

At Home Learning Guide for Discovery Preschoolers (2 years old)

Week of April 20, 2020



Typically, discovery preschoolers in our centers spend the month of April exploring the natural world through the theme of gardens. Even if you're at home, you and your child can do lots of fun and engaging things to learn about all the growth and change that come with spring.

A theme on **plants and gardens** may make you think it's only about science, but this week your child is encouraged to explore all areas of learning. In Creative Expression, they'll plant an imaginary garden in the palm of their hand and participate in a game of "Gardener Says," promoting their physical development.

Although one or two activities are presented for each day, repeating activities and repeated exposure to familiar materials are key components to developing your child's independent learning. As you go through the activities, keep materials in a basket or container for your child to access on their own throughout the week.

Developmental Domains are the areas of focus that support development of the whole child. Interested in learning more? Click [here](#) to discover the six developmental domains.

This Week's Theme: Plants and Gardens



What you'll find in this guide. . .

We've organized this content the way your child would be learning in their center, but you and your child can choose your own adventures and do the activities in any order.

MONDAY

Read with Me (Language and Literacy)

Books About Plants and Gardens

Books provide a rich opportunity for your child to make observations about plants and gardens, indoors or out.

Letter Search How many of one letter can you find around your home? Go on a letter hunt together and find out!



TUESDAY

Get the Wiggles Out (Physical Development and Wellness)

Gardener Says ... rake the leaves! This activity will get your child moving while sparking their imagination.



WEDNESDAY

Growing Flexible Brains (Executive Function)

What's Missing? Now you see it, now you don't! Can you tell what's missing?



THURSDAY

Express Yourself! (Creative Expression)

"This Is My Garden" Through a fun fingerplay, your child plants an imaginary garden in the palm of their hand.

Five Green and Speckled Frogs Find out what happens when five homemade frogs sit together on a log in this lively song!



FRIDAY

Get the Wheels Turning (Cognitive Development)

Garden Patterns Flower, leaf, flower, leaf—can you figure out what's next?



EVERYDAY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Pick an activity to weave learning experiences into your everyday routines—no preparation needed!



FOCUS ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

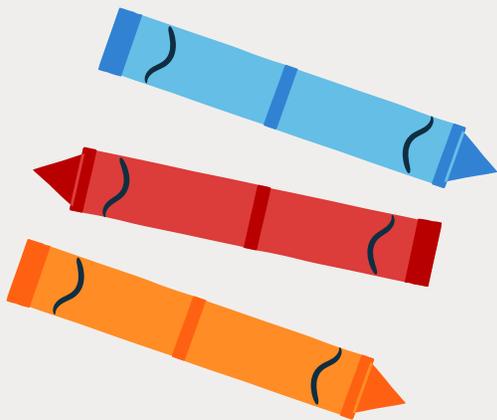
The Center on the Developing Child from Harvard University just released an infographic titled, ["What is COVID-19 and How Does it Relate to Child Development?"](#)

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Getting Ready for the Week: Materials to Gather

- Books about plants and gardens, or books that include gardens or gardening in the story and illustrations
 - Pillowcase or cloth bag
 - Small household items your child is familiar with (4–6)
 - Crayons, markers, or colored pencils in green, red, and orange
 - Index cards, or paper cut into cards of equal size (18)
 - Towel
 - An example of a selected uppercase alphabet letter to show your child, such as a letter on a block, toy, or other object in your home
 - Playdough, green and one other color*
 - [Five Frogs](#)*
 - Scissors* (for adult use)
 - Clear tape*
 - Cardboard tube (e.g. paper towel tube)
 - [“Five Green and Speckled Frogs”](#) song poster
 - [Video link](#) to the song “Five Green and Speckled Frogs”
- *see related activities for more details



Tip: At the beginning of your week, gather materials and place them in a container so you're ready to go!

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MONDAY

Read with Me: Books about Plants and Gardens

Books provide a rich opportunity for your child to learn about plants and gardens, indoors or out, while engaging with you in conversations and building language skills.



Length of activity:
10–15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult: High**



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:

Books about plants and gardens, or books that include gardens or gardening in the story and illustrations



What your child is learning:

- Making connections between text and illustrations
- Attention to text read aloud
- Knowledge about parts of a book

What you do: Select a book to read with your child, or if multiple books are available, invite them to select one. Sit with your child. Share the cover and title of the book with them and then read the book. After reading the book, go back and look at the illustrations with them. Talk with your child about the illustrations by asking questions, such as:

- What do you see in the picture?
- Where are the flowers in the picture?
- What color are the flowers?
- How many flowers are in the picture? Let's count.

Reading the same book over again every day is a great way to build your child's confidence, sense of mastery, and language skills.

