

Hermit Crab Lesson Plan

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Grade Level: Pre-Kindergarten

Pet Category: Aquarium/Fish

Duration: One week to a month

Overview: Classroom pets enhance the curriculum by instilling a sense of respect and responsibility in the children. It supports the idea that all living things need shelter, food and water for survival.

Objectives:

Children will:

1. Learn responsibility by taking care of the hermit crabs.
2. Learn facts about hermit crabs.
3. Learn that all living things need more than food and water to survive.
4. Learn how to take turns and work with their peers, and make friends. Balancing the needs and rights of self and others.
5. Learn patterns and everyday experiences.
6. Form relationships with adults.
7. Comprehend language, speak clearly, and use expanding expressive vocabulary.
8. be able to recognize and recall details about the hermit crabs.
9. demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of living things
10. use scientific inquiry skills

First start out with an activity to find out what the children know about pets and how to care for them during circle time.

Activity: Pet Talk

Questions to Consider: How does this child engage you in a conversation? In what ways is she able to clearly express her ideas? What information does she recall and share about her experiences?

Why this Important is: Children enjoy taking part in conversations that interest them. They love to talk about themselves and their experiences. Informal conversations with peers and adults help children build confidence in their ability to relay information that other people can understand.

What to Do: Engage this child and her classmates in a discussion about pets. Encourage them to think about a pet they have had or one who belonged to a friend or family member. This child may also enjoy talking about what kind of pet she would like to have and how she might care for it. Lead the discussion by asking this child and the others some open-ended questions. When you had your pet, what did you feed it? Where did it like to sleep? How did you take care of it? Focus on the conversation, noting this child's ability to continue to converse for at least three exchanges. Continue asking open-ended questions and restating this child's language for as long as she is interested. Ex. Ask what they think a pet might need to live, and write down their answers. Look for other topics that this child may enjoy providing information about, and engage her regularly in conversations.

Introduce the classroom pets: Hermit Crabs

Together as a class we will make a KWL chart and hang it up on the wall. We will refer to when they need to.

Activity: Being Kind to Our Pet

Questions To Consider:

What ideas does this child express about the crabs? How does she use writing and dictation to record her ideas? In what ways does she refer to the chart to understand the rules about taking care of the pet?

Why is this Important: Children learn through observation and discovery. They can watch and interact with the crabs and other small creatures for long periods of time. Encouraging them to write down their experiences helps them use their emerging writing skills in meaningful ways.

Materials: small classroom pet, such as hermit crab, fish, guinea pig, chart paper and marker

What to Do: Explain to this child that you have a pet in the classroom. Ask this child to talk about any experiences she has had with pets. Lead a discussion about the rules for taking care of pets. Ask questions that prompt this child to think about the important things to remember when caring for a pet. How do you think we should treat our pet? Talk about rules for observing, handling, and caring for the pet so it can remain healthy and safe. Use the chart paper to record any ideas about caring for the pet. Title the chart "How to Be Kind to Our Pet." Encourage this child to help write any familiar letters on the chart paper. Continue the activity for as long as this child is interested. Hang the list of ideas in the classroom and refer to them whenever handling the class pet. Show the children each hermit crab by holding them and explaining proper handling and caution. Discuss the habitat, and name the items needed. Ex. Food and water bowl, branch or netting for climbing, different size shells, coconut shell or some kind of hut for hiding, and sand, dirt, mulch on the bottom of the tank. Next discuss the types of feeds the crabs like to eat, and compare it to the foods that we eat. Discuss where the tank will be located in the classroom and tell them that we will take turns taking care of the crabs each day. Place the tank at the children's height so that they can easily see them, but remind them that they cannot touch the hermit crabs without adult supervision.

Calendar Time: Sing the months of the year and days of the week song.

Activity: Shell Patterns

Questions To Consider: What patterns can this child create and read? In what ways does this child describe the different features of the shells? How long is she able to attend to this activity?

Why is this Important: Exploring the different sizes of shells provides a great opportunity for children to learn about patterns and build important fine-motor skills.

Materials: Calendar pieces making a pattern

What to Do: Create a simple pattern to use as an example that you can share with this child. Show this child the different beads that are available for her to use to make a pattern. Discuss the features of the different size of shells. This shell is small, and this shell is medium. What do you notice about the piece you are holding? Share your calendar pattern with them and read the pattern together. We made a pattern with a hermit crab, small shell, medium shell, large shell, hermit crab, small shell....

Story Time:

Activity: Reading to Share

Questions to Consider: How does this child demonstrate understanding of the book by asking and answering questions? In what ways does he remain engaged with the book as you read? How long is he able to attend to this experience?

Why is this Important: Children who can look at a book and identify objects on the page comprehend what they see. If children can answer questions about content, they understand what they hear. Asking questions about a book while you read together can help children develop their ability to interpret pictures and words on the pages.

