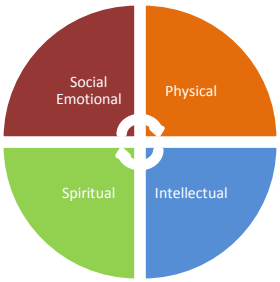
Using Children's Literature to Supporting Learning in Developmentally Appropriate Ways

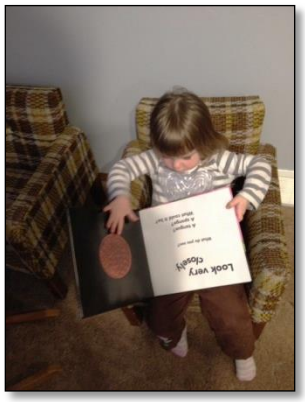


Book Title: *Looking Closely Inside the Garden* By: Frank Serafini

Age: Toddler and Preschool aged

Which areas of holistic development does this book support?
Intellectual and Spiritual

Essential Learning Experiences: (Which specific experiences does this book support? Most books will support many different experiences so identify your focus.)



- Intellectual
  - Solving Problems (curiosity, observing, predicting);
  - Creating and Imagining;
  - Exploring Words
- Spiritual
  - Experiencing a Sense of Wonder, Awe and Joy;
  - Experiencing Heightened Sensory Awareness;
  - Developing an Appreciation and Connection to the Natural World

Vocabulary: (Identify new words or phrases to introduce to children. When and how will you introduce the vocabulary and provide a way for children to experience/discover the meaning in an active and developmentally appropriate way?)
As this book has many words that may be new to children, you may wish to select a few to highlight during the first reading and then let the child's interest guide you on which words and ideas they are most interested in exploring further.

- ***Autumn*** - talk with children about the seasons and how autumn is another word for fall. What happens to plants in the fall? Take photos or draw/paint plants or a tree in your areas during the present season and then again when the seasons change. This allows children a meaningful connection to their own experience and environment to build an understanding of seasonal change.
- ***Harvest*** - you could demonstrate harvesting by gathering up items or discussing what happens when grain or food from the garden is ready. If you don't have your own garden or crop, explore opportunities to visit a local garden or farm to learn more about harvesting food and the connection to the food we eat at mealtimes.
- ***Chrysalis*** –learning about the special case that protects a moth or butterfly while it is transforming from a larva into an adult butterfly can be an awe inspiring experience for children. Consider hatching and releasing butterflies with children so they can observe the varying stages of development first hand. Add physical movement to the learning by encouraging children to

put blankets around themselves or curl up in a ball like the butterfly chrysalis and emerge as a butterfly and flap their wings.

- ***Enormous*** - model for children what is means to be enormous with their bodies. Compare with words like tiny or miniscule.
- ***Pollen*** – bring a flower like lilies into the classroom and show children the pollen.

- ***Meadows*** - a usually flat area of land that is covered with tall grass. A pasture can also be a meadow. Are there any meadows nearby that you could visit?
- ***Organic*** – bring a variety of organic (being made up of living plant or animal material) materials into the classroom and have children differentiate between organic and inorganic. You could create a chart to represent their findings.
- ***Secrete*** – to discharge or release. Demonstrate "secreting" water from a medicine dropper/pipette. Allow children to explore this
- ***Silken*** – provide a variety of materials for children to feel including silk

Opportunities for Representation: (materials to create an invitation, representing ideas)

- Discuss which animals and plants from the book live in your local ecosystem.
- Ask children to come very close to a plant or other natural item and ask them to observe and talk about what they see. This is also an opportunity to reinforce the concepts of near and far and the way things look can differ based on whether you are close or far away from something.
- Use a microscope or digital microscope to provide children a magnified view of items such as the pollen, leaves, water droplets, insects or pine cones. Encourage children to represent what they observe through drawing, painting, clay, fabric or other methods.
- Support children to take close up photos similar to the ones in the book based on the natural environment in your local ecosystem. This collection could be used to create a collection of their own book. They can also add question clues as in the book such as the example here:

- Am I a red apple with spots?
- Am I a giraffe with a sunburn?
- Am I a leather couch?

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Opportunities to Extend: (Ideas from the book based on interests of the children such as questions to encourage exploration, outdoor experiences, cultural connections, family engagement)

- Go on a scavenger hunt. Take pictures of the location (building, tree, garden) from close up and get children to mark them off as they see them.

- Weaving – provide children with paper plates, hole punches and string or yarn so they can develop their fine motor skills by lacing through the holes to create a spider web. You could also use a larger frame either in or outdoors for children to explore if they are interested in weaving.

- Invite families to be part of the learning. Ask families to take up close and farther back photos of an item that is important to them or they find interesting. Have them bring or send either printed or electronic copies that their child can then share with other children. Provide a sample or template and encourage them to develop a few question clues to accompany the photos.

- Spider walking game– create a large spider web on the floor using tape and encourage children to follow the lines.

- Start a classroom compost bin and introduce earthworms.

- Share interesting facts and add non-fiction materials related to areas of interest. For example:

I AM A LADYBUG!

Farms and gardeners love ladybugs. Ladybugs eat aphids, spiders and other insects that feed on plants.

Their distinctive spots and bright red bodies make ladybugs unappealing to predators. Their coloring is a reminder to any animals that have tried to eat them before: "I taste awful!"