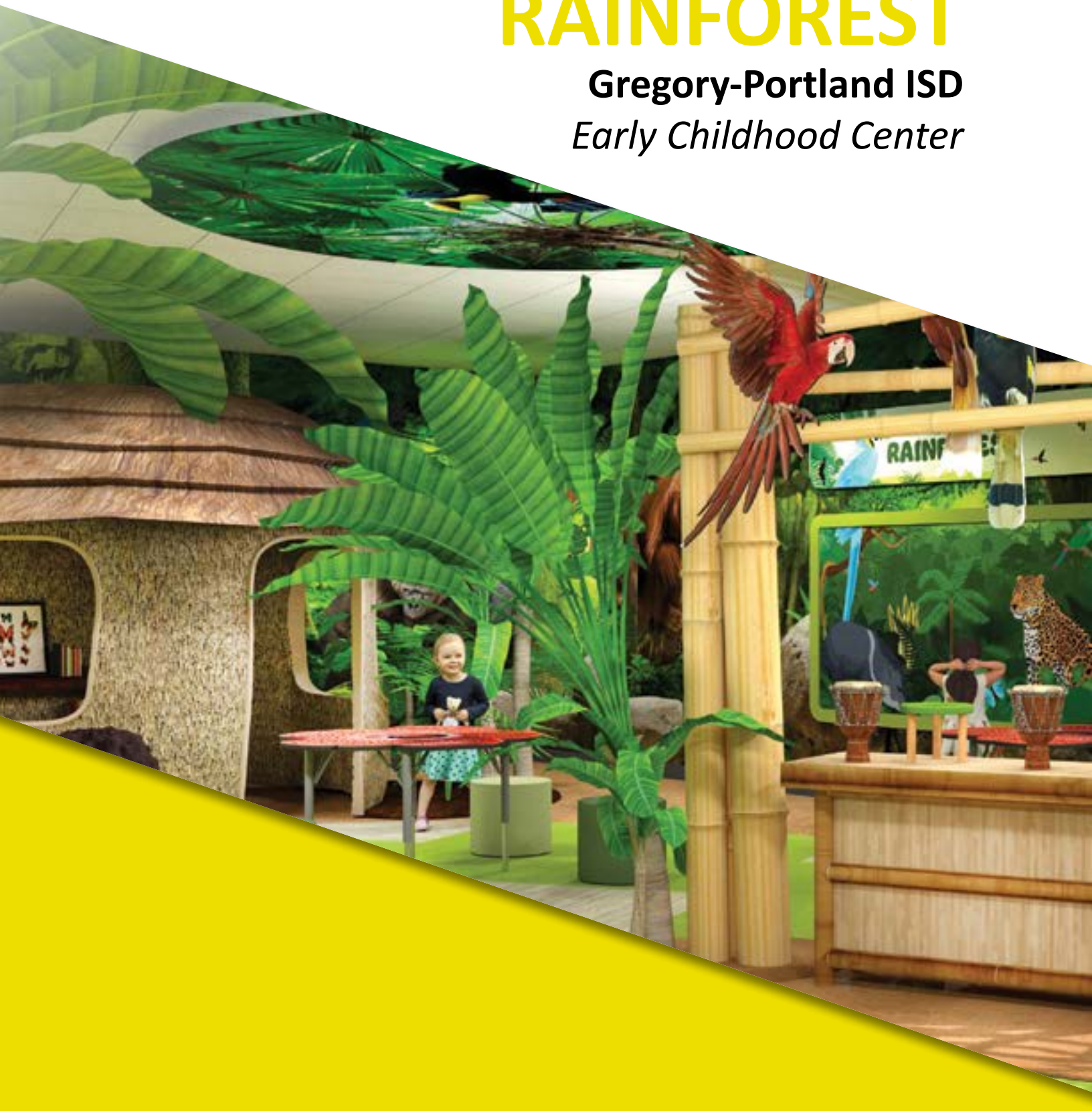
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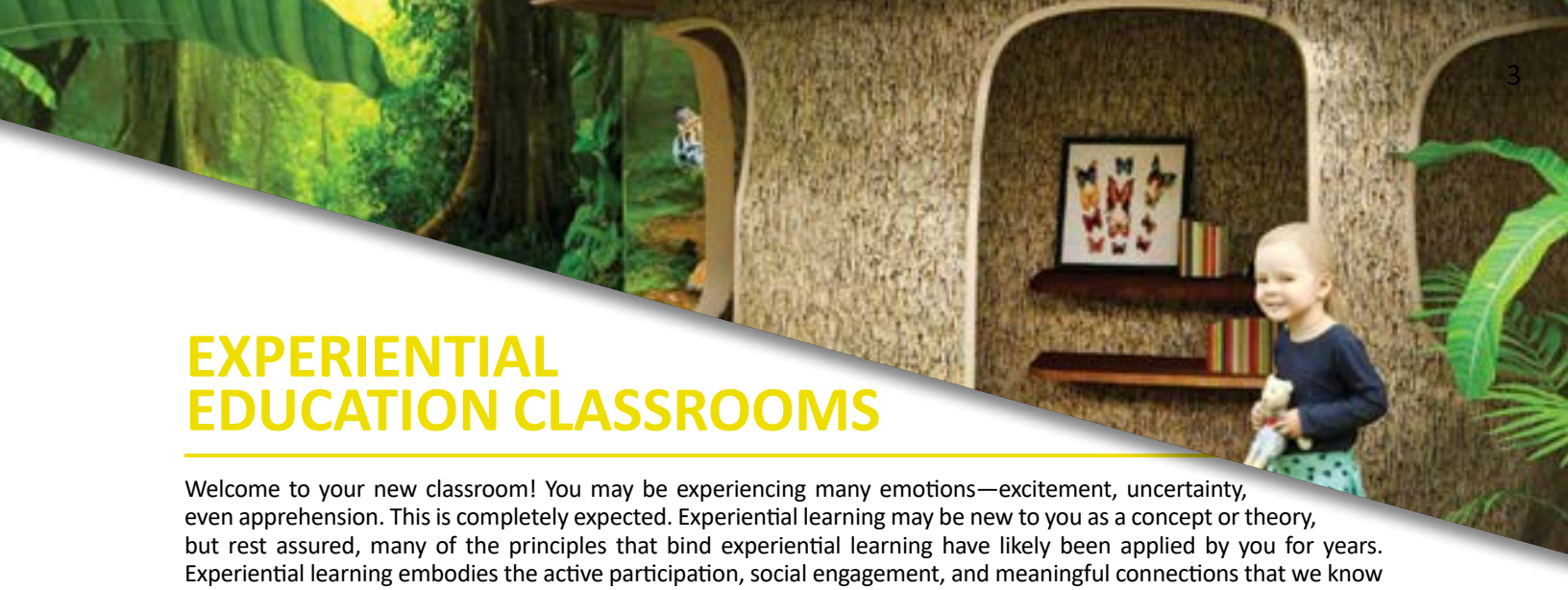
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EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

