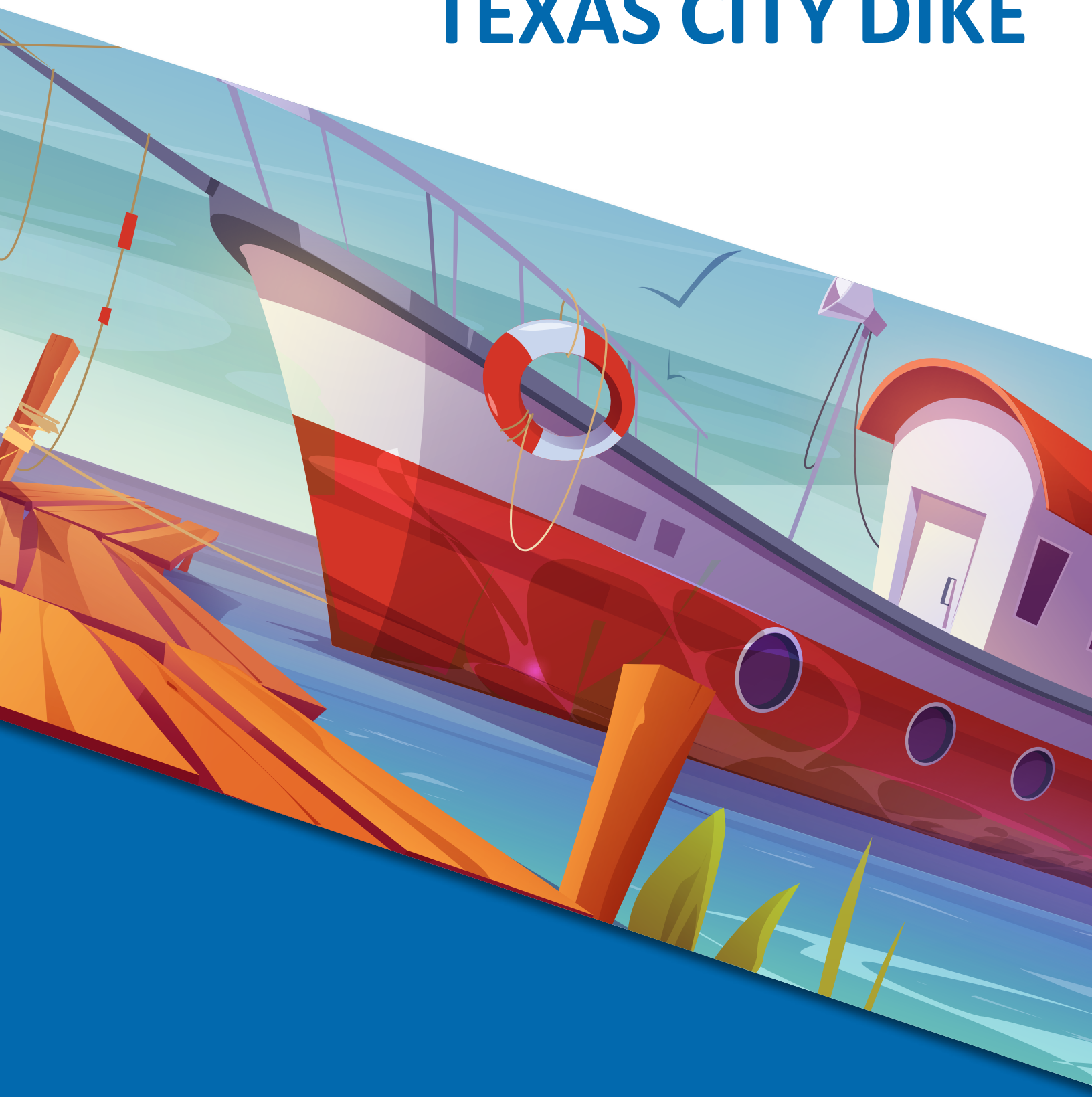
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Language and Literacy

Letter Mats: Themed Alphabet

EZ.017.LA.1001-1002

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will identify uppercase and lowercase letters.
Students will recreate letters.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Students practice tracing letter formations using themed letter mats and engaging manipulatives like Play-Doh, pom poms, and mini erasers. This hands-on approach not only strengthens fine motor skills and letter recognition but also fosters creativity and a love for learning.

