



Topic of Study - Animals in the Woods

 <p><u>Introduction</u></p>	<p>Children are familiar with many animals that live in the woods or in areas where there are lots of trees. Although some of the animals, such as squirrels and raccoons, may be seen in neighborhoods and in yards, they are considered to be wild animals. This topic of study will focus on these three wild animals: raccoons, squirrels and foxes. Other woods animals are included in some of the activities.</p>
 <p><u>Big Ideas</u></p>	<p>Here are four big ideas about raccoons, squirrels and foxes that you can help children explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Raccoons, squirrels and foxes are wild animals that live in the woods. ➤ Raccoons and foxes are most active at night (they are nocturnal), while squirrels are active in the daytime. ➤ Each animal has distinctive physical characteristics. ➤ Animals in the woods eat a variety of things.
 <p><u>Materials to Collect and Make</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures of animals in the woods, especially raccoons, squirrels, foxes, possums, deer, owls, skunks, and woodland scenes (laminated or cover with clear adhesive to preserve) • Children’s books about animals in the woods: <i>The Kissing Hand</i> by Audrey Penn, illustrated by Ruth E. Harper & Nancy M. Leak <i>Hattie and the Fox</i> by Mem Fox, Illustrated by Patricia Mullins <i>Nuts to You</i> by Lois Ehlert • Felt or Magnetic Board • Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the book, <i>Hattie and the Fox (A Story a Month, February 2002)</i> • Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the book, <i>The Kissing Hand (A Story a Month, August 2002)</i> • Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the book, <i>The Gingerbread Boy (A Story a Month, December 2003)</i> • “Night School” prop box: flashlight, pencils, crayons, paper, a name tag for each children, several children’s books, including <i>The Kissing Hand</i> • Animals in the Woods cube (See Attachment: Animals in the Woods Cube and Concentration) • Animals in the Woods concentration cards (See Attachment: Animals in the Woods Cube and Concentration)



Resources

- Check with your local library for the availability of children's books.
- Children's books can be purchased online, from school supply catalogs or local bookstores.
- Contact the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for the following materials or locate at www.arkansas.gov/childcare/storymonth.html:
 - ✓ A Story a Month –February 2002 - *Hattie and the Fox* (patterns for storytelling figures)
 - ✓ A Story a Month – August 2002 – *The Kissing Hand* (patterns for storytelling figures)
 - ✓ A Story a Month – December 2003 – *The Gingerbread Boy* (patterns for storytelling figures)
- Search websites or reference books for additional information and for pictures of animals in the woods.



Introducing and Concluding the Topic

Introduction: Finding Out What Children Know about Animals in the Woods

Benchmarks: 3.5 Understands that print conveys a message 5.8 Participates in group discussion

To introduce the topic of "animals in the woods" you need to find out what children already know about the topic. This allows you to build on your children's experiences. It also helps create an interest in the topic. Here's how to begin.

- Gather the children in a group. Say, "For the next few days we're going to be learning about animals that live in the woods."
- Write on chart paper, chalkboard or marker board the words "Animals in the Woods."
- Invite children to tell you things they already know about animals that live in the woods. They may name certain animals, for example squirrels and deer. You may say, for example, "You may see these animals in your yard or near your house. But they are not pets and they do not live on farms. They are wild animals. You may have to ask questions to stimulate their thinking, questions such as, "Have you ever seen animals in trees?" "What animals did you see?"
- Make a list of all of the things children know about animals in the woods.
- Review the list with them and say, "You already know a lot of things about animals in the woods and we'll find out even more. We'll find out about squirrels, raccoons and foxes."
- Keep the list until you have completed the topic of study.

Conclusion: Finding Out What Children Have Learned about Animals in the Woods

- Gather the children in a group at the conclusion of the study about wild animals in the woods.
- Write on chart paper, chalkboard or marker board, "Things We Learned about Animals in the Woods."
- Invite children to tell you some things they have learned. You may have to ask prompt questions such as "Name some of the animals we might see in the woods." Name the animals and ask, "What do you remember about each animal?"
- Make a list of all the things children learned about animals in the woods.
- Read the first list you made with the children. Then say, "Here are some new things you found out about animals in the woods" and read today's list with the children.



