

Kindergarten Overview

	First Semester	Second Semester
Language Arts / Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uppercase letters A–I• Letter sounds and shapes• Stories, poetry, and songs• Uppercase letters J–R• Letter sounds and shapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stories, poetry, and songs• Family history• Uppercase letters S–Z• Letter sounds and shapes• Emotions• Local community
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nature through the five senses• Falling leaves and special trees• Animals: similarities and differences• Plant growth: seeds and sprouts• Weather: seasonal changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stars and constellations• Animal behavior• Pet/animal care• Plant growth• Weather: seasonal activities
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers 1–6• Geometric shapes• Pattern recognition• Opposites• Comparing quantities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers 7–10• Sorting and grouping• Sequencing and counting• Geometric shapes• Comparisons and patterns
Arts and Crafts	Throughout the year, students engage in a multitude of art and craft activities including crayon drawing, watercolor painting, sewing, baking, nature crafts, collage, crafts from recycled materials, carpentry, model building, and working with clay.	
Music and Movement	Over the course of the year, students participate in activities that help develop musical ability, bilateral awareness, rhythm, hand-eye coordination, and dexterity. Sample activities include making and playing homemade musical instruments, reciting poetry, singing and finger plays, dancing, and playing catch and other kinesthetic games.	
Health	The book <i>Healthy Living from the Start</i> provides the basis for a year-long health course. Families explore topics relevant to their child's growth and development including nutrition, the growing body, hygiene, community, emotions, and safety.	

Kindergarten

Resource Book



Oak Meadow

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Introduction

Welcome to Oak Meadow kindergarten! The Oak Meadow curriculum is quite different from what is usually found in most schools. Although all of traditional subjects are studied, they are approached with an imaginative spirit that we feel is closer to the heart of a child than a more intellectual approach. The content and timing of academics are different from that found in traditional school. We believe that it may influence a child's balanced growth if the intellect is forced before the child is developmentally ready. Oak Meadow's curriculum responds to growing intellectual development as the grades progress.

Oak Meadow's goal is not to require children to demonstrate early intellectual achievement but to explore and discover concepts, knowledge, and skills in an experiential way. The uppercase letters of the alphabet are presented in kindergarten, as are the numbers 1 through 10, yet further development of reading, writing, and math skills occurs in first grade, when children tend to be more alert and more developmentally ready. Letters and numbers are abstract symbols that must be assigned meaning, so we give the kindergartener a full year of hands-on, imaginative, and practical activities to build a solid foundation with the symbols of the alphabet and numbers before moving on to the more advanced work of spelling, reading, and mathematical operations.

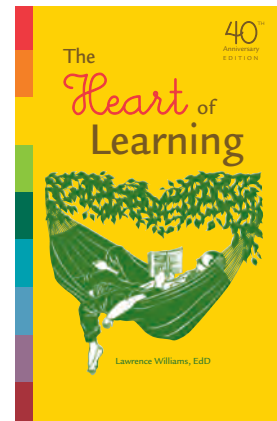
We feel this "extra year" is a good investment in a child's future education, for it allows childhood to unfold in an unhurried way. It also ensures that when the skills of reading and math do advance, the child is truly ready to meet the new challenges with ease and success. This year is the beginning of a long educational journey, and our goal is to provide a curriculum that playfully and creatively introduces your child to the excitement of all there is to learn and do.

Adopting a careful pace so that your child is allowed the time and space to deepen their understanding of these foundational elements may not feel comfortable at first. This child-centered pace of early learning is not typical in our culture, which tends to emphasize an "early is better" approach. Our culture tends to be eager for children to display their mental talents, yet we should remember that a child is more than just an intellect. A brilliant intellect is useless without a focused will and a loving heart. Our kindergarten curriculum is designed to engage the head, hands, and heart of both the child and the home teacher, and we hope your year is filled with the joy of learning together.

Course Materials

The kindergarten course consists of the following materials:

- ***Oak Meadow Kindergarten Coursebook*** provides all the instructions and assignments for the full year of kindergarten.
- ***Oak Meadow Kindergarten Resource Book*** (this book) includes extensive instructions about teaching each subject, plus all the stories you will be reading this year in language arts/social studies, math, and science. It also includes the recipes used in some of the assignments.
- ***The Heart of Learning*** provides important support and guidance for the homeschooling parent through a series of essays on the educational philosophy and learning principles behind the early grades of Oak Meadow. It includes information on child development as well as suggestions on how to develop your skills as a home teacher. (This is highly recommended but optional.)
- ***Oak Meadow Guide to Teaching the Early Grades*** includes practical information on how to present the lesson material as well as an extensive collection of songs, poems, and action verses that you'll be using through the early grades.
- ***Oak Meadow Circle Time Songs CD*** provides musical inspiration for your circle time. (This is an optional item.)
- ***Oak Meadow Crafts for the Early Grades*** includes all the instructions for crafts mentioned in the coursebook.
- ***Healthy Living from the Start: A Health Curriculum for Grades K–3*** offers a wide range of activities around health-related topics. Each lesson includes a set of activities to choose from for each grade level, making it easy to use with children of different ages.



The Heart of Learning is a series of essays on the educational philosophy and learning principles behind the early grades of Oak Meadow.

Supplies Needed for Most Lessons

In addition to the materials listed in each lesson, the following items are recommended throughout the curriculum and can be obtained at local craft and art supply stores or by purchasing the kindergarten craft kit in the Oak Meadow bookstore.

Main lesson books: These are large format, spiral-bound blank books that will be used for most of your child's lesson work. We recommend one for language arts/social studies, one for science, and one for math. You will probably use three main lesson books in the first semester and three in the second semester. (More details on the main lesson books are below.)

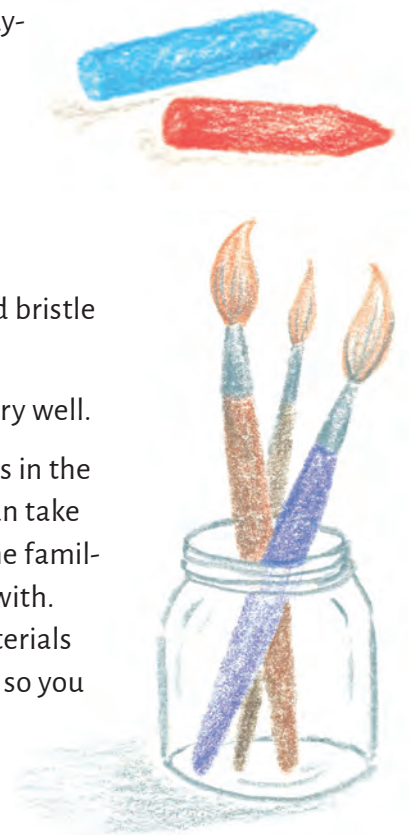
Jumbo beeswax block or stick crayons: A good quality set of crayons in the seven colors of the rainbow is an excellent choice.

Watercolor paints: You will want to have one tube each of blue, red, and yellow. Your child will have the opportunity to explore how these three primary colors form the basis of every other color.

Watercolor paintbrushes: We recommend brushes with a broad bristle ($\frac{3}{4}$ "). You will want one for you and one for your child.

Watercolor paper: Sturdy 90-lb. paper in a 9" × 12" size works very well.

Modeling material: Beeswax is a delightful material that softens in the hand, has a wonderful smell, and comes in beautiful colors. It can take some getting used to, so be patient as you and your child become familiar with it. Clay and homemade salt dough are also fun to work with. (You'll find some recipes in the Creative Play section.) These materials are used to mold the shapes of each of the letters and numbers, so you will want to have a supply readily available.



Paper: You will want to have on hand a good supply of practice or scratch paper. Copier paper works well.

How the Course Is Set Up

The curriculum in *Oak Meadow Kindergarten Coursebook* is divided into 36 lessons, each intended to be completed over the course of one week. Each lesson includes explorations for circle time, language arts/social studies, math, science, arts & crafts, music & movement, and health. You will also see the following sections in the coursebook:

Weekly Planner: This is a blank form that you can use each week to plan out your schedule. You can coordinate walks, trips to the library, and projects that need some advance preparation on your weekly planner and then return to it to jot down notes about what worked well, what needs more attention, and what you'd like to save to work on at a later time. You will use your weekly planner to keep track of what you did each week—this can make year-end reporting and documentation much easier.

Assignment Summary: You'll find a checklist of assignments at the beginning of each lesson. This lets you check off assignments as you complete them and see at a glance what still needs to be done.

