

EXPERIENCE GUIDE

THEME: NATURE

Early Language and Literacy Success:
Toddler Toolkit

Nemours[®] Reading BrightStart!

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: WALK AND TALK!

LANGUAGE BUILDER: WALK AND TALK!

Title: NATURE WALK

Learning Focus: Joint Attention;
Conversation; Vocabulary Development;
Sensory Exploration; Perceptual Information;
Fine Motor: Hands-On Exploration

Prep Time: 2 - 3 minutes

Estimated Time: 3 - 5 minutes

VOCABULARY

Adjectives: Select interesting words to describe nature objects and photographs (big, blue)

Noun: Identify, name or label materials or objects (ocean, leaves)

Verbs: Use words that describe actions of the toddler or that you model (blow, rake)

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Select Materials

- Reproducible: Large Nature Photograph Cards
- Sensory Nature Items (items from nature represented in the large photographs. i.e. seashells, leaves, etc.)
- Basket

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Reproduce one set of the large Nature Photograph Cards and hang them in various indoor or outdoor locations. Gather the recommended sensory nature items and place them in a basket. Engage toddlers in a fun, matching game as you explore nature together. Walk from photograph to photograph, exploring the different places you see. Create excitement

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Experience Starter

Select sensory materials that encourage investigation.

Initiate interactions by showing the props in an interesting way. (Shake your basket of sensory nature items as you sing or chant the words below.)

Nature here and nature there. I see nature everywhere!

Nature, nature, all around. Let's explore to see what we've found!

Watch and observe as you allow time for toddlers to investigate and explore the props, toys or objects.

Gasp! *Look at you coming to see what nature items I have inside this basket.*

Conversation Starter

Invite and encourage the toddler to explore the materials.

Oh, my! This is a seashell. Would you like to use your finger to feel the bumpy shell?

Ask an engaging question to encourage interest and curiosity in the materials.

What do you think we can do with this seashell?

Pause...and wait for the toddler to respond. Acknowledge the toddler by adding language to his verbal or non-verbal response.

That is right! The beach or the ocean is full of beautiful shells.

Let's look around at these pictures on the wall and see if we can find the beach.

Be flexible! Follow the lead and interest of the toddlers as they show you how they engage with the materials. Allow the direction of play to follow their interests.

I like how you are holding onto the seashell.

I will carry the basket and you carry the seashell as we walk and talk about nature.

Language Development

Use a variety of words, signs or gestures to describe the texture, shape, color or use of an item.

I see a picture with sand and waves across the room. That must be a picture of the beach. Let's investigate!

Narrate and describe the toddler's actions using descriptive language.

I am touching the soft, white sand with my fingers.

Now, I am touching the wavy, blue water.

Clarify meaning of new word(s) using clear, simple language.

The wavy, blue water is the ocean.

The waves are salty and go up and down, up and down.

Say the name or make the sound of an object as you encourage the toddler to repeat it.

Can you say big ocean?

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: WALK AND TALK!

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during the walk as you integrate hands-on, multisensory learning. Invite toddlers to choose a sensory nature item from the basket and match it to the nature location where it can be found.

Pause...wait...imitate. Add to vocalizations or gestures using complete sentences.

Many different animals live in the big ocean.

Touch and describe any unique features or characteristics of the prop, object or material, prompting the toddler's attention.

Look! I have a small bag of sand inside my basket.

Let's feel the soft, white sand together.

Watch for eye gazing, pointing or vocalization to indicate the toddler is showing interest in a prop, object or material. Add comments, details or extended language to your observation.

I see you looking inside my basket. Go ahead and reach inside. Will you find something else from the beach?

Sensory Experience

Acknowledge the toddler's choice of sensory exploration using descriptive language.

Oh! You've found so many big, green leaves.

Invite toddlers to touch, hold or handle the prop, object or material.

Rub this leaf with your fingers. It feels smooth.

Cognitive Development

Initiate simple experiments and investigations to see how things work.

Do you think these leaves came from the beach? Pause.

Are there any trees in this picture of the beach?

Explore together in a playful, easy-going manner, as you embed learning opportunities.

No! We find leaves on bushes and trees in the forest.

Encourage toddlers to search for hidden or missing props, objects or materials as you provide gestures, hints or clues to help them locate it.

Look around the room. Do you see a picture of a forest?

You will see many green leaves on trees.

Invite the toddler to mimic your actions or repeat the toddler's actions.

I see the forest way over there.

Can you walk quickly like me?

Introduce mathematical concepts such as comparisons, counting or one-to-one correspondence.

There are so many trees in this picture. Some are short trees and some are tall trees.

Count them with me. One...two...three...four...five...six...seven...eight...nine...ten trees in the forest.

Demonstrate how the prop, object or material can be used. Encourage exploration and discovery of the item.

Leaves, like these, grow on trees. Sometimes they fall to the ground.

We can use a rake and rake them into a pile. Watch me use my hand to rake these leaves into a pile.

Encourage toddlers to use the prop, object or material to explore how things move and work.

Can you use your hands to rake these leaves?

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

For Younger Toddlers

- Provide one nature item that represents one nature location. Assist the toddler as she matches the item to its location in nature.

For Older Toddlers

- Provide several nature items in the basket. As you pull them out encourage the toddler to determine their location in nature.

Fine and Gross Motor Development

Assist or support toddlers as they explore new actions such as bending down, moving from sitting to standing, running and jumping.

Sometimes the wind blows leaves off the trees.

Let's stand and pretend to blow the leaves off of the trees in the forest. Blow the leaves.

Encourage toddlers to use their hands in different ways (poke, turn, flip, lift, squeeze, push or drop).

Could we pretend to shake the leaves off the trees, too? Pause.

Shake...shake...shake.

Social and Emotional Development

Invite toddlers to observe expressions of peers by acknowledging feelings of others.

Look at (toddler's name) peeking into my basket. Her face tells me she is feeling curious.

She's wondering what she will find in my basket.

Respond to feelings of toddlers by labeling the emotion and its cause.

I see a big smile on your face! Reaching into the basket makes you feel happy!

Use the toddler's name and respectful language.

Go ahead! Reach back inside my basket.

Thank you, (toddler's name) for playing so nicely with me and your friend, (friend's name) today.

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: STORY PROPS

BOOK EXPERIENCE: STORY PROPS

Title: BUILDING A TREE

Learning Focus: Focused Attention;
Curiosity; Creativity; Conversation;
Comprehension; Exploration

Prep Time: 3 - 5 minutes

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

VOCABULARY

Adjectives: Select interesting words to describe tree (green, brown)

Nouns: Identify, name or label materials or objects (leaf, tree)

Verbs: Use words that describe actions of the toddler or that you model (blow, tap, shake)

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Select Materials

- Reproducible: Bare Tree Trunk
- Reproducible: Leaf Paper Shapes (one set for each toddler)
- Book Basket (bin or basket)

Select Books

- Include storybooks, picture books, nursery rhymes, songbooks and textured books

Suggested Titles

- *Tap the Magic Tree* – Christie Matheson
- *Hello Word: Backyard Bugs* – Jill McDonald

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Gather four to five books, in a variety of genres, related to the theme of nature, and place them in a basket. Choose a variety of books with rhyming verses, predictable text, a variety of

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Experience Starter

Select a variety of books that relate to the theme or concept of Nature. Be sure to include a variety of genres (storybooks, picture books, nursery rhymes, songbooks and textured books).