Reading
Books with
Children

Benchmark: 3.1 Shows enjoyment of books and stories and discussion of them

Book #1 *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, illustrated by Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak

First Reading of *The Kissing Hand*

- Prepare to read the book, *The Kissing Hand*
- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the words and the illustrator is the person who draws the pictures)
- Ask children to look at the cover and ask if they know the name of the animals they see. If children do not know, identify the animals as raccoons.
- Invite children to look at the raccoons and describe them. (patch on face that looks like a mask, tail has black rings around it and a black tip, for example)
- Ask children to predict what the story is about.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up by asking questions such as, "How did Chester feel about going to school?" "What were some things Chester's mother said he would do at school?" "Are these some of the things you do at school?"
- Invite children to talk about some of their feelings during their first days at school.

Teacher Note: If you have pictures of "real" raccoons, show them to the children so they see more clearly the identifying markings and describe the features of the raccoon.

Second Reading of *The Kissing Hand*

- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator.
- Invite children to recall the name of the animals on the cover.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the second reading by showing pictures of Chester and his mother with the moon behind them.
- Ask, "When is Chester going to school?" (night) "Why do you think Chester is going to school at night?" "How would you like to go to school at night?"
- Discuss with children that raccoons are **nocturnal**. This means they are most active at night.
- Invite children to discuss what they think raccoons do at night. (look for food, get into garbage cans, play)
- Ask children if they can think of people in certain jobs who are working throughout the night. (police officers, firefighters, nurses and doctors in hospitals, people who clean offices, grocery store clerks)

Additional Benchmark: 5.3 Expands vocabulary

Third Reading of *The Kissing Hand*

- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the third reading by asking children what Mrs. Raccoon did that made Chester feel better about going to school. "How do you think the kissing hand made Chester feel?" "How did Mrs. Raccoon feel when Chester gave her a kissing hand?" "How would you feel if someone in your family gave you a kissing hand?"

Fourth Reading of *The Kissing Hand* (Small Group)

- Gather a small group of children (4 to 6) so all can see the smallest animals in the book.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the fourth reading by showing each page to the children and inviting them to locate and name each animal they see (butterfly, bird, ladybug, beetle, squirrel, woodpecker, mouse, skunk (in swing), dragonfly, frog, snail, possum, bee, turtle, rabbit, fox, spider, deer, and owl.)
- Make a list on a large sheet of paper all of the animals the children see in the book.
- Read the list back with the children, running your fingers under each word as you read it.
- Invite the children to “read” the words with you.

Additional Benchmark: 3.5 Understands that print conveys a message.

Teacher Note: Repeat this reading with small groups so all children have an opportunity to see and name all of the animals in the woods and help to make a list of them.

Book #2 *Hattie and the Fox* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Patricia Mullins

First Reading of *Hattie and the Fox*

- Prepare to read the book *Hattie and the Fox*
- Show the cover, give the title, author and illustrator. (Explain that author is the person who writes the words and the illustrator is the person who draws the pictures.)
- Explain that Hattie is the hen.
- Ask children what they think Hattie is looking at.
- Say, “Let’s read and find out.”
- Begin to read the story, pausing when Hattie says, “I can see a nose and two eyes in the bushes” and ask children what they think is in the bushes.
- Continue with the story to the end.
- Follow up by asking children if their predictions about who Hattie saw in the bushes were correct.
- Ask, “Which animal in the story do you think the fox was after?” (Hattie, the hen) “How did Hattie get away from the fox?” “Do you think the animals in the story were afraid of the fox?”
- Show page where cow says “Moo” and ask what happened to the fox?