Materials: We've included a materials list for each lesson, divided by project or activity. You can use this to prepare in advance for each day's work. There is a complete list of materials in the appendix of *Oak Meadow Kindergarten Coursebook*, if you'd like to stock up in advance.

Learning Assessment: At the end of each lesson, we've included a learning assessment form to help you track your child's progress and stay attuned to the key competencies that are being developed. Some parents may want to create their own rubrics or bypass formal assessment entirely for the time being. The learning assessment forms can provide an easy way to document your child's development for reporting purposes.

For Enrolled Students: This section is for families who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and are sending their work to an Oak Meadow teacher. It provides information and reminders about how and when to submit work.

You will find, especially in the early lessons, specific instructions and a range of suggestions for how to structure the day, introduce subjects, and proceed through the work of drawing and writing. However, we encourage home teachers to try a variety of methods as the year goes on.

We urge you to stay responsive to your child and make adjustments along the way based on your child's interests and needs. Your sincere interest in both your child and the subject will draw forth the spark of learning. Beyond the lesson plans and the activities, it is who you are and what you bring to the learning relationship that makes it successful and rewarding. The Oak Meadow curriculum is not only interested in filling children with facts but also in helping parents and children become intelligent human beings who are able to respond thoughtfully, imaginatively, and effectively to the world in which they live.

How to Begin

If this is your first experience with homeschooling, understand that it can take weeks or even a few months before you and your child have settled into a rhythm and routine that feels natural and productive. Be patient with yourself and your child. Expect that things may feel awkward or even unsuccessful in your first few lessons. You and your child will soon learn what works well and what does not, and together you will find your own unique and enjoyable approach to homeschooling.

In the meantime, here are a few tips that will help your homeschooling journey be more successful.

- After reading the introductory section, read through lesson 1 to get a sense of what you will be doing in the first week. Look ahead several lessons so that you become familiar with the weekly format and the pace of the activities.
- Refer to the materials list and gather needed supplies. You may want to do this one week at a time or gather all the materials you'll need for several months in advance.

- Begin reading *The Heart of Learning* and *Oak Meadow Guide to Teaching the Early Grades*. You don't have to complete both before you begin your lesson work, but it will be helpful to familiarize yourself with what each contains and give yourself time to absorb some of it. You will probably find yourself referring back to both of these books throughout the year.
- Choose where to begin your science curriculum based on the season. Lessons 1–12 focus on fall activities, lessons 13–24 focus on winter, and lessons 25–36 focus on spring. Select the appropriate group of science lessons for the season of the year in which you are beginning. If you live in a more temperate region, you can still do most of the assignments since science explorations are focused on observation and description. You can use whatever nature offers you outside your door for your science activities. All the other subjects in the curriculum should be followed sequentially, lessons 1–36.
- After you have looked through all your materials and read a few lessons, if you have questions that are not answered by looking over more lessons or rereading the introductory section, feel free to call the Oak Meadow office to ask for clarification.

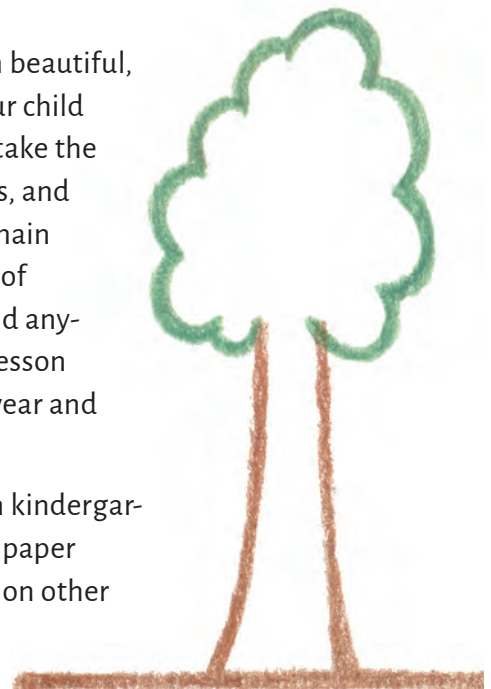


How to Use the Main Lesson Book

The main lesson book serves as a way to collect all of your child's work in one place. You may want to have a set of books for your child and another set of books for yourself—this way you can work together side by side.

In each main lesson book, your child will fill the blank pages with beautiful, colorful drawings and carefully formed letters and numbers. Your child should be encouraged to put their best work in this book and to take the time to decorate the borders of the pages, add detail to drawings, and cover the whole page. You can model this behavior in your own main lesson book. You can also glue into the main lesson book photos of larger projects, leaves and seeds collected for science studies, and anything else you would like to include in this special book. A main lesson book takes on a marvelous personality during the course of the year and becomes a treasured record of your child's educational journey.

We encourage the use of crayons for both drawing and writing in kindergarten, and Oak Meadow's main lesson books come with onion skin paper between the pages to keep the crayon drawing from rubbing off on other pages. Colored pencils also work well in the main lesson book. Unlike markers or pens, crayons and colored pencils



produce a softer, more changeable line that encourages students to trace over their work if they need to change the shape of a form, letter, or number.

Circle Time

It is helpful to start each day with a brief time of gathering together, which we call circle time. It is often easy and fun to include brothers, sisters, and other family members in circle time. Through vigorous, playful rhyming verses, songs, and large and small motor activities, the body and mind “wake up” and become ready for more focused work later in the morning.

Here are some tips for a successful circle time.

Location: When possible, have your circle time in the same area of your home each morning so this place becomes associated with the activity. An open, uncluttered space with plenty of morning light is particularly nice.

Beginning verse: Say the opening verse (or a poem of your choice) once everyone is sitting or standing together. Your child will join you as the verse becomes familiar. Speaking clearly emphasizes the sounds of the letters in a way that can greatly enhance the language arts lessons.

Songs, movement verses, and fingerplays: Each day you will do several songs and verses, many of which will have movements. Fingerplays are verses that are acted out using the hands in some way, and movement verses encourage more full-body involvement. It is important to use the same songs and verses each day for at least a week, or even several weeks, so that your child has time to learn it and become fully involved. Children love repetition! Add one or two new songs and verses each week, but go back to familiar verses frequently. Many fingerplays, verses, songs, and activities are included in *Oak Meadow Guide to Teaching the Early Grades*, and you can learn the tunes to the songs on the *Oak Meadow Circle Time Songs* CD. You may also remember some childhood favorites, or you can get a book from the library for more ideas. Add stretching, skipping, jumping, and crawling games to really get things moving. Get down on the floor and roll around. Be silly, playful, and energetic!

Closing verse: End with the closing verse before you begin the morning main lesson. We suggest you use the same opening and closing verse for about three months. Surprisingly, children do not tend to get tired of the opening and closing verses since these verses act as markers for the beginning and end of circle time. New opening and closing verses are introduced every 12 weeks (lesson 1, lesson 13, and lesson 25).

Creating a Daily Structure and Rhythm

We have written the curriculum so that each subject is presented in a natural, informal manner. It is always beneficial when children do not feel forced into the activity but instead become involved because it sparks something within them. Some children enjoy a consistent schedule for “school” each

day, and for those children it is important to maintain regular periods, but this is not necessarily the most effective way to approach homeschooling for most four- to six-year-olds. We feel that the best approach is often to integrate the projects and assignments into the natural flow of daily activities so the child doesn't make a distinction between "school" and "life." In this way, the child gradually develops the attitude that expanding one's knowledge and capabilities is part of the process of life and indeed is what life is all about.

Regardless of whether or not you establish a regular school schedule, creating a consistent daily rhythm is highly recommended. Living and learning are synonymous, and homeschooling should feel like a natural extension of family life. Taking the time and effort to establish your daily rhythm will make a difference in the long run. Young children naturally need a lot of freedom to explore and express themselves creatively. They also need to have opportunities to move from active, outward ("expanded") states, such as vigorous or social play, to more inward, focused ("contracted") states, such as listening to a story or drawing. When a child is either expanded or contracted for too long a period of time, they become restless and irritable.

The following schedule offers a natural balance between active and focused periods, and it provides a good foundation for a daily routine.

Circle time: After the morning routine of dressing and eating breakfast is finished, start your day with 15 minutes of verses, songs, fingerplays, and movement activities.