Initiate interactions by showing the books and props in an interesting way. (Pat your hands on the sides of your Book Basket as you sing or chant the words below.)

A tisket! A tisket! What's hiding in our basket?

Let's peek inside. What will we see?

So much to explore for you and me!

Show genuine excitement and interest for the books as you model book handling skills.

I see you gently reaching into the basket.

Conversation Starter

Invite and encourage the toddler to explore the books.

Pull out a book and tell me what you have found! Would you like to explore it together?

Ask an engaging question to encourage interest and curiosity in the books.

Wow! You've pulled a big book from the basket.

What do you think we will spy inside with our eyes?

Pause...and wait for the toddler to respond. Acknowledge the toddler by adding language to his verbal or non-verbal response.

A tree! I think you are right! There is a big tree on the front cover.

Ask permission to read the book before acting on your decision to read. Be aware of cues and body language.

This book must be about trees and nature. Would you like to open it and read it together?

Literacy Development

Demonstrate book handling skills, inviting toddlers to handle books with you.

Watch me carefully pick up the book and open it gently.

We need to be sure to take special care of our books so we can read them again and again.

Can you help me open this book carefully?

Direct the toddler's attention to a photograph, image or word.

Look at you opening up the book so carefully! Great job!

Invite the toddler to mimic your action, touching the photograph, image or word.

You've opened the book to a page with a big tree trunk on it.

Watch me touch the leaves on the tree.

Can you touch the tree, too?

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real-life photographs or illustrations and different textures to engage the senses. Include books that are sturdy and safe for toddlers to handle. Reproduce and laminate one set of Bare Tree Trunk and Leaf Paper Shapes for each toddler. As you sit closely and explore the books together, use these props to create a playful and engaging experience with toddlers. As you read, encourage the toddlers to interact with the book. For example, as the tree in the story sprouts leaves, have the toddlers add leaves to the Bare Tree Trunk.

Sensory Experience

Invite toddlers to touch, hold or handle the prop, object or material.

Reach inside my basket again. I think there is something else hiding inside.

Acknowledge the toddler's choice of sensory exploration using descriptive language.

You've found it! Look at this big, brown tree trunk.

Language Development

Narrate and describe the toddler's actions using descriptive language.

I see you waving the big, bare tree trunk up in the air.

Now, you are putting the big, bare tree trunk down on the ground.

Watch for eye gazing, pointing or vocalization to indicate the toddler is showing interest in a prop, object or material. Add comments, details or extended language to your observation.

This brown tree trunk looks just like the brown tree trunk in our book.

Touch and describe any unique features or characteristics of the prop, object or material, prompting the toddler's attention.

Here are the limbs of the tree and here are the branches.

There are no leaves. Where could they be?

Use a variety of words, signs or gestures to describe the texture, shape, color or use of an item.

Gasps! I see many colorful leaves on the ground. Green, red, orange and brown.

Say the name or make the sound of an object as you encourage the toddler to repeat it.

Can you say colorful leaves?

Pause...wait...imitate. Add to vocalizations or gestures using complete sentences.

You said that nicely! I see you touching each colorful leaf.

Clarify meaning of new word(s) using clear, simple language.

When the weather changes, the leaves on the trees change, too.

Sometimes trees have lots of leaves and sometimes they have no leaves at all.

Fine and Gross Motor Development

Promote hand-eye coordination through simple hand and finger play.

Tap the branches of the leaves in my book with your fingers.

Sing a song to create excitement. Sing to the tune of: Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Tap, tap, tap the tree.

Tap it fast and slow.

Tap it once. Tap it twice.

Look at the leaves grow!

Now, let's turn the page and see what happens!

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

For Younger Toddlers

- Encourage the toddler to interact with the book by tapping, shaking and rubbing.
- Encourage the toddler to find leaves in a specific color and add it to the tree.

For Older Toddlers

- As the toddler picks a leaf to place on the tree trunk, encourage him to tell you the color. If the toddler needs assistance, label the color and encourage him to repeat after you.
- Encourage older toddlers to sort leaves by color.

Assist or support toddlers as they explore new actions such as bending down, moving from sitting to standing, running and jumping.

Oh, my! Leaves are growing on the tree in our book.

Let's add our colorful leaves to the tree trunk. Can you bend and reach the green leaves on the ground?

Cognitive Development

Introduce mathematical concepts such as comparisons, counting or one-to-one correspondence.

We've added (number), (color) leaves to our tree trunk.

Let's touch and count them together.

Count the leaves on the tree.

Encourage toddlers to imitate the actions of others.

Look at (toddler's name) gently placing more leaves on the branches.

Would you like to add more leaves to the tree?

Explore together in a playful, easy-going manner, as you embed learning opportunities.

Look at this tree! There are many colorful leaves on the limbs and branches now.

Initiate simple experiments and investigations to see how things work.

This page says to shake the book!

What do you think will happen if we give this book a shake, shake, shake?

Give it a try!

Demonstrate how objects or materials fit together or work together in different ways.

Let's turn the page to see.

Gasp! *Oh, my! We shook the book and all the leaves fell off.*

Demonstrate how the prop, object or material can be used. Encourage exploration and discovery of the item.

Sometimes the wind can make the leaves fall.

Watch me blow the leaves from this tree like the wind.

Encourage toddlers to use the prop, object or material to explore how things move and work.

Can you blow the leaves off like me?

Social and Emotional Development

Identify the toddler's feelings and express empathy with appropriate language.

I can tell you are feeling surprised. Your eyes and mouth are wide open.

Respond to feelings of toddlers by labeling the emotion and its cause.

You are feeling surprised the leaves came off the tree.

Create a sense of belonging by initiating positive interactions and relationships with peers and caregivers.

It's okay! Let's put the leaves back on our tree together.

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: LINES, SHAPES AND PICTURES, TOO!

LITERACY BUILDER: LINES, SHAPES AND PICTURES, TOO!