If your child is ready: Select two or more books with similar illustrations or pictures of different plants like flowers or vegetables. Invite your child to make observations and comparisons between the books. Use questions to help guide their observations and comparisons. For example:

- What color are the flowers in this book?
- What color are the flowers in this one?
- Are they the same color or different colors?

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MONDAY

(continued)

Read with Me: Letter Search

How many of one letter can you find around your home? Go on a letter hunt together and find out!



Length of activity:
10–15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult: High**



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:

An example of a selected uppercase alphabet letter to show your child, such as a letter on a block, toy, or other object in your home



What your child is learning:

- How to recognize a selected uppercase letter in print
- How to say the sound of a selected letter

What you do: Select an uppercase letter to focus on for this activity. For example, you might select the first letter in your child's name. Look around your home to make sure examples of the chosen letter can be found in your environment, such as on wall art, book covers, toys, or pantry items.

Show your child the example of the letter. "What sound does the letter __ make?" Say the sound of the letter together a few times.

Then go on a letter search in your home, looking for the focus letter. Take the item with the example of the letter with you to look for a match! See how many different examples of the letter you and your child can find. If needed, give them some hints about where they might find the letter in your home. As they find examples of the letter, talk about the items. For example, you might say something like "You found an uppercase F in this book." This F is at the beginning of the word 'family,' just like F is the first letter in your name, 'Faye.'"

Alternatively, ask your child to find objects that begin with a letter. "Let's find an object that starts with the letter F."

If your child isn't quite ready to look for one specific letter, go on a search for anything in your home that has letters on it. You can also limit your search to one room of your home.

Questions to ask:

- What letter is this?
- Where can we find letter __ in our home?
- How many letter __'s can we find?

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TUESDAY

Get the Wiggles Out: Gardener Says

Gardener says ... rake the leaves! This activity will get your child moving while sparking their imagination.



Length of activity:
10–15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult:** High



Level of Prep Required: N/A



What you need:
N/A



What your child is learning:

- Movement-related vocabulary
- Following directions in a movement game
- Physical activity appropriate to age

What you do: Invite your child to play a game of Gardener Says. Ask them to share some of the things they have learned about gardens over the past few weeks. What grows in a garden? What does a gardener do to help the plants in a garden grow? To play the game, tell your child you will give them a task to pretend to do using “Gardener Says,” and then they can create a movement to show them doing that task. Here are some examples of tasks you can use.

Gardener says:

- Pull the weeds.
- Water the flowers.
- Rake the leaves.
- Plant the seeds.

If your child needs some ideas for movements, use questions to help guide them.

- Where do weeds grow?
- What does it look like to pull a weed out of the ground?

As you continue the game, incorporate your child's ideas from your earlier discussion.

If your child is ready: Invite them to come up with additional ideas about what could be done in a garden that you can then create movements for, encouraging them to join you in your movements.

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WEDNESDAY

Growing Flexible Brains: What's Missing?

Now you see it, now you don't! Can you tell what's missing?



Length of activity:

15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High



Level of Prep Required: Medium



What you need:

- Pillowcase or cloth bag
- Small household items your child is familiar with (4–6)
- Towel



What your child is learning:

- How to focus on an activity
- Memory skills
- Recalling information to answer questions about an object's characteristics

What you do: Gather 4–6 small items that your child is familiar with. If possible, collect plant or garden-related items like fake flowers or toy insects. If these items aren't available, then small toys, clothing like socks, or child-safe utensils and dishes like plastic forks, spoons, and cups will work just as well.

Sit on the floor or at a table with your child opposite you and show them the items you have collected one at a time. Share the name of the item with them and talk about the different features, such as color, texture, size, shape, or what it is used for. Then place all the items in the pillowcase.

Select two items from the pillowcase and place them on the floor or table between you and your child. Ask them to name each item, providing assistance as needed. Then cover the two items with the towel and ask your child to close their eyes. Remove one of the items and place it where they cannot see it. Have them open their eyes. Lift the towel and ask them which item is missing. If needed, provide them with clues about the missing item using the different features you discussed previously. After the missing item has been identified, show it to your child and affirm the name of the item. Return both items to the pillowcase and select two new items. Continue for as long as they're interested.

If your child is ready: To make the game more challenging, you can begin with three items for them to identify and then cover and remove one item.

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THURSDAY

Express Yourself: "This Is My Garden"

Through a fun fingerplay, your child plants an imaginary garden in the palm of their hand.



Length of activity:
10 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult: High**



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:
N/A



What your child is learning:

- Fine motor skills while acting out a fingerplay
- Creative movement
- Rhyming word recognition

What you do: Familiarize yourself with the words and movements to the fingerplay "This Is My Garden." Sit or stand with your child facing you and perform the fingerplay for them. Then repeat the fingerplay, inviting them to recite familiar words and perform the finger and hand movements with you.