WHAT TO DO

Provide students with the letter-tracing cards and a choice of Play-Doh, pom poms, or mini erasers for tracing. Include the themed magnetic letters as a visual alphabet reference. Demonstrate rolling the Play-Doh into “snakes,” and bending, pinching, and pulling the Play-Doh to make longer strands and curves. Demonstrate “tracing” the letter-tracing cards with Play-Doh, pom poms, or mini erasers.

PLAY TIP

Students can also use a dry erase marker or their finger to trace the letters.

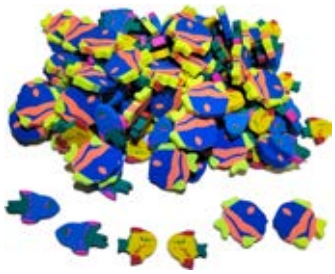
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Mathematics

Magnetic Alphabet Fishing: Number Cards

EZ.017.LA.1003-1004

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objective:
Students will recognize numbers 1-10.

Alphabet recognition and print concepts are reinforced as students use magnetic fishing poles to find fish letters in the simulated water flooring, making learning hands-on and engaging. Adding magnetic numbers introduces a cross-curricular component, promoting early math skills while fostering creativity, fine motor development, and a love for active learning.

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the magnetic fishing poles in the dramatic play area. Students can use the magnetic fishing poles as a free-choice exercise, building essential hand-eye coordination and calling out numbers as they pick them up.
2. As a guided exercise, write numbers on sentence strips or hold up themed number cards and ask students to pick up the corresponding number to reinforce recognition.

PLAY TIPS

- Use dice to rather than number cards to identify a number. Have students roll the dice and find the correlating numbers on the board.
- Ask students to put the number cards in order, from lowest number to greatest.
- Write letters on sentence strips rather than numbers to reinforce letter recognition.

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Mathematics

Counting and Measurement

EZ.017.LA.1005

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will count items up to 10 with one-to-one correspondence.
Students will begin to add to and take away items.
Students will begin to use nonstandard measurement tools.

Students use counting manipulatives, non-standard forms of measurement like Unifix Cubes, and themed counters, to practice one-to-one correspondence and early practices of measurement using themed math cards. Measurement can be an abstract concept for young children. Manipulatives like blocks, cubes, or cups provide a tangible way to understand concepts like length, and height. By physically comparing and ordering objects, they can build a foundation for understanding measurement units later.

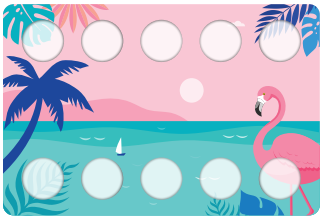
WHAT TO DO

After modeling how to use the mats, place the counting and measurement mats in a learning center as a teacher-directed or student-directed experience. As a teacher-directed experience, guide students to use manipulatives to show one-to-one correspondence and length. As a student-directed experience, allow students to freely explore the manipulatives and mats.

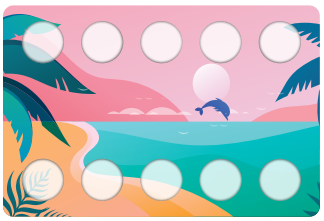
PLAY TIPS

- Use the math manipulatives to reinforce sorting by color and type. Encourage students to count how many are in each category. Encourage students to think of other ways to sort the manipulatives.
- Ask students to use the manipulatives to create patterns. Create simple pattern mats (ABAB, AABB, ABB) for additional support and guidance.

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Mathematics

Making Patterns

EZ.017.LA.1006

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize common 2-D shapes.
Students will sort by features and attributes.
Students will recognize patterns.

Students explore patterns and properties of shapes as they create whole images using pattern blocks and themed pattern block mats. Pattern blocks boost students' ability to think critically, make predictions, and test their predictions.

