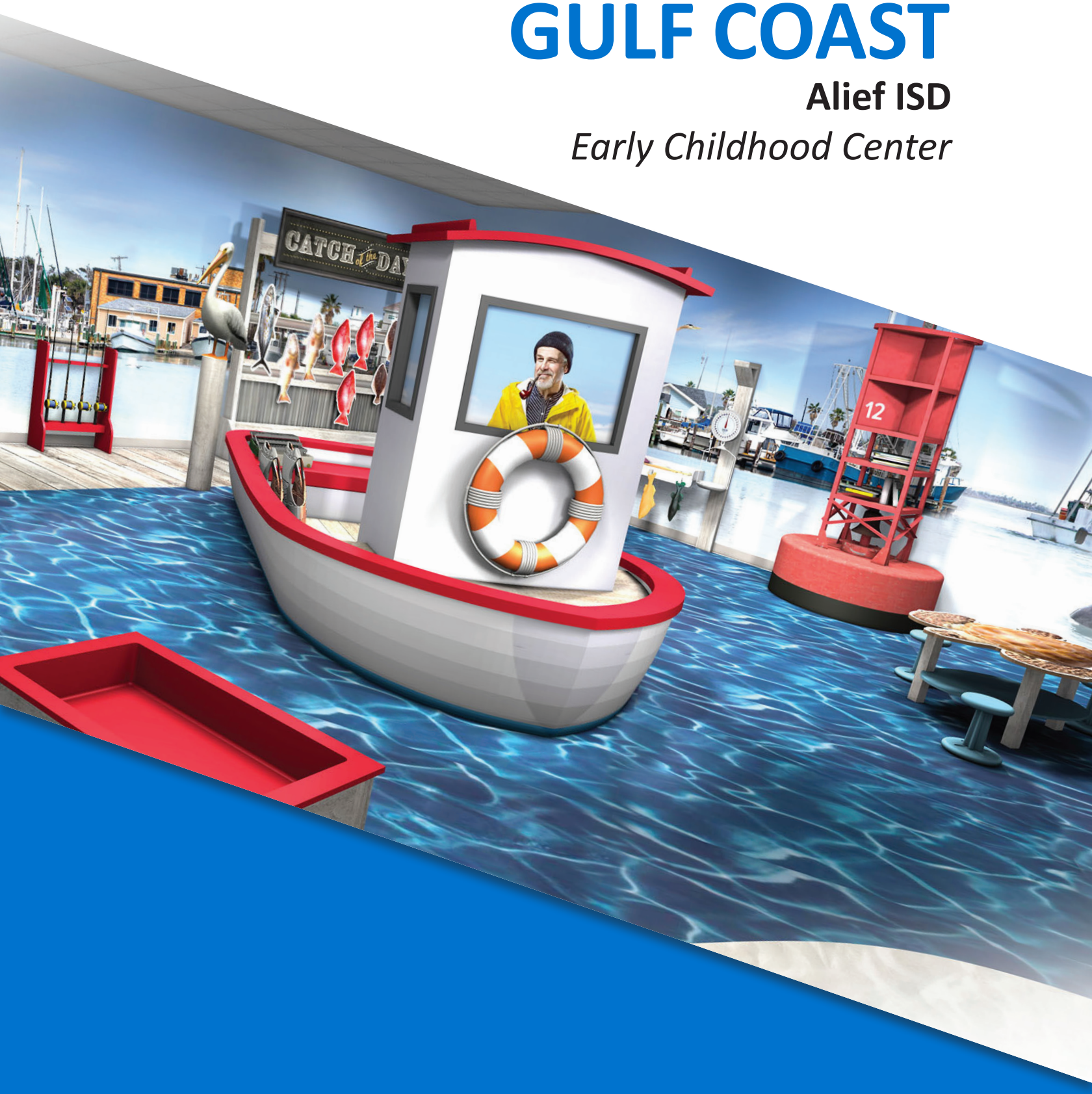
GULF COAST

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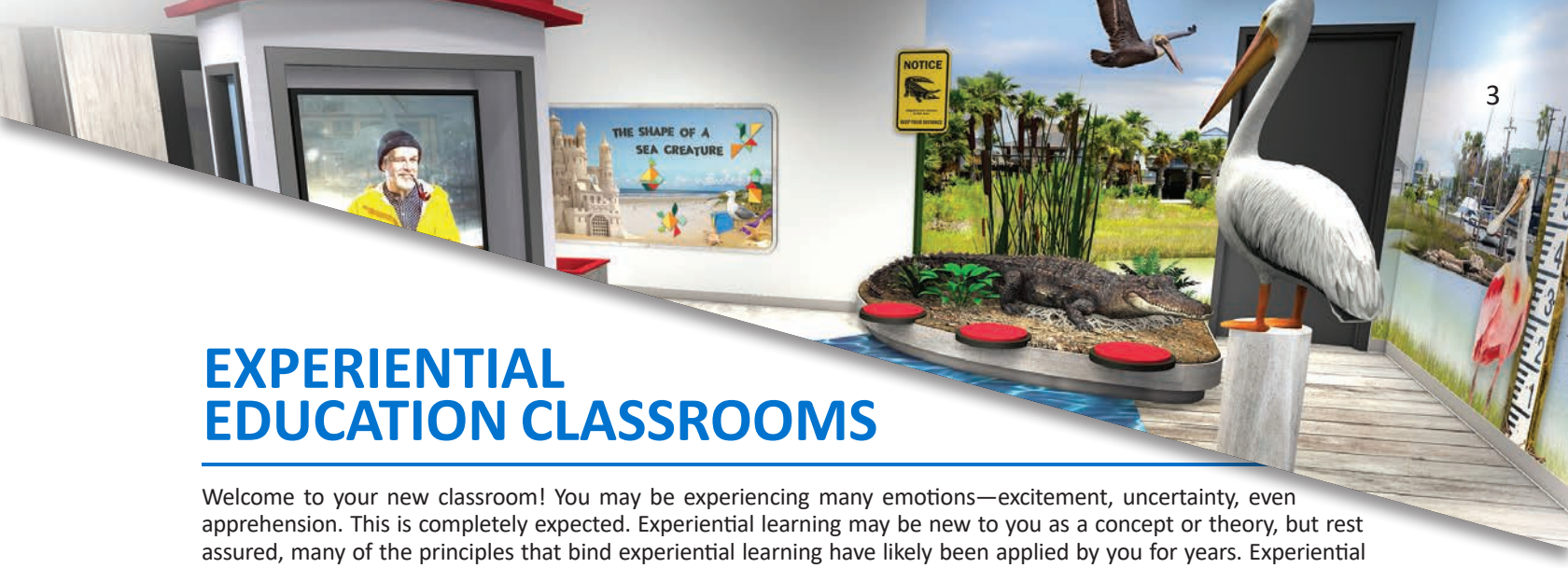
Early Childhood Center



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by Exhibit Concepts, Inc.

