

**Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom**  
**Topic of Study: Signs of Spring**

*Everything Spring* by Jill Esbaum  
*When Spring Comes* by Kevin Henkes, illustrated by Laura Dronzek  
*Animals in Spring* by Martha E. H. Rustad, Gail Saunders-Smith, PhD, Consulting Editor

**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.

There are three major themes that run through the three featured books: weather, animals, and things that grow. Two of the books are considered informational books; *Everything Spring* and *Animals in Spring*, and *When Springs Comes* is a storybook.

**Teacher Note:** *Plan this topic in spring so that children can easily observe signs of spring.*

**Connection to Adventures in Learning**

This curriculum guide can stand alone or be used as a supplement to the following:

**Adventures in Learning**

- Focus Area #6: Physical and Earth Science - Topics of Study
  - Rain
  - Water
  - Air and Wind
- Focus Area #7: Things that Grow – Topics of Study
  - Animals on the Farm
  - Animals in the Woods
  - Frogs and Turtles
  - Caterpillars, Butterflies, Worms and Insects
  - Crickets, Ladybugs and Spiders
  - Birds

**Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom**




- Birds
- Things that Grow and Do Not Grow
- New Babies
- Animals that Hatch from Eggs
- Animals on the Farm
- Bubbles
- Shadows

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

## Materials to Collect and Make

- Rain sticks (purchased or teacher made)
- Chart Sheet titled Signs of Spring divided into 3 sections with the following illustrated headings:  
Weather  
Animals  
Things that Grow


**Teacher Note:** Add a drawing or picture to each heading to give children a clue as what to add to each section.

<b>Signs of Spring</b>		
<b>Weather</b>	<b>Animals</b>	<b>Things that Grow</b>
		

- A picture representing each of the four seasons.
- Create charts for the following rhymes (see Additional Language and Literacy Experiences section):
  - Showers
  - The Rain
  - Rainy Day
  - Little Seeds

- Create a Baby Animals in Spring booklet as follows:
  - Collect pictures/photos of the following baby animals: fawn, nestling, piglet, duckling, tadpole, chick, kitten and lamb
  - Add a page for each animal, or if pictures are small, include more than one animal on a page. Write under each a sentence about that animal. For example:  
A fawn is a baby deer.  
A nestling is a baby bird that has not learned to fly.

\*Put each page in a clear page protector and add to a 3-ring binder.



**Showers**

Squelch and squirt and squiggle,  
Drizzle and drip and drain-  
Such a lot of water  
Comes down with the rain.

Marchette Chute

## 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: Signs of Spring

- Take the chart, Signs of Spring, and pictures representing the four seasons to the book reading area as you plan to read the first book, *When Spring Comes*.
- Show the four seasons pictures to the children, one by one, and briefly explain each one to children as follows:  
“We have four seasons called spring, summer, fall and winter. In the summer, it is real hot. We sometimes wear shorts and we swim in a lake or pool.  
In the fall, it is cooler than summer. The leaves of some trees change colors from green to yellow, gold and brown, and they fall to the ground.  
In winter, it is really cold and we wear coats and jackets. Sometimes we have snow and ice.  
In spring, the weather begins to get warmer, we see green leaves on the trees and we see baby animals such as ducklings.”
- Say, “For the next few days we are going to be reading stories about signs of spring and looking for signs of spring. We are going to write on this chart signs of spring we read about and see.”

Signs of Spring		
Weather	Animals	Things that Grow
		

### Conclusion: Reviewing the Signs of Spring

- Gather the children in a group at the conclusion of the topic of study about signs of spring.
- Show the three books that were read about Signs of Spring.
- Recall that we recorded signs of spring we read about and we observed.
- Invite children to recall some things they remembered in each of the three categories and point those out on the chart.
- Review the entire chart with the children.