"This Is My Garden" Fingerplay

This is my garden. **(Show one hand palm up.)**

I'll rake it with care. **(Use fingers of other hand to "rake.")**

I'll take some seeds

And plant them there. **(Pretend to drop seeds.)**

The sun will shine bright. **(Make a small circle with thumb and forefingers.)**

Then the rain will fall. **(Let fingers fall like falling rain.)**

My garden will bloom

And grow tall, tall, tall. **(Raise arms in the air.)**

If your child is ready: Invite them to create new or additional movements to include, or to select props to use, such as using a scarf to represent the falling leaf.

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THURSDAY

(continued)

Express Yourself: “Five Green and Speckled Frogs”

Find out what happens when five homemade frogs sit together on a log in this lively song!



Length of activity:
15–20 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child’s interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult:** High



Level of Prep Required: High



What you need:

- Playdough, green and one other color
- [Five Frogs](#)*
- Crayons*
- Scissors* (for adult use)
- Clear tape*
- Cardboard tube (e.g. paper towel tube)
- [“Five Green and Speckled Frogs”](#) song poster
- [Video link](#) to the song “Five Green and Speckled Frogs”

*Note: No playdough? No sweat! Print the Five Frogs, invite your child to color them green, and cut them out. If you aren’t able to print the sheet, make your own simple drawing of five frogs for your child to color. After cutting them out, lightly tape them to the cardboard tube in a row.



What your child is learning:

- How to act out a song using props
- Fine motor skills while making and moving playdough or paper frogs
- Recognizing rhyme and patterns in song lyrics
- Beginning subtraction skills

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What you do: Talk with your child about how frogs are one of the animals we might see—and hear—in spring. Show them the Five Frogs and explain that you are going to act out a song together about five green and speckled frogs.

If you have play dough, ask them to use it to make five little speckled frogs. If you don't have playdough, you can use the Five Frogs as described on the previous page.

Show your child the “Five Green and Speckled Frogs” song poster and share that the song is about five speckled frogs who sit on a log and love to eat bugs. Say the first verse of the song, pausing at the word *hollow*. Share that *hollow* means empty inside. Show your child the hollow cardboard tube that will represent the log in the song.

Play the video of the song and sing along together to “Yum, yum” after “... delicious bugs,” and “Ribbit, ribbit” at the end of the song.

Next, help your child place their five playdough frogs in front of the cardboard tube log (if using paper frogs, lightly tape them onto the cardboard tube). Play the video of the song again and this time, invite your child to take away one frog each time you sing a verse.

Questions to ask:

- Where have you seen frogs before?
- What sound do frogs make?
- How do frogs move? Can you show me?
- What does it mean for something to be speckled?
- How could you make speckles on your playdough frogs?
- If we start with five frogs on the log and one frog hops away, how many frogs are left?

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FRIDAY

Get the Wheels Turning: Garden Patterns

Flower, leaf, flower, leaf—can you figure out what's next?



Length of activity:
15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High



Level of Prep Required: Medium



What you need:

- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils in green, red, and orange
- Index cards, or paper cut into cards of equal size (18)



What your child is learning:

- To recognize and copy simple patterns
- To name simple shapes, objects, and colors
- To use expressive vocabulary and develop understanding of words that describe position or order of objects

What you do:

Create a set of pattern cards by drawing:

- A simple green leaf on 6 of the cards
- A simple red flower on 6 of the cards
- An orange carrot on 6 of the cards.
- Or you can make an outline of each shape and ask your child to color the shape using the appropriate color. (Remember, don't expect that your child will color within the lines; scribbling is just fine as long as you both see the outline!)

Sit with your child on the floor or at a table. Show them one of each card and help them to identify the object on the card. Begin by creating an ABABAB pattern using only two of the shapes, such as flower, leaf, flower, leaf, flower, leaf. Ask your child to name each of the cards in order.

Confirm the pattern created and ask your child to use the remaining cards to copy the pattern, placing their cards below the original pattern so that they are able to self-check their choices. Explain: "These cards make the pattern flower, leaf, flower, leaf, flower, leaf. Can you copy that pattern? What card comes first? A flower card. Find a flower card and place it here, below this card."

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Continue guiding your child as needed until they have completely copied the pattern. Create additional ABABAB patterns for your child to copy, such as carrot, flower, carrot, flower, carrot, flower or leaf, carrot, leaf, carrot, leaf, carrot.

If your child is ready: Have them help you to continue the pattern. After confirming the pattern created, ask your child “What card do you think we should put down next?”

If your child is unsure what comes next, that is expected. It is also fine that they make mistakes with this activity. Ask your child why they said what they did (whether they got it right or wrong) and without judgement, explain the sequence. It is important to hear your child’s thinking process—not just to prompt them to get the right answer.