Title: NATURE PEEKABOO

Learning Focus: Joint Attention;
Conversation; Vocabulary Development;
Phonological Awareness; Print Awareness;
Math: Matching, Sorting or Classifying

Prep Time: 5 - 10 minutes

Estimated Time: 3 - 5 minutes

VOCABULARY

Adjectives: Select interesting words to describe pictures (blue, green)

Nouns: Identify, name or label materials or objects (ocean, grasshopper)

Verbs: Use words that describe actions of the toddler or that you model (bend, turn)

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Selected Materials

- Reproducible: Large Nature Photograph Cards
- Reproducible: Small Nature Photograph Cards
- Basket

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Reproduce and cut one set of each Nature Photograph Cards (small and large). Use these materials to engage toddlers in a hands-on, fine motor, memory building activity that explores matching photographs. Show excitement for the new materials as you introduce each Large Nature Photograph Card,

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Experience Starter

Select **sensory materials** that encourage investigation.

Initiate interactions by showing the props in an interesting way. (Place Large Nature Photograph Cards around you on the floor and display the Small Nature Photograph Cards in your hand.)

Will you play a game with me?

Look around! What do you see?

Watch and observe as you allow time for toddlers to investigate and explore the props, toys or objects.

These are photographs of different things and places in nature.

I see you like these pictures in my hand.

Conversation Starter

Invite and encourage the toddler to explore the materials.

I see big photographs and small photographs that match.

Do you see them? Would you like to explore them together?

Ask an engaging question to encourage interest and curiosity in the materials.

What do you think we could do with these big and small photographs?

Pause...and wait for the toddler to respond. Acknowledge the toddler by adding language to his verbal or non-verbal response.

Yes! You've found a big card and a small card with the same picture. They match!

Let's play our peekaboo matching game!

Be flexible! Follow the lead and interest of the toddlers as they show you how they engage with the materials. Allow the direction of play to follow their interests.

Like the way you are touching each picture.

Language Development

Touch and describe any unique features or characteristics of the prop, object or material, prompting the toddler's attention.

I have a picture of the big, blue ocean. Here are the waves that go up and down.

Use a variety of words, signs or gestures to describe the texture, shape, color or use of an item.

The ocean is a huge body of cool, salty water. Fish and other animals live in the ocean.

Use descriptive language as you name or label the object or material selected by the toddler. Be sure to connect the material to the book, concept or theme.

You have a picture of a bright, green grass.

Grass grows in nature.

Say the name or make the sound of an object as you encourage the toddler to repeat it.

Can you say /g/.../g/....green grass?

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: LINES, SHAPES AND PICTURES, TOO!

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discussing the item in the photograph. Then, encourage the toddler to pick one Small Nature Photograph Card from your hand and search for the matching Large Nature Photograph Card on the floor. Help toddlers make connections to the theme of nature as you playfully engage their interest and curiosity in this song and movement experience.

Pause...wait...imitate. Add to vocalizations or gestures using complete sentences.

Great job! You are holding the picture of a green grass.

Create personal connections for toddlers as you relate the prop, object or material to their lives or previous experiences.

We love to run and jump in the green grass on the playground.

Yesterday, you were rolling all over the soft, green grass.

Use self-talk to discuss your actions, using descriptive language.

I am turning over my picture of the big, blue ocean and putting it on the floor right here.

Now, I am turning over your picture of the soft, green grass and putting it on the floor right here

Fine and Gross Motor Development

Promote hand-eye coordination through simple hand and finger play.

Let's see if we can match the big pictures we hid on the floor to the little pictures here in my hand!

Get ready to clap our hands to the song and pick a picture from my hand! Are you ready?

Sing a song to create excitement.

Peekaboo! Clap hands twice and pat legs once.

Peekaboo! Clap hands twice and pat legs once.

Can we find? Display small pictures for toddlers to choose.

A match for you? Touch the toddler.

Demonstrate how toddlers can use their bodies in different ways to promote balance, control and coordination.

You've found the small picture of the blue ocean.

Watch me bend down and turn over this big picture to see if it is a match.

Encourage toddlers to use their bodies in different ways. Take into consideration each toddler's age and stage of development.

Can you bend over and flip the card so we can see the picture? Will it be a match?

Social and Emotional Development

Increase confidence by acknowledging the actions or responses of the toddler.

You've turned over the big picture of the big, blue ocean.

They are the same. You've made a match.

Respond to feelings of toddlers by labeling the emotion and its cause.

I can tell you are feeling proud that you've made a match.

Use a warm tone of voice to comfort toddlers while acknowledging emotions.

I am proud of you, too, (toddler's name). You have a great memory!

Sensory Experience

Invite toddlers to touch, hold or handle the prop, object or material.

Let's set the match we've made over here in the big brown basket.

Now, can you turn over all the big pictures so we can see them again?

Acknowledge the toddler's choice of sensory exploration using descriptive language.

Nice turning! You've turned over one...two...three big picture cards.

We have another big, picture card. Can you flip that one over?

Cognitive Development

Explore together in a playful, easy-going manner, as you embed learning opportunities.

Okay, let's look at our pictures again.

Then we will turn them over and see if you can remember where each picture is located. Are you ready?

Prompt toddlers to engage in matching, sorting or classifying of props, objects or materials.

We can sing our song again and look for a match. Get ready to clap our hands to the song and pick a picture from my hand! Are you ready?

Sing a song to create excitement.

Peekaboo! Clap hands twice and pat legs once.

Peekaboo! Clap hands twice and pat legs once.

Can we find? Display small pictures for toddlers to choose.

A match for you? Touch the toddler.

Ask questions that encourage thinking and reasoning skills (problem-solving, mathematical thinking, making comparisons). Pause...and wait for the toddler to process your question and think about a response.

You've found a picture of a tall, rocky mountain.

Which one is the big picture card of a tall, rocky mountain?

Compare similarities and differences in shapes, lines and other details by identifying distinguishing characteristics (color, length, size, etc.) that are different from the previous material.

You've picked up the picture of a tree. Here is the brown trunk and here are the green leaves.

Do the tree and the rain look the same?

No. These are not a match.

Encourage toddlers to use props, objects or materials in a playful way, with an intended purpose.

Let's keep turning over the big picture cards and looking.

Hmmm, where could that mountain be?

Allow toddlers to move freely as they develop body, spatial and perceptual awareness.

I see you scooting closer to the picture cards and bending to turn one over.

Gasp! You've made a match! You've found the picture of the tall mountain!

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

For Younger Toddlers

- Begin with fewer, familiar Nature Photograph Cards.
- Instead of placing the cards facedown, keep them facing up and encourage the toddler to find the match.

For Older Toddlers

- Place up to six picture sets out for toddlers to look at and match. Start small and add an additional picture each time you play the game, making sure to introduce the picture and then show the toddlers where you have placed it on the ground.
- Place Large Nature Photograph Cards further apart, encouraging older toddlers to move in search of them.

Demonstrate how the prop, object or material can be used. Encourage exploration and discovery of the item.

Some people like to climb to the top of mountains.

Watch me pretend to climb this mountain. I am climb...climb...climbing!

Encourage toddlers to use the prop, object or material to explore how things move and work.

Now, you climb a tall mountain. Pause.

Look at you climbing so well. You are lifting your legs and your arms.

