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**Aquarium/Fish**



### **Preschool Lesson with emphasis on pet fish**

I teach preschool to children with special needs. This year we will add a Beta fish to our room (we currently have a hermit crab). It is a good choice for our room as it is non allergy pet that is not high maintenance. The children will be able to participate in its care. They can learn about caring for animals and the responsibility that goes with it. Having a classroom pet provides a wonderful opportunity for learning about nature, science and living things.

The Beta fish will be introduced near the beginning of the year when we do our unit on self. During the unit the children will have the opportunity to share pictures of their own pets which will be a good time to introduce our new pet fish.

**Objective:** Children will demonstrate understanding of what a pet/fish is, what pets/fish need, and how to care for a fish the classroom.

**Evaluation of outcome** will be based on charted observations and classroom work including drawings by children and notes by parents.

### **Prior to introduction:**

Send home note requesting pet pictures and informing families about the fish we will be getting. Parents will be asked to document on our daily communication sheets any comments or demonstrations of understanding about topic made by children. They will also be asked to record any additional opportunities their child has regarding the topic- visit pet shop or aquarium, helping to take care of a pet, art work related to fish or pets, books the read. Record may be in the form of pictures, written notes, drawings by child. Suggestions for these activities will be included in the monthly take home activities.

**Gather:** supplies to set up tank, books to read, songs and activities to use at circle, small group activities, center items for pet theme.

**Introduction- large group:** (may take multiple days)

Read: *I Went to the Zoo*

Discuss pet verses wild animal

**Discuss:** Using pet pictures and tangible objects such as pet bowls, tank, leash, brush, food, and puppets:

What pets do you have?

How do you care for them?

What do they need to live?

Where do they live/sleep?

(Use props to encourage answers- answers may be in the form of gestures, words, or pointing)

### **Building on it:**

Guessing game: use props and puppets (hidden) to provide clues. Children try to guess what it is.

Example: "I use this to take my dog for a walk" (a collar) "I am small, I hop, I eat bugs" (a frog)

Read a fish book and discuss fish as pets. (Have additional props for discussion- dog items, fish items)

What do they need? What do they eat? Where do they live? How do they move?

Compare fish to a dog- sort items

During small group have children draw a picture of a fish in a tank.

**Using knowledge:** (props- tank and tank items, video of betta)

Tell children the class will be getting a fish called a Betta fish. We need to prepare its home and make sure we understand how to care for it. Show video.

After video, tell children it is time to set up the habitat/home for our future fish. Show and discuss items, allow children to help place items in tank. Add water and conditioner. (Fish should not be brought in until all this is complete)

Discuss rules of interactions with fish. Ask children what the rules should be and record them on a chart to place near fish tank.

When fish comes to the classroom discuss/show children how to adjust fish to tank and remind them of the rules.

Using visual charts (prepare ahead of time) set up care routine- feeding schedule – children take turns feeding on different days- checking water temp., checking health of fish, cleaning tank (primarily done by teacher, but with some help)

*Visual charts:*

Feeding schedule – children sign up for a day by writing there name

Checking temp.- help children record temp

Checking health of fish and tank- smile face for looks good and sad for needs help

Discuss the naming our new fish. Ask children for ideas and write them on the white board. The children will vote on the name. Once a name is decided on, a name card should be placed by tank.

### **Additional activities to build on knowledge and extend into other areas of development:**

**Continue to read stories (see language arts below for suggestions) and sing songs.**

**Flannel board activities: Fish colors, Fish sort by size, Fish counting using songs**

**Fish songs:**

**I'm a Little Fishy** (Tune: *I'm a Little Tea Pot*)

I'm a little fishy, watch me swim

Here is my tail, here is my fin,

When I want to have fun with my friends

I wiggle my tail an dive right in!

**5 Little Fishes**

5 little fishes swimming near the shore

1 took a dive and then there was 4

4 little fishes were swimming out to sea

One went for food and then there was 3

3 little fishes said now what should we do?

One swam away and then there were 2

2 little fishes we are having great fun

One took a plunge and then there was 1

1 little fish said I like the warm sun

Away she went and then there were none!



**Color Fish Song** (Tune: Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush)

I saw a fish go swimming by, go swimming by, go swimming by.  
I saw a fish go swimming by, so early in the morning.

I saw a fish that was green all over, green all over, green all over.  
I saw a fish that was green all over, so early in the morning.  
(Call on a child to take the green fish off the flannel board. Repeat the song using a different color.)