## 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)**

**ST2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of core science ideas and concepts (stability and change)**

**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)**

**Book:** *When Spring Comes* by Kevin Henkes, illustrated by Laura Dronzek

- Prepare to read the book, *When Spring Comes*
- 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.)
- Show children the pages directly behind the book cover and invite children to tell you what they see: (flowers, baby birds, raindrops, umbrellas, rain boots, kites, butterflies, rain boots, bees, kitten). Explain that these are all signs of spring.
- Remind children that they are to be looking for signs of spring in the story.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the reading by involving children as follows:
  - Show the chart, Signs of Spring, review the 3 headings and explain that you will show the pages, children are to look for sign of spring and you will record them in the correct column.
  - Read each page, pausing on those that show signs of spring, and invite children to identify those signs and decide in which column to place them. Record in the correct column.
  - Here is an example with the signs of spring underlined.  
But, if you wait, Spring will bring leaves and blossoms.
  - Additional signs:  
Weather: snow melting, sun, rain, wind  
Animals: bird hatching, kittens, bees, worms  
Things that Grow: leaves, blossoms, green grass, flowers, seeds grow, buds, plants
- Say to children that summer is the season that follows spring. Show children the two pages directly in front of the back cover and invite children to tell you what signs of summer they see (flowers, watermelon slices, ear of corn, flip-flops, beach ball, sail boats, popsicles, strawberries, blueberries, sand bucket, fireworks).

**Teacher Note:** Support children as they identify the signs of spring and of summer on the pages on the inside and outside covers of the book by pointing to items they may not have seen or recognized.

**Book:** *Everything Spring* by Jill Esbaum

- Prepare to read the book, *Everything Spring*, a National Geographic KIDS book by Jill Esbaum.
- Show the cover, give title, and author. Explain that a number of people took the pictures that are on the cover and in the book.
- Show page 1 and ask children how they think the boy with the chicken on his head feels. How would they feel if they had a chicken on their head? How do they think the chicken got on the boy's head?
- Read the pages as you show the pictures, allowing children enough time to see the details in the pictures.
- Call attention to the names of the baby animals. For example: fawn/baby deer, nestlings/baby birds, bunnies/baby rabbits, ducklings/baby ducks, chicks/baby chickens, piglets/baby pigs, lambs/baby sheep, tadpoles/baby frogs,.
- Follow up the reading by involving children as follows:
  - Show the chart, Signs of Spring, review the 3 headings and explain that you will show the pages, children are to look for signs of spring and you will record them in the correct column.
  - Read each page, pausing on those that show signs of spring, and invite children to identify these signs and decide in which column to place them. Record in the correct column.

**Book:** *Animals in Spring* by Martha E. H. Rustad, Gail Saunders-Smith, PhD, Consulting Editor (**Small Group**)

- Prepare to read the book, *Animals in Spring*. Review the Glossary on page 22 for definitions of some of the words that may not be familiar to children.
- Gather a small group of children (4 to 6) in the book reading area,
- Show the cover, and give the title. Explain that a number of people took the pictures that are on the cover and in the book.
- Invite children to describe what they see on the cover. Do they say they see ducklings? Do they remember that on the cover of the book, *Everything Spring*, a duckling is hatching from an egg? Show that book to the children.
- Show page 4, read the words and invite children to describe what they see in the picture.
- Show page 6 and read the words. Refer to the Glossary, showing it to children and explain to them that the glossary gives us information that we may not know. Run your hand under the word “den” and continue as you read the definition “a den is where a wild animal may live. Bears live in dens, especially in the winter when it’s cold. They come out of their dens when the weather begins to be warmer.”
- On page 8, read the words and invite children to describe what they see in the picture. Again refer to the Glossary and read the definitions of hive, nectar and pollen to children.
- Continue reading the story to children, referring to the Glossary when appropriate.
- Follow up the reading by involving children as follows
  - Show the chart, Signs of Spring, review the 3 headings and explain that you will show the pages of the book, children are to look for signs of spring, and you will record them in the correct column.
  - Read each page, pausing on those that show signs of spring, and invite children to identify those signs and decide in which column to place them. Record in the correct column.

