



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: A PROJECT-BASED CURRICULUM

The Our Neighborhood project introduces kids to structured ways of thinking and expressing ideas about the people, places and things that matter most to them. The lessons build on the information and experiences that the children and the instructors already have about the culture around them.

When conducted in a group setting, these activities will build children's vocabulary and help them develop social skills. Children will practice cognitive skills through reading, writing, counting, adding, measuring, labeling, drawing and creating crafts. A variety of options for products—things that children can design and make on their own—are presented. The main goal of the project is to produce something as a group that can help other children and adults learn about their community.

Our Neighborhood is designed to be adaptable to a variety of interests and ways of working. It can be done in sequence or out of sequence, in parts or as one continuous, connected project. Because many out-of-school programs follow the academic calendar of winter, spring and summer terms, an 8-week project is suggested. Assuming a typical term of 12 to 13 weeks, this schedule allows extra time for field trips; preparatory activities, such as team building; closure activities, such as family nights; and extension activities.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CURRICULUM

OVERVIEW

The Our Neighborhood project is designed for 6- to 8-year-olds. Age, identity, family and community are common themes in children's schoolwork, in the literature and media they are exposed to, in the games they play, and in their personal lives. These themes are also relevant to older children and teens, and the project can be adapted by selecting reading material, group activities, websites, and software that are appropriate for older children.

This project will introduce collaborative reading, writing and groupwork processes, such as brainstorming, labeling, mapping and storyboarding. Computer-based activities emphasize multimedia skills, such as creating and editing original artwork, photos and text.

FORMULATING QUESTIONS

Our Neighborhood is an inquiry-based project. Children will formulate questions about their families and communities, and the adult facilitators will help the children figure out how to find the answers, do the investigations and document what they have learned. The facilitators will help the children identify questions that they want to investigate for the project. Questions could be broad, such as:

- Who lives in my community?
- What do people in my community do?
- What are important places in my community?
- Where are the places for kids in my community?

Or questions could be more specific to a particular topic, such as:

- What animals live in the neighborhood park?
- What do the animals in the park eat?
- Where do the animals in the park sleep?
- What things can we do to help the animals in the park?

OUTCOMES

Groups doing this project will have the option of making one or more of the following products:

- A group journal
- A group slide show or multimedia presentation
- A group website

Children will also create the following individual products:

- A personal journal
- Personal newsletters

COMPONENTS

- Reading: Children will read and be read to during every session.
- Writing: Children will practice composing words and sentences during every session.

- Oral presentation: Children will practice speaking in front of a group and listening to others while they are speaking.
- Presentation of mathematical data: Children will have the option to collect, analyze and organize numeric information during one or more sessions.
- Organizing information: Children will sort and categorize information on maps and cards.
- Visual communication: Children will compose, take and edit photos; draw by hand; and draw using software tools.

GOALS

Children doing this project will achieve the following goals:

- Increased vocabulary as they describe and come to understand some of the people, places, events and things in their family, peer group and community
- Increased ability to perform such social skills as sharing, listening, taking turns and helping others
- New factual and qualitative information about the people and places in their neighborhood that are important to children
- Increased ability to present concrete and abstract information in multimedia formats
- Increased skill in using multimedia software

PREPARATION (BEFORE YOU BEGIN)

Children who participate in Our Neighborhood should be organized into groups with no more than a three-year age span. The activities are not recommended for 5-year-olds (or for any children who have not yet enrolled in, or completed, first grade) because the activities require beginning reading skills, the ability to work independently for short periods of time and the ability to work in a group and with a partner. Because levels of skill and maturity vary, adult facilitators should exercise their best judgment when placing children into groups.

Children enrolled in a group should be expected to participate consistently throughout the whole project. The group should meet to work on project activities on regularly scheduled days and times, and children should start and end the activities as a group.

If the project is started with a group of children who have never worked together, it is highly recommended that the group spend the first few sessions doing community building activities to help children get to know each other and the adult facilitator. Community builders are also important for groups of children who know each other but who are new to working on a project together.

Children should be organized into groups with an adult facilitator-to-child ratio no greater than 1 to 20 and no less than 1 to 8. Ratios should be determined according to the comfort level of the adult facilitator and the needs and comfort level of the children.

The group will need a comfortable space in which to conduct project activities. Preferably, this space should have at least one large table and several chairs for writing, drawing and other sit-down activities. The group will need secure space to store project supplies and to hang materials such as drawings and maps.

RECOMMENDED TIME

Sessions that are between 60 and 90 minutes generally work well for younger children. They can handle longer sessions (two hours or more) if the activities are broken up with physical exercise, snacks, and rest or play periods. Scheduling time for group welcome and closure activities during every session is especially important for this age group. They benefit greatly from having clearly defined transitions between activities, such as physical games; sharing comments as a group; and practicing routines, such as setting up, cleaning up and lining up.

MATERIALS

Specific supplies needed for each project activity are listed in the session plans. It is helpful to have the following items on hand:

- Scissors (child and adult size)
- Clipboards
- Glue sticks
- Masking tape
- Scotch tape
- Index cards
- Loose white copy paper
- Colored construction paper
- Thin felt-tip colored markers
- Thick colored markers
- Pens
- Pencils
- Flip chart paper or Newsprint pads
- Single hole-punch
- Ball of string
- Rulers
- Manila folders
- Poster board
- Composition books or spiral notebooks
- Digital Cameras
- Microphone or Audio Recorder

TECHNICAL MATERIALS

Regardless of the specific application, it is recommended that the following types of software programs be made available:

- A program that young children can use to draw freehand
- A program that children can use to make multimedia presentations
- A program that children can use to edit digital photos
- A program that young children can use to make graphs and charts.