Morning main lesson: After circle time, proceed to a 45–60-minute main lesson activity. We suggest that you focus on language arts/social studies three times per week and math two times per week. It is not necessary to do each subject each day. However, if your child prefers to do a little math and a little language arts/social studies each day (perhaps imitating an older sibling), you can certainly plan your schedule accordingly.

Creative free play: This is a daily time when you can attend to your other responsibilities while also allowing your child to play freely or imitate you in your activities. Provide many opportunities for creative play, and consider this play period an important part of learning. There are many suggestions for creative play in this introduction, and we encourage you to frequently put away unused toys and introduce new elements for your child to discover.

Afternoon lesson time: After lunch, two afternoons a week, focus on science lessons, enjoying relevant stories and activities for about an hour. Three days a week, use this time for arts & crafts, music & movement, and health. You might choose two to do each day, depending on how long a particular project takes.

Outings and field trips: Walks through the neighborhood, trips to stores, visits to museums, and play dates at the playground are all learning experiences that you can integrate into your homeschooling day. Bringing your child out into a range of social environments helps them learn a great deal about the larger community and is an important element of your home-based education. Make note of special outings on your weekly planner to incorporate them into your week's activities.

Creative free play: After dinner, allow opportunities for relaxed play in the evening.

Bedtime routine: Your bedtime story will become an important part of the next day's lessons. You'll find more detailed suggestions for a bedtime routine below.

Most home teachers of kindergarteners spend about two hours during the day of focused time with their children in home-schooling and another hour at bedtime, reading stories and talking about the day.



Creating a Simple Bedtime Routine

Children have a real need for order and rhythm in their lives, and the bedtime ritual is an important part of this routine. It can be short or long and can include a variety of elements, depending on the needs of the child and the parents, but the basic purpose is always the same: to help the child calm down from the day's activities and prepare for sleep.

Each family has its own version of the bedtime ritual, but the traditional approach usually includes taking a bath, brushing teeth, hearing a story, giving and receiving goodnight kisses, and in some families, saying prayers or recounting the blessings of the day (remembering the good things that happened). Of course, interspersed in this sequence are brief conversations that can range from the practical to the sublime, but all help to resolve the concerns of the day and prepare the child for a restful night's sleep.

For all of us, sleep is a time of rejuvenation—a time to let go of our daily concerns and recharge ourselves physically, emotionally, and mentally. When we view sleep in this light and prepare ourselves consciously for it each night, we derive the greatest benefit from it. As important as this is for adults, it is even more important for children because they are more sensitive than adults and are more influenced by what they experience prior to sleeping.

We offer the following tips to help you create a healthy and satisfying bedtime routine.

Be consistent, but not rigid: Try to be consistent in the timing and the sequence of the elements of the routine, but don't let the routine become more important than the child. Children derive great satisfaction from following a set pattern, but this doesn't mean that everything must always be *exactly* the same, or that you should never skip an evening, or that you can't do

things a little differently if the circumstances require it. The whole tone of the bedtime ritual should be relaxed and loving, not pressured and forceful. If change is necessary, talk with your child about it first. Children can be quite reasonable when they know their needs, ideas, and feelings are respected.

Make a smooth transition: A smooth bedtime routine can help you end your day with a feeling of harmony. However, for many parents, bedtime is a source of conflict. Most of the problems that arise are a result of not giving children sufficient opportunity to make the transition from “waking mode” to “sleeping mode.” Just as people need time in the morning to wake up, they also need time in the evening to slow down and prepare for sleep. Often, however, parents don’t give children time to make this transition, and they create conflict by trying to force them to make the shift at the last minute. If you want your child to go to bed at 8:00, you can’t stay busy until 7:45 and expect your child to be quietly lying in bed at 8:00. At about 7:00, you should set aside what you are doing and begin the bedtime routine. By giving yourself and your child sufficient time in the evening, you provide an opportunity for quiet talk and a feeling of closeness as your child gradually prepares for sleep.

Focus on activities with value: After bathing and brushing teeth, take some quiet time for sharing, chatting, and reading aloud. Bedtime stories should be chosen carefully, leaving your child relaxed and open rather than revved up for action. You may spend this time in your child’s room or in a special chair elsewhere. If you do it elsewhere, your child will still need to transition into the bedroom sometime during the routine. Once your child is in bed, you may want to sing one or two quiet bedtime songs to soothe them in preparation for sleep.

Bedtime is a perfect time to focus on things that have a broader perspective or a deeper significance than the little concerns of the day. At the close of the day, there is a natural tendency to want to put everything in perspective, to consider something more meaningful than whether our children have learned their multiplication tables. At this time of the day, we tend to be inclined to consider the more intangible and enduring aspects of our lives, and children feel the same need. Simple conversations that arise at bedtime, as children (and parents) reflect on things that they have experienced during the course of the day, are often a wonderful way to connect with each other and with the inner values you share.

This process can be helped by reading or telling stories that have a timeless value, such as the great myths, legends, fables, and fairy tales that have been handed down from generation to generation. Stories such as these contain profound messages and enable children to experience the deeper aspects of life. This creates an opportunity to appreciate and enjoy each other as loving human beings who are sharing a journey of discovery together.

Creating a Supportive Homeschooling Environment

We offer the following discussions to families who are beginning to think about creating a new learning environment in the home. While much of the following may seem to be common sense, we all

need reminders to reconnect with the simple elements of creating a nurturing home for young children. It is easy to be lured by the “more is better” culture; we all end up with toy rooms overstuffed with toys, with videos and games that overstimulate, and with a weekly to-do list that feels more like a circus than a schedule. Yet, when considering introducing the new elements of homeschooling, it is important to look at your home environment with fresh eyes.

This is a great opportunity to make any changes and adjustments you have been intending to make. Even subtle or simple changes in the way a room is organized, or reducing the amount of screen time and overall media noise in your home, can have a renewing and enlivening effect on every family member. Young children are especially sensitive to these elements, and we encourage you to begin your homeschooling experience with a fresh start, an uncluttered space, and an open mind. Create a schedule that makes room for explorations and discoveries, and go forward into each day prepared to stop and smell the roses (sometimes literally!) whenever a “teachable moment” presents itself. In many ways, every moment is a learning moment.

Imitation Activities

Children in the first stage of development learn naturally through imitation. If possible, provide opportunities each day for your child to imitate you in your “real work.” Children would much rather be involved in the regular activities of the household than have life revolve around them. When we include our children in the daily activities of life, allowing them to work side by side with us instead of focusing all our attention on them, they learn essential tasks at their own pace, developing practical skills without feeling pressured to perform. When parent and child work together, a harmonious flow is established between them, which results in a deeper bond.

However, it is not enough to tell a child something—children need to be shown, and they need to have the supporting presence of the parent to help them maintain focus. What young children want most of all is simply to be with the parent and to be included in the parent’s activities. The kitchen, with its daily bustle, is an excellent place to begin. Children love to help wash the fruits and vegetables for a meal, and they are capable of cutting them when shown how to do so safely. Kneading bread is a fun activity for children to dig their hands into, and they enjoy shaping their own little loaves or forming the bread into animal, letter, and number shapes.

Include your child when setting the table. Mealtimes become very special when you create a ritual. You may wish to have cloth place mats and napkins and to make napkin rings for each member of the family (a fun craft project to do with your child!). When flowers are in season, your child can pick some to put on the table. When care is brought to the presentation of the meal, your child is often able to eat in a calm and slow manner, and many problems associated with mealtimes may thus be avoided. Good manners flow more naturally when care is taken with the arrangement of the table and the family is calm and focused. Offering a special thanks for the food can be part of creating a special atmosphere.

After the meal, you can wash and dry dishes together. Ask your child to help put away the silverware in the proper slots. Buy your child a small broom so they can sweep the floor with you. When you make the beds, ask your child to get on one side of the bed with you on the other to help you pull up the

sheet, blanket, and bedspread. Children love to fold clothes. Dish towels, washcloths, socks, and other small items are perfect for little hands. Teach your child to match socks and to stack the towels by color. All sorting and matching activities help build math and reading readiness.

No matter the task, your child will enjoy working alongside you when you bring an upbeat attitude to the task. If you give your child a directive to clean up and you do not participate, however, they will most likely balk at the idea. Children want to do things *with* parents—this is the key.

Creative Play

Is your house overflowing with games, toys, books, stuffed animals, paper, and bits and pieces of everything in between? Such spaces occur naturally and are the result of healthy, creative activity. Yet too much stuff can make individual toys inaccessible, and the overall scene of piles upon piles of treasures can be quite uninspiring and overwhelming.