Second Reading of *Hattie and the Fox*

- Show the cover, give the title, author and illustrator.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the second reading by inviting children to tell the story by looking at the pictures
- Involve children in saying the words that each animal said. For example, “Good grief” said the goose.
- Ask children which animal in the story is not a pet nor lives on a farm. (fox)
- Show children a picture of a real fox and ask them to describe it. (pointed ears and nose (snout), long, bushy tail, color, for example)

Additional Benchmark: 5.8 Participates in group discussion

Third Reading of *Hattie and the Fox* (small group of 3 to 4 children)

- Show the cover, give the title, author and illustrator. Invite children to say what the author and the illustrator do.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the third reading by reviewing the book with children as follows:
Show them the quotation marks and explain, "These are quotation marks. They show when someone in the story is saying something."
Read the first page and run your fingers under the words that Hattie says.
Repeat this procedure with all of the words that the animals say.
- Invite children to help you "read" the words of each animal. For example, "Good grief!" said the goose.
- Thank the children for helping you read the story.

Additional Benchmark: 3.5 Understands that print conveys a message

Book #3: *Nuts to You* by Lois Ehlert, author and illustrator

First Reading of *Nuts to You*.

- Prepare to read the book, *Nuts to You*.
- Refer to the pages titled "Squirrel Talk" at the end of the book for background information about squirrels.
- Show cover; give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that author is the person who writes the book and the illustrator is the person who draws the pictures.)
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up by asking questions such as, "Why do you think the name of the book is *Nuts to You!*" "What other things did the squirrel eat?" (seeds)
- Discuss with children that squirrels also eat corn, pine seeds (from pinecones), fruit.
- Ask children if they have ever seen a squirrel digging a hole in the ground. Why do you think they were digging a hole?" (hiding food for winter) "How do you think they find the nuts they have hidden?" (sense of smell)
- Ask additional questions such as "How do you think a squirrel is able to crawl up a wall or a tree?" (sharp claws)

Teacher Note: If you have a pinecone with just the core remaining, bring it in to show the children how the squirrels have eaten it.

Second Reading of *Nuts to You!*

- Show children pictures of real squirrels. Invite them to describe things they notice about the squirrels. Children may notice shape of ears, that squirrel has whiskers and a bushy tail, and the color of the squirrels. Point to these features if children do not notice them and let children describe them.
- Invite children to discuss squirrels they have seen.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the second reading by inviting children to say the rhyming words. For example, read, "See that squirrel in the tree? I think he'd rather live with _____. (me)

Additional Benchmarks: 5.6 Participates in songs, finger plays, rhyming activities and games
5.8 Participates in group discussion



Additional Books

A Pocket Full of Kisses by Audrey Penn
The Gingerbread Boy by Paul Galdone
The Gingerbread Man by Jim Aylesworth
Miss Suzy by Miriam Young, Arnold Lobel
One Fine Day by Nonny Hogrogian
Rabbits and Raindrops by Jim Arnosky
Raccoon on His Own by Jim Arnosky
Raccoons and Ripe Corn by Jim Arnosky
Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins
Sassafras by Audrey Penn
Squirrels by Brian Wildsmith
Timothy Goes to School by Rosemary Wells



Language Materials and Activities

Benchmarks: 3.1 Shows enjoyment of books and stories and discussion of them

Storytelling Figures: *Hattie and the Fox*

- Make felt or magnetic story figures for the book, *Hattie and the Fox*.
- Use the figures and a felt or magnetic board to tell the story to the children.
- Tell the children that the story figures and board will be placed in the book area.
- Review with the children the correct way to use the story figures. For example: Two children at a time use the figures to tell the story. Keep the figures on the board or in the storage bag/folder
- Spend time in the library/book area helping children use the story figures correctly.

Storytelling Figures: *The Kissing Hand*

- Make either felt or magnetic storytelling figures for the book, *The Kissing Hand*.
- Use the storytelling figures to tell the story.
- Explain to the children that the storytelling figures will be in the library/book area for them to use.
- Demonstrate and discuss with the children the correct way to use the storytelling figures.

Storytelling Figures: *The Gingerbread Boy*

- Make either felt or magnet story figures for the book, *The Gingerbread Boy*
- Read the book (if available) before using the storytelling figures to tell the story.
- Use the storytelling figures to tell the story.
- Explain to the children that the storytelling figures will be in the library/book area for them to use.
- Demonstrate and discuss with the children the correct way to use the storytelling figures.

