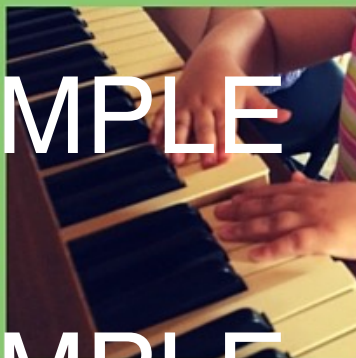


BLOSSOM & ROOT

EARLY YEARS



A Complete, Year-Long, Early Learning Program

BLOSSOM & ROOT



Copyright © 2016 Kristina Garner Blossom and Root
All rights reserved Kristina Garner
To report errors, contact kristina@blossomandroot.com
Design by Kristina Garner
Editing by Jason Garner
ISBN # Pending

Week 1

THIS WEEK IN...

SAMPLE



NATURE STUDY

A Walk for the Five Senses

Take a walk together near where you live. During the walk, talk to your child about things you are noticing using your five senses, and ask them questions about what they are noticing with theirs. Use seasonal words to punctuate your observations. (Example: I feel a cool autumn breeze on my skin! I hear the birds singing summer songs with my ears. What do you see in the winter sky?)

When you return home, ask your child if they would like to make a picture of anything they saw on their walk. Let them color whatever they would like. If they want to share with you what they drew, you can dictate their words for them on the front or back of the picture. You may wish to save all of your child's nature notes in a folder.



COMPOSER STUDY

Introducing Mozart

Decide when you will do composer study during your week. Tell your child you will be listening to music written by a man named Mozart for a few weeks. Use YouTube, iTunes, or a cd to play Mozart pieces. During composer study, simply play musical selections by the listed composer. Some people do this during free play, morning circle time, or during rest time. Decide what will work best for you and your family, and listen for at least ten minutes, at least twice a week.



MATH & SCIENCE WITH THE 3 E'S

ENVIRONMENT / EXPERIENCES

Play "Feed The Monster"

Draw a silly monster face on a stiff piece of card stock and cut out an opening for the mouth. Place this on top of a bowl. Give your child a bowl with cheerios, beans, or another small item and tell them it's time to feed the monster. Ask them to place the items one-by-one into the monster's mouth. You can count the items together as your child drops them in.

ENGAGEMENT

Get Into the Habit of Wondering Out Loud

For this first year, the scientific emphasis will be on observation and curiosity during your day together. Nature walks, kitchen classroom, open play, and outings all provide rich opportunities to observe, wonder, and ask.

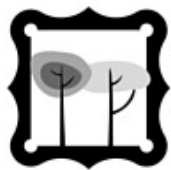
Get into the habit of wondering out loud from time to time. "I wonder where that bird is going?" "I wonder which pine cone is bigger?" Also pick up on your child's cues. For example, they may hear something while you are on a walk and pause. You could say "Did you hear that bird singing?" Or during block play, if they are stacking blocks into a tower, you could simply comment on the tallness of the tower they are building.

DON'T FORGET: DAILY OUTSIDE PLAY

Open time to explore & play
at their own pace, following
their own agenda, &
prompted by their own
curiosity.

Week 1

THIS WEEK IN... SAMPLE



PICTURE STUDY

Introducing Van Gogh & Study of *The Yellow House*

- * When doing picture study, don't give away the name of the painting at first.
- * Tell your child that you are going to share a painting with them every week. For the next several weeks, they will all be paintings by a man named Van Gogh.
- * Show the child the painting often during the week. You can even display a print of it if you like. Remind them who painted it.
- * Ask your child what colors they notice in this painting.
- * Ask your child what they think the people are doing.



KINDNESS & CONNECTIVITY

Celebrate the beginning of the homeschool year with this finger play:

This is our home, so stable and stout
make a "roof" with your hands over your head
We fill it with love, both inside and out
Fold hands into your heart, then "pour" them outward
My home is my school and will help me to learn
Tilt head and point to it as if thinking
To take care of our world when it is my turn.
Open arms outward, then hug them into yourself.



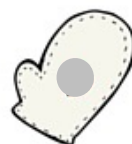
THE ARTS

Visual Arts: Free Painting with Yellows and Blues

Provide your child with paper, brush, etc. and yellow and blue paint. No prompts or parameters, just let them paint. If the weather is nice, painting outside is highly recommended! Let them paint as long or as short as they would like. If they would like to tell you about their art, dictate their words for them on the front or the back of the piece.

Dramatic Play: Set Up the Dramatic Play Area

Set up a small dramatic play corner / box / area in your main "school" zone that will be accessible at most times. Provide scarves, hats, dress up clothes, glasses with lenses removed, etc. Start by simply providing dress up items for now. It will grow over time.



THE KITCHEN CLASSROOM

Choose a recipe or cooking project to complete together. Allow your child to do developmentally-appropriate tasks to help: stirring, measuring, pouring, cutting soft items with a child-safe knife, helping with set-up and clean-up, helping to "read" the recipes, etc. See the guide on Kitchen Classroom for more information.

Week 1

THIS WEEK IN...

SAMPLE



READ-TOGETHER TIME

Little Blue Truck

Written by Alice Schertle

Illustrated by Jill McElmurry

This delightful book was always a favorite of my children. With engaging rhythm and rhyme, memorable characters, and just enough conflict, your child is sure to love it too! Even if you've already read it before, spend some time this week snuggling together over this first selection.



ENVIRONMENT / EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Little Blue Truck Sensory Tub

Fill a large plastic storage tub with about 1" of sand or dirt. Pour a little water in one spot to make a "muddy puddle" somewhere in the tub. Provide toy cars / trucks, animal toys, etc. if your child has them.