Everyday Learning Experiences

Pick an activity to weave learning experiences into your everyday routines—no preparation needed!

1

Children make observations all the time and everywhere. You can highlight their observations by asking them what they are looking at or by just asking questions. At mealtime you might ask, “Where are the carrots on your plate?” When you’re getting ready for bed you might ask, “What animal is on your pajamas?”

2

Pretend play and creative movement don’t require costumes and choreographed songs or fingerplays. You can let your child’s imagination run wild throughout their daily routines. Make up silly names for everyday foods. Create tall tales with the toys in the bathtub. Sneak through the house like a mouse to put away the toys. The sky is the limit when it comes to imagination and play!

3

Activities such as fingerplays and placing pattern cards help your child develop hand-eye coordination as well as build small muscles in their hands and fingers. Foods and utensils encourage use of the same muscles and hand or finger grips. For example, small crackers or fruits that your child can pick up one a time using a pinching motion or foods that your child can scoop with a spoon will also help develop those small hand and finger muscles. Even just eating helps develop hand-eye coordination.

4

Throughout the day you can help your child build their vocabulary. When you name a food that you’re eating, an article of clothing you’re helping your child put on, the texture of a toy you’re holding, or the color of the crayon they’ve picked up, you are introducing them to new words that they can use to express their own observations.

5

Look for opportunities throughout the day to increase your child’s understanding of positional words. As you interact with them in your daily routines, use phrases such as, “I will put your snack *on* a plate,” “Let’s put your crackers *in* a bowl,” “You can sit *next* to me while we read this story,” “You are *under* the blanket.”

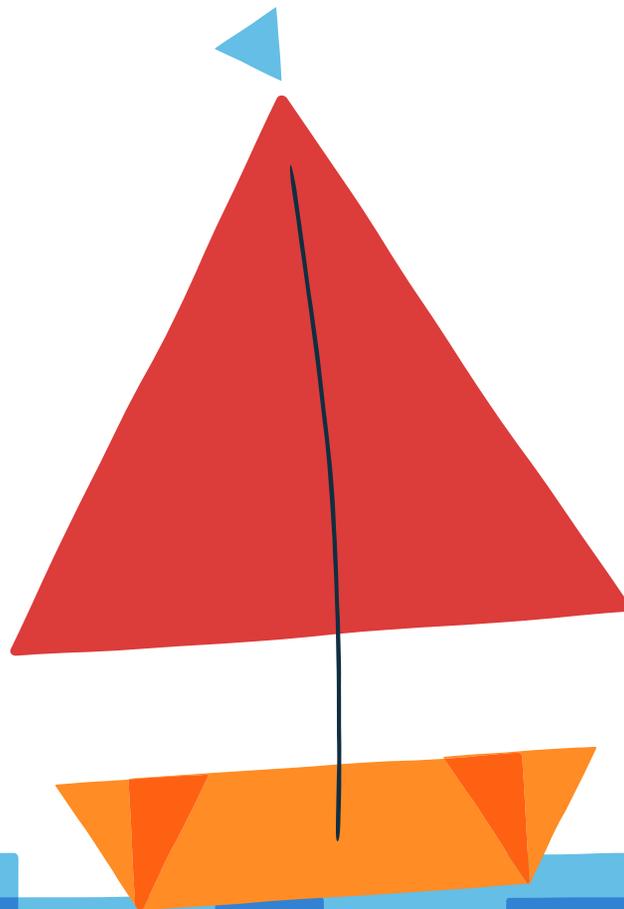
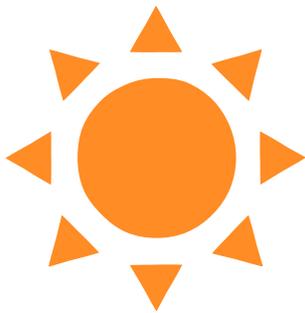
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Focus on Social and Emotional Learning: The Power of Play

Social and emotional learning isn't just for children. It's also important that adults understand and take care of their own needs and stressors so that we are at our best for our children. For this week, we wanted to refer you to an [infographic](#) developed by the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University that gives some quick pointers on how you can take care of yourself through this time. You can also go to their website for some great resources on child development in general that you might find interesting including, among so many other topics, brain development, play, helping your child deal with stress and build resilience, and self-regulation. Next week we'll have some targeted resources for you and your family on not just how to cope with the challenges that so many are facing, but how to use this time to build strong family bonds and help your child flourish!



Five Green and Speckled Frogs

Five green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are four green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!

Four green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are three green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!

Three green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are two green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!

Two green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there is one green speckled frog. Glub! Glub!

One green and speckled frog
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
Yum! Yum!
It jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are no green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!



LEARNING ADVENTURES® - MUSIC EXPLORERS™

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