You may consider doing a thorough organization before beginning your homeschooling experience. One method is to have a “50 Percent Reduction” day, where just about half of everything is carefully put away into boxes and stored for another day. (Labeling the boxes is a great idea!) Do you have five puzzles out? Put away two or three for now. Do you have a dozen stuffed animals in an overflowing basket? Choose six to keep and six to take a break (“take a vacation”). Clearing out and bringing order to the physical spaces of play and learning can have a positive, refreshing influence on children and parents alike.

Once everything is organized and accessible, creative play often emerges naturally from the events of your day, from the stories your child hears and from the experiences they have. Playing house or store, dressing up and acting out stories, building with blocks, and other such activities can easily be an extension of your focused main lesson times, and your child will often happily engage in these activities for an extended time without your active involvement.

The following is a list of classic creative play ideas.

Play dress-up: Children love to wear “big people clothes” so they can pretend to be the mommy or daddy, storekeeper, doctor, nurse, police officer, firefighter, and so on. They also like trying out all sorts of creative outfits. Thrift stores and garage sales are great places to find interesting garments and accessories for your costume box. Hats, gloves, shoes, silky things that can be draped, costume jewelry of all kinds, old neckties, and shawls can all be part of a well-stocked costume box.



Play store with real food: Cans of food, a small bag of popcorn, a box of uncooked pasta, or small unopened packages of beans and other foods can stock the “store” shelves, and play money (or real coins) can make the experience more real for your child. Also, you can use empty food boxes and cans, taping up the lids so they can be safely used for a pretend store.

Play house: Use a large cloth thrown over a table or an arrangement of chairs to create a cozy pretend house. Making a house out of a large box (ask your local refrigerator or washing machine dealer) is also fun. Cut out windows and doors, and paint the outside of the house with shutters around the windows, flowers growing around the edges, or any decorations that strike your child’s fancy.

Block play: A set of plain wooden blocks in basic shapes—squares, rectangles, round “towers,” etc.—offers endless possibilities. Blocks that are of consistent and relative sizes (“unit” blocks that show two square blocks equal one rectangular block, or two triangular blocks equal one square block) are excellent for developing an awareness of mathematical relationships. By simply playing with these blocks, children become comfortable and familiar with simple concepts of addition and subtraction, comparison and sequencing, and many other important ideas. Large cardboard “bricks” are also excellent building blocks, and they can be used to create very tall towers and entire castles. They are lightweight and easy to stack, and they won’t hurt little toes when they fall down.

While small interlocking plastic blocks (like LEGO and DUPLO) are a great hit with children and can lead to hours of imaginative play, we encourage you to provide a sturdy set of wooden blocks. There is a big difference in the feel, sound, and experience of using wooden blocks as opposed to plastic blocks. Although wooden blocks are especially helpful for small children to use, they will undoubtedly be used throughout the years for larger constructions by children of all ages.

Toys from nature: As the year progresses, you can develop collections of nature items. Shells, stones, nuts, pine cones, and other materials from nature can be kept in small baskets in an easy-to-reach place. Your child will naturally gravitate to playing with them in an amazing variety of ways.

Handwork: Keep beeswax and clay handy. Make your own modeling dough (two recipes are provided here) in addition to using purchased clay. Materials for handwork (yarn, felt, construction paper and other interesting papers, scissors, glue, craft sticks, etc.) can be kept on a low shelf, easily available whenever needed.

Grinding grain: Put wheat berries or dried corn in an old-fashioned manual coffee grinder and let your child grind it into flour. Store wheat flour or cornmeal in a jar until there are several cups and then make bread together.

Scarf play: Large silk or cotton scarves are wonderful for creative play. Children love to wrap themselves in the scarves, use them as capes, or dance with them. They can be used to create forts and houses or to lay the foundation for a farm or water scene on the floor. You can simply buy large pieces of light, silky fabric and place them in a basket near the play area.

Sand play: All that is needed is a pile of sand and some natural materials such as branches, leaves, small sticks, stones, acorns or other seedpods, grass, etc. Containers and “diggers” of different sizes and shapes (from thimble and spoon to bucket and shovel) and a bucket of water will allow your child endless possibilities. A “drip castle” can be made by mixing a soggy mixture of water and sand, scooping up small handfuls of it, and then allowing it to drip down into a pile, adding to it bit by bit as it grows into an unusual castle.

Simple Homemade Modeling Dough (Uncooked)

Ingredients:

4 cups flour

2 cups water (add food coloring if desired)

1½ cups salt

Combine flour and salt. Add the water little by little, kneading and mixing constantly. Put a little vegetable oil on your hands (and on your child’s too) before taking the dough out of the bowl to knead on a board. Be careful not to add too much water—you want the dough to be soft but not overly squishy.

Kept in sealed containers in the refrigerator, this dough will last a couple of weeks. If you want to make several colors of dough at once, divide the flour and salt mixture into several bowls and divide the water, adding a different color to each batch.

Simple Homemade Modeling Dough (Cooked)

Ingredients:

2 cups baking soda

1 cup cornstarch

1¼ cups cold water (add food coloring if desired)

Combine baking soda and cornstarch in a pan, and slowly add cold water while stirring. Cook over low heat, stirring often, for 5 or 6 minutes. Remove the dough from the pan and lay it out on a flat board to cool, covered with a damp cloth so it doesn’t dry out.

When cool, knead the dough for about 10 minutes. Store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

If your child uses this dough to make something they want to keep, you can put the creation on a lightly greased cookie sheet and bake it for about 2 hours at 200°F. Then turn off the oven and let it sit for another 2 hours in the oven to cool and harden. The cooked, hardened project can be painted if desired.

Nurturing a Healthy Imagination

A child's "play" is actually an extraordinarily complex learning process! It is the way a child learns to make sense of the world. Any parent or teacher who has closely watched a child absorbed in imagina-



tive play must be impressed by the intensity of the play and its reality to the child. Social situations and emotional challenges are given expression in the safe world of a child's pretend play. In this way, a child is able to confront difficulties, try out solutions, and integrate problem-solving techniques into their being. Through the imaginative use of wooden blocks, dolls, scarves and capes, and other simple props, a child can create the characters and scenery for a rich and endless variety of imaginative scenarios.

In recent years, however, simple toys have been replaced by a bewildering variety of toys designed to attract attention, make noise or move on their own, or tie into a movie or TV show. Electronic devices come loaded with enticing games, and everywhere you turn, "there's an app for that." Even young children are targeted by media conglomerates eager to get technology into every little hand. Although one can admire the ingenious

nature of these toys and electronic games, careful observation of children's relationship to these toys reveals an interesting point. These toys may be very alluring and fascinating at first, but children soon discover that the possibilities in such toys are limited. For example, if the toy moves and makes noise on its own, it takes away the child's fun of moving the toy and making noises. A rectangular wooden block can become a table, car, boat, house, man, or many other things as a child creates the details of it in their imagination. However, a Galactic Star Cruiser can only be a Galactic Star Cruiser. The child quickly loses interest or wants another more complex toy. A craving for more and more toys is often accompanied by less and less satisfaction.

When play centers around simple toys such as blocks, cardboard boxes, sand play, etc., the imaginative faculties are continually being strengthened and refined, for the child must supply the details of the adventure from within. A child who grows in such an environment develops the ability to see the possibilities inherent in all things, which lends itself to the skills of creative problem-solving, flexibility of thought, and a strong, independent mind.

The Influence of Screen Time and Media

From a developmental perspective, many parents and educators are concerned about the amount of time that children spend in front of a TV, computer screen, or electronic device. Young children are often riveted by moving pictures on a screen, be it video or computer games, movies or TV, or any other form of entertainment that is screen-based, but children benefit most from being physically

active. They should be encouraged to run, jump, play, imagine, and use their hands to create things. While occasional movie viewing or interactions with technology don't normally present a problem, we don't feel that regular screen time is healthy for young children because it takes them away from physical activity, which is very important for their balanced growth.

It can be difficult to find a balance between indulging a child's desires and limiting exposure to TV, movies, computer games, handheld electronic devices, and other screen time. Most parents feel there are many positive programs that their child can benefit from or enjoy, and TV (or online resources) can be an excellent educator and entertainer. However, electronic media can also get in the way of exploring, playing, interacting with parents and others, or just letting the mind wander, all of which encourage learning and healthy physical and social development.