### **Science:**

**Observe and record with pictures or chart fish movement, eating, health, water temperature**

*Visual charts:*

Feeding schedule – children sign up for a day by writing their name

Checking temp.- help children record temp

Checking health of fish and tank- smile face for looks good and sad for needs help

### **Art:**

**Fish Scene** (set up aquarium)

Give each child a piece of blue construction paper. Provide a variety of materials, such as fish stickers, plants, (pretend grass), paint, crayons, markers, glitter, etc. Allow each child to use their imagination and create their own aquarium.

**Decorate paper fish-** use color tissue (children cut or tear pieces for fine motor work)

### **Math:**

**Fishbowl Counting**

Give children paper fishbowls with numbers on each bowl. Have them count out the correct number of fish (using fish crackers or fish counters) and place in fishbowl. (We do numbers 1-5 and modify by putting dots on the paper where the fish should go for those that are working on one to one correspondence.)

**Fish sorting by color** (also size and type)- *see below for lesson plan for this activity.*

### **Language arts:**

**Books: Suggested books:** One Fish, Two Fish, What's It Like to Be a Fish (discuss pictures, information is a bit too detailed for this age), Hooray for Fish (colors and patterns), A Fish Out of Water (for older preschoolers), 10 Little Fish, Rainbow Fish, Fish is Fish, Swimmy, I Went to the Zoo

Betta fish care sheet: <https://s7d1.scene7.com/is/content/PETCO/public/finallib/ecom-team/petco/Caresheets/aquatic/caresheet-betta-2016.pdf>

**You Tube:** All 12 Colors of Betta Fish are Shown in This Video | Select Your Most Favourite Colour  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARajNuXK3\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARajNuXK3_o) (no words, but good for color identification)

Most Beautiful Types of Betta Fish - Betta Fish Names (nice visual)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0sfcUp3ew>

Amazing Betta Fish Facts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0sfcUp3ew> (facts are probably too much for preschoolers, but the video is nice. Facts are not spoken and you can pick and choose ones to share)

Not for preschool, but wonderful video on beta lifecycle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0sfcUp3ew>

**Sensory /pretend play:**

**Sensory box-** Sand/gravel with items for “aquarium” – pretend plants, wood pieces, shells- plastic fish

**Fish tank sensory bags** (the children could add items they want in it before sealing.) hair gel (clear or tinted blue),



glitter, foam fish

**Playdough fish mats:** make fish to put in tank



## Fish Sorting Lesson:

**Fish Sorting- introduce in large group, individual activity in small group** (Use fish bowl clip art to create flannel board fish bowls or to laminate for individual use. <http://clipart-library.com/clipart/Lcdjzebc4.htm>)

**Materials:** 12 flannel fish- 4 fish, 3 colors, flannel board, flannel fish bowls, laminated fish bowls (3 colors per child), plastic or colored fish crackers

**Goal:** Given up to 12 plastic or colored fish crackers of 3 different colors children will sort fish by color.

**Evaluate:** charted observation/pictures

### Large group introduction:

-Explain: “Today we will sort our pretend fish by color” Hold up different fish and encourage children to name/sign color. Place different color fish bowls on flannel board encouraging children to name colors.

-Demonstrate: “I need to put the fish in the fish bowls. The fish like to be in fish bowls that match their color so they can feel safe and hide.” Demonstrate this with at least one fish of each color.

Now demonstrate, but encourage participations by asking questions, checking with children, pretending to make a mistake etc.

-Participate: Take the fish off and do activity again giving each (or as many as their attention span will allow) child a turn to try.

Modifications: simplify teacher language to increase comprehension “What color is this fish?” – “What color?” Reduce number of colors to 2 (or for advanced children increase or add unusual colors). Increase size of fish/bowls.

### Small Group practice:

Give each child fish pieces (cracker or plastic) and clean laminated (if desired) fish bowls. Encourage them to sort by color providing encouragement and support as needed.

Modifications: reduce/increase number of bowls/fish, provide sample, add velcro to bowls and fish to increase stability, allow children to work with a partner, hand child one fish at a time

Extend: count fish in each bowl, how many altogether.

Use fish bowl clip art to create flannel board fish bowls or to laminate for individual use. <http://clipart-library.com/clipart/Lcdjzebc4.htm> <http://www.clipartbest.com/clipart-jixEprEiE>



Get this free printable to laminate and use as a playdough mat at <http://www.speciallearninghouse.com/fish-bowl-playdough-mat/>