

Theme: Nurturing Earth

2.0 Caring for the Natural World

Young children have a strong interest in the natural world because of their direct experience with growing things—a flower or plant, a kitten or puppy—that they care for. A plant or pet may be a young child’s first experience of providing nurturance to one who is dependent on others’ care (just as the child depends on the care of others). Parents/Teachers contribute to this awareness by guiding children’s understanding of the connection between their feeding and watering and the growth they observe in a plant or pet. They also encourage young children’s understanding of caring for the natural world through their guidance about the hazards of pollution and litter. Parents/Teachers can also help preschoolers learn about natural ecologies that are very different from their own, whether arctic, jungle, or other regions of the world. (*CA Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3, History-Social Science: Sense of Place (Geography & Ecology): 2.0 Caring for the Natural World, pages 109-110.*)

Activity: *Model respect and care for the natural world.* Be careful to leave wildflowers, branches from trees, and insects and other creatures alone—“I see a caterpillar walking across the sidewalk. Let’s all move around so we do not hurt it.”

Teach young children easy ways to conserve the earth’s resources. Create an accessible recycling center for your home (example: box/additional trash can/bag)—“It looks like we have some printed sales paper from today’s mail. I will put them in our recycling bin/bag/box so they can be made into new pieces of paper.” Repair toys and books where possible instead of purchasing new ones—“I think we can tape this book back together. Let’s try it. If it works, we won’t have to buy a new one.” Reuse materials in different ways.

****Find something within your home environment that you can repair or reuse. Explain to your child how you can reuse this item to conserve the earth’s resources. Create a recycling space for your home and modeling recycling practices when possible.***