Many educators have also noted that screen time can negatively influence the way a child plays. When children play, they often imitate what they see on the screen instead of engaging in their own creative and imaginative play. The more screen time children have, the more they will expect fast-paced action and excitement. They come to expect to be entertained and often act bored when they find themselves faced with free-play time. It can become hard for them to come up with their own original, creative-play scenarios to explore, solve, and learn from.

Creative play lays the foundation for academic learning and is vital for healthy intellectual, social, and physical development in young children. If your child needs help finding things to do when the TV is turned off, suggest other activities and be willing to join in the creative play until they are able to become involved and absorbed. With this approach, your child will soon develop the inner capacity to create original play scenarios and free-play time will become enlivened and enriched. (If screen time or boredom are concerns in your household, please read the chapters in *The Heart of Learning* that address these topics.)



Stories: Language Arts/Social Studies

The Tale of Peter Rabbit Lesson 1

by Beatrix Potter



Once upon a time, there were four little rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter.

They lived with their mother in a sandbank, underneath the root of a very big fir tree.

“Now, my dears,” said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, “you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don’t go into Mr. McGregor’s garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.



Now run along, and don’t get into mischief. I am going out.”

Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, and went through the wood to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.



Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries.

But Peter, who was very naughty, ran straightaway to Mr. McGregor's garden, and squeezed under the gate!



First he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes.



And then, feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley.

But around the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor!



Mr. McGregor was on his hands and knees planting out young cabbages, but he jumped up and ran after Peter, waving a rake and calling out, “Stop thief!”

Peter was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had forgotten the way back to the gate. He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe among the potatoes.





After losing them, he ran on four legs and went faster, so that I think he might have got away altogether if he had not unfortunately run into a gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket. It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.

Peter gave himself up for lost and shed big tears; but his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him in great excitement and implored him to exert himself.



Mr. McGregor came up with a sieve, which he intended to pop on the top of Peter; but Peter wriggled out just in time, leaving his jacket behind him.

And rushed into the toolshed, and jumped into a can. It would have been a beautiful thing to hide in, if it had not had so much water in it.



Mr. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was somewhere in the toolshed, perhaps hidden underneath a flowerpot. He began to turn them over carefully, looking under each. Presently, Peter sneezed—“Kertyschoo!”



Mr. McGregor was after him in no time, and he tried to put his foot on Peter, who jumped out of a window, upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor, and he was tired of running after Peter. He went back to his work.

Peter sat down to rest; he was out of breath and trembling with fright, and he had not the least idea which way to go. Also, he was very damp from sitting in that can.

After a time, he began to wander about, going lippity—lippity—not very fast, and looking all around.





He found a door in a wall; but it was locked, and there was no room for a fat little rabbit to squeeze underneath.

An old mouse was running in and out over the stone doorstep, carrying peas and beans to her family in the wood. Peter asked her the way to the gate, but she had such a large pea in her mouth that she could not answer. She only shook her head at him. Peter began to cry.

Then he tried to find his way straight across the garden, but he became more and more puzzled.

Presently, he came to a pond where Mr. McGregor filled his watering cans. A white cat was staring at some goldfish; she sat very, very still, but now and then the tip of her tail twitched as if it were alive. Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he has heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.



He went back toward the toolshed, but suddenly, quite close to him, he heard the noise of a hoe—scr-r-ritch, scratch, scratch, scritch. Peter scuttered underneath the bushes.

But presently, as nothing happened, he came out, and climbed on a wheelbarrow, and peeped over. The first thing he saw was Mr. McGregor hoeing onions. His back was turned toward Peter, and beyond him was the gate!



Peter got down very quietly off the wheelbarrow and started running as fast as he could go along a straight walk behind some black-currant bushes. Mr. McGregor caught sight of him at the corner, but Peter did not care. He slipped underneath the gate and was safe at last in the wood outside the garden.

Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scarecrow to frighten the blackbirds.

Peter never stopped running or looked behind him till he got home to the big fir tree.



He was so tired that he flopped down on the nice soft sand on the floor of the rabbit hole, and shut his eyes. His mother was busy cooking; she wondered what he had done with his clothes. It was the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter had lost in a fortnight!

I am sorry to say that Peter was not very well during the evening. His mother put him to bed and made some chamomile tea; and she gave a dose of it to Peter!





“One tablespoonful to be taken at bedtime.”

But Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail had bread and milk and blackberries for supper.



Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Lesson 2

Adapted from an old tale



Once upon a time, there were three bears who lived together in a cottage of their own, deep in the woods. Baby Bear was a wee little fellow with a high squeaky voice, Mama Bear was a middle-sized bear with a lovely melodic voice, and Papa Bear was an enormous creature with a loud, booming voice.

One day, while waiting for their porridge to cool, the three bears decided to go for a walk together in the woods.

Meanwhile, not far from their cottage, a young girl was wandering among the tall trees. Her name was Goldilocks. Goldilocks had been collecting leaves and had become hopelessly lost. When she spotted the tidy little cottage in the forest, she ran toward it, hoping to find someone who could help her.

Up she ran to the wooden door and knocked three times. When no one answered, she peeked through the window in the door to see inside. Then she tried the door and found it was unlocked. “Hello!” she called, hoping desperately that someone would answer. When no one did, Goldilocks decided to go inside and wait for whoever lived there to return.

As she entered the kitchen, she noticed three bowls of porridge sitting on the large wooden table. It looked like someone was ready to eat! The porridge smelled delicious, and Goldilocks suddenly realized she was very hungry. She approached the bowl at the head of the table. It was huge. She picked up the large spoon and tried a bite, but the



porridge was very hot and she nearly burned her mouth. The second bowl was a normal size, but when she took a taste, she made a face—the porridge was too cold. The third bowl was teeny-tiny, and the porridge in it was just right, so she ate it up in a hurry.

Wanting to be comfortable while she waited, Goldilocks went into the living room, where she thought she would sit down. Near the fireplace, she saw the biggest chair she had ever seen and ran over to sit in it. But it was much too hard for her. Next, she tried the medium-sized chair, but it was much too soft. Then she sat down in the teeny-tiny chair and found it to be just the right size for her—until the bottom dropped out and she landed with a thud on the floor!

Still the owners of the cottage had not returned. Goldilocks was very tired. She found the bedroom and went first to an enormous bed, but she found it was way too high at the head for her. The medium-sized bed was way too high at the foot to be comfortable. But the teeny-tiny bed was just right, and Goldilocks fell asleep as soon as she closed her eyes.

By now the three bears were on their way home, ready to eat their porridge. When they entered the kitchen, Papa Bear said in his loud, booming voice, “Somebody has been eating my porridge and left the spoon in it!”

Mama Bear noticed that her spoon was in her bowl too, and she said in her sweet voice, “Somebody has been eating my porridge too!”

“Somebody has been eating my porridge too and has eaten it all up!” cried Baby Bear in his high, squeaky little voice.

Knowing someone had entered their house, the three bears started looking around. In the living room, Papa Bear noticed that the pillow that was usually on his chair was now on the floor. “Somebody has been sitting in my chair!” he roared, clearly upset.

“Somebody has been sitting in my chair too!” complained Mama Bear, noticing that her plump feather pillow had been squashed flat.

Baby Bear ran to his broken chair and said angrily, “Somebody has been sitting in my chair and has broken it all to pieces!”

Concerned that the intruder might still be in the house, the bears continued looking. Into the bedroom they ran, and immediately Papa Bear noticed that his blankets were wrinkled. “Somebody has been lying in my bed!” he boomed.

Mama saw that the comforter on her bed was all crooked and said, “Somebody has been lying in my bed too!”

But when Baby Bear looked at his bed, what a fright he had! For there, fast asleep, was a little girl! “Somebody has been lying in my bed, and she’s still here!” squeaked Baby Bear in his shrill little voice, pointing at Goldilocks, who awoke with a start.



As she opened her eyes, she saw the three bears staring at her. She quickly looked from Baby Bear to Mama Bear to Papa Bear and nearly fainted from fear. The bears were all bigger than she was, even Baby Bear! When she saw the tremendous bulk of Papa Bear, she jumped up without thinking and ran past them, through the door and back out into the woods, as fast as her little legs would carry her.

When she could run no farther, Goldilocks collapsed in a heap on the ground. She had just had the fright of her life! “Imagine,

three bears living in a cottage!” thought Goldilocks. “I’m lucky they didn’t eat me up!”

