

Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom
Topic of Study: Taking Care of Our World

***10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* by Melanie Walsh**
***Biscuits Earth Day Celebration* by Alyssa Satin Capucilli**
***The Earth and I* by Frank Asch**

Introduction

In this guide children are engaged in activities that primarily support two domains in the *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months: Emergent Literacy and Science and Technology*. The **Learning Goals** (with **Strands**) that precede each activity relate to specific areas of development and learning that are the focus of the activities.

Through the three featured books children are introduced to a variety of ways they can help take care of our world. In *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*, children are introduced to ten simple things we can all do to improve the world we live in. In *Biscuit's Earth Day Celebration*, children are invited to join Biscuit as he helps take care of our green world. Frank Asch's beautifully illustrated book, *The Earth and I*, is a story about a child's very special friendship with the Earth.

Teacher Note: *The terms world and earth are used interchangeably.*

Connection to Adventures in Learning

This curriculum guide can stand alone or some of the activities can be used as a supplement to the following topic of study in **Adventures in Learning Focus Areas and Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom Guides**:

- **Adventures in Learning**
 - Trees
 - Vegetables
 - Flowers
 - Birds
- **Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom**
 - Birds
 - Things that Grow and Will Not Grow
 - Growing Pumpkins

This curriculum guide can also be used with similar topics of study from any curriculum.

Materials to Collect and Make

- Nature magazines
- Pictures of things we see in our world: birds, trees, flowers, mountains, and lakes, for example
- 3-ring binder
- Clear sheet protectors

Teacher Note:

- *Refer to list of Recyclable Materials and Found Objects and choose from that list items you want to add to your classroom and outdoor environment, including Prop Boxes*
- *Refer to Adventures in Learning on the Better Beginnings website, Tips and Techniques, page 6, for a list of Prop Boxes.*
- *Review the materials in the Prop Boxes and determine which of the items listed can be a recyclable item. For example, can the cash register in the Supermarket be one that is donated or that you found at a carport or yard sale? Can most of the materials in the Office Prop Box be recycled items?*

Introducing and Concluding the Topic

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory, long-term memory*)

CD3.2 Engages in symbolic and abstract thinking (*abstract thinking*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

Introduction: Finding Out What Children Know about Taking Care of Our World

To introduce the topic of “Taking Care of Our World” you need to find out what children already know about the topic and what they want to know. This allows you to build on children’s experiences and helps create an interest in the topic. Here’s how to begin:

- Gather the children in a group. Say, “For the next few days we’re going to learn about things we can do to take care of our world.”
- Write on chart paper, chalk board or marker board the words “Taking Care of Our World.”
- Invite children to tell you things they know about taking care of our world. You may have to ask prompt questions such as “When you heard the words “world” what do you think this means?” “What are some things you think are in our world?” “What are some things we can do to take care of our world?”
- Show children pictures of things in our world such as trees, flowers, birds, mountains, and lakes and explain that these are all part of our world.
- Explain to children that sometime we say earth, instead of world and the two words mean the same thing.
- Make a list of things children know about taking care of our world.
- Make a list of things children would like to know about how they can help take care of our world.

Teacher Note: *Have three headings on the chart sheet. The first heading will be “What We Know about Taking Care of our World”, the second heading will be “What We Would Like to Know about Taking Care of Our World” and the third heading will be Things We Learned about Taking Care of Our World.”*

Taking Care of Our World

What We Know about Taking Care of Our World	What We Would Like to Know about Taking Care of Our World	Things We Learned about Taking Care of Our World

Conclusion: Finding Out What Children Have Learned about Taking Care of Our World

- Gather the children in a group at the conclusion of the topic of study about taking care of our world.
- Review with the children the information in the first two columns.
- Invite children to tell you some new things they have learned about taking care of our world. You may have to ask prompt questions such as, “Can you name some of the things we learned that we can do to help take care of our world?”
- Add a list of things children learned about taking care of our world in the third column.

Teacher Note: *This method of introducing and concluding the topic is known as KWL. What do children know, what do they want to know, and what did they learn.*

Story Presentations

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

LD2.1 Uses increasingly complex vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure (in child's home language) (*expressive vocabulary*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*nature and the environment*)

Book: *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* by Melanie Walsh

- Prepare to read the book, *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*.
- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the story and the illustrator is the one who draws the pictures. Melanie Walsh is both the author and the illustrator).
- Invite children to look at the cover and describe what they see (light bulb, birds, ladybugs, butterflies).
- Say, "Let's read and find out what these things have to do with our world."
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Explain some things in the story that children may not understand. For example, light bulbs use energy such as electricity. Discuss with them how they come to school and ask if they know any children who walk to school. Ask how they feel about using both sides of their paper on which to draw.
- Follow up the reading as follows:
Read the page that says "I remember..." and ask children what is remembered before turning the page to read what they remember.
- Continue showing the pages such as "I try ..." and "I always...." and invite children to recall what they try and so forth.
- Discuss with children that they will help make a list of the things they would like to do in their classroom to help take care of our world.