**Teacher Note:** *Read this book with small groups of children if possible. Assure children that each will have a turn to hear the story, and follow through with this assurance.*

### 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, follows directions*)

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

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

**Activity: Signs of Spring Rhymes**

- Include the following rhymes into your daily schedule, using when appropriate: for example as you are introducing a story to the children, or as a transition to move children from one activity to another.
- Show rhyme chart as you are saying the rhyme.
- Repeat the rhymes so that children can recite them with you.
- Post the chart on the wall at child’s eye level. Observe to see if children look at the charts and attempt to say any of the rhymes. Join children and say the rhymes with them.

**Showers**

Squelch and squirt and squiggle,  
Drizzle and drip and drain-  
Such a lot of water  
Comes down with the rain.  
Marchette Chute

**Teacher Notes:**

- *When words such as squelch, squirt, squiggle, and drizzle, drip and drain begin with the same sound, this is called “alliteration.”*
- *Have children recite the rhyme with you and call their attention to the words that begin with the same sound.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Rain</b>  Rain on the green grass,  And rain on the tree.  And rain on the housetop,  But not upon me!  Anonymous</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rainy Day</b>  I do not like a rainy day,  The road is wet, the sky is gray.  They dress me up from head to toes,  In lots and lots of rubber clothes.  I wish the sun would come and stay,  I do not like a rainy day.  William Wise</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Big Turtle</b>  A big turtle sat on the end of a log,  Watching a tadpole turn into a frog.  Anonymous</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Little Seeds</b>  Little seeds we sow in spring,  growing while the robins sing,  give us carrots, peas, and beans,  tomatoes, pumpkins, squash and greens.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And we pick them,  one and all,  through the summer,  through the fall.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Winter comes, then spring, and then  little seeds we sow again.  Else Holmelund Minarik</p>

**Teacher Notes:**

- Encourage children to listen for the rhyming words in each of the rhymes, words such as tree and me, day and gray, etc.
- Explain to children that in the rhyme, Little Seeds, the word sow means to plant.
- The rhymes listed here can be found in *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young* selected by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by Marc Brown

**Learning Goals:**

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

**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 (living things)**

**Activity: Baby Animals in the Spring**

- Plan this activity after you have read the book, *Everything Spring*, to the children.
- Show children the cover of the book, *Everything Spring*. Remind them that lots of baby animals are born in spring and you need their help to name the baby animals.
- Show page 3 and say, “If you were a baby deer you would be called a \_\_\_\_\_.” (fawn)
- Run your finger under the word “fawn” and invite children to read the word with you.
- Continue this as follows, running your finger under the word and inviting children to read the word with you.
  - Page 4: baby bird that cannot fly - nestling
  - Page 6: baby rabbit – bunny
  - Page 7: baby duck – duckling
  - Page 8 – baby pig – piglet
  - Page 9 – baby sheep - lamb
  - Page 10 & 11: baby frog - tadpole

## Learning Environment

### Library Center

- Add the following books:
  - *When Spring Comes*
  - *Everything Spring*
  - *Animals in Spring*
  - *Babies in Spring* (teacher-made book)

### Discovery Center

#### **Learning Goals:**

**ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information** (*observations, questions, and predictions*)

**ST2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of core science ideas and concepts** (*stability and change*)

#### **Exploring Rain**

- Use large thumbtacks to poke holes in the bottom of paper cups.
- Place the cups and a small plastic pitcher of water in a tub or pan.
- Observe children to see what they do with the cups and the water. Do they pour the water in the cups?
- Encourage them to hold the cup up and see what happens. (water trickles out of holes and looks like rain as it falls into the tub.)
- Ask children what they think would happen if they held the cup higher. Did it change anything?
- Provide a place for children to put cups to dry after play so they can be used again.

### Art Center

#### **Learning Goals:**

**PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools** (*writing and drawing tools, scissors*)

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

#### **Create a Signs of Spring Mural**

- Divide a large sheet of butcher paper into three sections. Label the mural Signs of Spring and label the sections as follows: Weather, Animals, and Things that Grow. Attach to each section a drawing or picture to indicate what is to be added.
- Provide magazines that have pictures of signs of spring.
- Have available markers, crayons, colored pencils, safety scissors, glue, tape, and scraps of paper in spring colors such as pink, green and yellow
- Invite children to help create a signs of spring mural.
  - Involve them in discussing signs of spring they have been reading about and seeing outdoors.
  - Explain that they can work on this activity for three to five days. They can draw and cut out their own pictures or they can cut out pictures of signs of spring and attach to the mural.
  - Suggest that they invite their families to look at the mural and to tell them about some of the signs of spring, especially the ones they have added.

