



Investigation Garden

Open-ended investigations are wonderful for young children's science learning.

Let children plan and plant their own garden in a window box. Place soil in the box, and invite children to make suggestions for what to plant in the soil. Encourage them to use their imagination—in addition to seeds (such as apple seeds, beans, and fruit pits), children might also like to plant a marble, a crayon, or an eraser. Plant the seeds and other objects in the soil, and mark each spot with a craft stick labeled with the name of the seed or object. Place your garden in a sunny window, water regularly, and see what sprouts! Encourage children to observe that seeds grow living plants, whereas the other objects do not. Give students copies of the flower pattern, and have them record or dictate their observations on the back. Encourage them to add illustrations of the garden. Provide a new flower pattern for each day of observation.

Standards

- Knows that living things and nonliving objects are different
- Knows the basic needs of plants, such as air, water, and light

Seed Sort & Seed Art

Seeds are great materials for both math and art activities.

Collect a variety of seeds, such as apple seeds, sunflower seeds, and birdseed mix. Then try these ideas:

- ✓ Give children an assortment of seeds and several copies of the pattern. Work with them to label each flower with a different attribute, such as brown, black, oval, or round. Then have children sort the seeds onto the center circle of each flower, explaining their reasoning as they go.
- ✓ Use seeds to create beautiful mosaics. Give each child a copy of the pattern and an assortment of

Standards

- Sorts objects based on observable properties
- Uses a variety of materials to create works of art

seeds. Invite children to glue their seeds onto the flower shape any way they wish. They might use a different type of seed for each part of the flower (center, petals, stem, leaves), or create patterns. When dry, hang their mosaics on the wall for a beautiful display.

Look How We re Growing!

Build children's self-concept with an adorable springtime display.

Set up a bulletin board by cutting an oblong strip of green paper to fit across the bottom; cut slits to make grasslike fringe. Give your board a title, such as "Watch Us Grow!" Then give each child a copy of the flower pattern to decorate (have them leave the center blank). Collect a photo of each child (taken in school), cut to fit inside the flower's center, and paste each in the circle to cover the flower's face. (If using photos from home, let families know that the photos will be cut for an art project.) Finally, "plant" your flowers in a row in the "grass" on the bulletin board. Keep a supply of notecards near the board. Post each child's most recent accomplishment across the leaves on his or her flower—for instance, "Carlos learned to tie his shoes." This is a great way to let children know that "growing" is also about learning!

Standards

- Displays positive self-esteem and confidence in abilities
- Understands own stages of growth



Book Links

Alison's Zinnia by Anita Lobel (Greenwillow, 1990). Learn an alphabet of flower names from A to Z.

Flower Garden by Eve Bunting (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1994). A girl grows a garden in a window high above her city street.

Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988). This cyclical story describes growing a garden from seed to flower each year.