A ONE-WEEK LEARNING PACK FOR AGES 3–5

Nature Explorers Week

5 days of circle time, centers, art, and movement for home daycares and small child care programs



Look, don't touch · Living or not · Clapping syllables · Color + ink-saver

28 pages · US Letter · Full color · © 2026 Jackson Miller

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Welcome, How to Use & Contents

Nature Explorers Week is a complete five-day plan for mixed groups of children ages 3 to 5. Children practice look-don't-touch nature watching, count paper pinecones, look closely with a pretend magnifying glass, copy nature patterns, put a butterfly life cycle in order, sort living and not living things, clap syllables, and build a paper owl. Every activity works indoors with the printed pictures; an outdoor walk is optional.

A typical day

- **Circle time**, 10–15 min: a short read-aloud story and talk prompts
- **Math center**, 10–15 min: hands-on counting, comparing, or sorting
- **Literacy center**, 10 min: oral vocabulary and sound games
- **Art & fine motor**, 15–20 min: low-cost paper projects
- **Movement**, 5 min: a short movement game with seated options

Mixed ages

Each day plan has a **Simpler** idea (often right for younger 3s) and an **Extension** (often right for older 4s and 5s). Choose by what each child is ready for, not by age alone. Printed pages are tools for play and talk, not tests.

Printing

Print on US Letter paper at **100% / Actual size**. The color and ink-saver files have the same pages and page numbers. Send the family letter (p. 27) home on Day 1.

What is inside

- 5 educator day plans and a week-at-a-glance
- 5 original read-aloud stories + 1 counting rhyme
- 12 vocabulary cards · 10 number cards · 6 movement cards
- Counting mat, 16 pebble counters, look-closely match
- Nature pattern strips, life cycle cards, 2 sorts
- Owl shape builder, nature path count, tracing, letter, keys

Contents

- Cover 1
- Welcome, How to Use & Contents 2
- Week at a Glance 3
- Materials & Prep List 4
- Safety, Inclusion & Adaptations 5
- Day 1 Plan: Explorer Eyes 6
- Day 2 Plan: Look Closely 7
- Day 3 Plan: Patterns in Nature 8
- Day 4 Plan: From Egg to Butterfly 9
- Day 5 Plan: Living or Not Living? 10
- Read-Aloud Stories, Days 1–3 11
- Stories, Days 4–5 + Counting Rhyme 12
- Vocabulary Picture Cards A (6 cards) 13
- Vocabulary Picture Cards B (6 cards) 14
- Pinecone Number Cards 1–10 15
- Pinecones Under the Tree Counting Mat 16
- Paper Pebble Counters (16 large) 17
- Look Closely: Magnifying Glass Match 18
- Nature Pattern Strips 19
- From Egg to Butterfly: Sequence Cards 20
- Living or Not Living? Sort Mat + Cards 21
- Clap the Syllables: 1 Clap or 2 Claps? 22
- Snail Trails & Letter Tracing (optional) 23
- Owl Shape Builder Pieces 24
- Nature Path Count & Color 25
- Movement Cards (6) 26
- Family Letter 27
- Answer Keys & Terms of Use 28

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Pick and choose; every activity is optional

Week at a Glance



	DAY 1 Explorer Eyes	DAY 2 Look Closely	DAY 3 Patterns in Nature	DAY 4 From Egg to Butterfly	DAY 5 Living or Not Living?
Words	explore, look, tree, pinecone, rock, leave it	look closely, magnifying glass, part, whole, shell, veins	pattern, next, again, clap, part, stripes	egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly, change, grow	living, not living, grow, food, water, owl
Circle time	Wren's Looking Walk + counting rhyme	Oskar and the Magnifying Glass	Patterns on the Path	Little Egg, Big Change	Is It Alive?
Math	Pinecones Under the Tree	Look-Closely Match	Nature Pattern Strips	From Egg to Butterfly	Living or Not Living?
Literacy	Nature Words	Clue Words	Clap the Syllables	Change Words	Explorer Report
Art & fine motor	What I Saw	Up-Close Drawing	My Nature Pattern	My Butterfly Story	Owl Shape Builder
Movement	Tall Tree Sway	Owl Look	Snail Slide	Caterpillar to Butterfly	Rock Still
Big idea	Counting 1–5; look, don't touch	Looking closely; matching a part to the whole	Copying and extending patterns; clapping syllables	Ordering 4 steps in a life cycle	Sorting living and not living; building with shapes; counting a collection

Before the week starts

- Read the day plans (pp. 6–10) and stories (pp. 11–12). Skim the safety notes (p. 5).
- Print and cut using the prep list (p. 4). Adults pre-cut for children not yet using scissors.
- Copy the family letter (p. 27) for each family and fill in your program name.
- Optional walk: check your program's outdoor rules and the route before the week starts.

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EDUCATOR GUIDE

Educator plan

Day 1: Explorer Eyes

Today's words: explore · look · tree · pinecone · rock · leave it

Prep today: Cut the number cards (p. 15) and 16 pebble counters per child at the center (p. 17). Print the mat (p. 16). Paper and crayons for art.