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 Rainforest 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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RAINFOREST

Rainforest Animal Hunt

RF.01

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

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

DOING THE ACTIVITY

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

DIFFERENTIATION

- Enhance the rainforest dramatic play by encouraging children to create scenery. Children can make sponge painted giant leaves with vines and flowers out of tissue paper, paper plates, and construction paper. Provide a box filled with various supplies, such as faux fur, pieces of cloth, paper, craft foam, and feathers. Allow the children to use their imagination to create unique rainforest pieces.
- Add a few low-maintenance houseplants like pothos, snake plants, and spider plants to the Rainforest 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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RAINFOREST

Animal Puppet Habitats

RF.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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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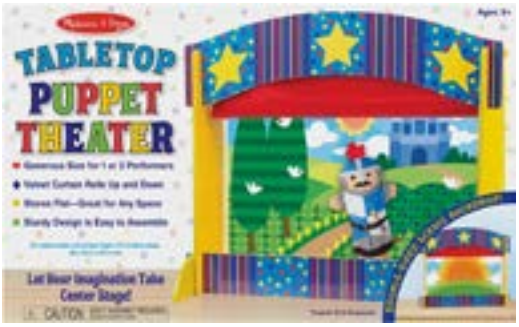
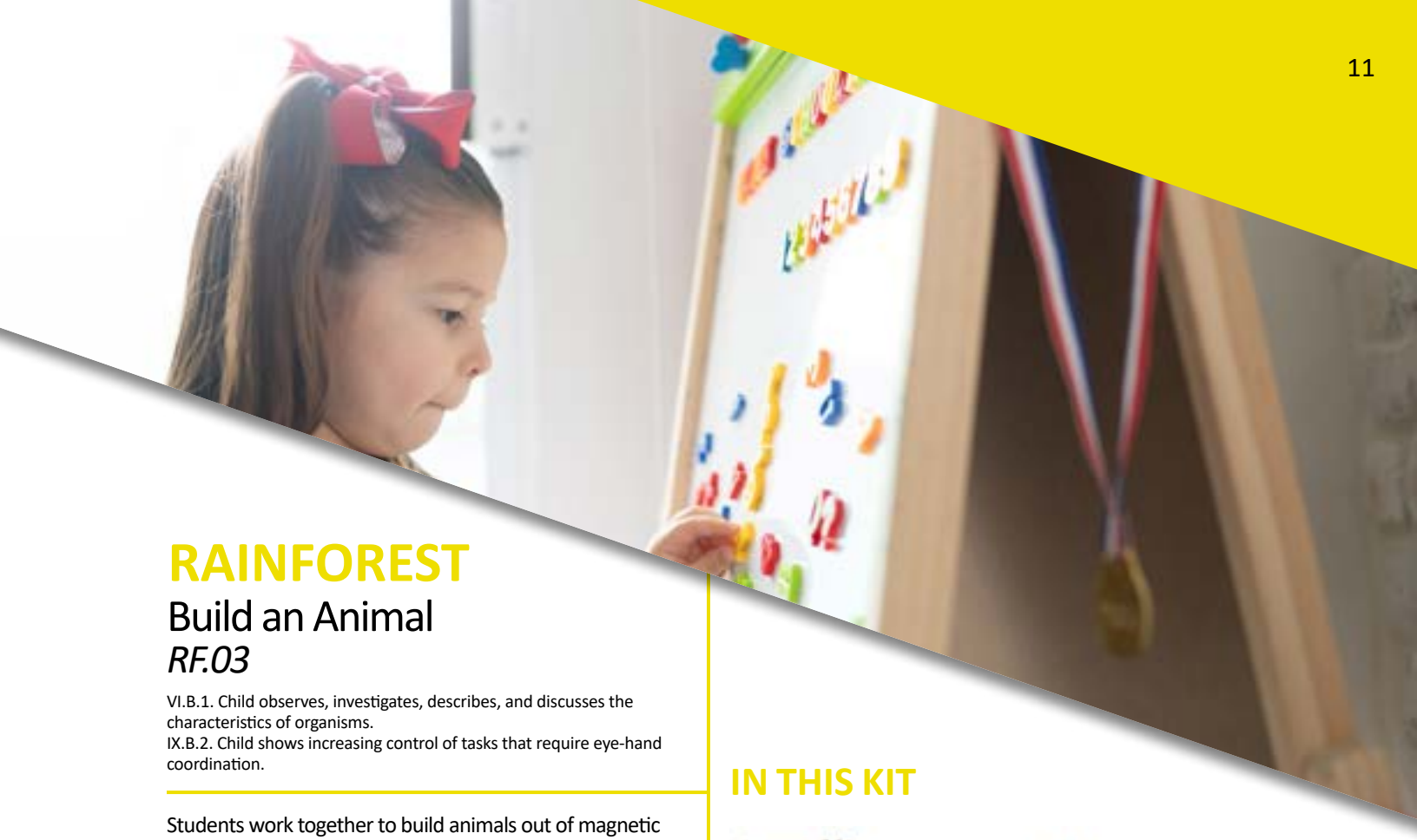




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RAINFOREST

Build an Animal

RF.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 can include: things wild animals need to survive, how animals get their food in the wild, and habitat descriptions.