SAMPLE

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: VISUAL PERCEPTION AND COORDINATION

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: VISUAL PERCEPTION AND COORDINATION

Title: BUGS IN THE GRASS

Learning Focus: Curiosity; Creativity; Understanding and Response; Joint Attention; Communication; Problem-Solving; Perceptual Information; Gross Motor: Explore Environment; Fine Motor: Hand-Eye Coordination; Fine Motor: Hands-On Exploration; Fine Motor: Grasp and Reach

Prep Time: 3 - 5 minutes

Estimated Time: 3 - 5 minutes

VOCABULARY

Adjectives: Select interesting words to describe materials (green)

Nouns: Identify, name or label materials or objects (grass, bugs)

Verbs: Use words that describe actions of the toddler or that you model (squeeze, pull)

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Selected Materials

- Activity Table or Tray
- Toddler Sized Tongs
- Plastic Insects
- Shredded Decorative Grass
- Scissors

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

During this experience, select sensory materials to promote multisensory learning. Focus on the development of fine motor control and hand-eye coordination in toddlers. Fill the activity table or

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Experience Starter

Select sensory materials that promote the use of fine and gross motor skills.

Initiate interactions by showing the props in an interesting way. (Place your hands in the activity table and rustle the decorative grass.)

Fast bugs, slow bugs.

High and low bugs.

Big bugs, small bugs.

Can we catch all the bugs?

Watch and observe as you allow time for toddlers to investigate and explore the props, toys or objects.

Look at you peering into the table, (toddler's name).

Conversation Starter

Invite and encourage the toddler to explore the materials.

Would you like to feel the crinkly, green grass?

Ask an engaging question to encourage interest and curiosity in the materials.

What else do you see, (toddler's name)?

Pause...and wait for the toddler to respond. Acknowledge the toddler by adding language to his verbal or non-verbal response.

Bugs! You are right. There are insects in the crinkly, green grass.

Be flexible! Follow the lead and interest of the toddlers as they show you how they engage with the materials. Allow the direction of play to follow their interests.

You've found my tongs, too. I see you holding them with two hands.

Cognitive Development

Demonstrate how the prop, object or material can be used. Encourage exploration and discovery of the item.

We use tongs in the kitchen to turn and pick up food.

Watch me squeeze the tongs with my hand to make them open and close.

Encourage toddlers to use the prop, object or material to explore how things move and work.

Can you try opening and closing the tongs with your hands? Squeeze! Squeeze!

Initiate simple experiments and investigations to see how things work.

Let's practice using these tongs. Hmmm, what can we pick up with the tongs? Pause.

Let's pick up these creepy, crawly bugs!

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: VISUAL PERCEPTION AND COORDINATION

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tray with shreds of decorative grass and an assortment of plastic insects. Create excitement as you invite toddlers to pull each insect from the long, green grass with tongs. Use a happy tone of voice as you pull insects from the green grass, describe and count them.

Explore together in a playful, easy-going manner, as you embed learning opportunities.

There are many bugs hiding in the green grass.

Can you find them?

Introduce mathematical concepts such as comparisons, counting or one-to-one correspondence.

Let's youch and count the bugs together.

One...two...three...four...five...six bugs in the green grass!

Encourage toddlers to search for hidden or missing props, objects or materials as you provide gestures, hints or clues to help them locate it.

I see a small, black bug with long legs. Can you find it?

Gasp! You did find it. This is an ant.

Encourage toddlers to use props, objects or materials in a playful way, with an intended purpose.

Can you try using the tongs to pull the ant from the grass? Squeeze and pull...pull...pull.

Sensory Experience

Acknowledge the toddler's choice of sensory exploration using descriptive language.

Wow! You did a great job using those tongs.

You've pulled one creepy, crawling bug from the grass.

Invite toddlers to touch, hold or handle the prop, object or material.

There are still more bugs. Let's give our friend, (friend's name) a turn.

(Toddler's name), would you like to catch the bug like your friend?

Social and Emotional Development

Observe and acknowledge the reactions of each toddler. Demonstrate awareness and responsiveness to the needs of the toddler.

I see you peeking at the bugs in the grass. Your face tells me you are feeling scared.

Respond to feelings of toddlers by labeling the emotion and its cause.

You are scared these bugs are real. Don't worry, (toddler's name) these are toy bugs.

Watch me pick one up with my fingers.

Use the toddler's name and respectful language.

Thank you for looking at the bugs, (toddler's name). I see that smile! Are you ready to play with these insects?

Fine and Gross Motor Development

Encourage toddlers to use their hands in different ways (poke, turn, flip, lift, squeeze, push or drop).

(Toddler's name), hold the tongs in your hand and squeeze, squeeze!

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: VISUAL PERCEPTION AND COORDINATION

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

For Younger Toddlers

- If the young toddlers have a difficult time using the tongs, help them squeeze the tongs using hand over hand assistance.
- Provide different tools for young toddlers such as large spoons.
- Place the bugs on top of the grass so toddlers can easily find and grasp them.

For Older Toddlers

- Label an insect by name or color and encourage the toddler to use the tweezers to grab that specific insect.
- Bury the insects in the grass so they are more challenging to find.

Extend the Experience

- Place other nature items in the grass. Describe an item and encourage the toddler to pick up that specific item with the tongs, large tweezers or spoons.

Promote hand-eye coordination through simple hand and finger play.

I see five little bugs crawling in the grass. Can you grab one with the tongs?

Sing a song to create excitement. Sing to the tune of: Five Little Monkeys

Lots of little bugs, crawling in the grass.

Hopping and buzzing, moving so fast.

Along came (toddler's name), early one day.

He picked one up, but it flew away!

Will you pick up a bug or will it fly away?

Demonstrate how to use their bodies in different ways to promote balance, control and coordination.

Some of the bugs are on the other side of the table. They are too far for us to reach.

Watch me slide....slide....slide around the table. Can you slide over here, too?

Language Development

Narrate and describe the toddler's actions using descriptive language.

I see you reaching into the long, green grass with your arm.

Now, you are grabbing a small, (color) insect with your fingers.

Clarify meaning of new word(s) using clear, simple language.

You've pulled a green grasshopper from the grass.

This green grasshopper is an insect that jumps from place to place.

Say the name or make the sound of an object as you encourage the toddler to repeat it.

Can you say /g/.../g/...green grasshopper?

Pause...wait...imitate. Add to vocalizations or gestures using complete sentences.

This green grasshopper is the same color as the grass. It's green!

Touch and describe any unique features or characteristics of the prop, object or material, prompting the toddler's attention.

These antennae on the grasshopper's head are for hearing and feeling.

Can you touch the antennae, too?

Use a variety of words, signs or gestures to describe the texture, shape, color or use of an item.

The grasshopper has six legs.

These two long legs are for leaping. Touch as you explain.

Watch for eye gazing, pointing or vocalization to indicate the toddler is showing interest in a prop, object or material.

Add comments, details or extended language to your observation.