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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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ACTIVITIES



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GULF COAST

Find the Aquatic Animals

GC.01

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts with peers during cooperative play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
VII.C.2 Child explores geography tools and resources.

The aquatic animals have escaped their enclosure! Students must use a classroom picture map to find the missing animals and return them to their home. Working with classmates, students use classroom maps to discover features of their classroom and find the missing aquatic animals.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Before the activity, hide the Gulf Coast aquatic life around the classroom, circle a different aquatic animal on each map, and draw a path to find the aquatic animal. The idea is for students to stop at various locations in the classroom using the map to see if they can find the aquatic animal.
2. Gather students in a small group. Tell students that several Gulf Coast animals have gone missing in the classroom and you need help finding them! Show students a map and explain that they must travel the path with their peers, stop at each location, and look for the aquatic animal. Once they find the aquatic animal, they can move on to the next map and aquatic animal.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Create an activity or action students must do as they stop at each location on the map. For example, at the first stop tell students they must do five jumping jacks after finding the aquatic animal.
- Encourage students to hide the aquatic animals and create a path on the map with their peers as you serve as a support.

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GULF COAST

Follow the Fish Leader

GC.02

I.C.1 Child uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to build relationships with adults and peers.
III.D.1 Child retells or re-enacts a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
IX.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

Just like humans, fish and other aquatic animals communicate with one another. They use sound, color, bioluminescence, motion, and smell. Humans communicate in lots of ways too; they sign, point, use pictures, and move their body. Students learn to use their body to communicate by encouraging others to follow their movements.

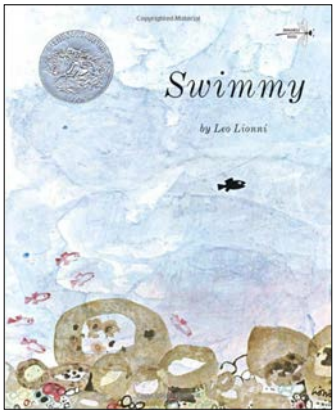
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. In the story *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni, Swimmy learns that collaboration and teamwork are important in a community, and a leader helps guide the community in the right direction. After reading the story, talk about the importance of working together and ask students what it means to be a leader.
2. Demonstrate the roles of the leader and followers using an action card. Give students the opportunity to discuss and decide who will be the leader first, emphasizing that everyone will take turns. Explain that the leader's role is to become an aquatic animal, choose an action card, and ask their peers to follow the action. The leader can perform one or more actions using the cards.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Empower students to create their own actions as a leader. Ask the leader how they would like the other students to follow.

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GULF COAST

Guess Who?

GC.03

I.B.3.a Child sustains attention to personally chosen or routine (teacher-directed) tasks until completed.
II.A.1 Child shows understanding by responding appropriately to what has been communicated by adults and peers.

Students practice asking questions and using new vocabulary words as they participate in a game of Guess Who?. Educator provides clues about an animal as students make predictions about the animal's identity. The last clue is a silhouette card of the animal with the animal reveal card at the end.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Brainstorm a list of Gulf Coast aquatic animals with the class, holding up each aquatic animal as it's named. Include any remaining aquatic animals from the stack of cards that are not mentioned. After all of the aquatic animals are displayed, discuss the features of each.
2. Tell students that you are thinking about one of the animals displayed. Provide clues to help the students determine the animal's identity. For example: This animal is brown or orange, has five points, and moves using tube feet. Can you guess what it is? Display the silhouette as a final clue.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- As a free-choice activity, encourage students to match the animal to the silhouette card on a table.
- Play "Act It Out" with the students using the aquatic animal cards. Students can move like an aquatic animal while the other students guess the animal's identity.

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GULF COAST

Gulf Coast Word Bank: Finding Words in the Sand
GC.04

III.C.1 Child recognizes and names at least 20 letters (upper- or lower-case letters).
IV.A.1 Child intentionally uses marks, letters, or symbols to record language and verbally shares meaning.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. **Finding Words in the Sand:** Students search for durable word bank words in the sand and match to the classroom word bank. A word bank key is provided for easy matching.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. This activity works well as a free-choice activity in the writing center. Add several laminated word bank words to the bottom of a cookie tray and cover with the colored sand. Encourage students to uncover the word bank words with a brush and match to the word bank cards.
2. After uncovering and matching the word, ask students to practice writing the word on lined paper.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Turn this into a shape recognition activity by taping black paper cutout shapes to the bottom of the tray and covering with sand. Students can use the brushes to uncover and identify the shapes.
- Create line, shape, and alphabet cards that students can view as they make tracings in the sand. Students can engage in free drawing and writing activities in the sand as well.

IN THIS KIT



coast	ocean	sea	Sun
alligator	pelican	sand	waves
sea turtle	raft	boat	buoy
sea horse	shell	fish	dolphin
sink	float	ship	heron
sandcastle	fishing rod/pole	pier	Roseate Spoonbill









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GULF COAST

Magnetic Alphabet Fishing
GC.05

III.C.1 Child recognizes and names at least 20 letters (upper- or lower-case letters).
V.A.5 Child recognizes numerals 0-10.

Alphabet recognition and print concepts are reinforced as students use magnetic fishing poles to find fish letters in the simulated water flooring. Adding magnetic numbers can add a cross-curricular component.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the magnetic fishing poles in the S.S. Adventure. Students can use the magnetic fishing poles as a free-choice exercise, building essential hand-eye coordination and calling out letters and numbers as they pick them up.
2. As a guided exercise, write letters and/or numbers on sentence strips and ask students to pick up the corresponding letter and/or number to reinforce letter and number recognition.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Create your own magnetic activity using sentence strips and adhesive magnetic squares. Write/draw shapes, word bank words, or students' names on a sentence strip, cut to size, and add an adhesive magnetic square. Students can "fish" for the newly created magnetic pieces.

