

Record # 122 Date Submitted: 2011-03-28 16:30:24 My principal has reviewed: yes
Project Name: Let's Explore Nature Project Type: InterDisciplinary Explain Category:
This is a Mini Grant Resident Name: Email: Telephone:
Grades: PreKindergarten
Number of Students 48
Yes, I will undertake project with partial funding.
<p>DESCRIPTION: Science for young children is about investigating and exploring actual objects and places and sharing ideas with others. The lessons at the 4-H Education Center at Auer Farm are focused on discovery, providing rich exploration with structured activities. Each lesson is based on the inquiry learning method, encouraging critical thinking and curiosity, while providing concrete hands-on discovery experiences essential to motivate and inspire scientific literacy. We want to bring our classroom experiences outside of the four walls. The three Pre-Kindergarten classes, from three different schools in West Hartford, each with 16 children, will travel separately to the 4-H Education Center at Auer Farm in Bloomfield, CT. They will each participate in two programs. The programs we are interested in are; Apples and Apple Trees and Maple Syrup. We specifically chose two programs that take place during different seasons of the year, Apples and Apple Trees in the Fall and Maple Syrup in the Winter. This will give the children the opportunity to explore the curiosities of the world around them and notice the environmental similarities and differences. It will peak their interest as they observe first-hand the changes that occur in nature through their own two eyes. They will be able to compare and contrast the environment as we travel numerous acres of the farm and see natural habitats. We will see wild turkeys as well as other animals in their own surroundings. All of this will allow the children to have an "ah-ha" moment as they themselves make connections to what they are observing. Research has been done on the importance of children getting back into nature. If we want our children to have strong early connections to our environment and to be connected to earth, we need to get them out into "Nature's Classroom." From these experiences, they can grow and have fond memories of the outdoors, hopefully wanting to take care of the earth, the environment and all living things. Our job is to teach them to respect and appreciate nature. Learning directly in "Nature's Classroom" allows the students to utilize all of their five senses. Seeing nature first-hand, observing animals at the farm, and understanding what trees have to offer are just a few important lessons the children will gain from these programs. Our hope as teachers, through these trips, is to build background knowledge, expose all of our children to many hands-on learning experiences and see the wonderful world around us. Many of our classroom children, if not for this experience and opportunity, might not ever experience going outdoors to see nature, breathe clean air, see animal homes, or learn about the bi-products we all take for granted. In our classrooms, we have children who are English Language Learners. As teachers we will pre-teach vocabulary and language to build their knowledge base. These programs will enrich their vocabulary, giving them first-hand knowledge, and allowing them to make direct connections to things they have learned. During the Apples and Apple Trees program, the children will experience Fall; harvest time on the farm. The Pre-Kindergarten students will investigate and participate throughout this program by identifying and picking apples. They will learn about pollination, seasonal changes of the apple tree as well as the growth cycle of an apple from flower to fruit. They will travel through the farms 20-acre apple orchard by hayride and observe their surroundings. The children will make their own apple cider by operating a simple hand-cranked press and then learn about pasteurization. Lastly they will sample a cup of pasteurized cider. During the Maple Syrup program, the children will follow the maple sugaring process from sap to syrup. Maple sap needs the Winter cold. On the tour of the "sugar bush" (a stand of maple trees), students will learn how to identify and tap maple trees. They will observe changes in liquid when the frozen sap melts and they collect it in buckets. In the maple sugar house, they will observe the sap boiling and see how the liquid turns to steam. The working evaporator demonstrates to the children how 40 gallons of sap are condensed into one gallon of syrup. The children will sample maple syrup on pancakes at the end of the trip. Both programs also allow the children to spend time in the barn, observing and interacting with real animals including cows, sheep, goats, rabbits and chickens.</p>