Teacher Notes:

- *Because of the possibility that this book could be damaged if not handled with care, consider explaining to children that this book is a teacher's book and that you will share this book with them when they and other children would like it read to them again.*
- *Keep the book with your special items and read with children who request it.*

Book: *Biscuit's Earth Day Celebration* by Alyssa Satin Capucilli

- Prepare to read the book, *Biscuit's Earth Day Celebration*.
- Take the book, *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*, to the reading area with you.
- Show children the cover of the book, *10 Things I Can Do Help My World*, and recall with them some of things they remembered about what they can do help our world. Explain that you will read a new book with them that includes some of these same things.
- Show the cover of the book, *Biscuit's Earth Day Celebration*, give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the book and the illustrator is the person who draws the pictures. Alyssa Satin Capucilli is both the author and the illustrator.)
- Explain that this book is a story about taking care of our earth, and that earth and world mean the same thing.
- Explain to children that Biscuit is celebrating Earth Day which is held on April 22 each year, but that we need to take care of our earth every day.
- Invite children to look at the cover and ask if they have read any other books about Biscuit.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Pause after reading each page, allowing children time to study the pictures and make comments or ask questions about what they see.
- Follow up the reading by inviting children to recall some of the same things in both books that children can do to help take care of our world. (turn off water when brushing teeth, feeding the birds, picking up trash, planting seeds)

Teacher Notes:

- *Explain to children that the book, Biscuit's Earth Day Celebration, will be in the Library Center so they can read it on their own or with other children.*

Book: *The Earth and I* by Frank Ash

- Prepare to read the book, *The Earth and I*.
- Show the cover and invite children to describe everything they see. (trees, plants, birds, fish, water, snail)
- Give the title, the author and illustrator of the book. (Explain that Frank Asch is both the author and the illustrator. He wrote the words and drew the pictures.)
- Show the title page and the dedication page and invite children to describe what they see.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Pause after reading or showing each page, allowing children time to study the pictures and make comments or ask questions about what they see.
- Follow up the reading by showing the pictures and reading the words again, pausing to ask questions about some of the things being read. For example:
"What do you think the boy is saying when he tells the earth what's on his mind?"
When showing the pages where it is raining and lightening, ask "What do you think the earth is saying?"
When showing the double spread pages that show the boy with a rake and the boy eating, ask "How do you think the boy helps the earth to grow and how does the earth help the boy grow?"
When showing the double spread pages that show litter, ask "Why do you think the earth and the boy are sad?" "What do you think can be done to make them happy?"
- Read the book to the end and allow children's honest reaction.
- Conclude by inviting children to discuss things they can do to make the earth happy.

Teacher Note: *Explain to children that this book will be in the Library Center for them to look at on their own with other children.*

Additional Language and Literacy Activities

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*nature and the environment*)

Taking Care of Our World

Draw or write on both sides of paper

Activity: Taking Care of Our World

- Take the three featured books to the group time area.
- Review the books with children, showing the pages, and stressing the things we can do to take care of our world.
- Invite children to discuss things we can do in our center, and specifically our classroom, to help take care of our world. Guide the discussion by involving children in explaining how we can do the things they suggest.
- Record on a chart sheet the things that you and the children agree can realistically be done in your classroom.
- Illustrate the list with drawings, pictures and/or photos and post on the wall.
- Use this list as a guide for the activities in which you and children are doing to help take care of our world.
- Refer to the list as a reminder when needed.

Teacher Notes:

- *Make the list to reflect what you and the children can do on a daily basis.*
- *Send home the list if this is something you think would be accepted by your families.*
- *If you have picking up and discarding trash as one of the things your children chose to do, avoid using plastic bags as a receptacle for the trash. Instead, consider using a box that has been recycled.*

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge, print knowledge*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*nature and the environment*)

Activity: Writing a Story about Taking Care of Our World

- Take photos of children involved in the "taking care of our world", activities in which you and the children are involved.
- Involve the children in developing a story about the activities. For example, if they are involved in planting a vegetable garden, take pictures of this activity and create a page for the book that shows the process.
- Attach pictures to a page, invite children to dictate what they are doing, and record what they say at the bottom of the page. You may decide to create more than one page about the activity.
- Place the page(s) in a sleeve protector and add to a 3-ring binder.
- Involve children in reading with you what has been written.
- Create a cover page for the binder. Include the title of the story, the name of the photographer, and the author(s).
- Add additional pages that reflect different activities.
- Place the book in the Library Center or Discovery Center where children can look at it on their own.
- Share the book with families.