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GULF COAST

Sea Life Bingo

GC.06

III.C.1 Child recognizes and names at least 20 letters (upper- or lower-case letters).
V.A.5 Child recognizes numerals 0-10.

Bingo games help students learn to associate visuals with words and help build a robust vocabulary. Using alphabet and number Bingo cards, students match the letter or number with the corresponding item as it is called from the Bingo caller.

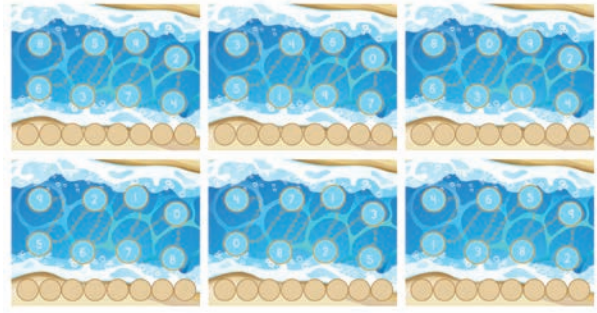
DOING THE ACTIVITY

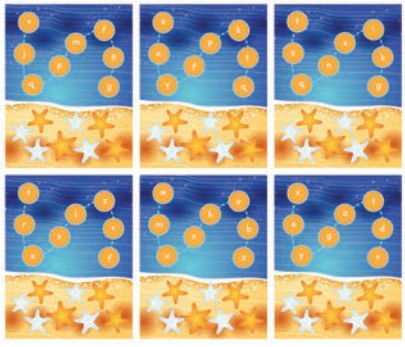
1. Pass out the Bingo cards and ocean counters and ask students to place the counters on the circles/starfish at the bottom. Reinforce the letters and numbers on the game board and explain that once a letter or number is called, students swim an ocean counter to the called letter or number.
2. As you roll a letter or number die, be sure students are using the ocean counters to cover the called letter or number. Remind students that Bingo looks like a filled row.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Use the ocean counters to reinforce math concepts like counting, sorting, patterning, and other early math skills.
- Add the ocean counters to the sensory bin filled with water beads.

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GULF COAST

Gulf Coast Alphabet: Play-Doh Letters

GC.07

III.C.1 Child recognizes and names at least 20 letters (upper- or lower-case letters).
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. **Play-Doh Letters:** Using the magnetic letters as a reference, students can make letters out of Play-Doh with adult support. Students can roll Play-Doh with their hands or use the rope-making Play-Doh tool and outline the magnetic letters.

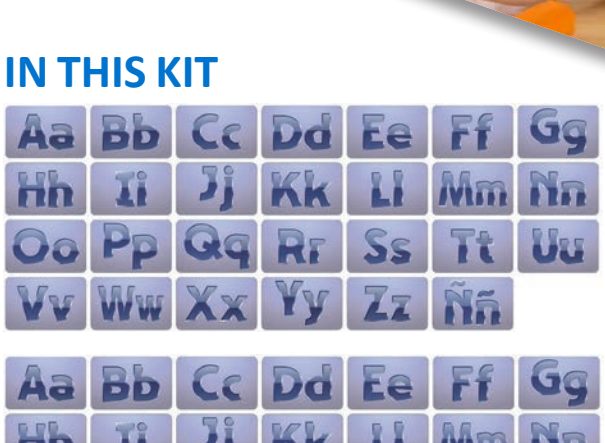
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Provide students with the letter-tracing cards and a choice of Play-Doh colors. Include the themed magnetic letters as a visual alphabet reference. Demonstrate rolling the Play-Doh into "snakes," and bending, pinching, and pulling the Play-Doh to make longer strands and curves. Demonstrate "tracing" the letter-tracing cards with Play-Doh.
2. Students can use the Play-Doh tools to assist with letter tracing or in free exploration.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Students can also use a dry erase marker to trace the letters.

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GULF COAST

Sand Writing

GC.08

IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.
IX.B.2 Child shows increasing control of tasks that require eye-hand coordination.

Sand is a unique writing surface. Wet or dry, sand can be smoothed to create an even surface for students to practice writing marks or letters with dowels or their finger. Afterward, simply smooth out the writing and repeat. The resistance of the sand helps students strengthen the muscles in their hand.

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 or the wooden dowel. Students can use the alphabet, line, and shape cards as a guide or create letters using the letter blocks.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Create additional laminated cards to include words (word bank reinforcement) and numbers as students become comfortable with alphabet, line, and shape tracing.
- Add a small amount of water to the sand to create a different texture and consistency; ask students to describe the differences.

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GULF COAST

Under the Sea Math

GC.09

V.A.3 Child counts up to 10 items and demonstrates cardinality by communicating that the last number indicates how many items are in the set.
V.B.1 Child uses objects, pictorial models, and/or a verbal word problem to represent adding up to 5 objects.

Using ocean-themed counting mats (1-10), students practice adding concrete objects to a set and have discussions using the terms less and more. The ocean-themed counting mats can also be used for whole group graphing and sorting activities.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Pass out the counting mats and under the sea counters. As you call out numbers, ask students to count the associated number of under the sea counters and place on the counting mat.
2. Provide the opportunity for students to assume the role of "number counter."

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Use the under the sea counters to reinforce sorting by color, type, and patterning. Encourage children to count how many are in each category.
- Add the under the sea counters to the Sand and Surf Sensory Table; include water and water beads to provide a sensory experience.