These lessons do not require one computer per participant. For many activities, it is recommended that participants share computers with a partner to benefit from peer coaching. Participants can rotate between computer and noncomputer activities during a project session.

BOOKS

The following children's books are listed in the session plans as recommended reading:

Chato and the Party Animals, by Gary Soto

Chato, "the coolest cat in el Barrio," throws a surprise birthday party for his buddy Novio Boy. It is a special party because Novio Boy, who came from the pound, has never had a birthday celebration. The friendly neighborhood of cats, dogs and mice reflects the culture of a close-knit Latino community. The story uses some Spanish words. An English-Spanish glossary is provided.

Tar Beach, by Faith Ringgold

Author Faith Ringgold is an artist who first created this book as part of a storytelling quilt, the design of which is woven into the illustrations. The artwork helps tell a story from the point of view of 8-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot. As Cassie sleeps on the "tar beach" rooftop of her apartment building, she dreams of flying over New York City and imagines how things would be easier for her family if she possessed magical powers. The book touches on serious issues, such as the fact that Cassie's father cannot join a labor union because his father was not a member and because he is of Native American and African American descent.

The Important Book, by Margaret Wise Brown

This book, by the author of Goodnight Moon, describes a number of everyday objects such as spoons and apples, narrowing them down to the one "important" thing about each. It provides an excellent model for descriptive writing exercises.

Pet Show, by Ezra Jack Keats

Archie scrambles to find a pet to bring to a neighborhood pet show because he cannot find his cat. He demonstrates maturity and caring when he ultimately lets a neighbor collect a prize ribbon for the cat. The story provides opportunities to introduce classification and description and to discuss sharing and friendship.

Fortunately, by Remy Charlip

Ned gets an invitation to a surprise party and ends up having an adventure with lots of twists and turns. Things are very good ("fortunately, a friend loaned Ned an airplane"), then very bad ("unfortunately, the motor exploded"), then good again ("fortunately, the plane had a parachute"), and so on. Provides an excellent model for writing simple narrative stories.

Books with similar themes can be added or substituted. It is recommended that the reading materials feature characters and settings that reflect the culture and ethnicity of the children doing the project. Here are some other suggested books:

Hairs/Pelitos, by Sandra Cisneros

Describes a loving family through the voice of a girl talking about the different hair textures and hairstyles of her siblings and parents. The text is written in both English and Spanish.

All Kinds of Families, by Norma Simon

Describes all the different ways in which a group of people can be a family (big or little, adopted or by blood, stable or moving around a lot, etc.). The pictures show families of different races and ethnicities. The author states that the book's purpose is "to acknowledge that families are not always composed in the traditional way: a household made up of two parents and their children."

Frog and Toad series, by Arnold Lobel

The classic Frog and Toad books (including Frog and Toad Are Friends, Frog and Toad Together, Days with Frog and Toad, and others) are great for chapter reading. The stories touch on social and emotional themes such as sharing, friendship, taking on challenges and growing up.

George and Martha series, by James Marshall

George and Martha are two hippos who do everything together, including getting in trouble. Their humorous stories teach children about learning from mistakes, respecting friends and other life lessons. Great for chapter reading. Titles include George and Martha; George and Martha: The Complete Stories of Two Best Friends; George and Martha: One Fine Day; George and Martha Back in Town; and others.

SESSION ONE: OBSERVATION

GOALS		OUTCOMES
Build vocabulary Think critically Practice writing words and sentences Work cooperatively Learn how to operate a digital camera Learn techniques for taking photos at different angles and distances		Idea Map Photos Newsletter
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT		
A computer with Internet access A copy of the book <i>Chato and the Party Animals</i> , by Gary Soto A newsprint pad or roll of butcher paper Composition books (one for each child and facilitator) Regular pens and/or colored gel pens Colored markers Digital cameras Copies of a newsletter template sheet		

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALS

What is it?

Journals can be used to record notes, creative writing and responses to questions as well as to keep drawings, photos, and newspaper or magazine articles. A routine of using journals and modeling their use will help participants form a habit of writing for their personal reflection and enjoyment. Facilitators can use journals to pose questions that connect to reading materials and project activities.

How to

For the first journal exercise, ask the participants to respond to a question that requires creative problem solving and imagination. (e.g., "In words and pictures, show how we can solve the problem of pollution.") Here are some other sample questions:

- How would you stop a cat and dog from fighting?
- Design and equip a rocket ship for traveling to Mars.
- How would you equip a person to fly?

Post the question on a board or piece of paper where everyone can see it. The facilitator should also respond to the question in a journal. At the start, the facilitator should share his or her response in front of the group (show the book, explain the words and pictures used, and then pass it around). Ask at least two children to volunteer to share their journal entries with each other in front of the group. Then have the children pair up and ask them to share their entries with one another. Finally, individual students share their responses with the whole group.