DIFFERENTIATION

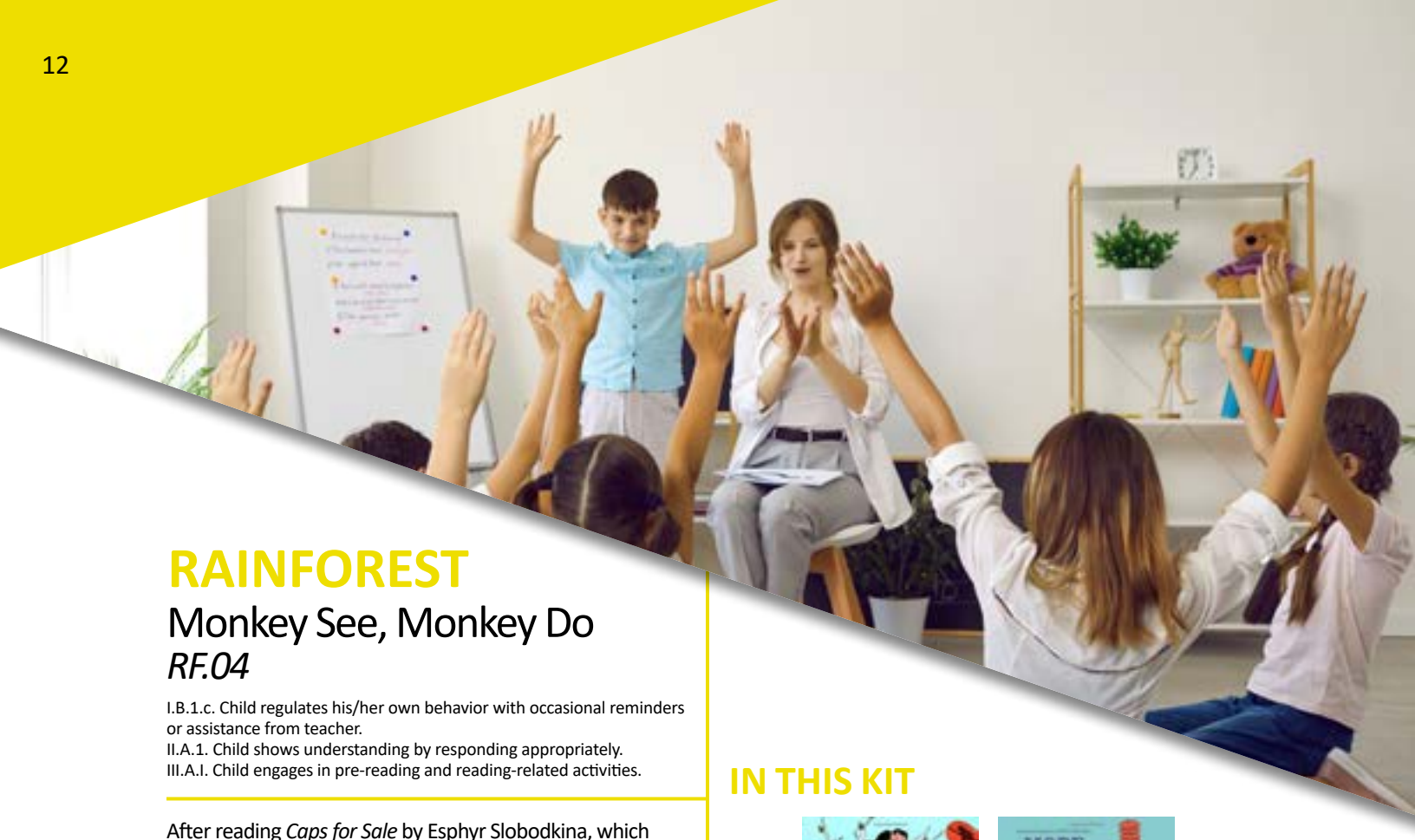
- Expose students to the wide variety of habitats in the world and the diverse animals that live in each through websites and books. National Geographic Kids, Kids Planet, and World Wildlife Fund offer resources, photos, and videos that help students see beyond their own backyard.
- Add the magnets to 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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RAINFOREST

Monkey See, Monkey Do

RF.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.I. 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.

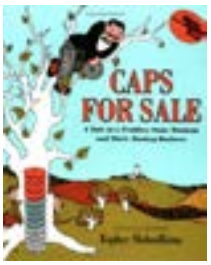
DOING THE ACTIVITY

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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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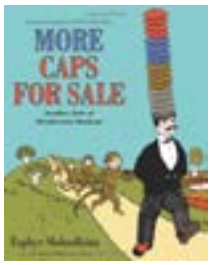






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RAINFOREST

Great Kapok Tree Charades

RF.05

I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts and communicates with peers to initiate pretend play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.
III.A.I. Child engages in pre-reading and reading-related activities.
VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.

Read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, emphasizing the importance of the tree to the characters in the story and beyond. Have your students select an animal from the story and act out animal behaviors using the animal cards. Students can discuss the animal needs within a habitat and consider the future issues that would occur if the animal were to leave the rainforest.

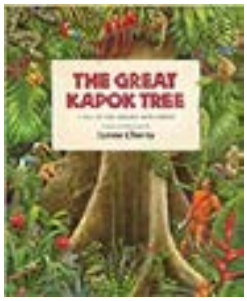
DOING THE ACTIVITY

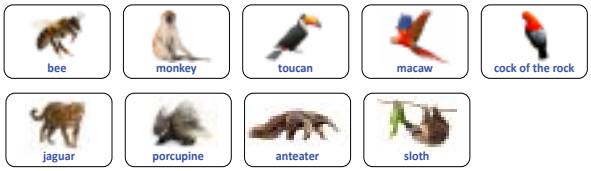
1. Read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, discussing new vocabulary throughout. After reading the story, talk about the setting of the story, characters, point of view (who is telling the story), and sequence of events.
2. Review the animals from the story using the animal cards: bee, monkey, toucan, macaw, cock of the rock, jaguar, porcupine, anteater, and sloth. Talk about the animals' behaviors and needs within the rainforest habitat. Ask the first student to choose an animal card and think about ways to mimic the animal's behavior using their body. As the student performs the behaviors, the remaining students guess the animal from the story.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Talk about the benefits the tree provides each animal and the consequences if the tree were cut down. Ask students to think about pros and cons to cutting down trees in general.
- Rainforests have four different layers: forest floor, understory, canopy, and emergent. Create a classroom tree on butcher paper, label the four different layers, and ask students to sort the animal cards by layer in which they live