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GULF COAST

Sea Life Magnets and Shapes
GC.10

V.C.2 Child creates shapes using materials and/or manipulatives.
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 create an ocean scene and explore features of the ocean environment by manipulating sea life magnets. Ocean fish and plants can be sorted by size, type, color, and other student-directed categories. Students can also recreate sea life using pattern blocks and emphasizing shapes.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

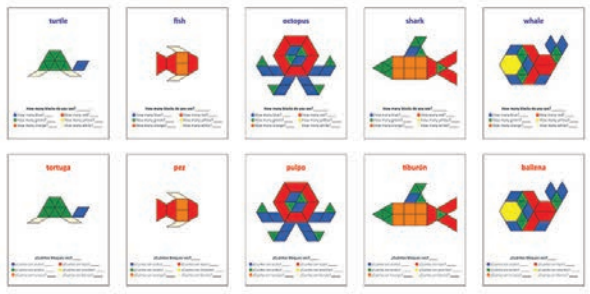
1. Place the sea life magnets on the magnetic wall for free exploration. Encourage students to connect sea life with appropriate food and shelter. Challenge students to sort the magnets in self-directed ways.
2. Place the pattern block mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the animal.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill-in the design with pattern blocks.
- Add the magnets to the writing center to entice tracing. Students can trace the sea life magnets and add details with art materials like paint, scraps of paper, yarn, and crayons.

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GULF COAST

Shell and Sea Glass Sorting

GC.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.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses characteristics of common objects.

You can find many interesting things walking along a beach like shells and sea glass! Seashells are made by animals and protect the animal's body. Sea glass is glass that has been changed by weather, waves, and salt. Students can sort beach materials into self-directed or educator-directed categories or use the materials to create imprints in Play-Doh.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. After reading *Sea Glass Summer* by Michelle Houts, provide students with the opportunity to explore the seashells and sea glass with the magnifying glasses. Ask students the following: "What do you notice?" and "How are the seashells/sea glass similar and different?"
2. Place the sea glass, seashells, and sorting tray in a free exploration area. Encourage students to sort by self-directed or educator-directed categories.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Make seashell imprints with Play-Doh. Ask students to roll out the dough with a rolling pin and explore prints in the Play-Doh.
- Fill the Sand and Surf Sensory Table with sand and add the pieces of sea glass for students to find. Incorporate counting and adding to/taking away skill development by asking students to find a specific number and add more or take away.

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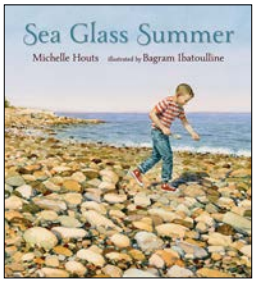












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GULF COAST

Fish in the Bucket

GC.12

V.D.1 Child recognizes and compares heights or lengths of people or objects.
V.D.2 Child recognize and compares capacity based on how much space exists within an object.
V.D.3 Child recognizes and compares weights of objects.

Children arrive at preschool with an everyday understanding of measurement that starts in infancy and continues to develop. They compare their own height to another's, the weight of food at the grocery store, and even the length of their toys. Students use standard and non-standard measurement tools to keep track of their own growth and measure aquatic animals in the classroom.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Place the items in the buckets for students to explore. Students can "fish in the bucket," pull out an animal, and measure the aquatic animal's length using nonstandard measurement (Unifix Cubes) and standard measurement (tape measure). Students can mark their measurements of multiple animals for comparison using the colored masking tape. Ask questions such as, "Which animal is the longest?," "Which animal is the shortest?," and "How are the tape measure and Unifix Cubes different?"
2. Encourage students to use the classroom balance to compare the weight of the animals. Ask the following reflection questions: "What do you notice as you put two different animals in the balance buckets?" and "What do you think will happen if you switch them?"

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- You can make your own nonstandard units of measurement using construction paper and aquatic animal templates. Trace the aquatic animal several times, cut them out, and use them to measure items in the classroom.
- Students can find other items in the classroom to measure-even themselves! Ask students to measure a friend with the standard and non-standard tools.

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GULF COAST

Sea Life Specimen

GC.13

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

Students explore sea life specimen replica and actual sea life specimen encased in acrylic using tabletop magnifiers. Students can compare sea life features and discuss attributes that contribute to thriving in the ocean.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Place the sea life specimen center, sea life acrylic set, and tripod magnifier in a free exploration area. Ask students to describe what they notice and share any similarities and differences between the specimen. Compare the sea life specimen to other animals students might see in nature or even pets in their home.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Add the specimen to a light table or explore the specimen with a flashlight and talk about the visible differences as students make observations with light.
- Leave the sea life specimen in the writing center and encourage students to make still life drawings of their observations.

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GULF COAST

Saltwater vs. Freshwater

GC.14

VI.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of common objects.

Students engage in scientific explorations by experimenting with saltwater and freshwater. Students make predictions and observations about various objects and materials placed in saltwater and freshwater and record their observations on a simple recording sheet. The sink/float conversation can continue by finding other items around the classroom, making predictions about their ability to sink or float.

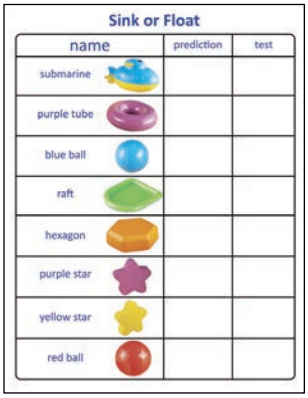
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Fill the Sand and Surf Sensory Table with water. Ask students to make predictions about each object, with questions like, “Will this object sink or float?” and “Why do you think it will sink or float?”
2. Fill the dishpan halfway with water and add 8 tsp. of salt until salt dissolves. Walk through the prediction and observation process again, making comparisons between items that float/sink in freshwater vs. saltwater.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Add jello powder or liquid watercolor to the water to encourage a multi-sensory experience.
- Investigate sink/float further with items found in the classroom such as Legos, balls, craft sticks, and crayons.

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GULF COAST

Sand and Surf Sensory Table
GC.15

VI.C.3 Child observes and describes what happens during changes in the earth and sky.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

The Sand and Surf Sensory Table can be used in a variety of ways. Students can mix colors to make discoveries about secondary colors, add aquatic animals to incorporate dramatic expression, and add sand or dirt to observe and make predictions about the effects of force (introducing new words like erosion, force, and weathering).

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. The Sand and Surf Sensory Table is a wonderful way to introduce physical science concepts in a play-based way. Add sand, a small amount of water, and the sea life animals to have discussions about erosion, weathering, and force. Use the cups filled with water and drop water from various heights and angles. Talk about the force that is needed to move the sand and create imprints.
2. Add water, cups, and sea life animals to the table to encourage dramatic play.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Use the mixing trays and pipettes to mix colors. Add several liquid watercolors to the mixing tray and ask students to transfer and mix in the Sand and Surf Sensory Table.
- Add numbered or lettered seashells to the sand and ask students to find numbers or letters that you call out.