Benchmark: 5.1 Demonstrates phonological awareness (hearing and recognizing the sounds of language)
5.5 Participates in songs, finger plays, rhyming activities and games

Walking Through the Woods

I went walking through the woods one day,
And what did I see coming my way?
I saw a squirrel with a bushy bushy tail,
Hiding some nuts all along the trail.

I went walking through the woods one day,
And what did I see coming my way?
I saw a fox and his tail was so long.,
That's all I saw 'cause I was soon gone.

I went walking through the woods one night.
What did I see that gave me a fright?
I saw a raccoon with a mask on his face.
I turned and I ran to a safe place.

Whisky Frisky

Whisky Frisky, hippity-hop
Up he goes to the treetop!
Whirly, twirly, round and round
Down he scampers to the ground.

Furly, curly, what a tail,
Tall as a feather, broad as a sail!
Where's his supper? In the shell,
Snappity, crackity, out it fell.

Gray Squirrel

(Suit actions to words)

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail.
Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail.

Wrinkle up your little nose,
Hold a nut between your toes,
Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail.

I See Three

(Hold up 3 fingers as you say the rhyme)

I see three – one – two – three
Three little foxes
Jumping over boxes.

I see three – one – two – three
Three little squirrels
Their tails are making whirls.

I see three – one – two- three
Three little raccoons
Playing lively tunes.

Nuts for Breakfast

A squirrel from his tree house
Poked out his head.
“It’s time for my breakfast”
He loudly said.

So he ran down the tree trunk
And scampered all around
His bushy tail was waving,
His nose was to the ground.

He found the nuts he’s buried,
First one, then two, then three.
He had them for his breakfast,
Then climbed back up the tree.

Animal Watch

When the sun was bright one summer day,
I watched three squirrels come out to play.

Just about dark when I could hardly see,
A sly old fox was looking at me.

By the light of the big full moon,
A saw a baby and her Mother Raccoon.

Benchmark: 5.4 Recognizes and identifies by name most common objects and pictures

Activity: Animals in the Woods Cube

- Make a “Animals in the Woods” cube as follows:
 - Carefully fill an empty cube shaped tissue box with crumpled newspapers. Use several sheets of paper because this will make your cube more durable.
 - Cover the cube with colored paper.
 - Color, cut apart and glue one animal per side to the cube: raccoon, squirrel, fox, possum, owl and skunk. See attachment.
- Help the children name all of the animals on the cube.
- Ask a child to toss the cube and name the animal.
- Continue with each child having a turn to toss the cube.
- Involve children in discussing what they know about each animal.

Teacher Note: Involve the children in this activity after reading the book, *The Kissing Hand*. All of these animals appear in the book.

Benchmark 3.4 Demonstrates visual discrimination and visual memory skills

Activity: Animals in the Woods Concentration

- Make pairs of animals in the woods cards: raccoon, squirrel, fox, possum, owl, and skunk. Laminate or cover the cards with clear adhesive for durability. See attachment.
- Gather a small group of children to play the game.
- Place the cards face up, show to children and have them name the animals.
- Turn the cards over and mix them up.
- Explain to children that they will each have a turn turning over a card, naming the animal, and trying to find the matching card. Demonstrate if necessary.
- Give each child a turn.
- Continue playing the game as long as the children remain interested.

Teacher Note: Remember that the object of the game is for children to develop visual discrimination and visual memory skills and that there are to be no winners or losers.

Teacher Note: Allow the children to play the game independently.