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RAINFOREST

Rainforest Word Bank: Animal Vocabulary

RF.06

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

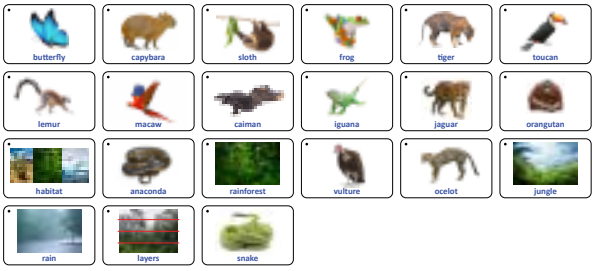
1. Place the magnetic letters on a magnetic board in order. Show students an animal identification card. Ask a student to find the corresponding beginning letter from the line of magnetic letters. This can also be placed in the writing center as a free-choice activity.
2. Reading and reciting new vocabulary 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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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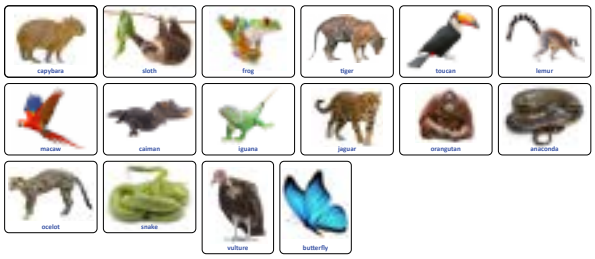


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RAINFOREST

Rainforest Alphabet: Pipe Cleaner Letters

RF.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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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RAINFOREST

Sand Writing Trays

RF.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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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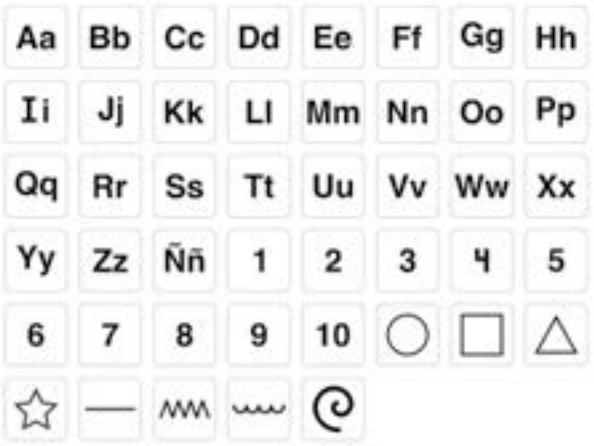


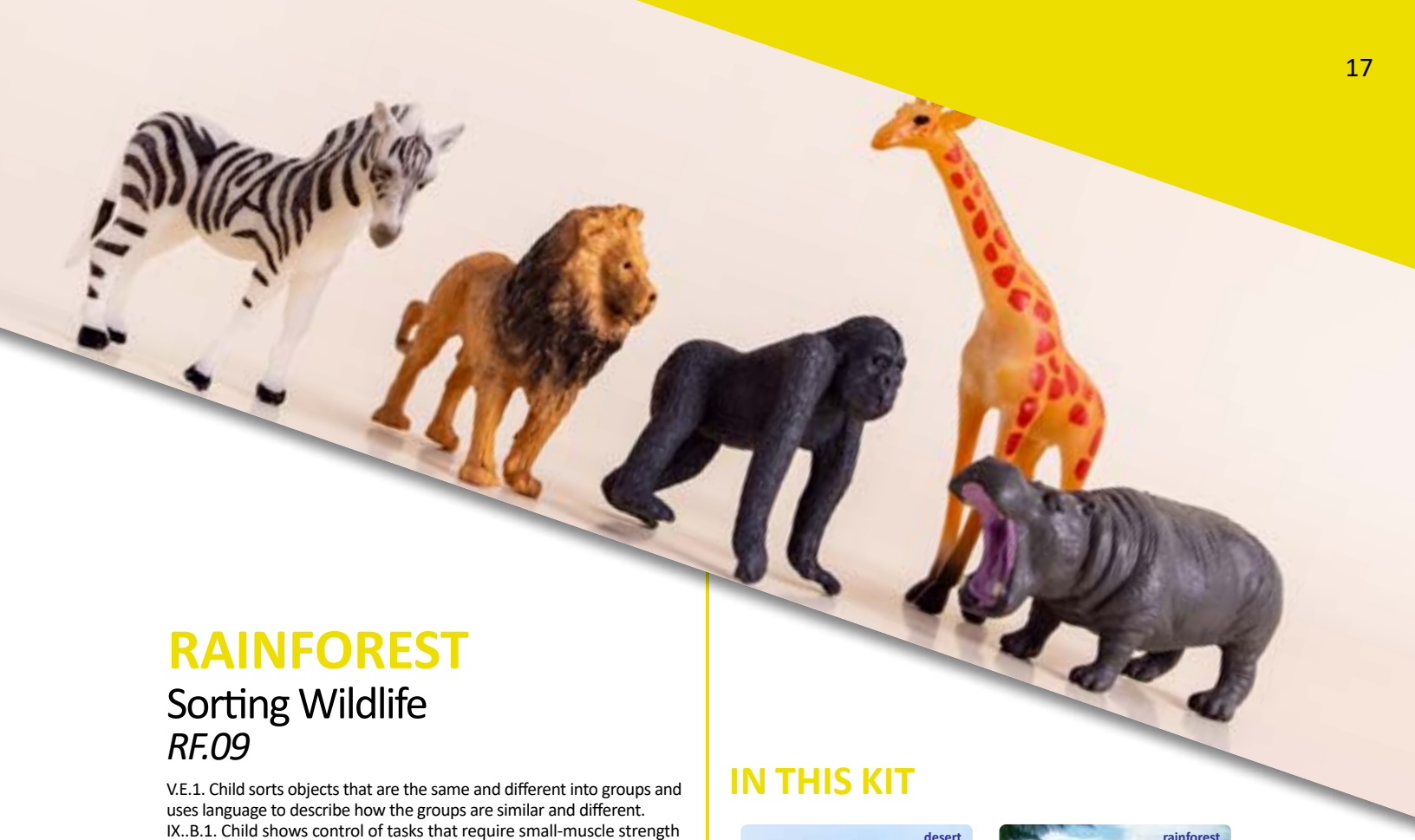






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RAINFOREST

Sorting Wildlife

RF.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.
IX..B.1. Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.
VII.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 using the habitat cards. Encourage dramatic play by including foliage and other dramatic play materials.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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RAINFOREST

