



Planning Investigations of Living Things

This handout provides guiding questions to support educators to plan life science investigations for children in their setting.

Meaningful Investigations

- What life science concepts have children shown an interest in? How might you investigate one of the following concepts with children? Refer to the Inquiry Starters: Life Science handout for some ideas on different experiences you might provide children to support them to investigate:
 - ◇ Parts and processes of living things
 - ◇ How living things grow and change
 - ◇ The life cycle of living things
 - ◇ What living things need to grow and survive
 - ◇ The habitats of living things
- In what ways might children use different inquiry skills (for example, asking questions, observing, predicting, documenting, and communicating) as they investigate?



Mutual Learning

- How might children experience this concept in their daily lives? Consider opportunities in your learning setting, within children's homes, or in their communities.
- Explore ways you might engage children with diverse backgrounds, strengths, abilities, and interests (for example, some children might enjoy getting dirty and others might not).
- Consider ways to connect with families (for example, you might invite families to take photos of living things they find in their neighborhoods). Is there an opportunity for a family member to share their expertise or experiences with children as it relates to the concept you are investigating (for example, a family member might like to garden or work as a vet technician)?

Mutual Learning

- What materials might you provide? How will these materials help children learn about living things? Consider materials that are open-ended and invite children to explore in different ways, tools that support observation (for example, magnifying glasses, measuring tools), and materials that might support them to document (for example, paper and drawing materials or clay).
- What outdoor spaces or indoor examples (like plants or classroom pets) are available for children to explore living things first-hand?
- How might you document and display children's inquiry experiences?



Mindful Vocabulary and Discourse

- What vocabulary might you introduce to children to expand their understanding of this concept? Consider ways to introduce new words authentically within direct and meaningful experiences.
- In what ways might you support children to communicate about their ideas and experiences? Consider different ways children might communicate (for example, gesturing, drawing, using augmentative and adaptive communication devices, writing, speaking).
- What are some open-ended questions you might ask children to encourage them to think critically and explain their emerging ideas about living things?

Multiple Representations

- How might you support children to explore this concept in different contexts, or with different materials (for example, children might explore life cycles by documenting changes in carrot plants and tadpoles)?
- In what ways can children communicate their understanding about this concept (for example, describing in their home language, creating models, drawing, using movement)?
- What are ways in which children can represent their observations of living things through different forms of documentation (for example, using a series of photos, drawings, sculptures, or storytelling)?