Tips

It is preferable to use pens (regular or, even better, colored pens) for journals because they cannot be erased. Erasing wastes time and makes it easy for children who are not happy with their writing or drawing to delete their work.

Children who have not received instruction in drawing will often become easily frustrated by drawing tasks, both on paper and on a computer. To help a group become more confident with drawing, try setting aside at least 10 to 15 minutes in each session to work on drawing exercises.

PART 2: READ-ALOUD

What is it?

Suggested reading is *Chato and the Party Animals*, by Gary Soto. This book is about a surprise birthday party thrown for Novio Boy, one of the cats in the neighborhood, by his buddy Chato, “the coolest cat in el Barrio.” It is a special party because Novio Boy, who came from the pound, has never had a birthday celebration.

How to

The facilitator should read the book before the session to become familiar with the text and pictures and to identify questions for discussion. During the read-aloud, the facilitator shows the pictures in the book to the group. After reading, the facilitator asks the group to discuss a few questions. Have the children pair up to discuss the questions with a partner, and then have them report back to the whole group.

Sample questions

- Who in the neighborhood helps make Novio Boy’s party happen?
- Where in the neighborhood does Chato go to get things for the party?
- When Novio Boy tells the birthday party guests, “you guys are mi familia,” what do you think he means?

Tips

Read-alouds provide great opportunities to introduce children to new vocabulary. One way to practice new words is to build a word bank: a collection of cards with words written on them. The facilitator identifies words in the reading that are new to the group—or words that may be familiar but which most of the children in the group do not yet know how to read or spell—and writes them on index cards. The cards can be posted in the room to discuss, copy and use for sentence composition exercises. Children can create their own word bank cards to store in personal folders.

PART 3: IDEA MAPPING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

What is it?

Idea Mapping is a technique used to generate, share and display ideas as a group. Participants break into small groups to work on hand-drawn maps made out of concentric circles. Children at all reading and writing levels, including prereaders, can contribute to the maps. Drawings, single words and word phrases can be used to represent ideas.

The purpose of this first map is to introduce the mapping technique, which will be used in later sessions.

How to

Each group should have several pieces of newsprint or butcher paper and a set of markers. The map starts with the facilitator writing a word in the center of a sheet of paper and drawing a circle around the word. Ask a question that relates to the word, and have the group respond to it in drawings and words. Add another circle that encompasses the first to hold responses to an additional question.

If the group is small (10 children or less) do the first map as one group. As the children gain more experience with mapping, they may prefer breaking into smaller groups to work independently. If the group has more than 10 participants, break it into small groups of four to six to work on separate maps.

Map ideas

- Central word: Neighborhood
- Question for the first circle: Where do children spend time in the neighborhood (e.g., house, playground, school or store)?
- Question for the second circle: What do children do in these places?

- Central word: Celebration
- Question for the first circle: What kinds of celebrations do we have for friends and family?
- Question for the second circle: Why do we have celebrations?

PART 4: WEB REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S PHOTOGRAPHY SITES

What is it?

Participants will look at websites containing photos taken by children to get ideas for their own photos. This site review also provides an opportunity to demonstrate website navigation techniques.

How to

It is easier for participants to access the sites if they can work from a webpage that has the links for the websites already embedded. If the group has prereaders and emergent readers, it is especially preferable to link them directly to the sites as opposed to having them type in URLs or use search engines to find sites. A closed page of links will also reduce the likelihood that the students come across sites containing inappropriate content.

The adult facilitator should gather the group around one computer and pull up each website, demonstrating what to look for and how to navigate the pages.

Children can work in pairs or independently to review sites. After a review period of no longer than 15 minutes, participants should share comments on what they liked best about the sites. Participants can do this by walking as a group from computer to computer.

Tips

Facilitators should thoroughly review all sites before directing participants to them. Reviewing the sites will allow the facilitator to point out particularly interesting areas and will ensure that participants are not directed to pages that have inappropriate content.

PART 5: UP, DOWN, CLOSE AND FAR PHOTOS WITH DIGITAL CAMERAS

What is it?

This exercise introduces the proper care, handling and operation of the digital camera. It also introduces basic photographic composition techniques.

How to

The facilitator points out the parts of the camera and describes their functions. The facilitator asks the students to practice naming the parts, shows them how to hold the camera properly and has them practice passing the camera to one another carefully, in a circle or in small groups.

Show the group how to take a picture. Show everyone how to take a picture from different angles and distances. (Using simple terms such as “up,” “down,” “close” and “far” is helpful.)

Let the group practice taking pictures. Give it a specific assignment (e.g., “Take three ‘close’ pictures from a ‘down’ angle.”) If there is time, download the photos onto the computers and ask everyone to pick one or two pictures to show to the group and explain why he or she took it.

Tips

If the facilitator does not have extensive experience with photography, browse through a beginner photography book or website to become familiar with basic photographic terms and concepts.

If the camera has features such as zoom and photo effects, the facilitator may want to point them out later. It may be overwhelming to introduce them in the children’s first session. These features, along with techniques such as panning and stop motion, can become the focus of short lessons during later sessions.

PART 6: DAILY NEWSLETTER

What is it?

A daily newsletter is a one-page news sheet of writing and drawing that participants will make at the end of each session to take home to their families. The newsletter helps parents learn about the progress of the project, creates a record of activities and accomplishments, and provides an opportunity for children to practice writing and visual communication skills.