After catching her breath, she wondered what she should do. She was still lost and very frightened. Reaching for her heart-shaped locket for comfort, she found it was gone and began to cry. She had lost her grandmother’s beautiful necklace. It must have fallen off when she was running or, worse yet, somewhere in the bears’ cottage! She knew she had to find it because it was very special to her. So off she went, trying to retrace her path as she had run from the cottage, hoping that she would find the locket before she got all the way back there.

Slowly and carefully, she examined the ground for any sight of her lovely gold locket and chain. As she neared the cottage, she still had not found her necklace. She knew she would have to gather all her courage to knock on the door again.

Goldilocks raised her trembling hand to knock. Mama Bear opened the door and was very surprised to see the little girl, who had just run off in fright, standing there before her! She said in her sweet voice, “Hello, child! Won’t you please come in? We were sorry that you ran off in such a hurry.”

Surprised by the kindly mother bear’s invitation, Goldilocks cautiously stepped inside the cottage once more. However, she nearly turned and fled again when Papa Bear stepped forward to greet her. He was nearly four times as tall as Goldilocks and half as wide as he was tall! His voice boomed throughout the room as he said, “Greetings, little girl. Welcome back. I hope we didn’t frighten you too badly. We were just so surprised that someone had entered our home, eaten our porridge, sat in our chairs, and gone to sleep in Baby’s bed that we didn’t know what to say! Please tell us who you are and why you have come.”

Baby Bear was hiding behind Papa Bear. By the look on his face, he wasn’t at all happy to see Goldilocks. It was bad enough that she had eaten all his porridge and broken his chair and slept in his bed, but now she was back, and he didn’t like it.

“Well, you see, I, uh,” stammered Goldilocks, “I have lost my precious gold locket that belonged to my grandmother, and I can’t go home without it.” She stopped to take a breath, then continued. “My name is Goldilocks, and I was collecting leaves in the woods this morning, and I wandered too far away before I realized I was lost. Then I came upon your cottage and decided to wait inside for you to come back. When I smelled your porridge, I realized how hungry I was. I’m sorry I ate all of Baby’s porridge. Then I thought I would sit down and wait for you in the living room, but when I broke Baby’s chair, I felt awful and thought maybe a nap would help. I must have been very tired and fallen asleep right away. When I woke up and saw all of you staring at me, I thought you were going to eat me, so I ran away. But when I realized I had lost my locket, I came back to find it. I’m very sorry I came into your house when you weren’t home. You are very nice bears.”

Baby had been listening to Goldilocks and felt a little better when he heard that she was sorry for all she had done, but he was still angry that his favorite little chair was broken. Papa knew how his son was feeling. “Please sit down, Goldilocks,” suggested Papa Bear, pointing to the sofa. He sat in his large chair and Mama sat in her medium chair, but Baby had to sit on the floor.

When Goldilocks saw how upset Baby Bear was, she said, “Baby Bear, my father is a carpenter, and he has taught me some of his skills. If you have a hammer and nails, I can help you fix your chair.”

Baby’s eyes lit up when he heard this, and he dashed off in search of the necessary tools. In the meantime, Mama Bear invited Goldilocks to stay for lunch. She volunteered to show Mama a recipe her grandmother had taught her for Bear Mush, a tasty combination of cooked grains. As lunch was being prepared, Mama was disappointed that there was no more honey to eat with the Bear Mush. Then Goldilocks remembered a tree in the woods she had seen earlier in the day. It was a very tall honey tree and only a very tall bear could reach the hole in the trunk high overhead to retrieve the honey. Papa Bear could reach it easily! She told him where it was and off he went to get some fresh honey for lunch.

Baby Bear returned from the shed with the hammer and nails in his paw. “Do you think we have time to fix my chair before lunch, Goldilocks?” asked Baby Bear hopefully.

“Why certainly!” Goldilocks replied. “Let’s take it outside. We’ll have it repaired in no time.” As she picked up the broken chair, something dropped onto the floor. She caught her breath as she looked down and saw her necklace there on the floor. “It must have come off when I broke the chair and fell on the floor! Oh, how wonderful to find my precious locket again!” She put it carefully around her neck and began skipping around with joy.

In the garden, Goldilocks taught Baby Bear how to hammer the nails into the wood. In a few minutes the chair was mended and so was the friendship between the two children. Mama was delighted to see Baby happy again. Just then, Papa returned with a pot full of fresh honey, and they all sat down to a delicious lunch to celebrate their new friendship. After lunch, Papa Bear invited Baby Bear to climb up on his knee. He motioned to Goldilocks to climb up on the other knee. He told them he had plenty of room for both of them. Papa Bear then told the two children stories from his childhood.

Later that afternoon, the three bears walked Goldilocks to the edge of the forest so she could find her way home again. Now that she knew the way, she promised she would return to visit the bears each week, as they had all become such good friends. Papa Bear and Mama Bear and Baby Bear all waved goodbye to Goldilocks as she set off for home, knowing they would see one another again soon.



Stories: Math

The Story of One Big Sun

Number 1 Lesson 5

by Rebecca Ide Lowe

Every day, Father Sun rose in the sky, lighting and warming the world with his brilliance. He smiled down on the Earth, shining in happiness and love. But in the forest, the animals were having an argument. Some of them thought that if Father Sun shone everywhere at one time, there wouldn't be enough light for everyone. They didn't want to share the light with others, but wanted it all for themselves. As the argument got louder and louder, Crow, Fox, and Eagle sneaked away. They had decided to steal Father Sun for themselves!

Crow said he would try first. He flew as high into the sky as he could. He flew straight up toward Father Sun. He went higher and higher, and the light got brighter and brighter. He felt hotter and hotter. When he looked at Father Sun, he was nearly blinded by his brilliance. "I don't think I can get close enough to catch Father Sun," Crow said to himself, and flew back down to make a new plan with Fox and Eagle.

"I have an idea," said Fox. "Every afternoon Father Sun can be seen in the pond at the clearing, staring up through the water. I will catch him there." So, that afternoon, Fox went to the pond in the clearing. Crow and Eagle watched from the edge of the forest. Fox crept quietly to the bank of the pond. He saw Father Sun staring up at him from the water. Suddenly, Fox jumped into the water to grab Father Sun. But Father Sun wasn't there! Fox swam about looking, but all he found was Catfish, who politely said hello and went on his way.

“Father Sun is not there,” said Fox when he had scrambled out of the water. “He ran away quickly before I could catch him.” Then he looked at the pond again. There was Father Sun, staring up at him just as before! “Oh, you are a tricky one!” cried Fox, and he leaped into the water again. Once more, he reached out his arms to grab Father Sun, and once more, his arms were empty. Father Sun was gone again!



Fox scrambled out of the water, calling to Crow and Eagle. “Where did he go? Did you see where Father Sun went? He ran away as soon as I jumped in the water, and I could not catch him.”

But Crow and Eagle had not seen Father Sun run away. They had only seen Fox swimming about in the water.

“I will catch Father Sun,” said Eagle. “I can fly higher than any other creature. And once I have caught him, we will share him among the three of us. We will have as much light and warmth as we need, and we will never have to worry about not having enough. Father Sun will shine just for us!”

Eagle flew into the air. He rose higher and higher toward Father Sun. Crow and Fox watched from the ground as Eagle soared higher than any creature had ever gone before. They watched Eagle fly so high that soon he was out of sight. All they could see was Father Sun shining joyfully, lighting the world and sending his warmth for everyone. They waited anxiously, thinking that any minute they would see Eagle returning with Father Sun tucked away in his bag. They thought about how wonderful it would be for the three of them to own Father Sun just for themselves. They stared and stared into the sky, looking for Eagle coming with Father Sun.

Suddenly, Eagle appeared. He was a tiny speck against the sky. Gradually he got bigger and bigger, closer and closer. But Father Sun was still shining for everyone. Father Sun was not tucked away in Eagle's bag. Crow and Fox watched as Eagle returned to the Earth and landed.

"Father Sun is too big," said Eagle. "He is too bright and too hot. When I drew close to him, I couldn't see anything except his light. I couldn't feel anything except his warmth. I had to close my eyes. I called to him, telling him to climb into my bag. He laughed, and said he would never fit in my bag. He said he would shine every day for me and for you, but that he would shine every day for everyone else too. So I give up—we cannot catch Father Sun and keep him just for ourselves."

Sadly, Eagle, Fox, and Crow went home. They were still worried that there would not be enough light and warmth for everyone. They agreed to meet at dawn to make a new plan.

