

Teacher Candidate: Bayan Haleem

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LESSON INFORMATION
<p><u>Title:</u> Trees and Nature Sensory Exploration</p> <p><u>Topic:</u> Exploring parts of tree and nature</p> <p><u>Subject:</u> Nature</p> <p><u>Integrated Subject:</u> Physical Movement and Language Development</p> <p><u>Grade:</u> Infant/Toddler</p> <p><u>Time/duration:</u> 20–25 minutes</p>
OBJECTIVES & STANDARDS
<u>Objectives:</u>
<p>The students should be able to:</p> <p><u>Primary Objective(s):</u> When given nature materials in sensory bins, toddlers will explore at least two materials by touching, picking, or moving between the bins with 80% participation.</p> <p><u>Supporting Objective(s):</u> Toddlers will try and either speak verbally or point to at least one nature item or a texture with the teacher prompting them.</p>
<u>Rationale:</u>
<p>Why this activity? I chose this activity because toddlers learn best through hands-on sensory experiences and exploration. My activity, Nature Sensory Exploration, allows children to touch, feel, and explore different materials, such as leaves, pinecones, grass, and sticks. For infants and toddlers, children are developing their understanding of their surroundings, language, and motor skills. This will help develop these skills by allowing them to move between bins, explore textures, and use their senses.</p> <p>Why this activity <i>now</i>? This activity is appropriate because at this age, toddlers are curious about the world and environment around them. They are very observant and like exploring new textures and materials. When the weather becomes warmer and children go outside more and spend time outdoors, they will see, feel, and smell real materials.</p>

Standards:

FE 1 (Infant–Toddler): Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth–Age 3

Children will explore and understand their environment through sensory experiences and active exploration.

Cognitive Development: Children will explore and understand their **environment** through sensory experiences and active exploration.

Language Development, Communication, and Literacy: Children will demonstrate their understanding of words and use language to describe objects and **experiences**.

Health and Physical Development: Children will develop control and **coordination** of small and large muscles through movement and exploration.

ASSESSMENT

Lesson Assessment:

Performance Task	Hands-on sensory exploration activity. Toddlers will interact with nature materials by touching, picking up, or moving between sensory bins.
Primary Objective(s);	When given nature materials in sensory bins, toddlers will explore at least two materials by touching, picking up, or moving between bins with 80% participation.
Evidence of Learning	The child explores at least two nature materials by touching, picking up, or moving between the different bins. The child can point out when the teacher names the item as well.
Documentation	The teacher will record mastery using an observation checklist and anecdotal notes during the activity to document each child’s interaction and participation

Anecdotal Template:

Participation	Understanding	Areas for Improvement	Notable Achievements
Explored leaves and grass	When object was mentioned looked at teacher	Needed reassurance to move to other bins	Pointed to the leaf
Picked up pinecones	Touched objects with different textures	Needed help identifying objects	Stayed engaged and curious in activity
Moved between different bins	Explored leaves and sticks	Needed reminders to stay by bins	Showed curiosity
Touched flowers and grasS	Looked at materials that were names and talked about	None	Smiled and asked and answered questionS

xxx Lesson Anecdotal Record Notes

Primary Objective: When given nature materials in sensory bins, toddlers will explore at least two materials by either touching, picking, or moving between different bins with 80% participation

MATERIALS

Materials:

Teacher Materials:

Leaves
Grass
Flowers
Sticks
Pinecones
Sensory bins
Observation checklist
Anecdotal notes sheet
Tray or mat for placing materials
Hand wipes or paper towels (for cleanup)
Labels or picture cards (leaf, tree, grass)
Basket or container to hold materials

Student Materials:

Access to sensory bins with nature materials inside
Space to move, crawl, or walk between bins
Soft mat or carpet area for safe exploration
Optional: small scoops or cups to pick up materials

CONTENT

Research-Based Strategies:

Strategy 1: Clear directions

Summary: Provide clear and simple directions with young children. Toddlers understand instructions better when they are simple and short. Modeling and gestures are helpful as well to let students copy and get a better idea

Connection to Lesson: The teacher will give simple directions such as “Touch the leaf,” “Feel the pinecone”, or “move to the next bin.” Directions will be given during the intro and while children are exploring the bins.

Rationale: Young children understand language when it's basic, short, and clear. Providing simple directions helps toddlers stay focused and understand what is expected of them.

Strategy 2: Modeling

Summary: Modeling is where the teachers demonstrate the action before children try on their own. This strategy helps young children understand what to do by watching the teacher.

Connection to Lesson: Before letting children explore the sensory bins, the teacher will model touching the objects and describing them. The teacher will touch the leaf and say, “This leaf feel sort, or pick up the pinecone and say, “this feels spiky or rough.”

Rationale: Toddlers learn through observations and imitation so when the teacher models the activity first, children will feel more ready and know what is expected of them.