How to

Newsletters can have space for the date, weather (space for drawing and words), accomplishments (e.g., “Describe three things you learned today.”), favorites (books, photos or websites), quotes, riddles and information for families (e.g., “Our next field trip will be...”).

Newsletters can be filled in with pencil, pen, colored pencils or markers. Creating the daily newsletter is also a time for the group to reflect on the day. Questions to be responded to in the newsletter can be posted on a whiteboard or on a piece of paper and shared as a group before being written down.

Tips

Group journals are useful for participants who finish activities early. One composition book can be shared by the whole group, or, if the group is broken into smaller groups, each small group should have its own. Group journal assignments should be simple, such as vocabulary-building exercises (e.g., “List things that you like to eat at home.”).

Extension activity

Using multimedia software, make a slideshow presentation of photos of people or objects in the room. This project involves giving participants a focused photo assignment, taking the photos, editing and sorting the photos, and then incorporating the photos into slides with accompanying text, sound and graphics. Successful assignments are very focused and provide opportunities for imagination and adaptation (i.e., take photos close and up or down that show part of something but not the whole thing). Participants could take photos of living things outside (bugs, plants or birds), patterns in the room (clothing, wallpaper, furniture fabric or carpet), shoes worn by the group, or other subjects.

SESSION TWO: INTERVIEWS

GOALS		OUTCOMES	
Build vocabulary		List-Group-Label cards	
Think critically		Photos of people	
Work cooperatively		Interview writing	
Practice writing words and sentences		Newsletter	
Practice asking questions, listening and responding to questions		Digital Presentation	
Practice taking photos that express a perspective			
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT			
A computer with Internet access Microsoft Word or similar software Multimedia or Presentation software A copy of the book <i>Tar Beach</i> , by Faith Ringgold Composition books (one for each child and facilitator) Loose-leaf paper Index cards Pencils Regular pens and/or colored gel pens Colored markers Digital cameras Copies of newsletter template sheet			

PART 1: JOURNALS

What is it?

Have the group do a journal exercise relating to their favorites places at home or in the neighborhood.

Sample exercises

- In words and pictures, show your favorite places on the block or in the neighborhood where you live.
- In words and pictures, show what would happen in your neighborhood if you had a magic power. What would you be able to do? How would you use your power to help other people?

PART 2: READ-ALOUD

What is it?

The suggested reading material is *Tar Beach*, by Faith Ringgold. In this book, 8-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot talks about her family and about her New York City neighborhood. Cassie imagines how life would be easier for her family if she possessed magical powers like flying.

Sample questions

- What is the “tar beach” where Cassie’s family goes at night?
- Why do you think she calls it tar beach?
- Cassie says that the George Washington Bridge is her “most prized possession.” Why do you think the bridge is important to her?

PART 3: WEB REVIEW OF CHILDREN’S WRITING AND DRAWING SITES

What is it?

Participants will look at websites containing original writing and artwork by children to get ideas for their own writing and drawing.

PART 4: LIST-GROUP-LABEL

What is it?

List-Group-Label is a group brainstorming technique. Participants generate questions or ideas that are written on index cards. The purpose of this List-Group-Label exercise is to prepare for a partner interview exercise (the next activity) by brainstorming interview questions.

How to

Tell the group that everyone will be pairing up to do an interview with a partner. Ask the group to suggest ideas for questions. Have one person (or two people, taking turns) write the questions on the cards as they are called out, one at a time. With younger children, it is most efficient for an adult to write out the cards. Then ask two or three children to sort the cards for the group by creating categories and placing the cards in the categories. The cards can then be posted or given to participants to keep.

PART 5: PARTNER INTERVIEWS

What is it?

Interviewing is a great way for children to practice speaking and writing skills. The purpose of this interview is for the participants to learn more about each other. Partners will ask each other a series of questions, record the answers and take a photo of each other.

How to

Have the children pair up. An adult facilitator should model the interview process by asking a volunteer to come up in front of the group and participate in a short interview. The facilitator should ask two or three questions; the volunteer answers each question, and the facilitator takes his or her picture with a digital camera. Facilitators should be sure to model writing down the answers to the questions in a journal. Next, ask two volunteers to model a short interview for the group and take a photo. Then have the entire group conduct the interviews and take photos.

Afterwards, each pair can type its answers into complete sentences using a word processor. If the group has little or no previous experience with word processors, an adult facilitator should demonstrate basic techniques such as opening a file, saving, using the menu, placing the cursor, scrolling, and changing font type and size. Partners should help each other with spelling and punctuation.

Partners can also download their photos and make changes to them. If the group has used photo editing software before, this is a good opportunity for them to practice changing a photo to make it more interesting. If they haven't used photo editing software before, the adult facilitator can gather the group back together to demonstrate how to use the software and explain a few of the tools and effects. The partners can then work together to change their photos.

Digital Presentation

Create a digital presentation or slideshow about the group with the writing and photos from the interview exercise using multimedia or presentation software. Have each team of partners create two projects: one for each partner. As the presentations are completed, have two or three participants work together to decide how to organize and edit the files, if necessary.

Note: If the group has never seen a slideshow or presentation, show them a completed one before beginning work on the project.

PART 6: DAILY NEWSLETTER

What is it?