<p>GOALS: Students will be introduced to nature and its surroundings by attending lessons that will help reinforce the skills taken from the Connecticut Department of Education Performance Standards for preschoolers. They will investigate and explore apples and apple trees as well as maple syrup making. They will share ideas with others, invite questioning and have fun at the same time! Below are the standards the children will work on through these experiences. Apples and Apple Tree program: CT Department of Education Performance Standard: Cognitive Development: COG 1: Student will engage in scientific inquiry. COG 5: Student will compare and order events. Personal and Social Development: P/S 2: Sustains attention. P/S 7: Cooperates with peers. Maple Syrup program: CT Department of Education Performance Standard: Cognitive Development: COG 1: Student will engage in scientific inquiry. COG 2: Student will use a variety of strategies to solve problems. Personal and Social Development: P/S 2: Sustains attention. P/S 7: Cooperates with peers. The Pre-Kindergarten classes also must adhere to the National Accreditation for Early Young Children's (NAEYC) high standards in order to receive and maintain accreditation. Below please find some of the standards that would be fulfilled through the experiences of these programs. 2.D.04 Children have varied opportunities to develop vocabulary through: a. conversations b. experiences c. field trips d. books 2.D.06 Children have varied opportunities and materials that encourage them to have discussions to solve problems that are both: a. interpersonal b. related to the physical world 2.G.02 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to learn key content and principles of science such as: a. the difference between living and nonliving things (e.g., plants versus rocks) and life cycles of various organisms (e.g., plants, butterflies, humans) b. earth and sky (e.g., seasons; weather; geologic features; light and shadow; sun, moon, and stars) c. structure and property of matter (e.g., characteristics that include concepts like hard and soft, floating and sinking) and behavior of materials (e.g., transformation of liquids and solids by dissolving or melting) 2.G.03 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage them to use the five senses to observe, explore, and experiment with scientific phenomena 2.G.05 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to collect data and to represent and document their findings (e.g. through drawing or graphing) 2.G.06 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage them to think, question, and reason about observed and inferred phenomena 2.G.07 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage them to discuss scientific concepts in everyday conversation 2.G.08 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that help them learn and use scientific terminology and vocabulary associated with the content areas 2.L.05 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to learn about the community in which they live 2.L.07 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to learn about physical characteristics of their local environment as a foundation for learning geography 2.L.08 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to learn how people affect their environment in: a. positive (e.g., recycling) b. negative (e.g., polluting) ways 2.L.09 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that allow them to contribute to the well-being of: a. their classroom b. the community, including care for the social and physical environments in which they live</p>
<p>TIME LINE: August 2011 ---- Contact other two schools and give contact information so that they can set up their classrooms trips. September 2011 -- Contact the 4-H Farm to set up trips, one for late September/early October the other for early March. ** Before each trip... organize permission slips, secure bus transportation, and fill out other necessary paperwork. Notify school of trip as well. Pre-teach children about trip topic to start building their foundation for further learning. ** Days before each trip... confirm with the 4-H Education Center and bus company as well as parent chaperones. ** Day of trip... secure first aid bag from nurse, bring emergency contact information, as well as cell phone. Bring camera for documentation. **After each trip... send proper documentation and thank-you's to the grant donor(s).</p>
<p>EVALUATION: Each Pre-Kindgartener is formally assessed on thirty Performance Standards several times a year. Informal assessments to gather data are on-going throughout the year. We will measure success of the programs by taking authentic assessments from each child participating in the trips. Before each trip, the teachers will pre-assess their classes' knowledge of the topic to be explored. During the trips, the children will document observations of their experiences using clip boards. After each trip, we will have discussions and use open-ended questioning to assess the children's understanding of their documentation. The children will extend their learning back in our classrooms after each field trip. We will have follow-up activities so that the children can continue to make connections to what they have learned. Some ideas include using the math and science performance standards and include skills such as sequencing and ordering, weighing and measuring, counting, comparing and contrasting, and patterns of life and life-cycles.</p>
Amount Requested: \$1897.74 Other Requested:

BUDGET	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
Materials			
Equipment			
Supplies			
Honoraria			
Travel	\$ 997.74	bus costs \$55.43 per hour. Each trip will need 3 hours. There are a total of 6 trips (2 per class).	
Shipping			
Mounting			
Installation			
Other 1	\$ 420.00	total for 3 classes to participate in Apples and Apple Tree program at \$140.00 each.	
Other 2	\$ 480.00	total for 3 classes to participate in Maple Syrup program at \$160.00 each.	
Total	\$1897.74		

Reason I didn't submit report:

I am applying for One grant
 Yes, I will submit an evaluation.
 Yes, you have my permission to use my application.

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