I see you looking in the grass again. There are still more bugs in the grass.

Go ahead! Use the tongs to grab another bug.

* Continue to sing or chant until no insects remain in the grass.

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

INTEREST AREA: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Title: REACH FOR THE STARS

Learning Focus: Social Relationships;
Sense of Identity; Vocabulary Development;
Phonological Awareness; Spatial Awareness;
Sensory Exploration; Perceptual Information;
Gross Motor: Body Awareness

Prep Time: 2 - 3 minutes

Estimated Time: 3 - 5 minutes

VOCABULARY

Adjectives: Select interesting words to describe materials (big, small, silver)

Nouns: Identify, name or label materials or objects (star)

Verbs: Use words that describe actions of the toddler or that you model (jump, catch)

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Select Materials

- Yarn
- Reproducible: Stars
- Tape

CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

For the following experience, reproduce multiple sets of Stars in various sizes. These sensory materials will create an exciting learning experience. Using yarn, hang some of the stars from the ceiling, ensuring they are long enough for the toddler to reach them with some effort. Place other stars on the ground or around the learning area. Engage toddlers in play as you sing. Encourage toddlers to jump from star to star and reach

Continued on next page

Experience Starter

Create a musical experience using sensory materials, instruments or song.

Initiate interactions by showing the props in an interesting way. (Touch and point to the stars around the room.)

Children, children, come along.

It's time to sing a silly song.

Watch and observe as you allow time for toddlers to investigate and explore the props, toys or objects.

I see you've found my stars up high, (toddler's name).

Conversation Starter

Invite and encourage the toddler to explore the materials.

I spy more stars on the floor. Stars up high and stars down low. Would you like to find stars with me?

Ask an engaging question to encourage interest and curiosity in the materials.

Where should we look first?

Pause...and wait for the toddler to respond. Acknowledge the toddler by adding language to his verbal or non-verbal response.

You've found a shiny, silver star!

Be flexible! Follow the lead and interest of the toddlers as they show you how they engage with the materials. Allow the direction of play to follow their interests.

I like the way you are jumping on that star.

Language Development

Touch and describe any unique features or characteristics of the prop, object or material, prompting the toddler's attention.

This star is silver and has five points. Watch me touch each one.

Now, you touch them as I count. One...two...three...four...five!

Say the name or make the sound of an object as you encourage the toddler to repeat it.

Can you say /s/.../s/...silver star?

Pause...wait...imitate. Add to vocalizations or gestures using complete sentences.

This is a big, silver star. Over there, I see a small, silver star.

Use a variety of words, signs or gestures to describe the texture, shape, color or use of an item.

Stars twinkle way up high in the nighttime sky.

In the sky, some stars are big and some are small, just like these stars on the ground.

Create personal connections for toddlers as you relate the prop, object or material to their lives or previous experiences.

We can look up and see stars in the sky at night.

Do we see stars on the ground like these? Pause. No, that's silly!

Use self-talk to discuss your actions, using descriptive language.

CAREGIVER STRATEGIES IN ACTION: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Continued from previous page

up high to touch the stars. Be sure to show sensitivity and respect to individuals who may not wish to participate.

I am going to jump from one small, twinkling star to another small, twinkling star as I sing a silly song. Will you sing and jump with me?

Sing a song to create excitement. Sing to the tune of: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

*Jumping, leaping, on a star.
Some are close and some are far.
Hopping, stomping, one by one.
We are having so much fun.
Jumping, leaping, on a star.
Some are close and some are far.*

Use descriptive language as you name or label the object or material selected by the toddler. Be sure to connect the material to the book, concept or theme.

*Wow! That was a lot of jumping!
I see you looking up at the small, twinkling stars in the sky.*

Sensory Experience

Invite toddlers to touch, hold or handle the prop, object or material.

Would you like to catch those stars?

Acknowledge the toddler's choice of sensory exploration using descriptive language.

I like the way you are standing on your toes and reaching for the star with your long, strong arms.

Fine and Gross Motor Development

Promote hand-eye coordination through simple hand and finger play.

Can you reach up high with your arms and grab with your fingers?

Sing a song to create excitement. Sing to the tune of: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

*Catching, catching, little stars.
Reaching for them with our arms.
Stretching, reaching, way up high.
Grabbing stars up in the sky.
Catching, catching, little stars.
Reaching for them with our arms.*

Encourage toddlers to use their hands in different ways (poke, turn, flip, lift, squeeze, push or drop).

Look at you push...push...pushing the star! Now, it is waving back and forth like a shooting star in the sky.

Demonstrate how toddlers can use their bodies in different ways to promote balance, control and coordination.

*Watch me reach and pull a star down.
Reach and pull. Reach and pull.
Can you try that?*

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

For Younger Toddlers

- Hang stars low enough so young toddlers can reach.
- Hold the toddler up to stretch and reach for higher stars.
- Allow toddlers to scoot or crawl from star to star if they are more comfortable.

For Older Toddlers

- Encourage toddlers to move with you and sing along to the nursery rhyme.
- Allow older toddlers to create their own interesting movement for each new verse as you follow their lead.

Cognitive Development

Explore together in a playful, easy-going manner, as you embed learning opportunities.

Look at you! You've pulled down a big star that was hanging from the sky.

Compare similarities and differences in shapes, lines and other details by identifying distinguishing characteristics (color, length, size, etc.) that are different from the previous material.

This is a big silver star. You are standing on a small, silver star.

Big...small. Big...small.

Invite the toddler to mimic your actions or repeat the toddler's actions.

(Toddler's name), would you like to reach and pull a star like your friend, (friend's name)?

Sing a song to create excitement. Sing to the tune of: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Catching, catching, little stars.

Reaching for them with our arms.

Stretching, reaching, way up high.

Grabbing stars up in the sky.

Catching, catching, little stars.

Reaching for them with our arms.

Prompt toddlers to engage in matching, sorting or classifying of props, objects or materials.

Great reaching, (toddler's name)! You caught a silver star.

Is this a big star or a small star? Pause.

This is a big, big star and here is the small star. Big...small!

Ask questions that encourage thinking and reasoning skills (problem-solving, mathematical thinking, making comparisons). Pause...and wait for the toddler to process your question and think about a response.

How many points does this big star have? Is it the same as the small star? Pause.

Let's touch and count together. One...two...three...four...five!

They both have five points.

Social and Emotional Development

Invite toddlers to connect to peers during play and exploration.

Look at (toddler's name)! She is crawling from star to star. Would you like to crawl, too?

Use the toddler's name and respectful language.

(Toddler's name) and (toddler's name) are crawling from shiny star to shiny star!

You are playing so nicely together! Thank you friends!

Use a warm tone of voice to comfort toddlers while acknowledging emotions.

I see big, bright smiles on your faces. You are feeling happy crawling on these silver stars!