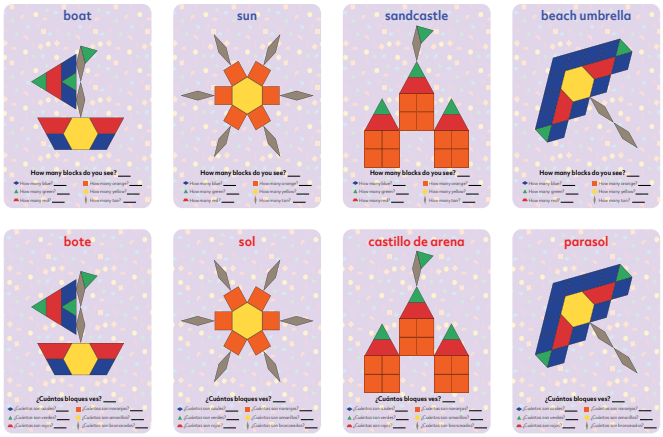
WHAT TO DO

Pattern block mats and pattern blocks work well as a self-directed activity. The intuitive nature requires little direction. Place the mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the whole image.

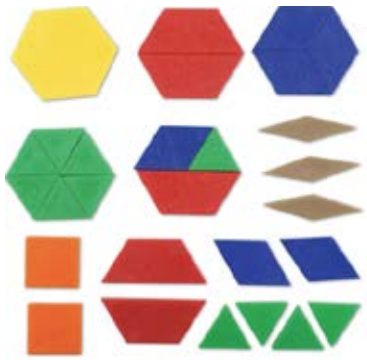
PLAY TIPS

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place the design on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill in the design with pattern blocks.
- Have students take a two-handed scoop of pattern blocks and sort by shape or color. Use graphing paper or a graphing mat to visualize the sorting process.
- Students can use mirrors to create patterns and make observations in the reflections. Ask students to describe what they are seeing as they create patterns in the mirrors.

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Language and Literacy

Pre-Writing Line Tracing

EZ.017.LA.1007

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will build pre-writing skills by tracing curved, notched, and zigzag lines. Students will recognize directionality in print and writing.

Students work on emergent literacy and transition to letter formations by tracing lines, patterns, and shapes with a theme in a dry erase, reusable format. To connect to fine motor development, students are encouraged to add detail. Themed templates are included for tracing.

WHAT TO DO

1. Place the dry erase templates in the writing center. Students have the choice to use dry erase markers on the dry erase templates or place paper on the template and trace using a pencil/crayon. Remind students to start from left to right and top to bottom.
2. Encourage students to make their own tracing templates using the dry erase templates as a guide. Students can work on tracing shapes, lines, and numbers by repetitively tracing the same shape, line, or number using a different color crayon each time.

PLAY TIPS

- Include the themed tracing patterns in the writing center to align with other free-choice writing exercises. Using a clipboard will help students control the writing utensil.
- Tape the template vertically, on an easel or teacher board, to encourage the strengthening of fine motor development.

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Language and Literacy

Syllable Awareness

EZ.017.LA.1009

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to blend and segment syllables in words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Recognizing that words can be broken down into syllables or units of sound is a phonological skill.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the vocabulary cards as a guided activity or free choice center activity. Have students clap the number of beats on the vocabulary card and indicate the number by moving the clip.

PLAY TIPS

- Provide simple instruments to reinforce the number of syllables. Rather than clap the number of syllables in a word, students can shake the number of syllables.
- Students can use their body to emphasize syllables in a word. Have students jump up and down, tap their toes, march in place, do jumping jacks, or tap their head to count syllables.

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Language and Literacy

Rhyming Awareness

EZ.017.LA.1010

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to recognize rhyming words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Rhyming activities help children listen for ending sounds in words, a precursor to phonics activities in late preschool.

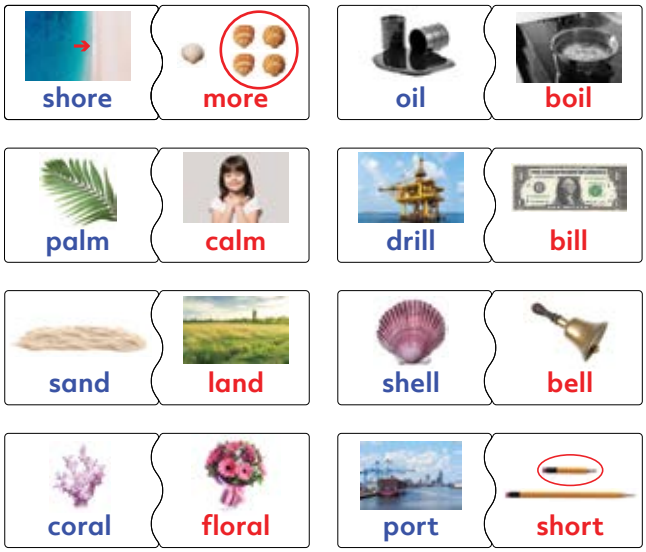
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the rhyming cards as a small group or free choice activity. Say the words on the cards together and help students to identify the rhyming pairs. Students can connect the rhyming pairs by placing the cards side by side on the table.