Instructions for creating a daily newsletter are in Session 1, Part 6.

SESSION THREE: INQUIRY

GOALS		OUTCOMES	
Build vocabulary		Journal writing and drawing	
Think critically		Idea Map	
Work cooperatively		Inquiry process writing	
Practice writing words and sentences		Newsletter	
Practice forming investigative questions			
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT			
A computer with Internet access			
A copy of The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown			
Composition books (one for each child and facilitator)			
A newsprint pad or roll of butcher paper			
Regular pens and/or colored gel pens			
Colored markers			
Copies of newsletter template sheets			

PART 1: JOURNALS

What is it?

Have the group do a journal exercise that relates to investigation.

Sample exercises

- In words and pictures, show how you would figure out how milk gets to the grocery store. Whom would you ask? What information would you need?
- In words and pictures, show how you would figure out how many cats and dogs live in your neighborhood. Whom could you ask to help get the information? What tools would you use to get the information?

PART 2: READ-ALOUD

What is it?

Suggested reading is The Important Book, by Margaret Wise Brown. This book describes the “important” characteristics of ordinary things like grass, spoons, rain and apples.

Sample questions

- The Important Book says that the important thing about snow is that it is white. Do you agree?
- The Important Book says that grass has “a sweet grassy smell.” Can you think of other words to describe how grass smells?

PART 3: FINISH WORK ON PARTNER INTERVIEWS

For 30 minutes, continue work on the writing, drawings, photos and presentations from the interview exercise in the previous session. Any incomplete work can be finished during future sessions.

PART 4: IDEA MAP

What is it?

The group will perform idea mapping exercises to decide what it would be like to investigate and put information in a book about the neighborhood. The mapping will also help students decide on a field trip they could use to collect information for the book. The goal of this exercise is for the group to brainstorm and come up with great questions to find answers to. Create two or three maps, or more if time permits.

Map ideas

- Central words: People in the neighborhood
- Question for the first circle: What people do we know in the neighborhood?
- Question for the second circle: What do these people do?
- Question for the third circle: What are the important things about these people?
- Question for the fourth circle: What do we want to find out about these people?

- Central words: Places in the neighborhood
- Question for the first circle: What are the important places in the neighborhood?
- Question for the second circle: What do people do in these places? What do animals do in these places?
- Question for the third circle: What is important about these places?
- Question for the fourth circle: What do we want to find out about these place

PART 5: INQUIRY PROCESS WRITING

What is it?

Participants will write words and sentences defining the questions they want to investigate, what they already know about the questions, and what they need to do to find answers.

How to

Participants should have the following:

- A question-focused handout where they can write words and sentences about the questions they want to find answers to (I want to know...), what they think they already know about the questions (I already know...), what they think they don't know about the questions (I don't know...) and what they think the answer might be (I think maybe...).
- A handout that helps them refine their questions (My main question

is....Another question I have is....Another question is....etc.).

The idea of this exercise is to continue refining the questions until the most interesting questions (and the questions that best lend themselves to investigation) are uncovered.

Ask participants to work on their question sheets in pairs. Bring them back together to share their questions. Write the questions on cards or on a sheet of paper and post them.

Following this activity, the adult facilitator should examine the questions generated by the participants to determine what type of field trip would be best suited to collecting information about the questions the group would like to explore.

Ideas for field trips (beyond the usual sites such as museums, zoos, aquariums and parks):

- A local restaurant. Make plans ahead of time with the restaurant owner and staff. If possible, ask the restaurant to prepare food for the participants to taste. This trip could help teach children about nutrition, cooking, food from other parts of the world and cultures from other parts of the world.
- A place where you can see something being made or repaired, such as a local bakery, bike repair shop, shoe repair shop, pottery studio or carpenter's workshop.
- A workplace. Interview people at their place of work about their jobs.
- Interview a local small business owner. Is there a bookstore, music store, clothing store, corner grocery, crafts boutique, gym or some other business in your area with a friendly owner?
- A place where people help other people, such as a fire station, a hospital, a community police station or a senior care facility.
- A local radio or television station.
- Places to learn about animals other than zoos: a pet store, kennel, veterinarian's office, nature preserve or farm.
- Places to learn about plants, trees and flowers other than parks and museums: a florist shop, community garden, university or government botanical research center, a neighbor's garden.

PART 6: DAILY NEWSLETTER

What is it?

Instructions for creating a daily newsletter are in Session 1, Part 6.

SESSION FOUR: DATA COLLECTION

GOALS		OUTCOMES	
Build vocabulary Think critically Work cooperatively Practice writing words and sentences Read and interpret bar graphs Construct bar graphs from information collected through surveys		Journal writing and drawing Survey writing Bar graphs Newsletter	
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT			
Software to make graphs A copy of Pet Show, by Ezra Jack Keats Composition books (one for each child and facilitator) Clipboards Loose-leaf paper Regular pens and/or colored gel pens Colored pencils and/or colored markers Copies of newsletter template sheets Bag of 2 cm. colored plastic cubes (can be found through teacher supply sources or educational toy stores); LEGO cubes can be substituted			

Important: Before doing this session, check out websites that have sample lessons for learning about graphs. If the participants have little or no previous experience with graphs, focus just on bar graphs. If the participants are already familiar with different types of graphs, facilitators can incorporate line graphs, pie charts and other types of graphing into the activities.