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GULF COAST

Alligator Life Cycle

GC.16

VI.B.2 Child observes, describes, and discusses the life cycles of organisms.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Life cycle models help young children understand how living things grow from smaller to bigger over time. After reading non-fiction books about the alligator's life cycle, students can explore life cycle images in the alligator nest and tangible alligator models.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

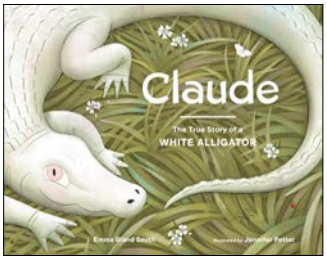
1. After reading *Claude: The True Story of a White Alligator* by Emma Bland Smith and *Amazing Animals: Alligators* by Kate Riggs, discuss the alligator's life cycle, based on information discovered through the read alouds. Compare and contrast to the life cycles of the sea turtle, bat, and deer.
2. Encourage students to participate in dramatic play using the alligators and alligator eggs in the Alligator Nest exploration display. Students can apply ideas from the read alouds in their interactions with the adult alligator, baby alligator, and alligator eggs. Students can even hatch an alligator egg using water and make observations about the emerging alligator.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Create an alligator swamp in the Sand and Surf Sensory Table. Add shaving cream, green liquid watercolor, and alligator figures to extend the dramatic play.

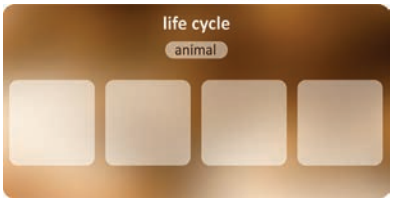
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GULF COAST

Scuba Diving

GC.17

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts with peers during cooperative play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

You can learn a lot about aquatic life just by making observations in their environment. You can make observations at the beach by looking at stranded debris, watching the tide come in, and exploring underwater! Students assume the role of aquatic scientist by preparing to study life underwater. They read about ocean animals, look at pictures, and gather equipment they need (scuba gear, periscopes, camera).

DOING THE ACTIVITY

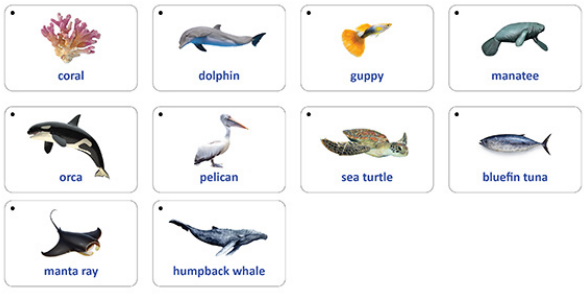
Add the scuba jumpsuits, periscopes, sea life animals, and animal identification cards to the S.S Adventure boat-themed exploration display. Students can "dive" to make sea life animal observations and record information about their discoveries.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Make flippers and underwater cameras using craft foam. To make flippers, draw flippers on craft foam, cut out the flippers, and cut out an opening in the back for students to wrap around their ankle. To make a camera, draw a camera on craft foam, cut the camera out, and attach to an empty juice box (or 5" x 5" box).

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GULF COAST

Gyotaku Fish Printing
GC.18

VII.A.1 Child identifies similarities and differences between himself, classmates and other people through specific characteristics and cultural influences.
VIII.A.1 Child uses a variety of art materials and activities for sensory experience and exploration.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.

Gyotaku is the traditional Japanese method of printing fish, a practice that dates back to the mid 1800s. Japanese fishermen would use this method to record their catches. Students can create their own Gyotaku art using fish replica and paint.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Tell students they are going to make fish prints using fish replica and paint. Write the word gyotaku (gyo + taku) on the dry erase board or chart paper; explain the Japanese term as “fish rubbing.” Tell students that Japanese fisherman would record their catch using ink and paper, which also became an art form.
2. Allow students to choose a fish replica, paint color, and paint brush. Using the paint brush, students can paint the fish on one side and press down to create an imprint on paper.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Gyotaku art can be used to stimulate discussions about species of fish, Japanese culture, and nature printing in general. Encourage students to consider other items to nature print like seashells and classroom sea life animals.
- Suggest students bring in items from home to add to the print material collection.

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GULF COAST

Catch of the Day

GC.19

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.
VII.B.3 Child discusses the roles and responsibilities of family, school, and community helpers.

The Catch of the Day center allows students to explore local fish native to the Gulf Coast. The magnetic fish can be sorted by size, saltwater vs. freshwater, color, and by features. Exploring the catch of the day may spark conversation around fish we eat and fish we throw back, saltwater and freshwater fishing, native species, and local professions.

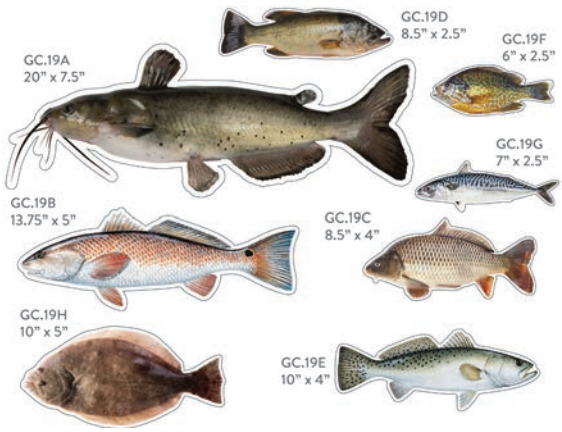
DOING THE ACTIVITY

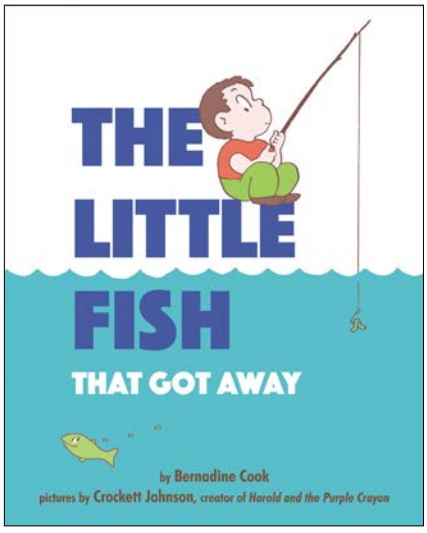
1. Brainstorm a list of local marine jobs such as fisher, ship captain, marine biologist, oceanographer, lifeguard, and diver (encourage students to think about jobs they have seen or heard about). Focus in on fisher, reading *The Little Fish That Got Away* by Bernadine Cook, and discussing what it takes to be a fisher.
2. Place the catch of the day magnets on the magnetic wall for free exploration. Encourage students to organize the fish from shortest to longest, sort by color, classify saltwater vs. freshwater, and organize into other educator-directed or student-directed categories.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Add the magnets to the writing center to entice tracing. Students can trace the catch of the day magnets and add details with art materials like paint, scraps of paper, yarn, and crayons.
- Ask students to vote on their preferred marine job, keeping tally marks on chart paper as students vote.