Just before dawn the next morning, Crow, Fox, and Eagle met in the clearing. Other animals crept out of their homes to say good morning and to await Father Sun. As they all sat and watched, Father Sun's many rays began to poke up through the darkness. There was a ray for Crow, a ray for Fox, and a ray for Eagle. There was a ray for Squirrel, for Mouse, for Wolf, for Bluebird, for Snake, for Bear, for Chipmunk, for Snail, for Catfish, and for every other creature in the forest. There was a ray for each bug and butterfly, for each father and mother and child in the village, for each grandmother and grandfather and baby nestled in bed.

Crow, Fox, and Eagle looked at one another and laughed. "How silly we are!" they said. "Father Sun is for all of us. There is only one sun, but there are enough rays for everyone!" And so it still is today.

Princess Daylight

Number 2 Lesson 7

Adapted from a story in *At The Back of the North Wind* by George MacDonald

Once upon a time, a queen gives birth to a baby girl. She names the princess Daylight. Many fairies come to the baby's christening, bearing wonderful gifts.

One of the guests is a wicked fairy who says that Daylight shall sleep all day and shall never see the sun. Luckily, there is still a good fairy who has not yet given her gift. This good fairy gives the princess the gift of being able to stay awake all night, so she will at least see the moon. The wicked fairy demands another chance to give something and says that if Daylight is to be awake at night, she shall be just like the moon, being strong when the moon is growing bigger, or is full, and weak when the moon is growing smaller, or is only a sliver. Fortunately, there is yet one more good fairy waiting, and she adds that the spell shall last only until a prince kisses Daylight without knowing that he has kissed a princess.

And so, as the princess grows, she is healthy and happy during the full moon but weak and sad during the shrinking moon; she is awake throughout the night and asleep at the first hint of dawn. She never sees the sun at all, and though she becomes more and more beautiful as she grows up, no king wants his son to marry her, because of the spell.

Then, in a nearby kingdom, a young prince sets out to seek adventure, disguised as a peasant. He wishes to prove to himself that he can get along just as well as other people do. One day, he comes upon a house where lives a kind old woman who is actually a good fairy. She recognizes him as a prince but does and says nothing about it. She welcomes him, giving him food and a bed for the night.

That night, the prince discovers a beautiful young woman singing and dancing in the moonlight. He watches her for hours—until he falls asleep—and when he wakes up, it is daylight and he is alone. While looking for her, he

finds a little house he believes may be hers. He goes in and is generously fed by the cook. While he is there, he learns that the house is a favorite spot of Princess Daylight—but of course he doesn't know that she is the dancer in the woods. That evening, he goes back to the forest in hopes that the dancer will appear again.

As before, she appears with the moonrise, and the prince watches her dance the whole night long. As the moon goes down, she retreats into the trees until she disappears altogether. He then goes back to the old woman's cottage, where he is again given breakfast and a place to rest. Again he waits in the forest at moonrise and sees the princess dance more joyously than ever under the full moon, but suddenly clouds, thunder, and lightning come, and he sees the princess fall to the ground.

Thinking she is injured, he runs to her. She is not happy to see him, but soon they start talking. She asks him about the sun. He is surprised she has never seen it and tells her how beautiful it is. Then she retreats to her cottage, not inviting him to follow.

The prince's wanderings take him into the neighborhood of the swamp fairy, who makes sure he gets lost and cannot find either the princess or the good fairy's cottage for seven days. One day, toward dawn, during the time when the moon is getting smaller and smaller, he sees a person lying under a tree. She is about the size of a child and appears to be very sick. Her eyes are closed, but he does his best to revive her. When he does, she weeps and cries but won't tell him what is wrong. She seems ill and weak, and she looks quite pitiful.

Believing she is dying, he carries her to the princess's cottage in the woods, thinking the cook there might be able to help. When she moans and weeps, his heart is moved, and he kisses her. As he approaches the door of the cottage, he realizes that he is, in fact, carrying Princess Daylight herself, who, by his kiss, is freed from the spell at last and has been restored to health. Of course, he is overjoyed to see her, and before long they marry and live happily ever after.



Stories: Science

The Butterfly Story Lesson 2

by April Smith

One day, Erica and Lauren were playing with their little sister, Briar, in the garden. It was summer, and they were looking at all the poppy princesses with their frilly skirts, dancing in their Poppy Ballroom just outside the bedroom window.

Suddenly, Erica caught sight of a beautiful butterfly soaring above them. She had large orange and black wings, larger than any other kind of butterfly Erica had ever seen in their garden.

“Look!” cried Erica. “Look at this beautiful Fairy Queen. She’s come to the ball to see the princesses. Let’s dance with her!”

So the girls danced around the lawn, waving their arms up and down, just as if they were beautiful Fairy Queens too. Little Briar toddled behind them as best she could. Soon, it was time for lunch, and the girls went inside to tell their mother all about their play.

While they were away, the beautiful Queen Butterfly settled on the swan plant close to the house. This plant had long slender leaves, just the sort that Queen Butterfly was looking for. This was the plant that butterfly babies most liked to eat.

Queen Butterfly settled gently on the underside of the swan plant leaf, holding on tightly with her long slender black legs. And there she laid three tiny, tiny, pale yellowish eggs. Then she flew away.

A few days later, out of these tiny, tiny eggs hatched three tiny, tiny caterpillars. They were yellowish in color, each with a little black head. We shall call them Incy, Wincy, and Tincy. My, they were hungry! And do you know what their first breakfast was? It was the shell of the little egg out of which they had just hatched. They ate it all up.

“But we’re still hungry,” Incy, Wincy, and Tincy said.

“Look,” said Incy, “here’s a big green meadow we can eat. I’ll try it.” With his strong tiny jaws, Incy ate some.

“Mmm, this is good,” he said to Wincy and Tincy. “You should try some.”

So Wincy and Tincy also tried some of the green meadow. They liked it too, and they all ate to their hearts’ content. Of course, we know what the green meadow really was, don’t we? Yes, it was the swan plant leaf!

After two days of eating, Incy, Wincy, and Tincy had grown too fat for their first skin. Now, caterpillars are very lucky. They don’t have to wash their clothes when they get dirty or buy new ones when they get too big.

They have a brand new set of clothes right under the old one. So when they feel their skin getting too tight, it just splits open—and out they crawl with their new skin already on. The three caterpillars had to change their clothes several times over the next few days because they grew very fast. Now their clothes were very colorful, and they were dressed in skins of black, yellow, and white.

One day after school, Erica and Lauren noticed Incy, Wincy, and Tincy on the swan plant. They were very excited.

“Oh, Mother, come and look!” cried Lauren.

Mother came with Briar and the magnifying glass. They all had a close look at the three caterpillars with the magnifying glass, and they could see their stubby little black legs and their pointy little front legs. They watched them push themselves along with their stubby legs.

“What are those long, thin black things on their heads and tail ends?” asked Erica.

Before Mother could answer, Briar put out her little finger and touched Incy. Incy was afraid, and the children saw him start whipping the long black things all about as if he were trying to scare them away.

“There, he’s showed you what they are for,” said Mother. “And look, there’s a black beetle crawling along to see the other caterpillar there.”

They all watched as the beetle crawled toward Wincy. Wincy sensed the beetle coming and suddenly disappeared before the beetle’s eyes. Oh, that beetle got such a surprise. He couldn’t see Wincy anywhere, so he just flew away. Erica and Lauren just laughed and laughed because they had seen Wincy’s trick. Wincy had fallen off the leaf, but as she’d gone, she’d let out a silken thread and there she was, hanging in midair under the leaf. Soon, she began eating her silk thread and pulling herself back up.

Now the girls watched the caterpillars start to eat the leaves again. Through the magnifying glass, they could see their strong little jaws munching and munching through the edge of the leaf.

“Mmm, I’m hungry too,” said Lauren.

“Come on,” said Mother. “Let’s all go and have our own afternoon tea.” So they all went inside for tea.

Lauren and Erica went to see the caterpillars every day for the next two weeks. Every day, they looked bigger. One day, the girls got such a fright! They ran inside calling, “Mother, Mother, the caterpillars have gone!”

“A bird has eaten them. I know it has!” cried Erica sadly.

“Calm down now,” said Mother softly. “It’s all right. Birds don’t like eating brightly colored caterpillars. They taste yucky to them. Come with me, and I’ll show you something special.”

Mother took them outside and there, attached to some wire on the wall of the house, a short distance from the swan plant, was hanging the most beautiful little green lantern house the girls had ever seen. It was yellow-green and round like a thimble but all closed in over the top. And around the widest part near the top was a little line of golden dots that shone brightly in the sunshine.