Wildlife Graphing

RF.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 (RF.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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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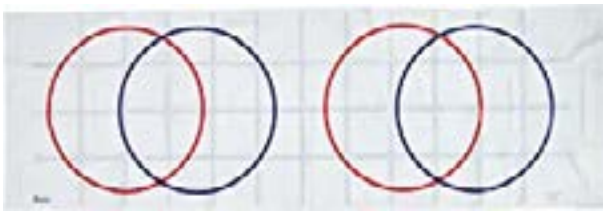




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RAINFOREST

Animal Exploration

RF.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 the sensory box 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 are the claw replica (comparing all replica) the same and different and why?," and "How are the feather replica (comparing all replica) the same a different and why?," and "How are these features important to animals?"

DIFFERENTIATION

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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RAINFOREST

Life Cycle Observations

RF.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 a 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).

DIFFERENTIATION

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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RAINFOREST

Our Feathered Friends

RF.13

VI.B.1. Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.
IX.B.1. Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.

Birds are commonly found in all settings and in every community, making them easily accessible and interesting to young students. When young children observe birds, they naturally learn about bird identification, behavior, habitats, and conservation. Students can explore bird characteristics, such as feathers and beaks, by investigating simulations in the sensory table.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read developmentally appropriate books about birds, such as *Birds* by Kevin Henkes and *A Nest Full of Eggs* by Priscilla Jenkins, discussing the features and characteristics that birds have in common. Talk about feathers as the most defining bird characteristic.
2. Provide students with feathers to examine in the sensory table. Students can blow on the feathers, squirt water on the feathers, and comb the feathers back using their finger or pencil. Ask students to describe what they see.
3. Provide students with tools that simulate a bird picking up items with its beak, such as tweezers, tongs, straws, and toothpicks. Provide various types of "food" in the sensory table, such as beans, rice, and paper. Ask students to describe how it feels to pick up the items (how do you think a bird might feel?).

DIFFERENTIATION

- Paint with feathers. Allow students to manipulate the feathers, asking them to make different sized paint strokes and discuss what the children notice.
- Make birdseed collages. Copy large silhouettes of birds onto cardstock and allow children to fill in the silhouette with glue and seed.
- Take a bird walk. Look for birds and signs of birds (feathers, seeds, droppings). Post a bar graph at a classroom window with native birds. Children can tally what birds are observed over a period of time and make comparisons.

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RAINFOREST

Animal Camouflage

RF.14

III.D.2. Child uses information learned from books by describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting.
VI.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses properties and characteristics of common objects.
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 images of habitats and animals that camouflage. The children move the animal 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 images in the learning center. Encourage students to move the animal 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).

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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.

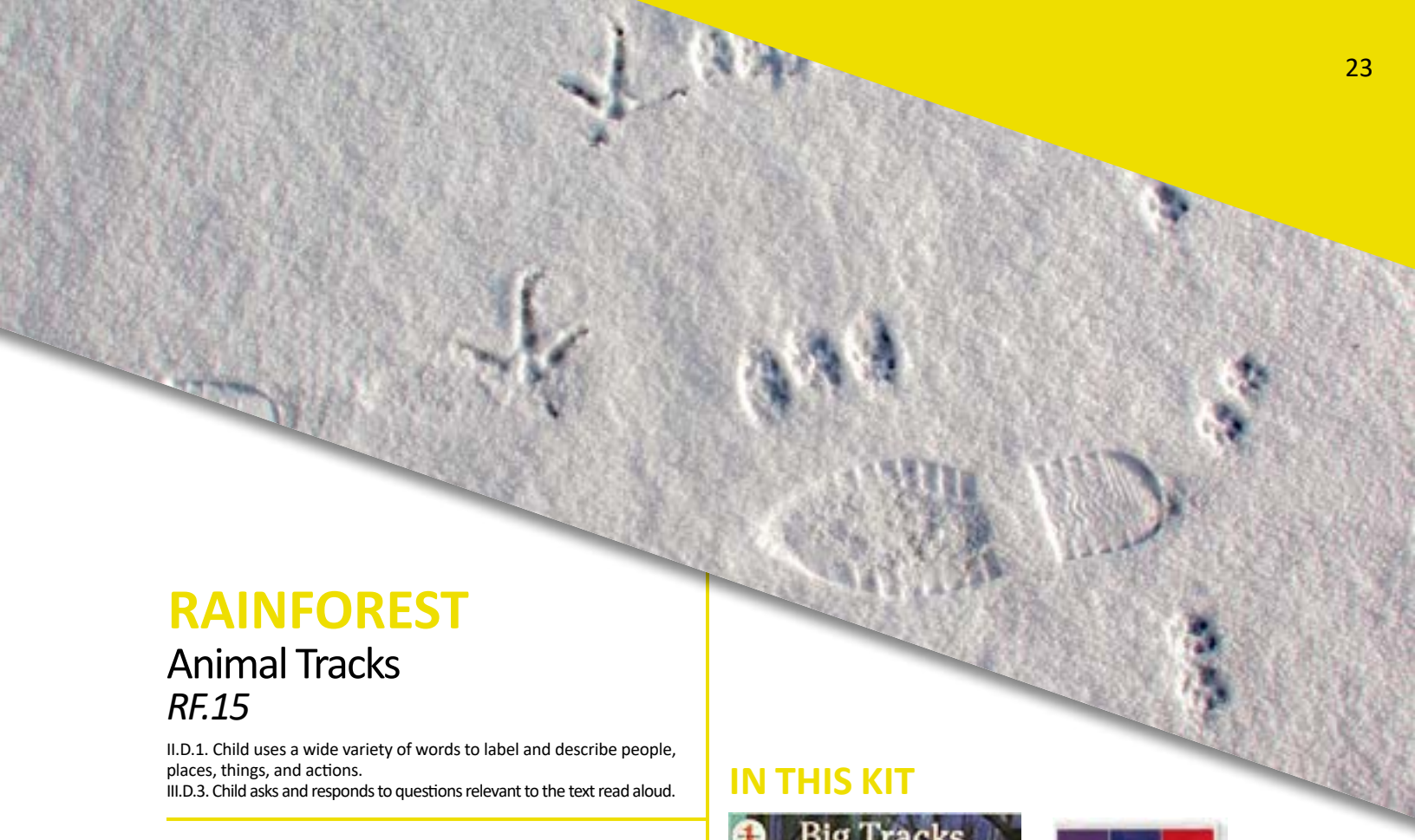
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RAINFOREST

Animal Tracks

RF.15

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?

