Exploring the Wonder of Nature!
Introduction

- Presenters
- Pre-Training
- Knowledge Measure
- Back Home Plan
Learning Objectives

- Describe how exploring nature with infants and toddlers can enhance learning and development
- Identify strategies for infusing nature and science into daily routines, activities, and play
- Create and facilitate nature exploration opportunities for infants and toddlers
Nature is.....

All living and non-living things that were not created by man
Benefits for Children

Infants and toddlers benefit from spending time outdoors in nature.
Introducing Children to Nature

- Daily experience in a natural outdoor setting is not always an option
- Indoor nature-rich environments can help children connect to and learn from nature
The Value of Nature

- Improves awareness, reasoning, and observational skills
- Facilitates the development of new language and literacy skills
- Inspires wonder and discovery
- Enhances learning of math and science concepts
Virginia’s Milestones of Child Development

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionalsresources.cgi
Scientific Knowledge
18 months to 36 months

Indicators of Learning:
- Observe and describe characteristics of living things, the weather, and the outdoor environment
- Use senses to observe and explore materials and natural phenomena

Examples:
- Identify or attempt to name earth’s materials (e.g., water, rocks, dirt, leaves).
- Look at flowers and point out details (e.g., the petals and stem).
Indicators of Learning:
• Begin to explore physical properties of objects and identify their use
• Recognize objects as the same and different

Examples:
• Explore common substances such as twigs, dirt, water
• Collect items that have common characteristics (e.g., shells, rocks, leaves)
Facilitating Learning and Development

- Provide intentional opportunities for exploration and learning
- Connect aspects of activities to children’s lives, experiences, learning
Facilitating Learning and Development

- Facilitate thinking skills through problem-solving, questioning, and predicting
- Encourage active involvement in activities and routines
Nature Rich Classrooms

- **Living things:** bugs, butterflies, fish, birds, plants, animals, pets
- **Books:** home-made photo books, realistic nature content and pictures
- **Toys:** puzzles with nature content; plastic fruits and vegetables; hand puppets; sensory tables with dirt, grass, water
- **Materials:** magnifying lenses; clear containers of grass or mulch; bird nests; large, smooth rocks; flowers; pine cones
Nature Activities – Considerations

- Safety issues
- Age and development appropriateness
- Children’s comfort level
Creating Nature Activities

Purpose:
Materials:
Activity/Experience:
Questions to ask:
Vocabulary words:
Creating Nature Activities

• Divide into five groups
  • Growing Things
  • Seasons
  • Rocks and Shells
  • On the Farm
  • Birds, Nests, Eggs

• Introduce yourself to one another
• Choose a recorder and reporter
• Work in your small group for 15 minutes
Summary
Resources

- www.natureexplore.org
- http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionalsresources.cgi
- www.nwf.org
- http://www.pbs.org/parents/exploringscience/backyard_or_park.html
- www.childrenandnature.org/news/center
Conclusion

- Back Home Plan
- Post-Training Knowledge Measure
- Evaluation
THANK YOU!

For more information, contact us at:
www.va-itsnetwork.org