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GULF COAST

Ocean Life Dramatic Play
GC.20

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts with peers during cooperative play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Students can consider multiple perspectives as they pretend to be sea creatures and/or humans living by the ocean. As sea creatures, students think about the roles of prey and predator as they camouflage with the coral or hide behind a seashell to surprise their dinner! As humans, students think about what it means to live by the ocean, appreciating the things the ocean provides and the beauty they see.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Set up the materials in the S.S. Adventure boat-themed exploration area. You can set the stage by encouraging students to assume complimentary roles, such as fish and fisher, or shark and crab.
2. As an educator-directed activity, ask students to camouflage as they transform into sea life animals. Ask students to consider the animals they must hide from or the animals they would eat.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Turn the dramatic play center into an aquarium. Students can assume roles such as aquatic life, visitor, and aquarist. Ask students to make entry tickets and exhibit labels using construction paper and writing/drawing materials.

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GULF COAST

Self-Portraits

GC.21

I.A.2 Child shows self-awareness of physical attributes, personal preferences, and own abilities.
VIII.A.1 Child uses a vareity of art materials and activities for sensory experience and exploration.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.

Students see themselves in future professions through discussions, books, and imaginative play. Through open-ended art opportunities, students can create self-portraits depicting themselves in professions of interest.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

After reading several books about Gulf Coast professions from the classroom library, provide students with a variety of art materials for them to use to create self-portraits. Ask students to "study" their facial features in the handheld mirrors and share similarities with one another. Students can create themselves in gulf-themed professions or any profession of interest.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Draw self-portraits on handheld mirrors. Students can view themselves in the mirror and draw their portrait directly on the mirror with a dry erase marker.
- Using butcher paper, make large-scale portraits that can be displayed in the classroom or around the school. Add additional collage materials such as yarn, buttons, googly eyes, and toothpicks for students to explore and add as they see fit.

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GULF COAST

Building Sandcastles

GC.22

VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.
IX.B.2 Child shows increasing control of tasks that require eye-hand coordination.

Building sandcastles provides children with the opportunity to be creative, build vocabulary, and improve upon fine motor skills. Enhancements like blocks, seashells, sea life animals, and molds are included to help encourage repetitive and extended play.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to picture the beach. What do they see, feel, and smell? Ask students what they like to do at the beach. Ask the following follow-up questions: "Have you ever built a sandcastle before?," "What do you need to build a sandcastle?," and "What are the steps to build a sandcastle?"
2. Encourage students to freely explore, build, and rebuild sandcastles using the molds and wooden blocks. Students can add animals of the sea to incorporate dramatic play experiences. Add water to the sand to further enhance discussions about erosion and tide.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Facilitate a discussion about erosion after reading *The Tide is Coming in* by Calee M. Lee. Ask students to think about ways to prevent erosion (make predictions) as they build classroom sandcastles (adding protective material like rocks, craft sticks, and wooden blocks). Encourage students to add protective material and test their predictions as they add water with different amounts of force.

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GULF COAST

S.S. Adventure Multimedia Learning Experience

GC.23

VI.A.2 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses position and motion of objects.
VI.B.1Child observes, investigates, describes,and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
X.A.4 Child uses technology to access appropriate information, with adult supervison.

Students learn more about aquatic life, Gulf Coast weather patterns, and boats through multimedia in the classroom. These media narratives aid in learning and spark curiosity to find more information about a specific topic. Educator can pause the media to encourage observations and ask object-focused questions.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. The S.S. Adventure Multimedia can be used as a student-led or educator-directed experience. As a student-led experience, provide ample opportunities for students to view the media and ask questions. As an educator-directed experience, pause the media and ask students to think critically about what they are viewing. Ask open-ended questions that motivate students to think about how situations apply to them, which include:
    - How does that make you feel?
    - What would you do if ____happened? Why?
    - Why do you think ____ is important?
2. You can also use the media in focused ways by pausing the media and asking students to count objects, observe colors, find specific objects, and identify letters and shapes.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Use the S.S. Adventure Multimedia to introduce the Gulf Coast classroom theme. Students can view the media as educator guides the inquiry and listens for students' interests for future planning.

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S.S. Adventure Multimedia-ECI created



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GULF COAST

Alligator/Spoonbill Webcams
GC.24

VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
VI.B.3 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the relationship of organisms to their environments.
X.A.4 Child uses technology to access appropriate information.

Students virtually observe alligators and spoonbills in the wild using live cams or recordings. Students can make comparisons between these species by observing their features and behaviors in their natural habitat.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Live-action webcams can bring distant places to life and engage students in the inquiry process. Students can study animal habitats and behavior by observing live-action (or recorded sessions) consistently and over time. Use the following site to determine where alligators and spoonbills are in their life cycle and record patterns in behavior for classroom discussion. Link: https://explore.org/livecams/spoonbills/alligator-spoonbill-swamp-cam (St. Augustine FL)

TEACHING STRATEGY

Encourage students to use the simple observation tracking sheet over several days, recording what they see (drawing pictures), and sharing with the class. Students can talk about animal behavior over time and make comparisons to other animals such as pets, animals at the zoo, or birdfeeders/ squirrel feeders at home.