DIFFERENTIATION

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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RAINFOREST

Animal Models

RF.16

IV.B.1 Child discusses and contributes ideas for drafts composed in whole/small group writing activities.
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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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RAINFOREST

Rainforest Layers

RF.17

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.

Each layer of a rainforest has unique characteristics. These layers house different plants and animals, based on water, sunlight, and air needs. Students can explore and experiment with a variety of plants, animals, and other materials in the sensory table to create layers that serve different functions.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Review the following with students: A rainforest is a place where it rains often and there are a lot of trees and other plants. The rainforest has layers in which different kinds of animals live. Set up the sensory table with the rainforest manipulatives, while also drawing attention to the rainforest layers activity board. Encourage children to create layers in the sensory table and move the animals up and down from one layer to another.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Encourage students to sort the animal manipulatives by where they might find an animal in the rainforest layers.
- Ask students to sort animal cards on the rainforest layers activity board.

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RAINFOREST

Animal Charades

RF.18

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.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.

DIFFERENTIATION

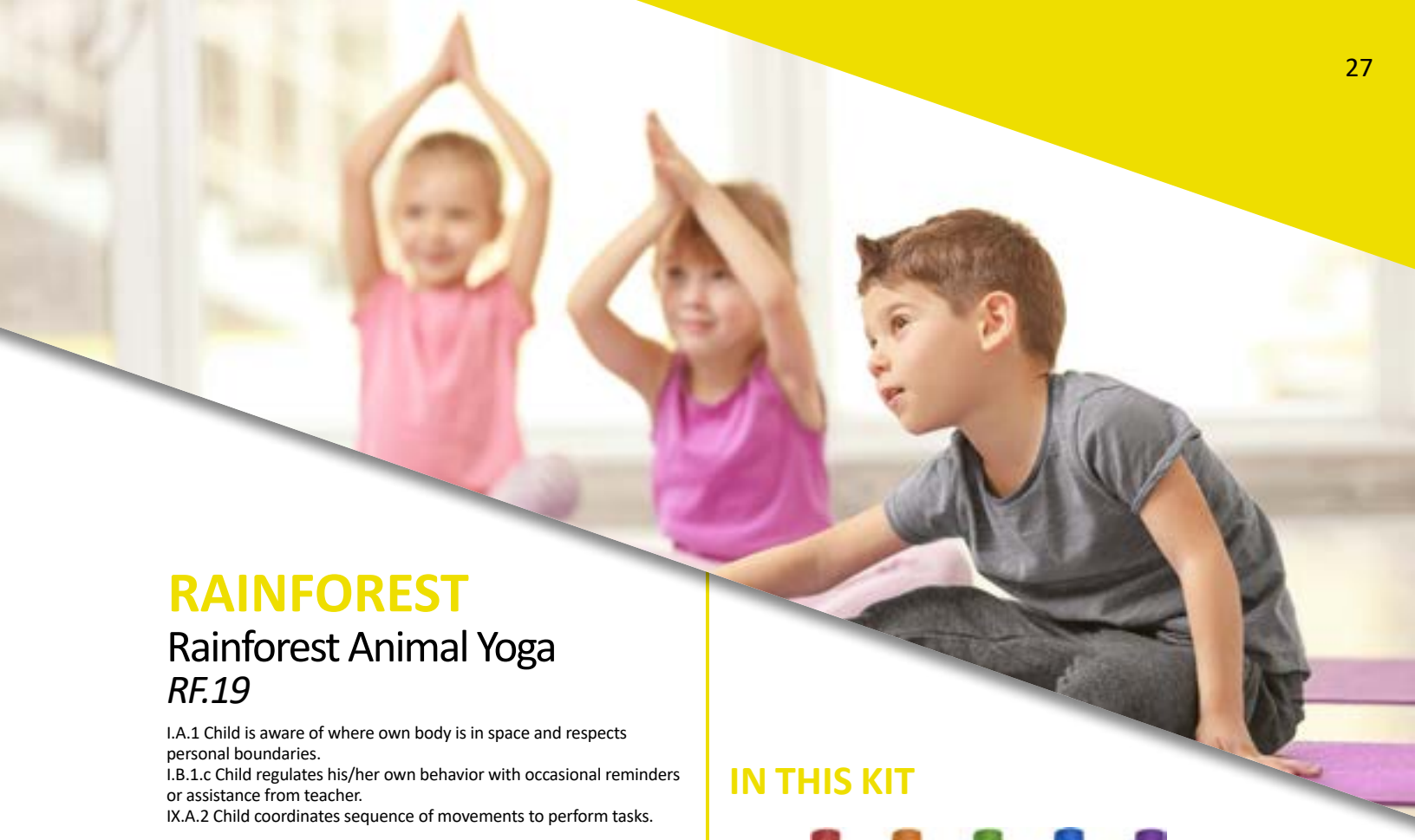
- Incorporate animal sounds in adaptations of charades.
- Incorporate animal movements into routines and transitions. For example, ask students to hop like a kangaroo over to a learning center or fly like a hawk to the lunch table.