**Science /
Discovery
and Math**

- Benchmarks:**
- 3.10 Classifies objects by physical features such as shape or color.**
 - 3.20 Uses senses to learn about the environment and to collect data (scientific process: observing)**
 - 3.21 Uses words to describe the characteristics of objects (scientific process: communicating)**
 - 3.22 Makes comparisons (scientific process: comparing)**

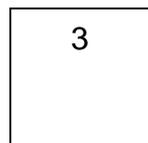
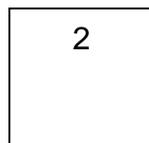
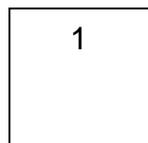
Activity: Feed the Squirrels and Raccoons

- Provide a collection of two types of nuts (in shells) that are quite different in appearance and two containers such as baskets.
- Label one basket **Nuts for Squirrels** and one basket **Nuts for Raccoons**. Add a picture of each animal to the appropriate basket.
- Allow children to decide which animal likes which type of nut the best and to put those nuts in that animal's basket. (There is no right or wrong way to do this.)
- Invite children to count the nuts in each basket and decide which animal gets the most nuts and which animal gets the least.
- Involve children in discussing how the two types of nuts are different.

Teacher Note: Have an uneven number of nuts so there can be more and less. Provide as many nuts as your children can count.

Activity: How Many Nuts?

- Make numeral cards from 1 to 10.
- On five cards put a picture of a squirrel and on five cards put a picture of a raccoon.
- Invite children to put the correct number of nuts on each card.



Teacher Note: Adapt this activity for the children in your group. For example, you may want to include cards with only the numerals 1 to 5 for some children and 1 to 10 for others. For

some children you may want to draw the corresponding number of nuts on each card so children can do one-to-one correspondence, matching nuts to drawings.

Additional Benchmarks: 3.13 Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence
3.15 Demonstrates an understanding of number (how many) numeral (3 is a numeral) relationship

Activity: Weighing Nuts

- Follow up the **Feed the Squirrels and Raccoons** activity by inviting children to weigh the nuts and decide which group is the heaviest and which is the lightest.

Activity: Favorite Animal in the Woods Graph

- Provide a choice of three animals found in the woods (squirrel, fox and raccoon for example)
- Prepare a graph with columns for each animal. Use a picture or drawing of the animal with the word written on it
- Make name cards for each child in a size that will fit on the graph.
- Explain to children that they will choose the animal they like best.
- Invite each child to choose which animal is his or her favorite and tape his or her name card in the correct column on the graph.
- Involve the children in counting the number of children who like each animal.

Our Favorite Animal in the Woods

7			
6			
5	Jonathan		
4	James		Miguel
3	Kennedy	Trude	Juan
2	Sam	Maria	Sarah
1	Ashley	Elizabeth	Jackson
	squirrel	fox	raccoon

- Write a summary story.

Our Favorite Animal in the Woods

Five children like squirrels best. Three children like foxes the best. Four children like raccoons the best.

Activity: Squirrel Watching

- Take the children outside for a walk in an area where there are trees and squirrels may be found.
- Ask children to walk quietly and watch for squirrels.
- Return to the room and invite children to tell if they saw squirrels, where the squirrels were, and what they thought the squirrels were doing.
- Record this on a chart and read it back to them.
- Allow children to draw what they saw on the chart paper.

Additional Benchmark: 3.5 Understands that print conveys a message



**Food/
Nutrition
Experience**

**Benchmarks: 4.2 Demonstrates health and personal care habits
4.3 Tries new foods before deciding whether he/she likes them
4.6 Coordinates eye-hand movements to complete task**

Activity: Frozen Mini Corn on the Cob

- Adults prepare the mini corn on the cobs according to package directions.
- Let cool for a few minutes.
- While warm (NOT HOT) give each child a spoonful of margarine and a plastic knife with an ear of corn on a plate.
- Supervise the children as they spread the margarine on their ear of corn.
- Talk with the children about how raccoons, squirrels and deer love to eat corn.

Activity: Trail Mix

- Gather the following: different kinds of whole-grain cereal squares, toasted oat cereal and pretzel sticks. Place each in a separate bowl.
- Allow each child to put a scoop of each food item into his or her bowl.
- Serve the trail mix with juice.

Teacher Note: Allow the children to do as much of the food experience as possible.

Teacher Note: Adults and children should always wash hands before doing food experience.