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- Activity requires internet and a computer/iPad



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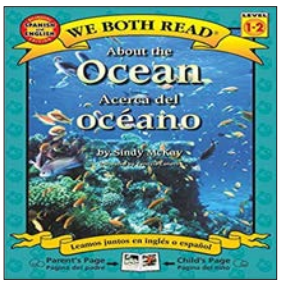
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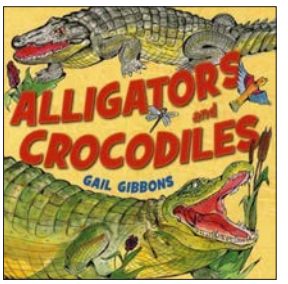
NON-FICTION



About the Ocean
Acerca del Oceano



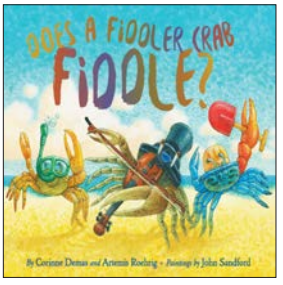
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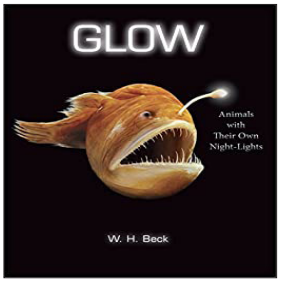
Alligators and Crocodiles



The Brilliant Deep:
Rebuilding the World's
Coral Reefs



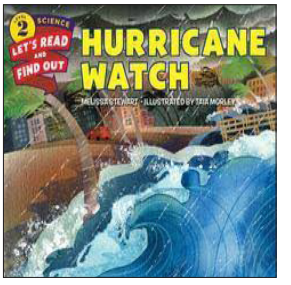
Does a Fiddler Crab
Fiddle?



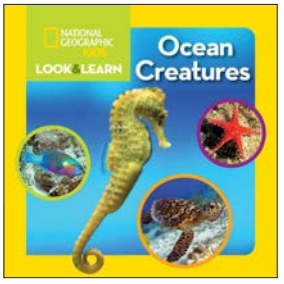
Glow: Animals with Their
Own Night-Lights



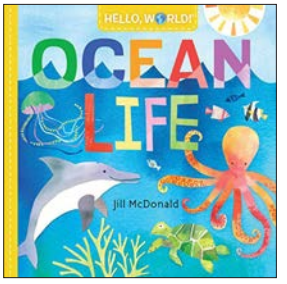
Hurricanes!



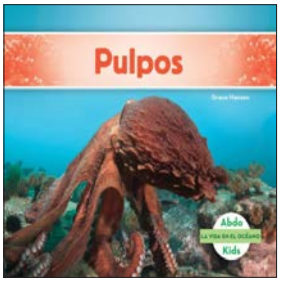
Hurricane Watch



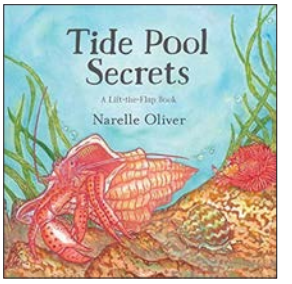
Ocean Creatures



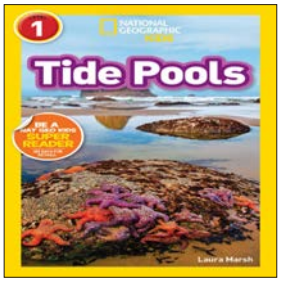
Ocean Life



Pulpos



Tide Pool Secrets



Tide pools



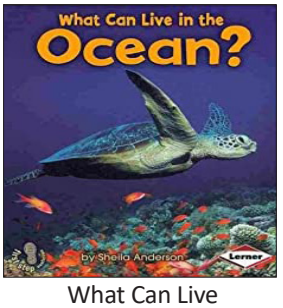
Tornados y Huracanes



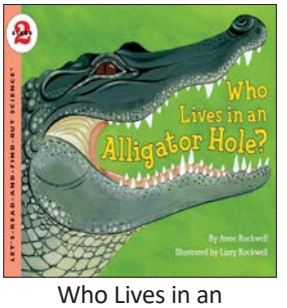
Vacaciones con
el Hurancán



La vida marina



What Can Live
in the Ocean



Who Lives in an
Alligator Hole?

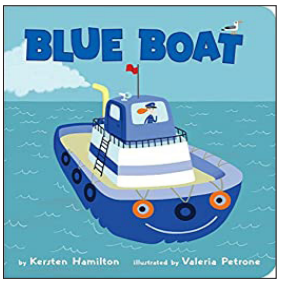
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zones

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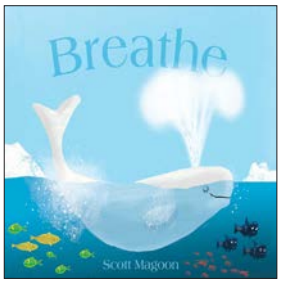
FICTION