REPRODUCIBLE PAGE

Language Builder – Super Searcher – Sky Photograph Cards, Moon, Stars, Clouds and Sun

Language Builder – Language Starter – Large Nature Photograph Cards and Insect Photograph Cards

Language Builder – Walk and Talk – Large Nature Photograph Cards

Book Experience – Story Props – Bare Tree Trunk and Leaf Paper Shapes

Book Experience – Interactive Storytelling – Insect Photograph Cards

Literacy Builder – Rhyme Time – Moon, Stars, Clouds and Sun

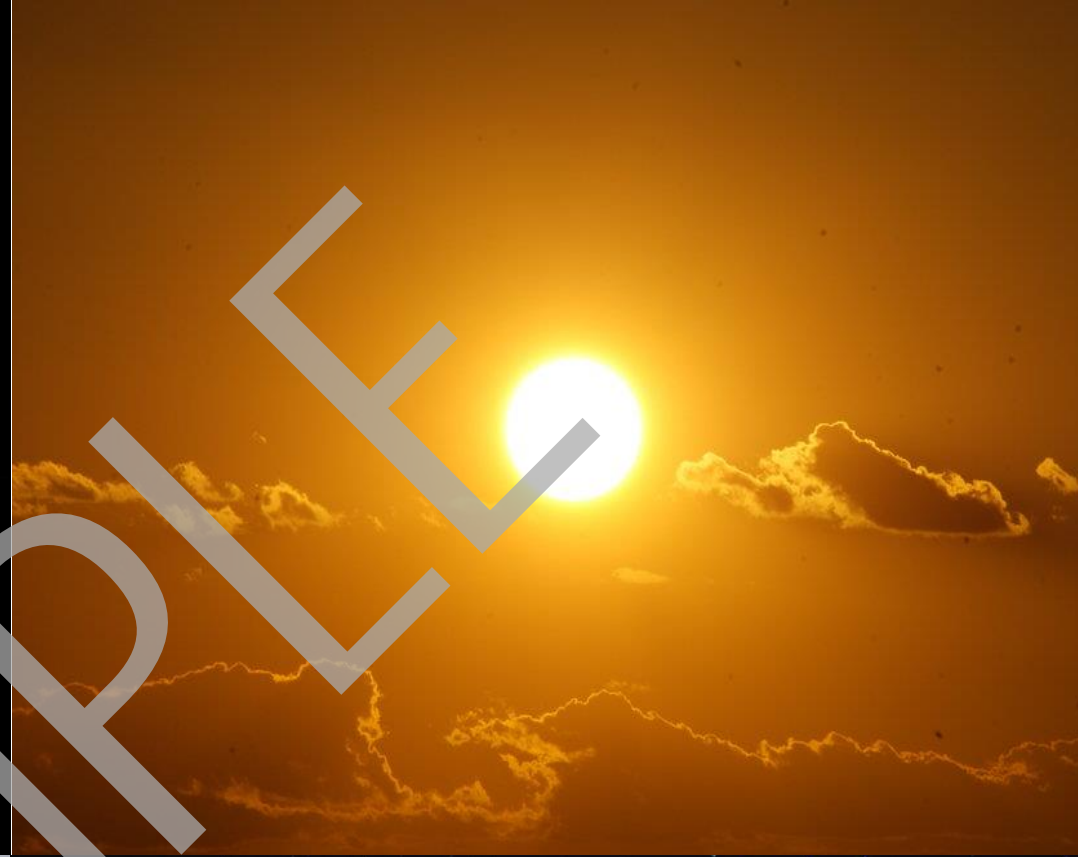
Literacy Builder – Listen! Listen! – Small Nature Photograph Cards

Literacy Builder – Lines, Shapes and Pictures, Too – Small and Large Nature Photograph Cards

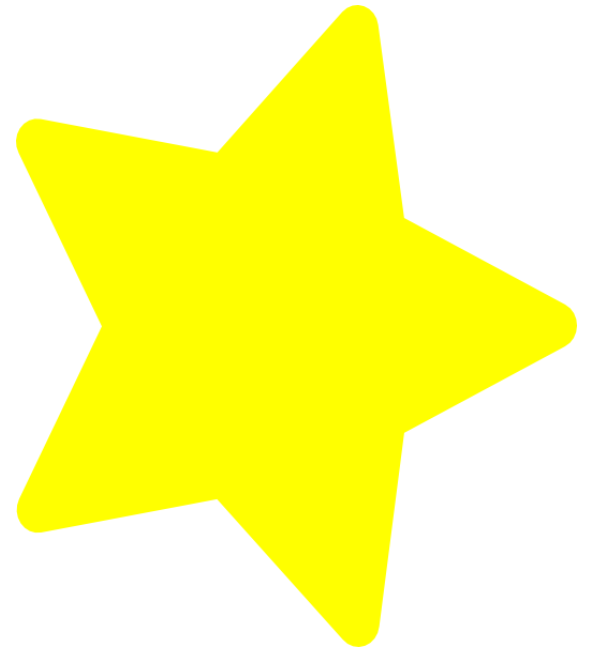
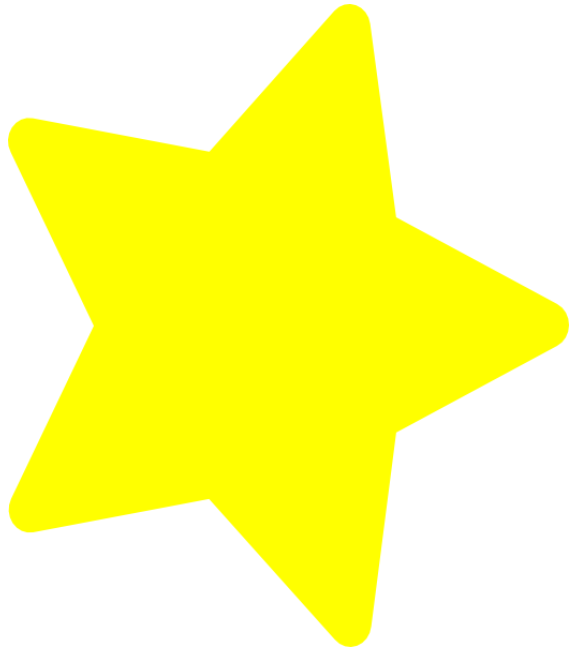
Physical Development – Move My Body – Large Nature Photograph Cards