Taking Care of Our World

Photos by
Mrs. Smith

Authors:
Mrs. Smith's Class

We planted a
vegetable garden!

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language (*rhyme*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*living things*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art materials (*exploration of art*)

Activity: Create a Mural – How We Are Taking Care of Our World

- Provide crayons, markers, scissors, glue, and nature magazines or pictures of items that you have cut out.
- On a large sheet of butcher paper write “How We Are Taking Care of Our World.”
- Show the paper to the children and explain that they are going to help create a mural, which is a large picture that will be posted on the wall.
- Read the title of the mural with the children and explain that they can draw a picture, cut out pictures from magazines, or use precut pictures that show how they are taking care of our world.
- Suggest that they write their name or invite you to write it next to what they have added to the mural, and that they can dictate to you what they chose to add to the mural and why they chose it.
- Post the completed mural on the wall.
- Invite families to look at the mural and read what the children have written, especially their child.

Teacher Note:

- Consider allowing children to work on the mural for several days.
- Encourage each child to add to the mural, but respect a child's choice to not participate.

Learning Environment

Library Center

- Add the following books:
Biscuit's Earth Day
The Earth and I

Discovery Center

- Book by the children, *Taking Care of Our World*
- Nature magazines

Art Center

- Refer to the attachment, Recyclable Materials and Found Objects for a list of Items for Creative Art.
- Add and rotate these materials to support your current Topic of Study and the interests and developmental needs of the children.

Dramatic Play Center

- Refer to the attachment, Recyclable Materials and Found Objects for a list of recycled items to collect.
- Add and rotate these materials to support your current Topic of Study and interests of the children.

Block Center

- Tree cookies (blocks or discs): a variety of sizes of cross cut sections of hardwood trees, including the bark.
- Mailing tubes (for tunnels and ramps)
- Blueprints
- Blocks made out of boxes

Outdoor Environment

Teacher Notes:

- *Below are examples of activities from the Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom, Topic of Study, Birds that support this guide, Taking Care of Our Environment.*

Learning Goal:

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*living things, nature and the environment*)

Feed the Birds

- Discuss with children that birds need food to help them grow.
- Involve children in putting bird seed in a bird feeder and keeping it filled.
- Hang the feeder from a tree on the playground or a tree close enough to the playground for children to see.
- Take a bird chart and pencils outdoors and encourage children to make a check mark when they see a bird listed on the chart.

Water for the Birds

- Attract birds to the playground in the summer by offering them water.
- Purchase a birdbath and involve children in adding water to it, or putting water in a large, flat pan.
- Place the container in an out-of-the way corner of the playground, preferably under a tree so the water does not evaporate so quickly.

Teacher Note:

- *Here is an additional activity from Adventures in Learning - #8 Animals, Topic of Study: Birds:*
 - *Collect materials birds use to build their nests: twigs, small sticks, stems, straw, bits of brightly colored yarn and string, grass, feathers.*
 - *Explain to children that the items will be placed on the playground to see if birds take any of them to build their nests.*

Transition Activities

Learning Goal:

CD2.2 Shows flexibility in adjusting thinking and behavior to different contexts (*adjusting behavior to match context*)

Things I Can Do to Help My World

- Prepare a list of things from the featured books that children can do to help take care of their world.
- Use the items on the list as follows:
Say, "I remember to turn off the lights when..." and invite a child to complete the statement which is "when I leave the room."
- Continue with other examples such as:
"I try to remember to turn off the tap water...." "when I brush my teeth."
"I always throw..." "my trash away."
- Continue this activity until each child has transitioned to the next activity.

Family Connection and Engagement

- Send home a note to families explaining that children have been learning about taking care of our world.
- Review the handout, Memo to Families, to determine if it is appropriate to send to your families. If not, consider developing a memo of your own.

Additional Books

Don't Throw That Away by Lara Bergen, illustrated by Betsy Snyder

Earth Day: An Alphabet Book by Gary Kowalski

Earth Day by Trudi Strain Trueit

Earth Day Every Day by Lisa Bullard, illustrated by Xiao Xin

This Is Our World by Emily Sallinger, illustrated by Jo Brown