Materials: The book: A House for Hermit Crab by: Eric Carle

What to Do: Ask the children what they think the book might be about showing them only the front cover. Each time you invite this child to read with you, make the reading interactive. Ask questions about each page of the book. Encourage this child to ask a question if he is unsure about something in the story. Ask him a variety of questions that he can answer verbally or nonverbally, as appropriate. What are some of the animals you seen in the story? Why does the Hermit Crab need a house? How are we like Hermit Crabs? What is a habitat? Is our

habitat like the one in the story? What is the same and what is different? Vary the questions you ask. Start with simple questions and then move on to more complex ones if this child is ready. Observe this child's comprehension of the pictures and words. Notice any distress if he is unable to answer the questions you ask. Because children thrive on repetition, this child may want you to read the same books and ask the same questions each time. This is a great way to build his confidence and comfort with books.

Math:

Activity: Size it up

Questions to Consider: In what ways does this child classify the objects? How does she describe her groups to you? How long is she able to attend to this experience?

Why is this Important: Children may notice differences between objects but may not be given opportunities to put their observations into words. Giving this child a set of shells to sort and then asking her to talk about the groupings helps her think purposefully about the similarities and differences between them.

Materials: Box, set of large, medium and small shells

What to Do: Place the sets of small, medium and large shells in the box. Invite this child to look through them and talk about what she finds. Ask this child to think of a way to group the objects. Prompt her to discuss the options for creating groups. How could we put these shells into different piles? What do you notice about them that are alike? What is different? Offer assistance as needed as the child sorts the shells. Allow them to be creative in how she creates her groups. When she is finished, encourage this child to talk about how she grouped the objects. Ask questions that help her think of the process she used to separate the shells into groups. I see you have three piles. How did you decide what to put in each one? Continue the activity for as long as this child is interested.

Activity: Not Like the Others

Questions to Consider: In what ways does this child compare the objects? What words does this child use to describe the similarities and differences he sees? How does he manipulate the scoop or shovel to find the objects? How long is he able to attend to this experience?

Why is this Important: Children often point out how things are the same and how they are different. Noticing similarities and differences is an important skill that will help children in many different areas such as reading, science, and math.

Materials: collection of familiar objects, such as shells and rocks, tub of sand or sandbox, small scoop or shovel

What to Do: Prior to playing with this child, bury several shells and one rock in the sand. Invite this child to pretend that he is at the beach and he is looking for shells. Give him the scoop or shovel, and encourage him to find as many shells as he can in the sand. As this child discovers each shell, prompt him to describe it and talk about how it is similar to or different from the others. What can you tell me about this shell? What do you notice when you look at these two shells together? After finding the entire collection of objects, including the rock, ask this child to tell you which item is not like the others. Encourage this child to explore the collection and point out similarities and differences using comparative words such as darker/lighter, bigger/smaller, heavier/lighter, and smoother/rougher. Continue this activity for as long as this child is interested. Encourage him to look at other objects and make comparisons between them throughout the day.

Music and Movement:

Activity: Doo-a-Little Dance

Questions to Consider: How does this child move her body during the activity? In what ways does she recognize and understand your actions? How long is she able to attend to this experience?

Why is this Important: Children often enjoy imagining themselves as animals. Encouraging them to move and sound like animals gives them the opportunity to think creatively and express themselves in new ways.

Materials: large open floor space or outdoor area, paper and crayons, bowl or hat

What to Do: On small separate pieces of paper, write down various animal names. Include some of this child's suggestions as well. Be sure to include some animals that move in interesting ways such as a crab, rabbit, fish, or snake. Place the pieces of paper into a bowl or hat. Invite this child to pull a paper from the bowl and move

like the animal on the paper. Encourage her to describe the animal and its movements. Take a turn acting out the motions of an animal for this child to guess. Offer assistance by making animal sounds or giving clues about the animal. I am an animal that wears my house on my back. Continue the activity for as long as this child is interested. You can use this game to transition from one activity to another during the day. To encourage a quiet transition, incorporate slower, calmer animal movements.

Art:

Activity: Hermit Crab Collage

Questions to Consider: How does this child engage in a discussion about the book? What details from the story does he recall and relay to you? How well does this child attend to this new experience? In what ways does she interact with you during the activity? How does the child explore the art materials?

Why is this Important: Young children learn through repetition. Repetition of routines and experiences makes those events more familiar and predictable. Reading the same books and repeating activities help children feel confident in their ability to master related skills.

Materials: paper, glue, crayons/markers, scissors, small stones, green string and pictures of animals from the story A House for Hermit Crab.

What to Do: Look at the cover of the book together. Ask this child to describe what he sees there. Have the children use the crayons or markers to draw a habitat on their paper. Encourage the children to glue the corresponding animal on their paper as you reread the story. Next have the children add string for sea weed, and small stones.

Conclusion:

1. We will refer back to our KWL chart and make sure that everything that we wanted to learned has been accomplished and update it if needed to learn more.
2. We will review the rules daily about how to care for our classroom pets.
3. The children will bring in pictures of their own pets at home and we will display them in our housekeeping area.
4. We will incorporate the parents in helping our children take care of our hermit crabs throughout the year when we have scheduled breaks, and during the weekends. Of course a hand out on Hermit Crab care will go home with them each time.
5. We will continue to learn about the Hermit Crabs as they grow and change into new shells.