Physical Development – Balance Builder – Moon, Stars, Sun and Clouds

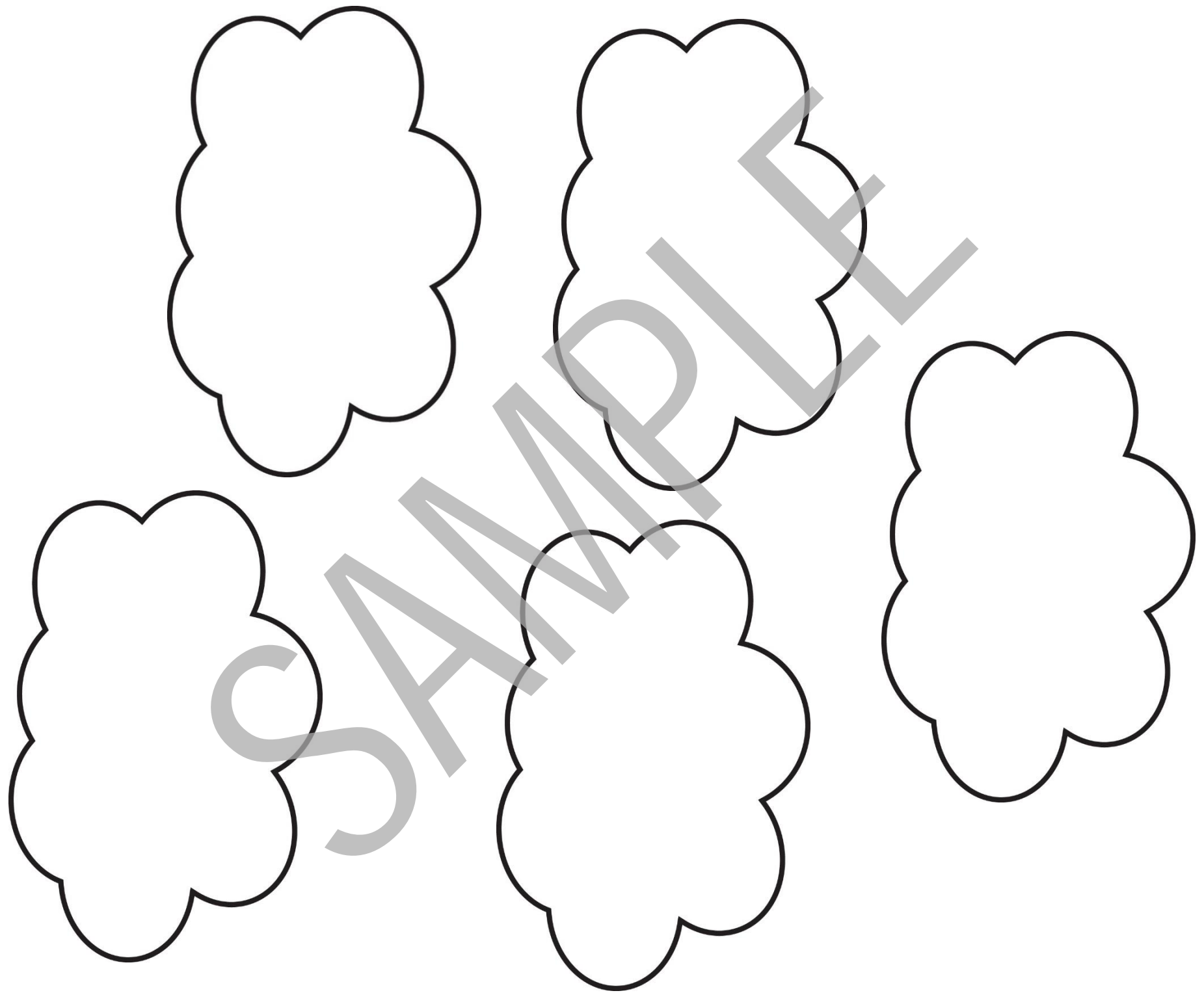
Interest Area – Music and Movement – Stars