PLAY TIPS

- Play rhyming words with body parts. Have students touch their head, nose, arm, etc. and think of a word that rhymes with the body part.
- Play, *I Spy with My Little Eye*, using target items in the classroom. For example, decide on something in the classroom, like *door* as the target word. Then state, "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with *floor*." The students look around the classroom for something that rhymes with floor.

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Language and Literacy

Onset and Rime Awareness

EZ.017.LA.1011

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to identify and segment one-syllable words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Onset and rime activities help children identify patterns in words.

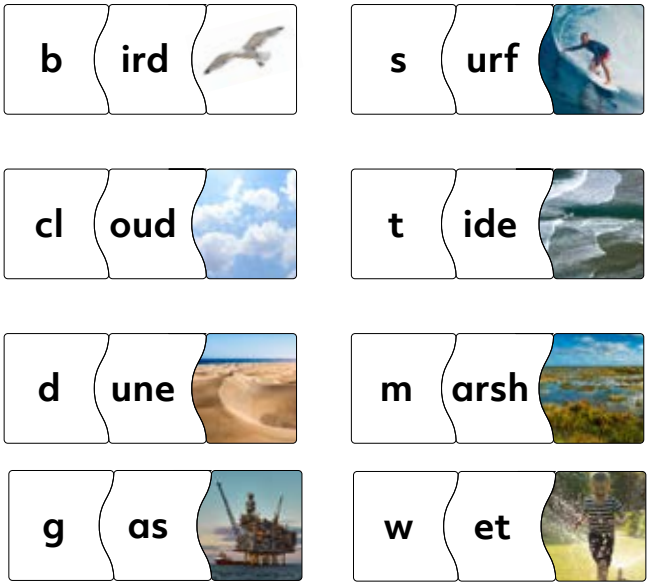
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the picture puzzles as a small group or free choice activity. As a small group exercise, model saying the onset together, the rime together, and the picture that identifies the word. As a free choice exercise, have the students put the pieces together to create a word.

PLAY TIP

Attach beginning and ending sounds to a set (2) of large dice. Have students roll the dice and say the word created, putting the onset and rime together.

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Language and Literacy

Finding Words in the Sand: Word Bank Words

EZ.017.LA.1012

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objective:
Students will identify and match word bank words.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Students search for durable word bank words in the sand and match them to the classroom word bank using a provided key for easy reference. This engaging approach not only reinforces vocabulary and spelling skills but also enhances critical thinking and tactile learning experiences.

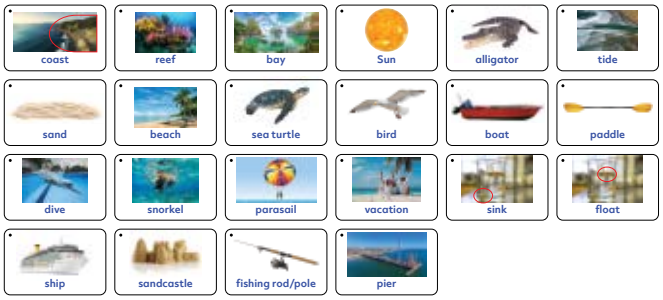
WHAT TO DO

1. This activity works well as a free-choice activity in the writing center. Add several laminated word bank words to the bottom of a cookie tray and cover with the colored sand. Encourage students to uncover the word bank words with a brush and match to the word bank cards.
2. After uncovering and matching the word, ask students to practice writing the word on lined paper.