“It looks like the lights are on inside the house,” said Lauren.

“Yes,” said Mother, “and guess who is inside the house?”

“But a caterpillar couldn’t fit in there,” objected Erica.

“Well, come over here and have a look,” said Mother. The girls followed her over to the window ledge, and there they saw Incy hanging upside down by his tail from a piece of overhanging wood. His head was curled up as though he was looking at his tail. He wasn’t moving at all.

“He’s the last one to start building his house,” said Mother. “Now come and look here.”

And there on another part of the wall was the third caterpillar. Near the tail end, the girls could see the old yellow-black and white skin shrinking away. Now, most of the caterpillar was covered with a green-colored soft skin, like the little lantern that was hanging on the wire.

The next day when Erica and Lauren went to look, they found there were three little lantern houses hanging very still with their little golden lights shining.

Each day, the girls went to look at the lantern chrysalis houses where the three little caterpillars were sleeping. Nothing moved, nothing changed. And then, as happens with little girls when there’s nothing new to look at, they forgot to look for a few days. But Mother had thought to count the days on a calendar, and after 11 days and nights had passed, she reminded the girls to have another look at the little lanterns. Lauren and Erica noticed they had gone from light yellow-green to a darker brown color.

When they got home from school the following day, there was a *big surprise* waiting for them.

There on the wire by the house was something hanging where the lantern chrysalises had been. Hanging on to the spot where the chrysalises had attached to the wire was a rather crunched up, orange and black creature with white spots, hanging on with long and slender black legs. Erica suddenly remembered the beautiful Queen Butterfly they had seen in the garden a few weeks ago.



“Mother, Mother,” cried Erica, “come and see!” Mother came, and as they watched, the butterfly started to gently move its wings back and forth.

“This may take a little while,” said Mother. “I’ll fetch afternoon tea, and we’ll have it outside where we can watch.”

So that’s what they did. Then the girls played in the garden while the sun shone brightly. They came back every so often to look, being very careful not to touch the butterfly, as Mother said it would damage its wings.

Soon, the butterfly had opened its wings and was moving them back and forth, faster and faster, drying them in the sunshine. Then suddenly it let go of the old chrysalis and flew. It flew from flower to flower, resting here, flying there, and soon it was flying very strongly just as though it had been flying forever. Oh, how wonderful it was to soar through the air! The girls ran around pretending they too were beautiful orange and black monarch butterflies. Little Briar happily danced with them as best she could.

Over the next two days, the other two butterflies came out of their chrysalises and showed the girls their beautiful wings. They also flew around the garden with the children, enjoying their new shapes, sipping nectar from the flowers, and soaring on the breezes.

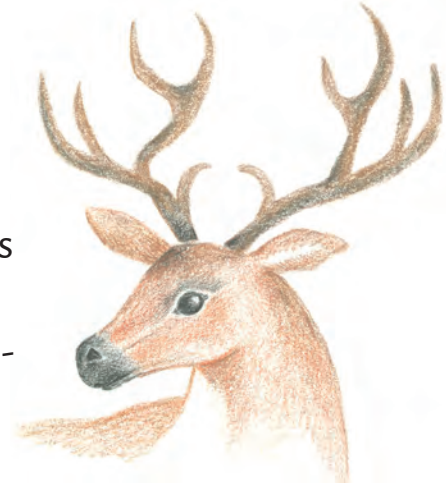
This was a summer Erica and Lauren would remember joyfully forever.

The Prince of the Forest

Lesson 3

by Laura Butler

Once upon a time, in the deep forest, there was a little mountain called Fairy Mountain, where fairies and elves danced and played every day. Their fairy friend, Hob Gobbie, was the caretaker of the mountain, and he kept their main house and the gardens clean and beautiful. He also protected everyone against the bigger creatures of the forest like the snakes, the fearless fox, and most of all from the antlers of the big Daddy Buck, the King of the Forest.



One day, at the garden by the fairy house, Hob Gobbie heard a faint cry. The cry was not familiar to him. He went closer to the crying, and what did he see but a baby fawn stuck in vines by the garden!

At first, he was frightened because he knew that the fawn's daddy was the big Daddy Buck, and he thought the Daddy Buck would think that he, Hob Gobbie, had trapped the little fawn. But then his heart softened, and he became very brave and started to help the little fawn. He told her that he would try and set her free. So he pulled and he pulled to break the vines, but he wasn't strong enough. Hob Gobbie then went inside and made some food for the little fawn and brought food and water for her, to make her as comfortable as he could.

He became very fond of the little fawn, and all that day he took care of her. He tried to imagine what it was like to have a daddy as big and powerful as the Daddy Buck. His secret wish was to one day be able to touch the antlers of the Daddy Buck, but he was much too afraid to ever get that close.

Just before evening, he checked on the fawn and told her good night. He looked beyond the meadow of Fairy Mountain to Bear Mountain. There, standing on the very top of Bear Mountain, was the Daddy Buck. Well, at first,

Hob Gobbie wanted to run and hide, but then he remembered that he was doing a kind thing for the Daddy Buck by taking care of his little fawn. He knew the fawn would be safe, so he went into his fairy house for the night.

Early the next morning, Hob Gobbie woke up, stretched, and got out of bed. He quickly ran outside to see the fawn. Hob Gobbie could scarcely believe his eyes. There, standing right in front of him, was the Daddy Buck. He had been able to free the fawn with his big antlers! He looked at Hob Gobbie and said, “Thank you for taking such good care of my little fawn. Is there anything I can do to repay you?”

Hob Gobbie didn’t know what to say, but then he thought about his secret wish. In a very soft, fairy voice, Hob Gobbie said, “Why yes, Daddy Buck. If you don’t mind, I would love to touch your antlers.”

The Daddy Buck was happy to grant Hob Gobbie his wish, and he got down on his knees so Hob Gobbie could reach way up to his antlers. Hob Gobbie could feel the strength and power of the antlers, but they were also smooth and the covering was soft. “Thank you so much, Daddy Buck,” said Hob Gobbie. “My fairy friends will never believe me when I tell them about this, but I will always remember this special day.”

“I will forever be grateful to you, Hob Gobbie, for helping my little fawn,” replied Daddy Buck. “We will come back and visit you whenever we can. You are a very good friend.”

So off went the little fawn and the Daddy Buck. Hob Gobbie saw them join the Mamma Doe on the top of Bear Mountain, and the three of them ran into the forest. They came back to visit Hob Gobbie quite often, and the Daddy Buck made Hob Gobbie Prince of the Fairy Forest because he was so brave, kind, and honest.





Recipes

Delicious Whole Wheat Bread

Ingredients

- 1 lb (4 cups) whole wheat flour (using $\frac{1}{2}$ all-purpose flour is okay)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup warm water
- 1 package yeast
- 1 tsp salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
- 3 tbsp molasses (or $\frac{1}{2}$ molasses, $\frac{1}{2}$ honey)

Instructions

Add the yeast to the warm water and stir until dissolved. Stir in the molasses, oil, salt, and milk. Stir in 3 cups of flour and let sit for 5 minutes.

Stir in the rest of the flour to make a sturdy dough. Knead on a floured board until the dough springs back easily when touched. Place the dough in a greased bowl to rise in a warm place for 45 minutes or until about doubled in size.

Punch the dough down and divide it into loaves, rolls, small balls to shape into animals, or “snakes” for making letter or number shapes. Shape as desired, and place on lightly greased baking sheets or in well-greased bread pans. Let rise until doubled in size.

Bake at 425°F for 10 minutes. Reduce to 350°F and bake for about 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Homemade Crescent Rolls

Ingredients

- 1 package yeast
- 3 tbsp sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk, scalded
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- melted butter (optional)

Instructions

Dissolve the yeast in water. Cool the milk until it's warm to the touch but not hot, and add it to the yeast with the egg, salt, and sugar. Mix well. Then add flour and knead well. Put it in a greased bowl to rise in a warm place until about doubled in size.

On a floured board, roll out the dough and brush lightly with melted butter (optional). Cut dough out in pie-shaped wedges (long triangles) and roll them up, beginning with the widest end and ending with the smallest point. Shape into a curve, like a large C. Brush lightly with melted butter, if desired.

Cover with a light cloth and let rise in a warm place until about doubled.

Bake at 400°F 15 minutes or until golden brown. (This recipe is easily doubled.)