PART 1: JOURNALS

What is it?

Have the group do a journal exercise that relates to pets.

Sample exercises

- If you could create an imaginary pet, what would it be? Show it in words and pictures.
- In words and pictures, show the important things about your favorite kind of pet. What does it eat? How does it sleep? How does it move?

PART 2: READ-ALOUD

What is it?

The suggested reading material is Pet Show, by Ezra Jack Keats. This book is about a boy who is trying to find a pet to bring to a neighborhood pet show.

Sample questions

- Why do you think Archie let the old woman keep the ribbon she won for the cat, even though the cat belonged to him?
- Why do you think every pet in this pet show won a prize?
- If you had a pet show, what would you give prizes for?

PART 3: SURVEYS

What is it?

Participants will collect information from each other in order to practice making and interpreting bar graphs.

How to

Explain to the group that everyone will be surveying each other (asking questions to get information) in order to learn more about the group. Write sample survey questions on a whiteboard where everyone can see them. Some of the survey questions should relate to the read-aloud. For example, if the read-aloud was Pet Show, then some of the questions could be about the types of pets that people own. Others could relate back to the investigative questions the group created in the previous session. Some survey questions could be about basic interests such as favorite foods or holidays.

Ask the group to think of other questions to include in the survey, and add them to the list of questions. Ask participants to pair up and select a question for their survey. Participants can write their survey questions and answers on loose-leaf-paper and clipboards or in their composition books. Pairs who finish early can do a second survey.

PART 4: MAKE BAR GRAPHS BASED ON THE GROUP SURVEY

What is it?

Participants will learn how to construct bar graphs.

How to

First, show participants how to read a bar graph. Distribute copies of two bar graphs to each participant. Explain what information is being shown in the graphs. If possible, use colored cubes or some other physical item to show how the information in the graphs relates to real physical units. Stack the colored cubes together to mirror the bar graphs. Take the cubes apart and have two participants volunteer to recreate one of the bar graphs in front of the group. Repeat the explanation and demonstration if necessary.

Ask each pair to count up the results of their surveys. If there are enough cubes to go around, have pairs use cubes to create physical bar graphs of their survey results.

Next, demonstrate how to make a bar graph using whatever software is available. Ask one of the pairs to read their survey results aloud. Use this information to create a bar graph with the software. Then ask another pair to volunteer to make a graph. Help the volunteers make a graph based on their survey results in front of the group.

Have all the participants work in pairs to make bar graphs based on their survey results.

If software is not available, graphs can be made on paper, using rulers, pencils and colored pens or markers.

PART 5: DAILY NEWSLETTER

What is it?

Instructions for creating a daily newsletter are in Session 1, Part 6.

SESSION FIVE: PREPARE FOR A FIELD TRIP

GOALS		OUTCOMES	
Build vocabulary		Journal writing and drawing	
Think critically		Visual Map	
Work cooperatively		Newsletter	
Practice writing words and sentences			
Anticipate and prepare to take advantage of learning opportunities at a local field trip site			
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT			
A computer with Internet access			
A copy of the book <i>Fortunately</i> , by Remy Charlip			
Composition books (one for each child and facilitator)			
A newsprint pad or roll of butcher paper			
Index cards			
Clipboards			
Loose-leaf paper			
Regular pens and/or colored gel pens			
Colored pencils and/or colored markers			
Copies of newsletter template sheets			

Note: The adult facilitator should begin this session with plans for a particular field trip already in place.

PART 1: JOURNALS

What is it?

Have the group do a journal exercise that relates to preparing for a trip.

Sample exercises

- Imagine that you are going to leave your neighborhood to live on the North Pole for a week. In words and pictures, show what you would bring for the trip.
- In words and pictures, show what you would do during a trip to the desert.

PART 2: READ-ALOUD

What is it?

The suggested reading material is *Fortunately* by Remy Charlip. This book is the story of a boy who gets an invitation to a surprise party and ends up having an adventure with lots of twists and turns.

Sample questions

- In the story, Ned digs a hole to escape from tigers in a dark cave. What else could have happened?

- What is your favorite part of Ned’s adventure? What would you do if you were in that situation?

Tip

If possible, bring books related to the people, resources and activities that occur at the field trip site to this session for a read-aloud and personal reading. A trip to the library to find books, children’s magazines and other print material related to the field trip site could be an extension activity.

PART 3: IDEA MAPPING

What is it?

Make a visual map to generate ideas about things to see, do and learn during the field trip.

Map ideas

- Central word: Name of field trip site (e.g., City Bike Shop)
 - Question for the first circle: What do you think we will see at the (field trip site)?
 - Question for the second circle: What do we already know about the things we will see?
 - Question for the third circle: What do we want to learn about the things we will see?
 - Question for the fourth circle: How can we find out about the things we want to learn?
-
- Central word: Name of field trip site
 - Question for the first circle: What people will we see at the (field trip site)?
 - Question for the second circle: What questions do we want to ask these people?
 - Question for the third circle: How will we record the answers to our questions?

PART 4: FIELD TRIP ROLES

What is it?

