

KINDERGARTEN
TWIN RIDGES HOME STUDY

NINTH LEARNING PERIOD
PART A
By Marguerite Vulfs

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LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

This learning period is full of adventure as Spring Break arrives during it and runs into May as the last day of the learning period is May 3rd. I will divide it up into Part A which is the week before Spring Break and Part B for the weeks after the break.

Part A will continue with early Spring and the unfolding of the season. Part B will be much more dynamic with planting and outside activities. The week of Spring Break can also be used for some activities, ones which you may already do as a family. As always, take pictures for your work samples. The week of Spring Break also looks good for lots of hikes especially locally. Another fun event is the Ananda Tulip Garden in North San Juan. Plan ahead as the Spring Break week can not only be peak blossom time but also bring lots of people. The first tulips are starting to bloom now and the Garden opens April 1st this year. I am planning to go sometime after the 8th.

A fun event to celebrate with the Kindergarten age child is May Day. A little planning ahead can help make this moment especially fun. One event that I hope you all can attend is the 40th year celebration of Twin Ridges Home Study. It will be on May 1st and I plan to attend. Look for the school to send out more information about this.

This is a learning period in which lots of work can be accomplished and every day can really be full of fun learning. Spring is in the air in spite of the cold and chilly moments. Soon our days will be full of sunshine.

Sincerely,
Marguerite

CIRCLE

As I write this, the rain is falling and the wild plum blossoms have made their appearance in spite of the weather. In Circle, we feel like optimists, "waking up" the flowers on a daily basis whether the sun shines or not. The children are really starting to notice what is blooming! Continue to use the "waking up" song with each flower that reveals itself.

Circle right now still reflects the season. I enjoy introducing the song "Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley" this time of year. It can be "in the round" meaning you move in a circle with it and stop to perform the different movements. The timing of this can be in conjunction with planting your peas in the garden with sweet peas or green peas. Peas are often more hardy sowing them directly into the ground so the idea of "sowing" a seed works here.

Later in the month we will begin a song for May Day.

"Here's a branch of snowy May, a branch the fairies gave me,
Who will come and dance today with a branch the fairies gave me?
Dance away, dance away, holding high a branch of May,
Dance away, dance away, holding high a branch of May."

As with so many songs, I have learned this by heart and so you will have to phone me to learn the melody. I will be teaching it in enrichment when we get back from the Spring Break. I wanted you to have the words as they also go along with prepping for a May Pole Dance.

GARDENING

Last Autumn we planted spring bulbs at school and the last few weeks we have enjoyed exploring the small crocus flowers and small daffodils. In Circle we have "woken" up different flowers that have begun to bloom in the different elevations. There are reports of roses in Oregon House!

We did not plant a Winter garden this year at the school, rather allowing the soil to rest. But we have started soil prep and you can too. In keeping with trying to use things around us, we have dug compost from the pile and buried it into the garden to further decompose. It is a bit of an experiment and the Kindergarten group on Monday helped with it.

Children love to grow things and planning ahead can make it really fun. I have found what is successful are peas, pumpkins and sunflowers. Carrots, radishes and lettuce as well as some squash can even things out. You can plant all of these in containers if space is limited although the pumpkins and squash may not perform their best.

We will begin peas, pumpkins and sunflowers in the green house soon for the children to take home. The peas will need something to climb on and creating a trellis together can incorporate some mathematics as well. You can also grow sweet peas and they are lovely.

If you already have a beautiful garden, make sure that you set aside a place for your child to plant what they wish as well. It is good for them to see the cycle of planting and the results. Also the daily care of the garden actually helps to create a sense of self care of themselves which is an important early skill to learn.

You can plant starts inside and use egg cartons to begin with. This method also allows composting of the items used to grow in! Sierra Harvest has a program in which they will help you build a garden site on your property and mentor you for two years. Their phone number is (530) 265-2343. We are so fortunate to have this resource available to us.

It is fun to incorporate stories as well during this time, and the public library and school library both have books about growing things. One of my personal favorites is "Miss Rumphius" by Barbara Clooney. Some of you may have even had it read to you as it was created in 1982.

SCIENCE

This moment provides many of opportunities for Science. Already you are in the garden and that can easily provide hours of learning. Another part of the garden which can also be a Science project are worms.

Worms are the perfect creature for the children to study. They can easily hold them for examination. You can also make a worm bin and watch them compost EVERYTHING. There are many DIY YouTube videos available for this. Also you can just examine worms right now as they are everywhere. Worms are the classic child discovery but care needs to be given in the handling of them. Earthworms do not regenerate if you cut them in two so teaching this is important. The head end of the worm can continue to live however. As well, worms and small rattlesnakes can seem to the child to be similar so be sure to teach the care needed when exploring. My third grader thought he found a small pile of large worms once with a friend but soon realized he had discovered rattlesnakes. "Soft Child - How Rattlesnake Got it's Fangs" by Kay Sather is an important book for this time.

MATHEMATICS

With all of the projects suggested, measuring using a tape measure is the primary focus right now for this part of the learning period. Make sure that you take pictures of your child actually measuring for work samples. You can also keep track of what you measure - the garden beds, the trellis, your child's height, your height, etc. This can be another work sample.

If counting is getting tedious, try building again with blocks and whatever is available. A rainy day can be an inside building day. A sunny day can be an outside building day. In addition, you can ask your child to count for you as you plant the garden especially with pea seeds as they are large and easily countable.

Another fun project can be to make an outside loom that your child can weave things into. Try to find a spot that will be protected from the elements. As you string the loom, your child can help you count. Weaving sticks, yarn, feathers, etc. opens a multitude of disciplines. You can Google "Garden Loom" or "Outside Loom" for ideas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This is a nice moment to "test" your child in a fun way with what they are able to accomplish physically.

Create a "Test Sheet" of various tasks and during the course of this learning period moment "test" your child. Some of the tasks that can be included are running, skipping & hopping on both feet & each foot, pushing something heavy, climbing, balancing, skipping rope and catching & throwing a ball. Perform this also after the Spring Break. You can make it fun by creating some sort of "Award" for their accomplishments. The more imagination used here the better with this.

Movement at this age is, of course, just about nonstop. Hiking and biking are great ways to be together. The Cascade Trail has recently been opened again for more easy access closer to town. Early habits of hiking help to create lifelong movement enthusiasts!

STORY

During Learning Period #8B, I introduced two stories and mentioned that whichever one you did not choose, you could choose the other for Learning Period #9A. In addition, the classic "The Velveteen Rabbit" by Margery Williams is a perfect story. Also, another classic "The Run Away Bunny" by Margaret Wise Brown will appeal to most of the children. You can carry these stories into the Spring Break time as well.

The story for Learning Period #9B will be "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" by the Brothers Grimm. We will end the year in Learning Period #10 with "The Frog Prince" by the Brothers Grimm. Both stories lend themselves to the "telling" of them, and I hope that, by giving an advance of what the stories are, you might also have a chance to memorize one of them.

Created by Marguerite Vulfs April 2019