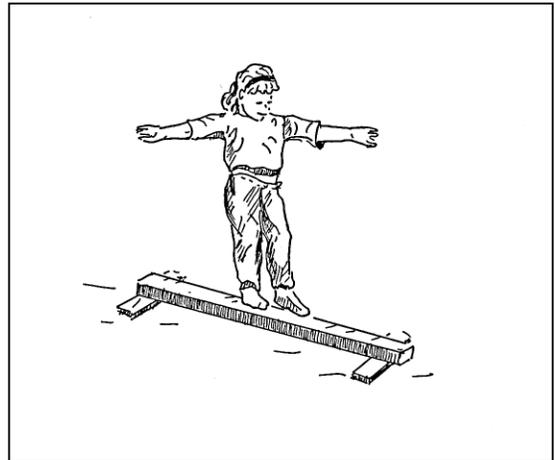


**Movement/
Physical
Education**

Benchmark: 4.12 Shows balance and coordination

Activity: Walk on a Balance Beam

- Show pictures of squirrels climbing trees. Explain to children that squirrels and raccoons use their tails for balance as they climb trees.
- Tell children that they can use their arms to help balance themselves.
- Begin with balance beams placed only slightly above floor level.
- Involve children in walking on a low balance beam or on a 6-foot strip of tape on the floor if a balance beam is not available.
- Allow only one child at a time to walk on the beam or tape.
- Have children step up on one end of the balance beam.
- Tell children, "Walk across the balance beam just like you would walk across the floor." Say, "Step with one foot, now step with the other foot." Say, "Hold your arms straight out to your side."
- Hold the hand of a child who may need this support.
- Allow children many opportunities to practice walking across the board until they have gained the skills and confidence to move to a higher board.
- Be aware that children will vary in their development of this skill.
- Vary the difficulty of the skill according to the development of the child. Some may be able to walk sideways or backward on the beam.



Teacher Note: Modify this activity for children who may be having difficulty balancing on a beam. For example, have them balance on a taped line on the floor or on a chalk line on the sidewalk outdoors.



Learning Centers

Benchmarks: 2.10 Explores and manipulates art media
2.12 Preplans art project and then works with care

Art

Activity: Animals in the Woods Mural

- Tape a long sheet of butcher paper to the wall.
- Gather children around and invite them to help create a woods scene. Talk with them about what they would see if they went walking in the woods. (trees and animals, for example) What animals might they see?
- Let children know that they can work on the woods scene all week.
- Label the paper: **Animals in the Woods**. Explain that they can use crayons, markers and pencils to draw on the paper. They can draw pictures and cut them out and glue them to the paper. They can find pictures of trees and animals, cut them out and glue them to the paper. Allow the children to create their own woodlands scene with out providing pre-drawn patterns or directions as to what to make. If they add animals that may not be found in the woods, this is okay. Allow the creation to belong to the children.
- Add cookie cutters of animals in the woods to use with play dough.

Block Center

- Add small pine branches.
- Add vinyl animals that live in the woods.

Library/Book Corner

- Add books about animals in the woods
- Add pictures that show animals in the woods. (laminates or cover pictures with self stick adhesive)
- Add felt/magnetic story figures and felt or magnetic board.

Teacher Note: Consider alternating the felt/magnetic story figures rather than putting all of the story figures in the library area at one time.

Benchmark: 2.1 Shows creativity and imagination in play with materials and props

Home Living/Dramatic Play

- Make a "Night School" prop box to add to the home living area. Include a flashlight, pencils, crayons, paper, a name tag for each child, and several children's books. Make sure to include *The Kissing Hand*. Post a sign in the center that says **Night School**.

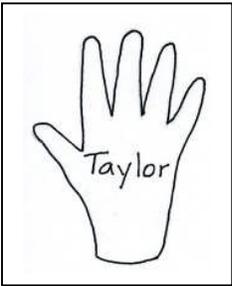
Benchmark: 4.6 Coordinates eye and hand movements to complete tasks

Manipulatives

- Add animals in the woods puzzles
- Place nuts (in shells) in baskets. Add tongs for children to use to transfer the nuts from one basket to another.