Assign roles for different tasks that need to be performed during the trip. Roles might include the following:

- Interviewer: ask questions and record responses
- Photographer: take photos
- Artist: make drawings of people interviewed and other interesting things
- Sound recorder: record interviews and interesting sounds
- Number recorder: counting or keeping track of important numerical information

Have the group think of other things that it might want get from the field trip experience

and create related roles. Could the adults at the site be surveyed? Could the group track some sort of numbers and make them into a graph? Does the group want to collect samples?

Roles can also be related to safety and logistics, such as leading the line or cleaning up after snacks. Multiple participants can have the same role, and participants can have multiple roles. Everyone should be responsible for taking notes about important and interesting things that happen during the trip.

Before the trip, discuss the goals of the trip and the specific activities that have been scheduled. Also talk about field trip safety and the “rules of the road”: how to be safe when riding in a vehicle or walking in a group and what to do in case of an emergency.

How to

Use index cards to write down the roles and the person who will be filling each role. Make a short list on each card of the things that the person in the role will need to do (e.g., photographer: carry camera and disks/film, take pictures, and share camera with other photographers). Ask the participants if they think new roles should be included. Use your judgment on whether to assign roles or ask for volunteers. Give participants their role cards to keep during the trip.

Tip

If time permits, role-plays are a great way to practice scenarios that might occur during the trip, such as interviewing an adult, asking an adult for help and eating together at a table in a restaurant. Role-plays can also be used to build skills such as lining up, walking with a buddy, holding the door and carrying equipment.

PART 5: WEB REVIEW

What is it?

Have participants look at websites related to the field trip to gather information to be written down, printed or discussed prior to the trip.

How to

Search for and review websites related to the field trip site. If the field trip site does not have its own website, search for sites about similar places, sites about the types of activities that can occur at the field trip site or sites about resources related to the field trip site. If the field trip involves traveling to a location outside the immediate neighborhood, a map site like Google maps, can be used to chart how the group will travel to the field trip site.

Have participants work in pairs to look at the websites. Bring the group back together to share what everyone learned.

PART 6: DAILY NEWSLETTER

What is it?

Instructions for creating a daily newsletter are in Session 1, Part 6.

SESSION SIX: FIELD TRIP

There is no one best way to conduct a field trip, but a good rule of thumb is, “Be prepared and be organized.” Having time estimates mapped out for each activity will help ensure that no activities get left out. Discussing logistics in detail with the hosts at the field trip site before the trip will help ensure that activities run smoothly.

For 6- to 8-year-olds, hands-on activities make a successful field trip. Be sure to bring clipboards and paper or journals so that the students can draw and write during the trip. Take lots of photos. If appropriate to the activities and permissible, bring small containers or plastic bags so the students can bring back samples of things they encounter. Bring a few storybooks to read in case there is downtime while riding on a bus or waiting for an activity to start.

A sample schedule for a field trip is as follows:

- 3:00 P.M. Leave program building to take bus to the Elm Street Bakery
- 3:45 P.M. Arrive at Elm Street Bakery; discuss how to be safe in bakery
- 4:00 P.M. Taste-test muffins, cookies and bread
- 4:15 P.M. Start tour of bakery; take photos, make drawings and take notes
- 4:45 P.M. Start interview with bakers
- 5:15 P.M. Start baker-for-a-day activity: Pour flour and eggs into mixing machine
- 5:45 P.M. Say good-byes; take a bathroom/water break; get bread recipe
- 6:00 P.M. Take bus to program building
- 6:45 P.M. Arrive at program building for parent pick-up; do daily newsletter

Although it may be difficult to find the time to do a newsletter on a field trip day, a newsletter is especially important for helping children reflect on the trip and communicating the excitement of the trip to parents. If necessary, bring copies of the newsletter template sheets to the field trip site.

SESSION SEVEN: START BOOK

GOALS		OUTCOMES	
Build vocabulary Think critically Work cooperatively Produce a fiction or nonfiction story that can be read by others		Book writing Drawings Edited photos Newsletter	
MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT			
Microsoft Word or similar software Software for drawing Software for editing photos Three copies of a book (for panel book) Composition books (one for each child and facilitator) Manila folders, cardboard or construction paper (for panel book) Loose-leaf paper A newsprint pad or roll of butcher paper Glue sticks Scotch tape Regular pens and/or colored gel pens Colored pencils and/or colored markers Copies of newsletter template sheet			

PART 1: FIELD TRIP JOURNALS—REFLECTION AND SHARING

What is it?

Participants review their notes, drawings, photos and writing from the field trip to share with the whole group.

How to

Ask participants to work in pairs to review, edit, and add to the writing and drawing they did during the field trip. If participants used clipboards and paper, they can transfer their notes and drawings to their journals by gluing them in or rewriting them. Digital photos can be printed out and glued into journals. Any printed materials from the trip (e.g., brochures, news articles) can be taped or glued into journals.

Have the group come together to share everyone's writings, drawings, photos and clippings. What new things did the participants learn during the trip? What was surprising? What were the students' favorite activities? What do we want to learn more about?

PART 2: PANEL BOOK READ-ALoud

What is it?

A panel book is a book that has been taken apart page by page and glued to individual pieces of board so that each page can be displayed separately. Looking at the book becomes like looking at a series of paintings on a wall.

The panel book will be used as a model for “storyboarding” a book that the participants will write together, as a group. Seeing a familiar book as individual story pages will help the participants understand storyboarding.