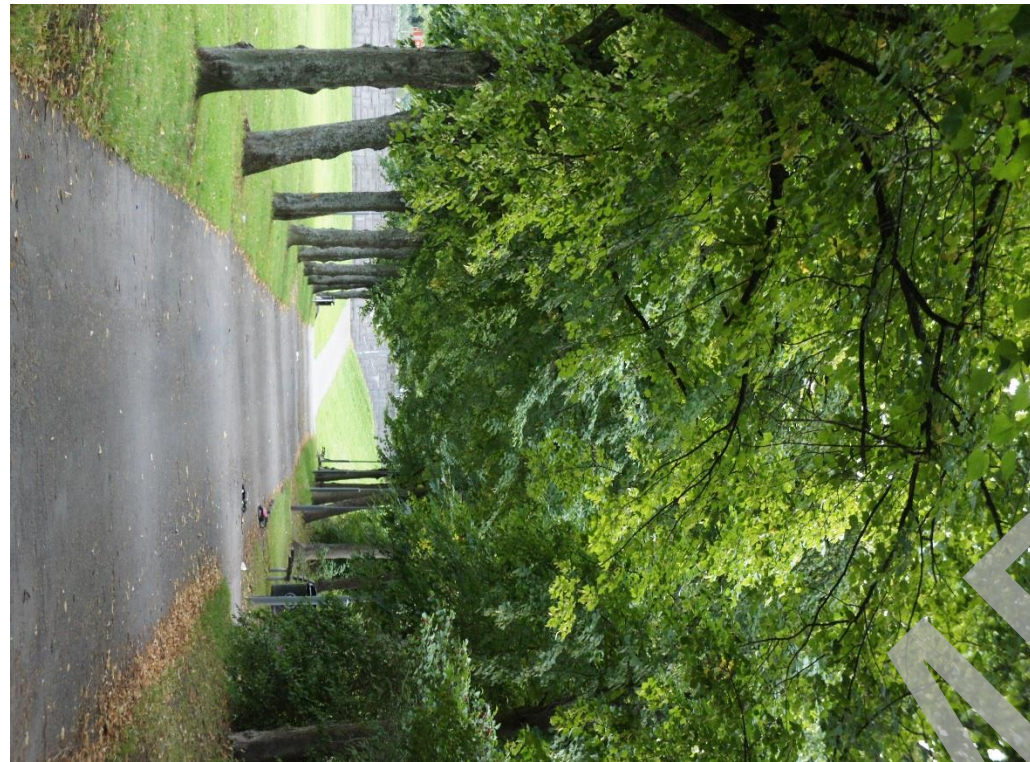




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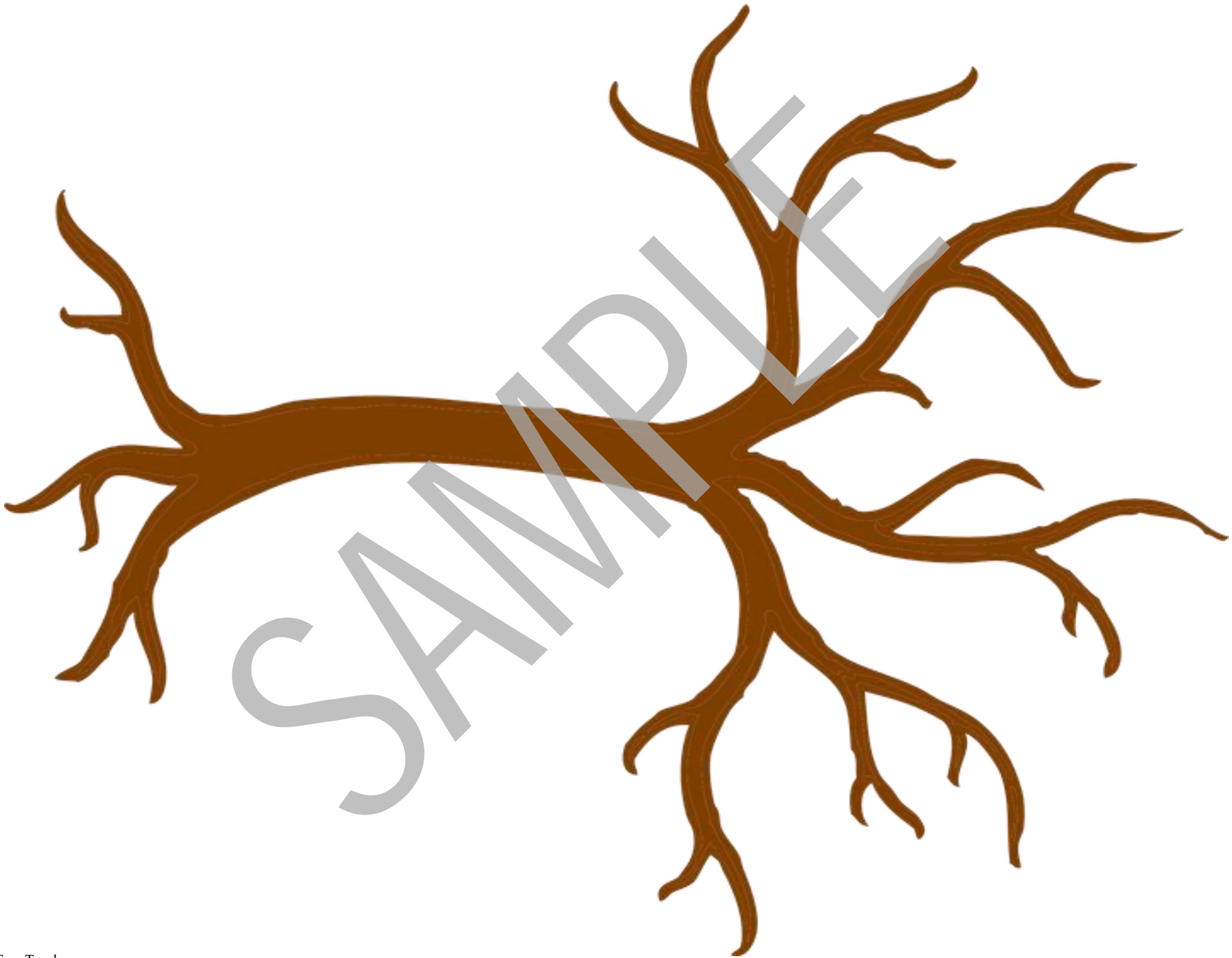






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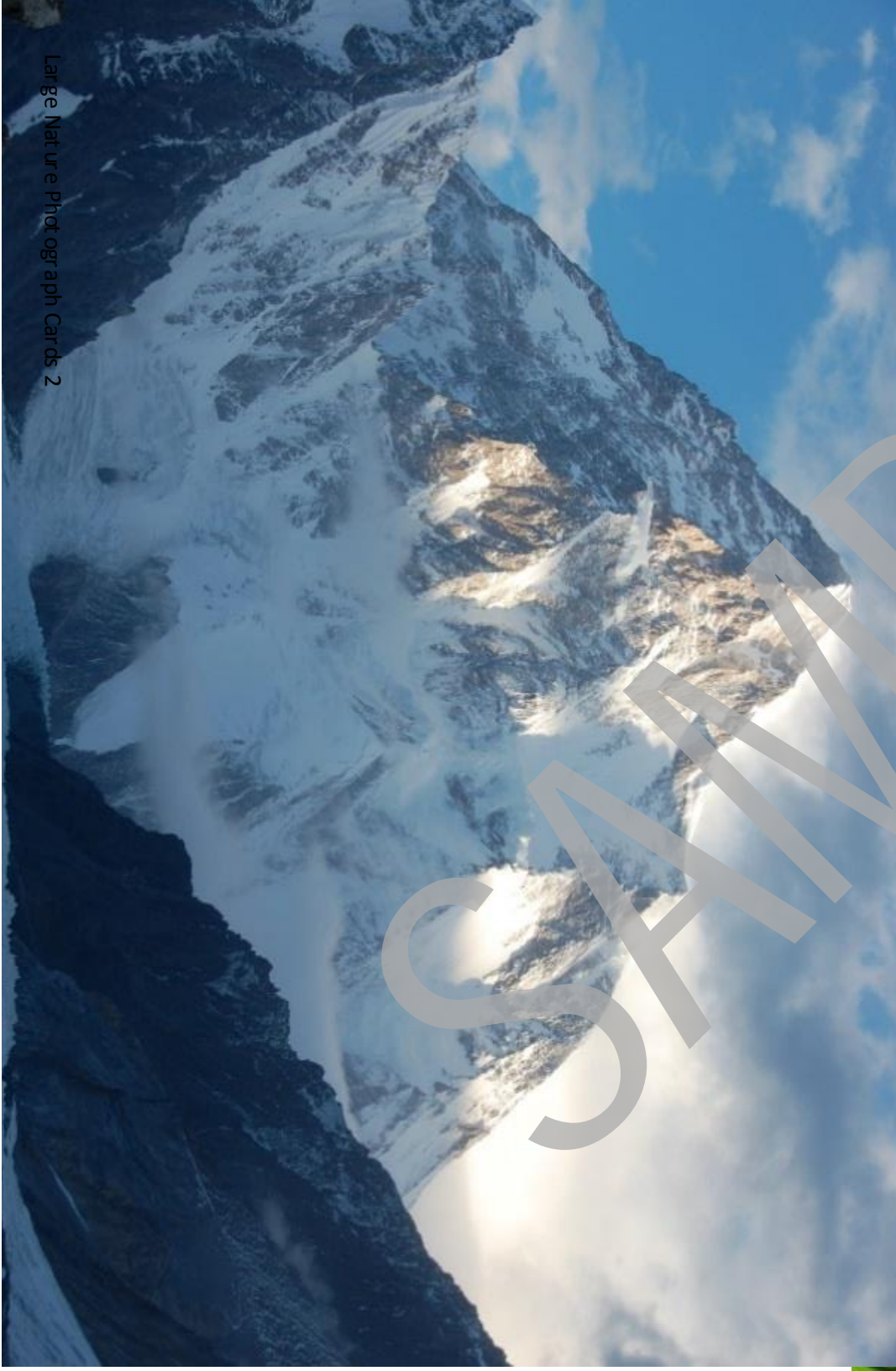
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