Circle time

10–15 min

- Read **Wren's Looking Walk** (p. 11).
- Ask: "How many pinecones did Wren count? Why did she leave them in the park?"
- Teach the explorer rule: "Explorers look with their eyes and keep their hands to themselves." Practice "explorer hands" (hands behind your back).
- Say **Five Little Pinecones** (p. 12), folding one finger down each time.
- Transition: walk to centers like quiet explorers, looking for one thing from nature in a picture or out the window.

Math: Pinecones Under the Tree

Pages 15, 16, 17

1. Child picks a number card 1–5.
2. Touch and count the pinecone pictures on the card, one touch for each.
3. Place the same number of pebbles in the top row of the mat, starting at the left.
4. Count again and say the total: "Four pinecones, four pebbles."

Literacy: Nature Words

Vocabulary cards, p. 13

Show each card. Children name it and tell one thing about it: "A rock is hard." Nature words in home languages are welcome; say them together.

Movement: Tall Tree Sway

Card on p. 26

Stand tall like a tree with your arms as branches. Sway gently in a soft wind, then a strong wind, then stand still.

Art: What I Saw

Paper, crayons

Children draw something from nature they have seen: in a book, out the window, or on the way here. Adults write the child's words.

Simpler

emerging / younger 3s

Use cards 1–3 only. Count aloud while the child points to each pinecone picture.

Extension

ready / older 4s & 5s

Use cards 6–10 and fill both rows of the mat. Ask: "How many more to make 10?"

Look for

informal notes

Points once to each picture. Says the last number to tell how many. Follows the look, don't touch rule outdoors.

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CIRCLE TIME

Read slowly; pause for children to predict and act it out

Read-Aloud Stories, Days 1–3

Day 1: Wren's Looking Walk

original story, about 1–2 min

Wren and her grandpa went for a walk in the park. "Today we are explorers," said Grandpa. "Explorers look with their eyes and keep their hands to themselves."

Under a tall pine tree, Wren saw something brown and bumpy. "Pinecones!" she said. She pointed and counted: "One, two, three, four, five!"

"Can I take one home?" she asked. Grandpa shook his head. "Let's leave them here. A squirrel might need them."

They saw a gray rock, a blue feather, and a little snail on a wet leaf. Wren crouched down low and looked for a long time. She did not touch.

At home, Wren drew everything she saw: five pinecones, one rock, one feather, and one snail. "My picture is my nature treasure," she said.



Pause & ask: *How many pinecones did Wren count? Why did she leave them?*

Day 2: Oskar and the Magnifying Glass

original story, about 1–2 min

Oskar's teacher showed the class a magnifying glass. "It makes small things look big," she said. "Hold it near your eye, and look closely."

Oskar looked at a picture of a snail. Up close, he saw a swirl on its shell, round and round, like a spiral.

He looked at a leaf. Up close, he saw thin lines, like tiny roads. "Those are veins," said his teacher.

He looked at a pinecone. Up close, it had little scales, all in rows. He looked at a feather. Up close, it had soft lines that went out to the sides.

"Everything has secret parts," said Oskar. "You just have to look closely." He drew the swirl, the lines, and the scales in his explorer book.



Pause & ask: *What did Oskar see up close on the snail?*

Day 3: Patterns on the Path

original story, about 1–2 min

Imani walked along the garden path with her mom. "Look," said Imani. "Someone put a leaf, a rock, a leaf, a rock along the edge."

"That is a pattern," said Mom. "What comes next?" Imani looked. "A leaf!"

They saw more patterns. A bee had stripes: yellow, black, yellow, black. A flower had petals all around, the same again and again.

On the way home, Imani clapped the words she knew. "Rock: one clap. Pine-cone: two claps. Rab-bit: two claps!"

That night, Imani drew her own pattern: flower, leaf, leaf, flower, leaf, leaf. "It is a garden pattern," she said.



Pause & ask: *What came next in the leaf and rock pattern?*

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LITERACY

Each magnifying glass shows part of a picture up close. Find the whole picture.

Look Closely: Magnifying Glass Match





pinecone

A



B

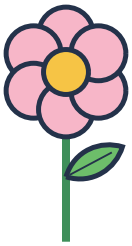


leaf

C

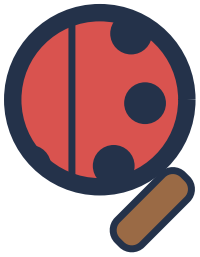


D



flower

E



F



G



snail

H

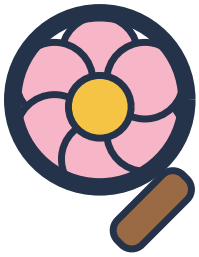


I

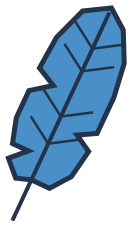


ladybug

J



K



feather

L

✂ *Cut on the dashed lines. Small letters are for the answer key only.*

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