For this activity, the panel book should be a book that the group has previously read together. The book selected should have a story that provides an easily replicable model for student writing. Fortunately, by Remy Charlip, or *The Important Book*, by Margaret Wise Brown, are excellent choices. The goal is to have the participants closely examine a book that can be used as a model for writing their own book.

How to

When selecting a book to make into a panel book, buy three paperback copies: one to keep for reading and two to use to make the panel book. Because book pages are usually printed on both sides, two copies are needed. Use sturdy paper or cardboard as the backing for the pages of the panel book. Manila folders make good backing because they are durable and fold easily for storage and carrying. Masking tape can be used to connect multiple folders together so that they are connected as one long panel. Remove the pages and glue them to the back of the folders, paper or boards.

Use masking tape to affix the panel book to a wall.

First, read the story aloud to the group, pointing to the panel book story pages while reading. Keep a copy of the book in your hand to help read; it might be hard to read some of the writing if standing at a distance. Then have the group read the story aloud with you. Ask participants questions about the story illustrations and layout. How do the pictures help tell the story? Are there any pages that have pictures, but no words? Are there any pages with just a few words? How are the words placed on the pages?

PART 3: START BOOK

What is it?

Participants will make a fiction or nonfiction storybook as a group. The book will include writing from all students and can include artwork and photographs.

How to

Use your judgment to determine whether the group is ready to handle writing an original story. It is recommended that the group first write a book modeled after a book with an easily replicable pattern of writing, such as *Fortunately* or *The Important Book*. If the students are ready to write an original story, try doing so after the patterned writing exercise.

Give the participants a focus for their writing. The focus should build on a previous experience everyone has in common.

Examples

Modeled after the book *Fortunately*:

- Write a story about our field trip

- Write a story about going to school one day
- Write a story about playing in the park one day

Modeled after The Important Book:

- Write about the important things we saw on the field trip
- Write about the important things about places in our neighborhood
- Write about the important things about people in our neighborhood

Pattern-writing exercise

Make a large template sheet with a writing pattern for everyone to follow. Place it where everyone can see it. If the book being modeled is *Fortunately*, then the pattern would be as follows:

Fortunately one day _____
 But unfortunately _____
 Fortunately _____
 Unfortunately _____
 Fortunately _____
 Unfortunately _____
 Fortunately _____
 Unfortunately _____
 Fortunately _____
 (continue)
 And fortunately _____
 Because fortunately _____

If the book being modeled is *The Important Book*, then the following pattern would apply:

The important thing about _____ is that _____
 It is like _____
 You can _____ it
 You can _____ it
 It is not _____
 It is _____
 And it _____
 But the important thing about _____ is that _____ (repeat first sentence)

A book can be assembled simply by connecting all the pattern writing into a single book. Each participant would contribute one page, or several pages, to the book. Writing patterned after *The Important Book*, for example, is well suited to this. Have two or three participants work together to decide the final order and layout of the book.

If the objective is to produce a book that has a single cohesive story (e.g., a single story modeled after the book *Fortunately*), then the group should be brought back together to plan the story by storyboarding.

Storyboarding

Storyboarding is a technique used to plan creative projects that involve narrative and visual elements, such as films, commercials and cartoons. A book with pictures can be storyboarded.

Lay out sheets of newsprint or butcher paper. Gather the group together to brainstorm what will happen on each page. Put very rough sketches on the pages, enough to give an idea of what the final picture will be. Write a few words on each page (such as “boy goes to bakery”) to outline what the writing will be. Have participants volunteer to work in pairs on a page or group of pages. After the pages are made, have two or three participants work together to finalize the order and layout of the pages.

Add drawings, photos and background colors to the pages. Design a front cover for the book. Have the participants think of other content that might add value to the book. Are there items collected from the field trip or made during other activities that could be included? Are there any relevant news articles? Could charts, graphs or tables be added?

If time is scarce, a book can be made by hand on paper. Be sure to photocopy the pages before binding so that multiple books can be made.

If there is adequate time, have the participants transfer their writing into a word processor. Drawings can be scanned into a computer or created directly on a computer using software. Images and digital drawings then can be inserted into the pages to build out the pages of the book. Print multiple copies to make multiple books.

SESSION EIGHT: COMPLETE BOOK

Continue working on the book this session and during future sessions, if necessary.

Extension activities

Group Multimedia Presentation

Use the content of the book to make a multimedia presentation or digital slideshow. Begin by storyboarding each slide of the presentation. Have participants work in pairs to complete the slides. Record narration and other sounds on the slides. If a program with animation functions is used, think of ways to incorporate short animations into the presentation. Have two or three participants work together to finalize the order and layout of the presentation.

Group Website

Make the content of the book into a simple website. Have two participants work together to define the design elements of the site: the color and layout of the pages, and the font, color and size of the text. (They can sketch this on paper.) Then have two participants use software to make a diagram of how the pages will be linked.

Have participants work in pairs to transfer the content of their book pages into webpages. Show the participants how to do a few simple functions, such as inserting and changing text, inserting images, and changing the background color of the page. (Adult facilitators can work independently at a later time to hyperlink the pages and handle more complicated tasks.) Ask volunteers to make any new pages that may be needed, such as a front page, or other elements that may be needed, such as a special graphic to link the pages.