Academic Language/Vocabulary:

Academic Language/Vocabulary

- **Leaf:** A green part of a plant that grows on trees and plants
- **Grass:** A green plant that grows from the ground
- **Pinecone:** A brown cone that falls from pine trees
- **Soft:** Something that feels smooth or gentle
- **Rough:** Something that feels bumpy
- **Nature:** Things that come from outside, like plants, trees, and the environment around us
- **Tree:** A tall plant with a trunk, branches, and leaves
- **Dirt/Soil:** The ground where plants grow
- **Sun:** Gives light and helps plants grow
- **Rain/Water:** Helps plants grow
- **Wind:** Air that moves and can blow leaves

LESSON PROCEDURES

Anticipatory Set/Motivating Activity:

1. The teacher will bring the children to the sensory exploration area where the bins with nature materials are already placed on the floor.
2. The teacher will sit with the children near the bins and allow them to start looking and exploring.
3. The teacher will grab a material from the bin and say, “Look at what we have today!”
4. The teacher will hold up an item and ask what it is.
5. The teacher will allow the children to touch the materials and ask simple questions like what it looks like and how it feels.
6. The teacher will connect the materials to real life by saying, “We see leaves and grass outside when we come into school.”
7. The teacher will explain what they will be doing and what they should pay attention to during the activity.

Direct Instruction/Modeling: (I do) Teach 1

Direct Instruction/Modeling (I do) – Teach 1

1. The teacher will gather the children near the sensory bins where the nature materials are placed.
2. The teacher will pick up one material, such as a leaf, and show it to the children.
3. The teacher will model exploration by touching the leaf and saying, “This is a leaf. It feels soft.” The teacher will add, “Leaves come from trees.”
4. The teacher will pick up another material, such as a pinecone, and say, “This pinecone feels rough. It also comes from a tree.”
5. The teacher will demonstrate how to gently touch and explore the materials using their hands.
6. The teacher will ask guiding questions such as:
“How does it feel?”
“Is it soft or rough?”
“What do you see?”
“Where do you think this came from?”
“Do you see leaves or trees at school?”
“Do you see them at your house?”
7. The teacher will introduce simple growth ideas by saying, “Trees and plants grow outside. They need dirt, sun, rain, and air to grow.”
8. The teacher will encourage the children to observe the materials closely and think about the different textures and where they come from.
9. The teacher will explain that the children will now explore the bins and touch the different nature materials.

Guided Practice: (We do) Teach 2

1. The teacher will invite the children to explore the sensory bins together.
2. The teacher will encourage the children to touch and pick up the nature materials.
3. The teacher will guide the children by saying, “Let’s explore the bins together.”
4. The teacher will ask guiding questions such as, “What do you feel?” “Is it soft or rough?” and “What do you see?”
5. The teacher will help children move between the bins and explore different materials.
6. The teacher will model language by describing the materials, for example, “The leaf is soft,” or “The pinecone feels rough.”
7. The teacher will connect the materials to real-life experiences by saying, “We see leaves and grass when we play outside.”
8. The teacher will support children who need help and encourage them to explore more than one material.

Collaboration (you do together) Teach 3

AND/OR

Independent Practice: (You do alone) Teach 3

1. The teacher will allow the children to explore the sensory bins independently.
2. The children will move between the bins and choose the nature materials they want to explore.
3. The children will touch, pick up, and observe the different materials such as leaves, grass, pinecones, and sticks.
4. The teacher will observe the children while they explore and allow them to discover the materials on their own.
5. The teacher will continue asking simple guiding questions such as, “What does it feel like?” or “What do you see?”
6. The teacher will encourage children to explore more than one material and move between the bins.
7. The teacher will document each child’s participation and interaction with the materials using the observation checklist and anecdotal notes.

Closure:

1. The teacher will ask the children to come together near the sensory bins.
2. The teacher will hold up a few of the nature materials such as leaves, grass, or pinecones.
3. The teacher will ask the children simple questions like, “What did we touch today?” or “How did it feel?”
4. The teacher will encourage the children to point to or name the materials they explored.
5. The teacher will review the textures by saying words like “soft,” “rough,” and “smooth.”
6. The teacher will say, “Today we explored nature and felt different textures with our hands.”
7. The teacher will transition the children to the next classroom activity.

STUDENT DIVERSITY

Cultural Representation

The point of this lesson is to let students connect to their real-life experiences in their homes and communities and neighborhoods. Lots of children see nature materials like grass, leaves, flowers, and sticks when they play outside with families, or walk into school, or play in the park. Using real-life materials allows children from different backgrounds to connect back to their home experiences. It also lets children explore freely and have them in different ways, like pointing, using words, or touching. This helps all students explore and play without limiting them.

Accommodations for Individual Differences

UDL, Modifications (physical, visual, auditory, processing, cognitive differences)

To support all learners, I will use UDL strategies so that children can participate in different ways. The materials will be placed on the floor in large bins so children who crawl or walk can easily reach them.

For young toddlers, the teacher will give very simple directions and model how to explore by showing them how to touch and pick up the materials. The teacher may guide their hands to help them feel the texture. If needed, the teacher will move closer to the child, hand them items, and stay nearby to support their participation.

For older toddlers, the teacher will encourage more independent exploration and use simple questions like “How does this feel?” or “Can you find something soft?” to support thinking and language. The teacher will also repeat key vocabulary words such as soft, rough, and leaf to support auditory learners.

For children who need extra support, the teacher will provide prompting and physical guidance when needed. For children with language delays or different language backgrounds, they can point out or gesture instead of speaking.