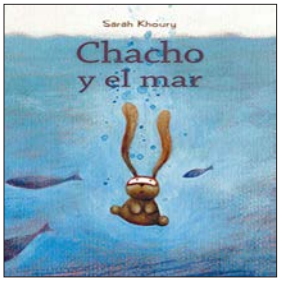
A Fishing I will Go



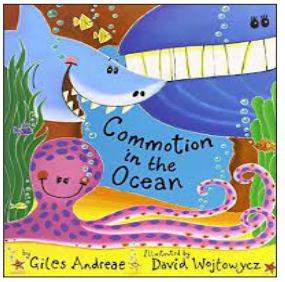
Blue Boat



Breathe



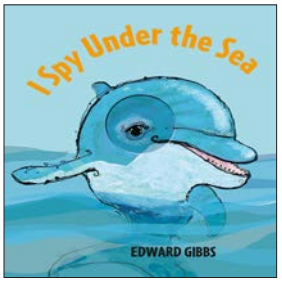
Chacho y el Mar



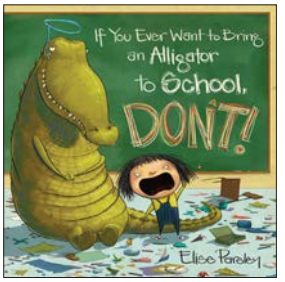
Commotion in the Ocean



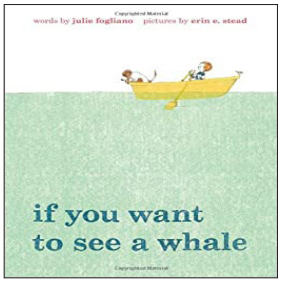
Hello Ocean
Hola Mar



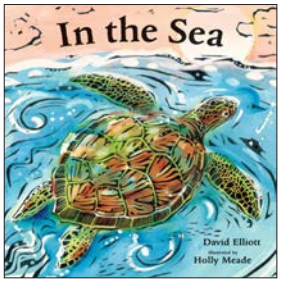
I Spy Under the Sea



If You Ever Want to Bring an Alligator to School, Don't



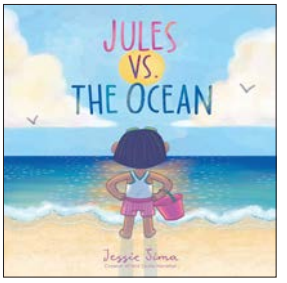
If You Want to See a Whale



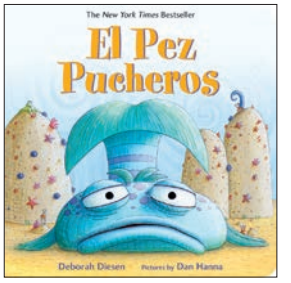
In the Sea



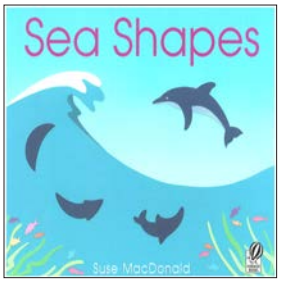
Jorge el Curioso
Visita el Acuario.



Jules vs. the Ocean



El Pez Pucheros



Sea Shapes



Un Pez Dos Peces Pez Rojo Pez Azul

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GENERAL SUPPLY KIT



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GENERAL SUPPLY KIT





















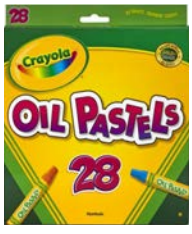












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ASSESSMENT TOOLS



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GULF COAST

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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GULF COAST

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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GULF COAST

General Observations

DATE	TIME	SKILL	OBSERVATIONS

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GULF COAST

Picture Portfolio

Student:_____

Date:_____

Learning Center:_____

(Include photo or sample of student's work)

Notes:_____

_____

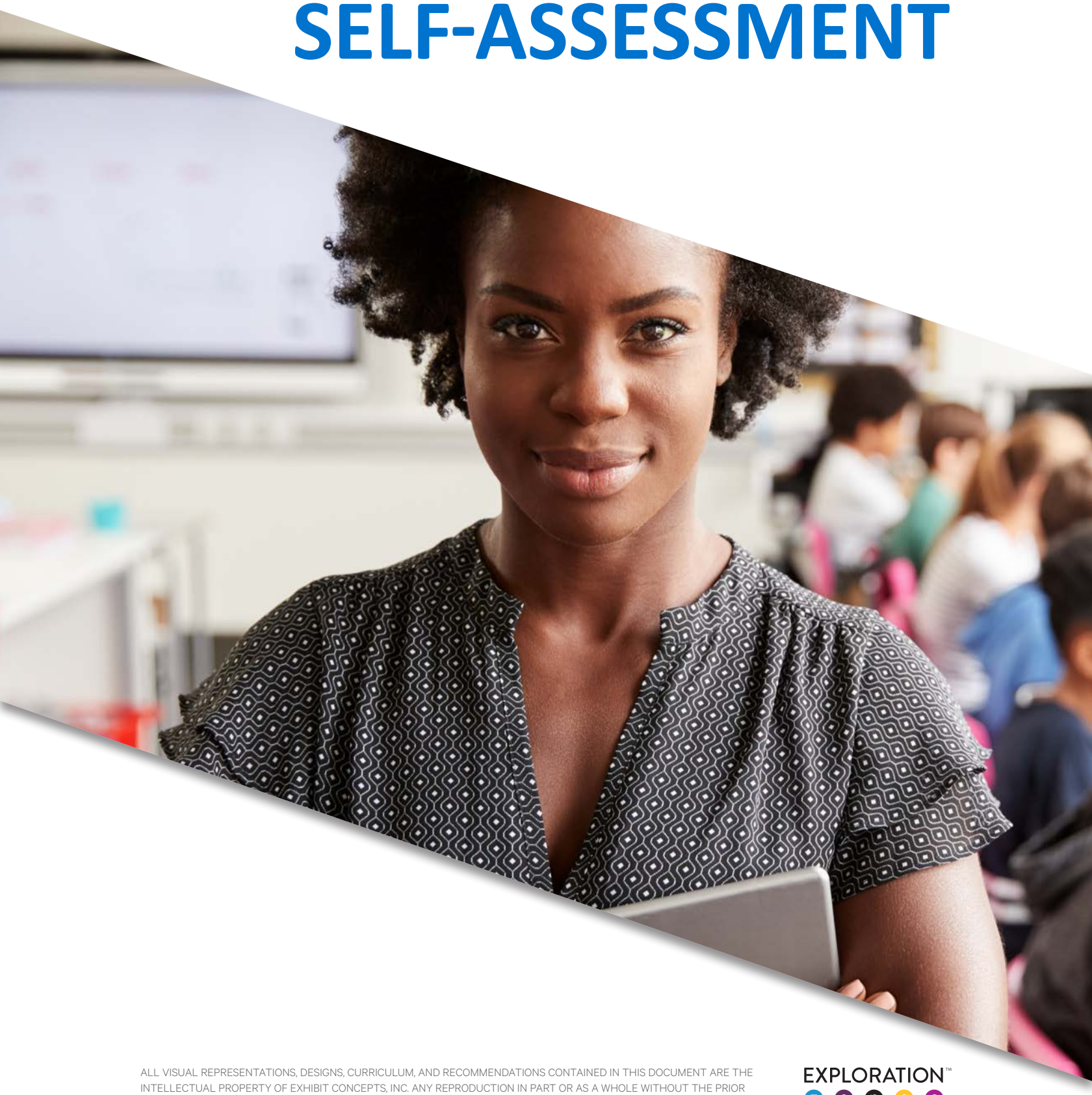
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TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT



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GULF COAST

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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