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RAINFOREST

Rainforest Animal Yoga

RF.19

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 helps 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

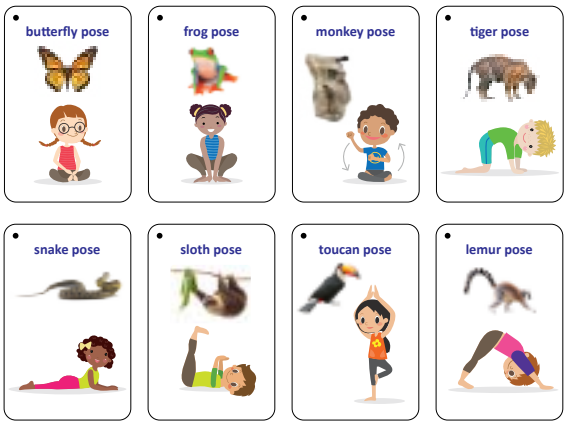
1. Yoga in the classroom is wonderful as it can be used in many different ways. As a large group activity, provide students with an item that designates their personal space, such as a sticker or piece of paper. As a small group activity, pass out individual yoga mats to work on specific body movements. 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 become accustomed to the routine and practice, slowly increase the amount of time engaged in a pose.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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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RAINFOREST

Digital Documentation

RF.20

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.

Digital tools can be creatively incorporated into early learning classrooms with guidance and education. A digital camera 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.

DIFFERENTIATION

- 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



De la Oruga a la Mariposa



Explore My World: Butterflies



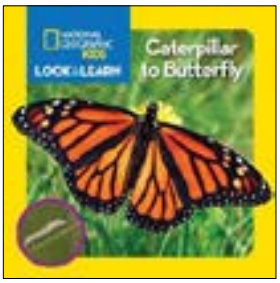
Explore My World: Rain Forests



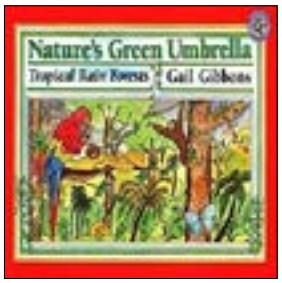
Hello World! Rainforest Animals



Little Kids First Big Book of the Rain Forest



Look and Learn: Caterpillar to Butterfly



Nature's Green Umbrella: Tropical Rain Forests



Secrets of the Rainforest



La Selva Amazónica



Who Grows Up In the Rain Forest?



Zonia's Rain Forest

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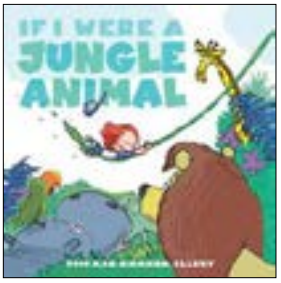
FICTION



Diez Amigos de la Jungle



I'm the Scariest Thing In the Jungle!