Water table or tub

- Add vinyl woods animals to the water table or tub

	<p><u>Sand table or tub</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add deer corn, scoops and containers to the sand table or tub • Add corn cob bedding (available at pet stores), scoops and containers to the sand table or tub <hr/> <p><u>Science/Discovery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add nuts, numeral cards and baskets <hr/> <p><u>Quiet Corner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a quiet corner in your classroom; a place where children can go to be alone and to get away from the stresses of group living. • Place soft items in the quiet corner. Carpet on the floor, soft pillows, and soft and cuddly stuffed animals or dolls are examples. • Discuss with children when they might want to go to the quiet corner. When they are angry and need to get away from the source of their anger? When they are sad and need to be alone? When the room gets too noisy and they need a quiet spot? • Explain to children that the quiet corner is for one child at a time
 <p><u>Transition Activities</u></p>	<p>Benchmark: 3.4 Demonstrates visual discrimination and visual memory skills</p> <p>Activity: Which Animal Is Missing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place pictures of four woods animals on the floor. • Invite children to name them. • Ask children to close their eyes while you remove one of the pictures. • Ask children to open their eyes and ask the selected child to name the animal that is missing. That child transitions to the next activity. • Continue with this activity, giving each child a turn. <hr/> <p>Activity: Woods Animal Cube</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give each child a turn to toss the woods animals cube. • Ask child to name the animal on top of the cube, name the animal, and go to the next activity. • Continue with this activity, giving each child a turn. <hr/> <p>Benchmark: 3.7 Identifies letters and signs in the environment</p> <p>Activity: Kissing Hand Name Tags</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a kissing hand for each child and add the child's name in the center of the hand. • Show the kissing hands, one at a time, and invite children to identify their names and go to the next activity. 
 <p><u>Family Activities</u></p>	<p>Send home a note to parents stating for the next few days, the children will be learning about animals in the woods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest some ways families can be involved in the topic of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect items such as pictures of animals in the woods. • Include the titles and authors of some of the children's books about woods animals. Suggest that they look for these books in the local library, check them out and read them with their child. • Send home directions for making the Woods Animals cube with suggestions for how families can use the cube with their children. • Send home <i>The Kissing Hand</i> activity sheets from The Family Connection. (See pages 14 and 15: The Classroom Connection and The Family Connection)

THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Activity #2

“Reading a Story: *The Kissing Hand*”

Remember your first days at preschool or kindergarten. Did you feel lonely or afraid when your family left? We understand these feelings in the children in our classroom; so we plan activities to help children make the transition from home to a new setting.

Here are some things we do to make it easier for children to separate from their families.

- We read the book, “*The Kissing Hand*” by Audrey Penn, as new children enter our classroom.

This is a story about Chester Raccoon. Chester is going to school for the first time and is afraid. His mother shares a family secret with him to help him feel less afraid. She places a kiss in the palm of his hand. She tells him when his is lonely, he is to press his hand to his face and remember that she loves him. Just before Chester goes to school, he gives his mother a “kissing hand” so she can know he loves her too.

- We read and discuss the book several times.
- We invite children to talk about some of their feelings during their first days at school.
- We trace an outline of each child’s hand and help the child cut it out.
- We send the “kissing hand” activity home with each child to share with his/her family.

See **The Family Connection Activity #2** to get ideas for making your child’s “kissing hand” special.

This is what happens when children can easily separate from their families.

- Children enjoy their classroom experiences.
- Children are better able to concentrate on classroom activities.
- Children help their families feel good about leaving their children with us.

THE FAMILY CONNECTION

Activity #2

“Reading a Story: *The Kissing Hand*”

You will need: Crayons
An outline of your child’s hand that has been sent home by your child’s teacher or that you have traced on paper or poster board

Try This!

- Invite your child to recall the events in the book, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. Use his/her hand outline as a reminder.
- Help your child decide how to make his/her “kissing hand” special. Here are some suggestions:
 - Give the hand a simple kiss. That’s what Chester Raccoon and his mother did. (Lipstick makes the kiss show!)
 - Add a heart drawing or heart sticker.
 - Glue a family photo to the hand.
 - Write the words “I love you” on the hand.
 - Have each family member “autograph” the hand.
- Encourage your child to take his/her special “kissing hand” back to school for sharing or for comfort.

