieved-** The student frequently demonstrates the ability to apply the knowledge or perform the skill accurately in several environments without support.

3 **Progressing-** The student demonstrates understanding or use of the knowledge or skill in one or more environments with some support.

2 **Emerging-** The student is beginning to show understanding or use of the knowledge or skill in one environment with extensive support. The student is unable to demonstrate the skill without assistance.

1 **Introduced-** The student has been exposed to the knowledge or skill as part of the educational curriculum but demonstrates no measurable understanding of the knowledge or skill at this time.

Notes:_____

_____

_____

_____

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WILD WORLD

Anecdotal Note Observation Form

Student:_____ Date:_____ Time:_____

Objective for this observation:

List of others in the context:

Context:

Notes:

Preliminary thoughts regarding observation:

Educator's Signature:_____

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WILD WORLD

General Observations

DATE	TIME	SKILL	OBSERVATIONS

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WILD WORLD

Picture Portfolio

Student:_____

Date:_____

Learning Center:_____

(Include photo or sample of student's work)

Notes:_____

_____

_____

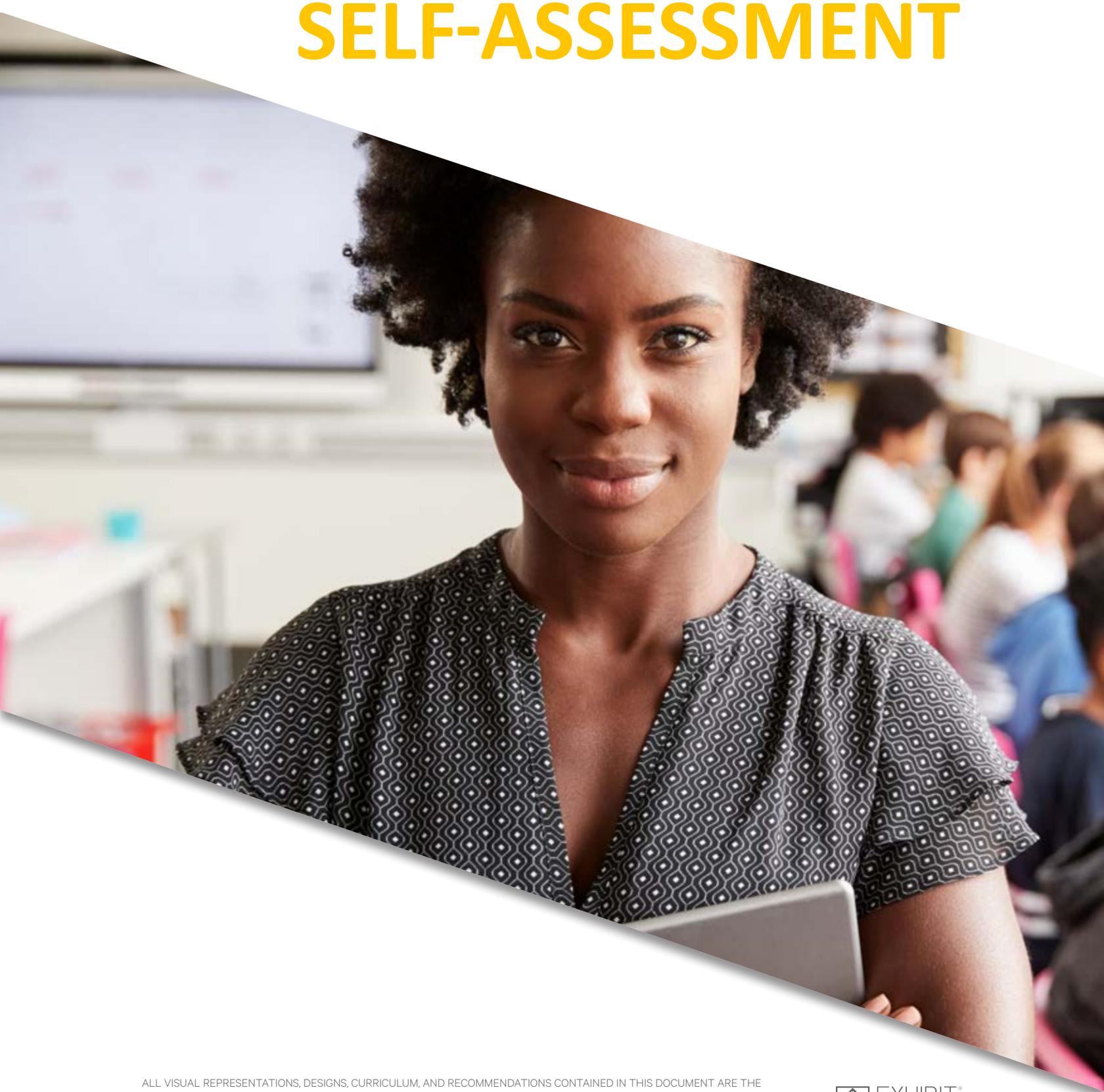
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TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT



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WILD WORLD

Self-Assessment of Benchmarks of Experiential Education Implementation

Name:_____ School:_____ Date:_____

WHEN I PLAN...	LACKING	EMERGING	PRACTICING
I plan activities and experiences that follow the interests of my students.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I consider multiple learning modalities.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I consider new and novel items to engage students.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
WHEN I TEACH...	**LACKING**	**EMERGING**	**PRACTICING**
I give students choices.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I ask open-ended questions that help students think creatively and critically.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I observe my students.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I identify and respond to the existing knowledge and skills each student brings to an activity or experience.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I help students make connections between existing and new knowledge.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I use developmentally appropriate concepts and vocabulary to introduce new content.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I individually reflect on how to continuously improve my instruction.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
IN MY CLASSROOM...	**LACKING**	**EMERGING**	**PRACTICING**
My students are active in the learning process by:			
• choosing items to engage with and participating in activities that interest them.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• working through problems and activities in real-life situations.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• collaborating with peers, as developmentally appropriate.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• initiating their own investigations.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• asking questions.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• making observations.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
My students recognize and use developmentally appropriate vocabulary and concepts.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
My students are intrinsically motivated.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐

My definition of experiential education is:

I'd like to know more about the following in regard to experiential education:

My strengths:

Areas I'd like to improve upon:

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