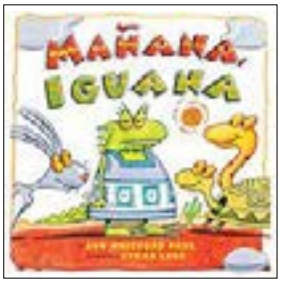
If I Were A Jungle Animal



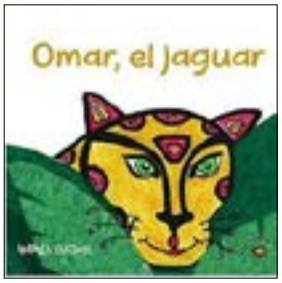
El Libro de la Selva



Malty the Blue Tiger/
Marita la Tigresita Azul



Mañana, Iguana



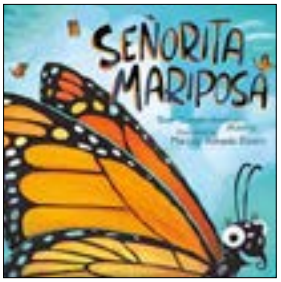
Omar, el Jaguar



Over In the Jungle: A Rainforest Rhyme



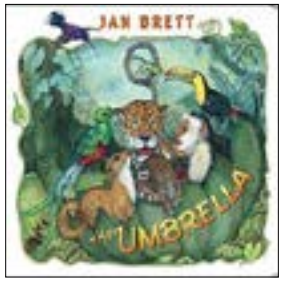
La Selva Creció



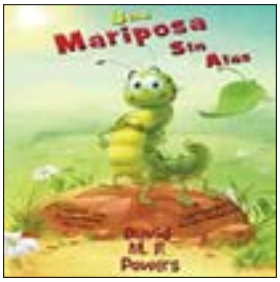
Señorita Mariposa



Thiago the Tiger and the Light Within



The Umbrella



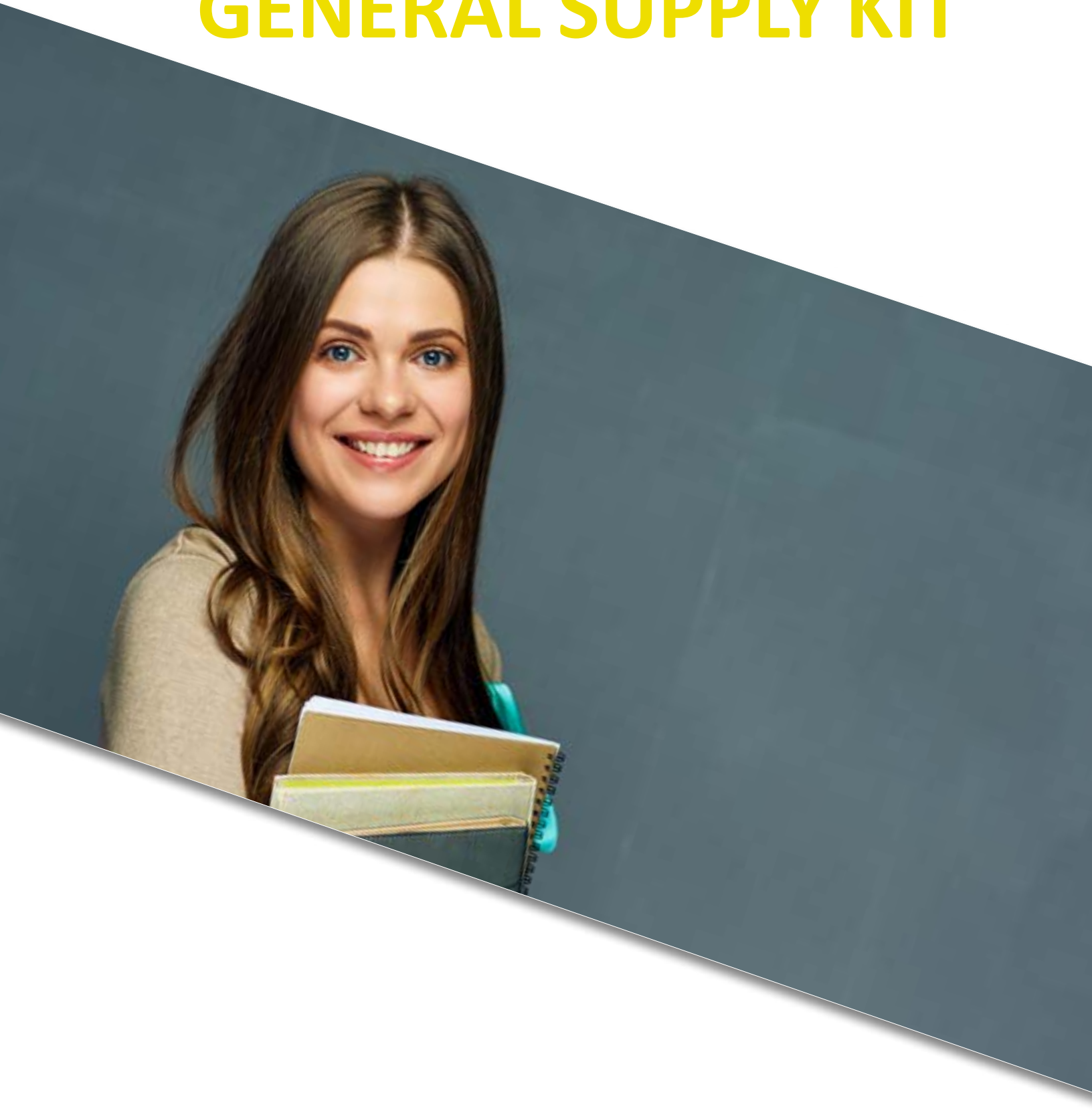
Una Mariposa Sin Alas



Waiting For Wings

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ASSESSMENT TOOLS



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RAINFOREST

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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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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General Observations

DATE	TIME	SKILL	OBSERVATIONS

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Picture Portfolio

Student:_____

Date:_____

Learning Center:_____

(Include photo or sample of student's work)

Notes:_____

_____

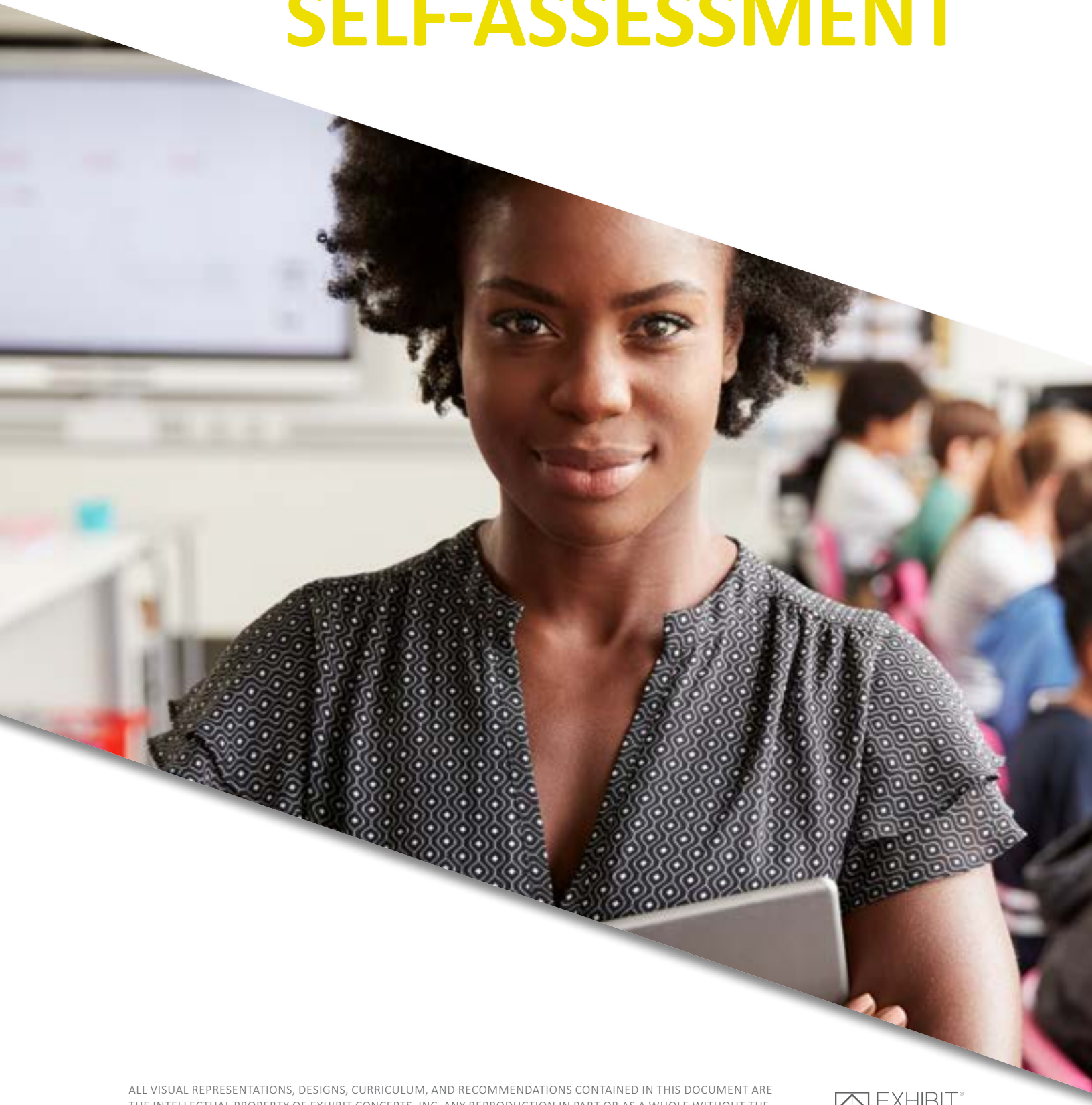
_____

_____

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TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT



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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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