



Children Investigate Living Things

The purpose of this activity is for educators to discuss ways children investigate and learn about living things.

Key Concepts

- Characteristics of living things
- Needs of living things
- Changes in living things
- Observing
- Documenting

Materials and Setup

Each team will need the following:

- Copies of the photo cards (pages 2–5)
- Sample Responses (optional, page 6)



10–15 minutes



Small groups



In-person or virtual professional learning

Activity Instructions

1. Review the photos.
2. With your table group, discuss the following:
 - a. What do you notice about the ways children in the photos engage with living things?
 - b. What might children in the photos be learning about living things?
 - c. What are some ways children in your setting engage with living things in similar or different ways than the children in the photo cards? Consider how a child's culture or lived experience might contribute to ways they explore living things.
3. After your discussion, you might review the Sample Responses.



A. A child observes an earthworm.





B. A child waters the plants in the garden.





C. A child draws a representation of an apple.





D. A child picks a ripe tomato.





E. Children observe and discuss caterpillars and butterflies.





Sample Responses

Review the sample responses for additional ideas on ways children in the photos investigate and learn about living things.

- All children in the photos explore life science concepts through real, authentic, hands-on experiences.
- Children in the photos investigate life science in different ways and are learning about different concepts and phenomena. For example:
 - ◇ Photo A: A child is observing an earthworm. They might be noticing the shape of the body or learning the different ways living things can move.
 - ◇ Photo B: A child is watering the garden. They might be learning about what plants need to survive.
 - ◇ Photo C: A child is documenting a piece of fruit. They might be learning about the characteristics of fruits.
 - ◇ Photo D: A child is picking tomatoes. They might be learning about ways living things grow and change—noticing how the fruit forms and when it is ripe and ready to be picked.
 - ◇ Photo E: Children observe and discuss caterpillars and butterflies. They might be learning about the life cycle of different animals and noticing the ways the caterpillar grows, creates a chrysalis, and emerges as a butterfly.
- Children in different learning settings will learn about living things in many diverse ways. For example:
 - ◇ Noticing ants, birds, or squirrels in or around the learning setting
 - ◇ Observing different plants and flowers growing near the learning setting
 - ◇ Sharing about family pets that might live with them at home
 - ◇ Noticing how a baby sibling or cousin grows and changes over time