PLAY TIPS

- Turn this into a shape recognition activity by taping black paper cutout shapes to the bottom of the tray and covering with sand. Students can use the brushes to uncover and identify the shapes.
- Create line, shape, and alphabet cards that students can view as they make tracings in the sand. Students can engage in free drawing and writing activities in the sand as well.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

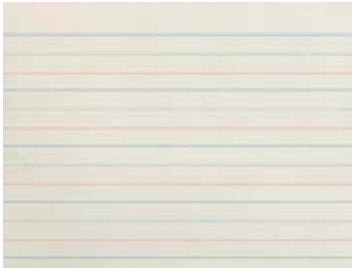


coast	reef	bay	tide	sun	alligator
beach	sand	bird	sea turtle	paddle	boat
dive	snorkel	parasail	vacation	sink	float
ship	pier	sandcastle	fishing rod/pole		









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Language and Literacy

Retelling a Story

EZ.017.LA.1013

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objective:
Students will retell a story to develop sequencing skills, print concepts, and descriptive vocabulary.

Students develop essential communication skills by practicing the appropriate tone of voice and facial expressions when retelling stories. Through engaging picture books, they identify key elements of the story, such as characters, setting, problems, and solutions, while organizing events in sequential order. To support their learning, students use tools like story maps, finger puppets, and prompts, making retelling both interactive and fun. This approach not only enhances their storytelling abilities but also boosts comprehension, creativity, and confidence in expressing ideas.

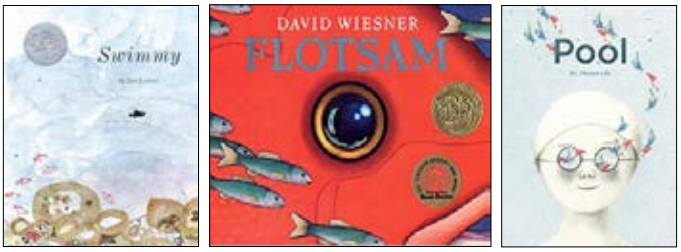
WHAT TO DO

1. Read books with simple text, such as *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni or wordless books, such as *Floatsam* by David Wiesner and *Pool* by JiHveon Lee. While reading or picture walking through the books, be sure to point out transitions using vocabulary, such as: first, then, next, after that, and finally. Use the story maps to reiterate transitional words by drawing characters or setting features (you can also write high-frequency or word bank words).
2. Encourage students to retell the stories in their own words using the finger puppets and plush animals. Use retelling prompts like, “How did the story begin?,” “What happened next?,” “What did the (character) do after the (event/action)?,” “How did the (character) solve the problem?,” and “How did the story end?” The story maps can be used to reinforce the sequence. Students can draw character or setting features or place the finger puppets and plush animals under the appropriate transitional word.

PLAY TIP

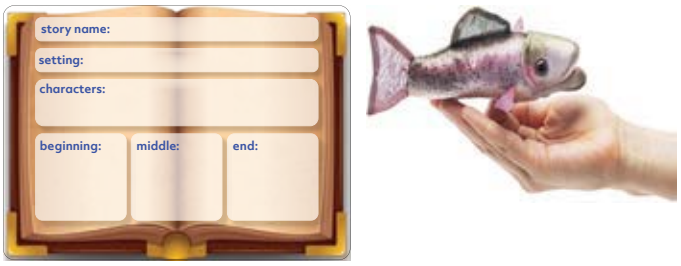
Make additional props to support the stories using open-ended art materials.

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Fine Arts

Scuba Diving

EZ.017.LA.1014

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will participate in cooperative dramatic expressions.
Students will demonstrate new understandings through body movements and physical interpretations.

You can learn a lot about aquatic life just by making observations in their environment. You can make observations at the beach by looking at stranded debris, watching the tide come in, and exploring underwater! Students assume the role of aquatic scientist by preparing to study life underwater. They read about ocean animals, look at pictures, and gather equipment they need (scuba gear, periscopes, camera).

WHAT TO DO

Add the scuba jumpsuits, periscopes, sea life animals, and animal identification cards to the S.S Adventure boat-themed exploration display. Students can "dive" to make sea life animal observations and record information about their discoveries.

PLAY TIP

Make flippers and underwater cameras using craft foam. To make flippers, draw flippers on craft foam, cut out the flippers, and cut out an opening in the back for students to wrap around their ankle. To make a camera, draw a camera on craft foam, cut the camera out, and attach to an empty juice box (or 5" x 5" box).

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Science

Bird Watching

EZ.017.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Large Group, Small Group, and Free Choice

Objective:
Students will observe and discuss the characteristics and behaviors of birds.