### **Dramatic Play Center**

- Add a rainy day prop box with a raincoat, rain boots, and a rain hat.

### **Spring Cleaning**

- Explain to children that in spring, some people do “spring cleaning.” This is when they give their house a really good cleaning.
- Say to children, “I think our Dramatic Play Center needs a good spring cleaning.”
- Provide cleaning items such as rags, empty spray bottles, and a child-size broom.
- Provide two small tubs, one with soapy water and one with clean water for washing, rinsing, and dish clothes for drying the dishes in the center.

### **Teacher Notes:**

- *Consider placing the two tubs in the Water Play Center instead of the Dramatic Play Center.*
- *Consider involving children in spring cleaning in some of the centers. For example, take all of the puzzles and other manipulatives off the shelves and have children dust the shelves.*
- *Look at your playground. Does it need spring cleaning? If so, involve children in this activity.*

### **Music Center**

- Add rain sticks, either teacher made or purchased
- Guide children to create a gentle rain by moving the sticks slowly and a downpour by shaking them.

**Teacher Note:** *You may choose to introduce rain sticks to children before placing them in the Music Center; for example, after reading the book, *When Spring Comes*.*

### **Physical Activity (either indoors or outdoors)**

- Involve children in this activity if you have a parachute and children are accustomed to being involved in parachute play.
- Explain to children that in the spring it sometimes rains lightly and have them slowly move the chute up and down.
- State that sometimes there is a hard rain and have them shake the chute a lot.
- Conclude the activity by saying, “Sometimes there is no rain at all” as they lay the chute on the floor or ground.

**Teacher Note:** *When children lay the chute on the floor or ground, consider this as a transition activity that can calm children down from active play and as a way for the teacher to take control of the parachute.*

### **Outdoor Environment**

#### **Learning Goals:**

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

**ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information** (*observations, questions, and predictions*)

**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*)

#### **Signs of Spring Walk**

- Attach a sheet of paper to a clipboard and write at the top of the paper Signs of Spring.
- Explain to children that we are going to go on a walk around the playground and/or neighborhood looking for signs of spring and that you will record what they say. Remind them to use their seeing eyes and listening ears.
- Review with them some of the signs of spring we read about before embarking on the walk.
- Record what children say. Some examples may include: leaves on the trees, leaves moving in the breeze, flowers blooming, green grass, worms crawling, birds chirping or singing, bees buzzing.
- Read the list back to the children as you sit under a tree or when you return to the classroom.



## Transition Activities

### Learning Goal:

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

- Recite the following rhyme as you move children from one activity to another; activities such as moving them into learning centers or outside to the playground.
- Substitute each child's name into the rhyme.
- Involve children in saying the rhyme with you.

**Rain, Rain, Go Away**  
Rain, rain, go away,  
Come again another day,  
Little (child's name) wants to play.

## Family Connection and Engagement

- Communicate with families that children have been learning about signs of spring and list some of the signs that families may be able to observe in their backyard or neighborhood.
- Suggest that families take a walk in their backyard, neighborhood or a near-by park and look for signs of spring. Take along a pad of paper or a note card and record the signs of spring that are observed. Upon returning home, read with your child what you have written.
- Give to families a list of books about signs of spring, especially those that were presented to the children. Suggest that they check the books out of their local library and read them with their children.

## Additional Books

*Clifford's Spring Cleanup* by Norman Bridwell

*Its Spring* by Linda Glaser

*Listen to the Rain* by Bill Martin, Jr. & John Archambault, illustrated by James Endicott

*Umbrella* by Taro Yashima

*Weather Words and What Do They Mean* by Gail Gibbons