The state of Texas hosts more bird species than any other state in the U.S., offering opportunities for interesting bird watching. Students can encourage birds to gather by creating unique bird feeders and identifying Gulf Coast species using observation tools (binoculars and journals) and bird identification books. Observing live birds fosters a connection with nature and an appreciation for the environment.

WHAT TO DO

1. Fill and hang the Bird Buddy outdoors. For optimal birdwatching, select a location abundant with birds, ideally close to a window with easy student access. Download the appropriate Bird Buddy software to a smart device.
2. Encourage students to use the binoculars and bird log to record bird viewings visible through the window. Access the Bird Buddy software to make comparisons between birds viewed through the window and birds viewed through the Bird Buddy camera. Students can also use the Bird Science Viewer to make comparisons. The bird identification book can help students make connections and positive identifications to their observations, with adult guidance.

PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to make bird feeders in the classroom and hang them outside (observe the differences between the birds the feeders attract). Try splitting an orange in half, removing the pulp, and filling the orange with bird food. Hang the feeder outside with string.
- Create a classroom "bird book" by collecting students' bird logs and binding them together.

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Science

Alligator/Spoonbill Webcams

EZ.017.LA.1016

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will explore interactive science media to enhance learning.

Students virtually observe alligators and spoonbills in the wild using live cams or recordings. Students can make comparisons between these species by observing their features and behaviors in their natural habitat. Seeing wild animals in their natural environment can spark curiosity.

WHAT TO DO

Live-action webcams can bring distant places to life and engage students in the inquiry process. Students can study animal habitats and behavior by observing live-action (or recorded sessions) consistently and over time. Use the following site to determine where alligators and spoonbills are in their life cycle and record patterns in behavior for classroom discussion. Link: https://explore.org/livecams/spoonbills/alligator-spoonbill-swamp-cam (St. Augustine FL)

PLAY TIP

Encourage students to use the simple observation tracking sheet over several days, recording what they see (drawing pictures), and sharing with the class. Students can talk about animal behavior over time and make comparisons to other animals such as pets, animals at the zoo, or birdfeeders/ squirrel feeders at home.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Animal Observations

My animal looks like:

Day 1:	Day 2:	Day 3:
Draw your animal today	Draw your animal today	Draw your animal today

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Mathematics

Who Sank the Boat?

EZ.017.LA.1017

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will explore the concepts of weight and balance.
Students will make observations and compare/contrast features of objects.

During a reading of *Who Sank the Boat?* by Pamela Allen, students can make predictions about the animals' ability to sink the boat. Students who predict actively listen for clues and details that might hint at what will happen next. Predictions also incorporate their prior knowledge and experiences. After reading the book, students can experiment with different materials to create boats that will hold items of varying weights and sizes.

WHAT TO DO

1. Read *Who Sank the Boat?* by Pamela Allen, asking students to name the animal on each page as you read. Ask students to predict whether the animal will sink the boat or keep the boat afloat. After reading the book, use the balance to demonstrate how to compare the weight of two objects in the classroom (use objects that will fit inside of the buckets).
2. Fill the Sand and Surf Sensory Table with water. Roll clay into a ball and ask students what they think will happen if you drop the clay into the water (it will sink). Next, flatten a ball of clay and shape into a boat. Show students the difference as you place the clay into the water (it will float). Encourage students to create a boat using the clay, adding a craft stick and paper sail. Try adding counters to see how much weight each boat can hold. Encourage students to reconfigure their boat and try again. Students can use additional open-ended materials to make a boat, including foam sheets and craft sticks.

PLAY TIP

Encourage students to compare the weight of two objects without looking at the objects. Have students place their hands behind their back, place an object in each hand, and ask which object is heavier. Students need to rely on their sense of touch to make comparisons.

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Mathematics

The Sea and Me

EZ.017.LA.1018

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will compare the size of aquatic animals using standard and nonstandard units of measurement.

Anglers along The Gulf of Mexico can catch an assortment of species amid landscapes ranging from sandy beaches to offshore reefs. Recreational, commercial, and scientific fishers often make comparisons between catch size for different reasons. Students use standard (scale, tape measure, balance) and non-standard (links) forms of measurement to compare the size of saltwater specimen in the classroom. Students can make comparisons to the size of themselves and other real-life items. By physically comparing and ordering objects, young students can build a foundation for understanding measurement units later.

WHAT TO DO

Place the saltwater specimen, scale, tape measure, links, and balance in a free exploration area. Ask students to use the standard and non-standard measurement tools to determine weight and length of the items and make comparisons. Ask guiding questions, such as: “Which is the longest/shortest?,” “Which is the heaviest/lightest?,” and “How do you know?” Compare the saltwater specimen to other animals students might see in nature or even themselves.

PLAY TIPS

- Use paper chains to create the average length of sea animals and make comparisons. Include the following sea animals: Orca-32 ft., Bottlenose Dolphin-12 ft., Sea Turtle-7 ft., and Common Stingray-8 ft.
- Leave the saltwater specimen in the writing center and encourage students to make still life drawings of their observations.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED











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Science

Wind and Water Erosion

EZ.017.LA.1019

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will explore the effects of erosion through experimentation and observation.

There are many different natural processes in our environment that change the surface of the Earth. Weathering, such as wind and water, can cause these changes. Students will explore processes of weathering and erosion by experimenting with sand, rocks, water and wind (man-made). Students will make observations and compare to everyday experiences and situations. Experimenting with the materials allows students to make predictions, observe results, and ask questions. Through this play, they gain a deeper understanding of scientific concepts.

WHAT TO DO

1. In one part of the dishpan (or Sand and Surf Sensory Table), make a landmass with the sand, sloping the landmass downward. Make an "S" shape divot (riverbed) in the sand, starting at the top of the landmass, following through to the bottom. Place rocks along and in the riverbed. Slowly pour water down the riverbed and ask students several observation related questions, such as: "What do you notice about the way water moves?," "What do you notice happens to the sand?," and "How can we move the sand using water?" Try moving the sand with the fan (wind).
2. Encourage students to make other landmasses in the sand and explore ways to move the sand using water, rocks and wind (fan).

PLAY TIP

Introduce new vocabulary like erosion and deposit. Erosion is the Earth breaking down into small pieces of dirt, sand, and rock from weather (wind, rain, and flowing water). Deposit is the dirt, sand, and rock that is left over after erosion.

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Fine Arts

Gyotaku Fish Printing

EZ.017.LA.1020

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objective:
Students will explore culture through artistic representations.

Gyotaku is a traditional Japanese technique for creating fish prints, originating in the mid-1800s. Japanese fishermen would use this method to record their catches. Students can create their own Gyotaku art using fish replicas and paint. Students can look for shapes and patterns and differentiate between the different images created by different types of fish.

WHAT TO DO

1. Tell students they are going to make fish prints using fish replicas and paint. Write the word gyotaku (gyo + taku) on the dry erase board or chart paper; explain the Japanese term as “fish rubbing.” Tell students that Japanese fisherman would record their catch using ink and paper, which also became an art form.
2. Allow students to choose a fish replicas, paint color, and paint brush. Using the paint brush, students can paint the fish on one side and press down to create an imprint on paper.

PLAY TIPS

- Gyotaku art can be used to stimulate discussions about species of fish, Japanese culture, and nature printing in general. Encourage students to consider other items to nature print like seashells and classroom sea life animals.
- Suggest students bring in items from home to add to the print material collection.

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Fine and Gross Motor

Building Sandcastles

EZ.017.LA.1021

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will apply background knowledge to building structures.
Students will participate in sensory-rich activities and experiences.

Building sandcastles provides children with the opportunity to be creative, build vocabulary, and improve upon fine motor skills. Enhancements like blocks, seashells, sea life animals, and molds are included to help encourage repetitive and extended play.

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask students to picture the beach. What do they see, feel, and smell? Ask students what they like to do at the beach. Ask follow-up questions including: "Have you ever built a sandcastle before?," "What do you need to build a sandcastle?," and "What are the steps to build a sandcastle?"
2. Encourage students to freely explore, build, and rebuild sandcastles using the molds and wooden blocks. Students can add animals of the sea to incorporate dramatic play experiences. Add water to the sand to further enhance discussions about erosion and tide.

PLAY TIP

Facilitate a discussion about erosion after reading *The Tide is Coming in* by Calee M. Lee. Ask students to think about ways to prevent erosion (make predictions) as they build classroom sandcastles (adding protective material like rocks, craft sticks, and wooden blocks). Encourage students to add protective material and test their predictions as they add water with different amounts of force.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED













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