Place the tub somewhere where you don't mind a mess - outside or on top of a tarp in the kitchen. Let the child explore the opportunity to play in sand / dirt and water and see how they interact. You can even provide a little pitcher of water for them to pour in as they like. It's important to remember that you are simply providing an environment / experience for them to approach as they wish. There is no agenda, no determined length of required engagement, and no need for you to direct their play.



DON'T FORGET: PROVIDE A

LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT

- * Cozy reading nook readily available
- * Regular visits to the library
- * Print-rich environment
- * Writing center readily available
- * Be sure that you also read for learning and pleasure and make sure they catch you doing it!



ENGAGEMENT PROMPTS

As you read the book throughout the week, here are some questions you could ask your child:

- * Which truck do you think has good manners - the little blue truck or the dump truck?
- * What happens to the dump truck when it's rushing too fast?
- * What does the little blue truck do when the dump gets stuck?
- * Which animal in the book is your favorite one?

Week 1

OUR PLAN FOR THE WEEK

SAMPLE

DAILY FREE
PLAY &
OUTSIDE
TIME!

- Nature Study
- Composer Study & Picture Study
- The Arts
- Kindness & Connectivity
- The Kitchen Classroom
- Read-Together Time / Engagement / Activities
- Math / Science Engagement / Activities
- Interest - Led Projects
- Library Day / Extracurricular Activities
- Special Holidays / Celebrations / Events

THURSDAY

MONDAY

FRIDAY

TUESDAY

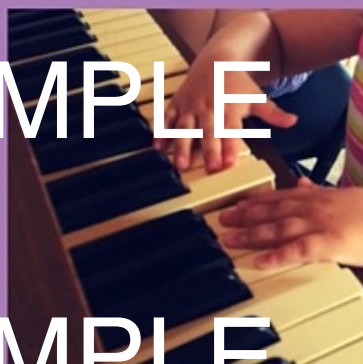
SATURDAY

WEDNESDAY

SUNDAY

BLOSSOM & ROOT

EARLY YEARS



A Complete, Year-Long, Early Learning Program

BLOSSOM & ROOT



Copyright © 2016 Kristina Garner Blossom and Root
All rights reserved Kristina Garner
To report errors, contact kristina@blossomandroot.com
Design by Kristina Garner
Editing by Jason Garner
ISBN # Pending

SAMPLE

BLOSSOM & ROOT EARLY YEARS VOL. 2

A SAMPLE WEEK WITH BLOSSOM & ROOT EARLY YEARS VOL. 2

(Based on Week One Curriculum)

Monday

- Introduce composer study (Beethoven) during breakfast time.
- Also, at breakfast, show child Renoir's *The Swing*. (picture study session 1)
- Complete Reading / Writing Readiness Lesson 1 for letter A.
- Complete Exploring Artistic Expression: Cotton Swab "Dab" Painting and Mixing Primary Colors.
- Complete math lesson 1.

Thursday

- Read *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* again at breakfast.
- Choose an activity to do for *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* from the guide in the back.
- Complete Reading / Writing Readiness Lesson 4.
- Work on Interest-Based Investigations.

Tuesday

- Play Beethoven again during breakfast time. (composer study)
- At breakfast, do session 2 (gentle narration) activity of Renoir's *The Swing*. (picture study)
- Complete Reading / Writing Readiness Lesson 2 for letter A.
- Complete Nature Study & Notebook: explore our yard and make a map of the area around our home.
- Complete math lesson 2.

Friday

- Play Beethoven again during breakfast time. (composer study)
- At breakfast, do session 3 activity (discussion) of Renoir's *The Swing*. (picture study)
- Complete Reading / Writing Readiness Lesson 5 AND Kitchen Classroom.
- Read the two Mother Goose rhymes during morning snack.
- Work on Interest-Based Investigations.

Wednesday

- Read *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* at breakfast time.
- Complete Reading / Writing Readiness Lesson 3 for letter A.
- Complete S.T.E.M. Activity: Sink or Float. Also complete the "How Tall Am I?" activity.
- Complete math lesson 3.

Total Time Spent on Lessons:

Monday: About an hour

Tuesday: About an hour

Wednesday: About fifty minutes

Thursday: Forty minutes on lessons, an hour at the library

Friday: About an hour

* The rest of the week will be spent on free play, outside play, looking at books, going to play-group or extracurricular activities, and helping run errands.

Week 1

THIS WEEK IN...

SAMPLE



COMPOSER STUDY

Introducing Beethoven

We kick off our first composer study of the year with Beethoven. Decide on a time during your week to dedicate to composer study, and play selections from that term's composer during it (using YouTube, a cd, etc). Some people like to do this during art or free play, but anytime will work. Remind your child of the name of the composer each time you begin, then simply listen together as you work and play.



PICTURE STUDY

Renoir - Study of *The Swing*

- * We begin our first picture study unit with Pierre Auguste Renoir. If possible, read *Renoir and the Boy with the Long Hair* by Wendy Wax and illustrated by Nancy Lane. Then begin the first study.
- * Session 1 - Remind the child of the artist's name, but don't tell them the title of the piece yet. Show them the painting and let them look at it for as long as they like.
- * Session 2 - Let your child look at the painting again. When they are done, turn the painting over and ask them to tell you everything they can remember about it. What colors / shapes were there? What was happening in the picture? Were there people? Animals? etc.
- * Session 3 - Now you can tell your child the title. Talk about the painting a little. Do they like it? Does it remind them of books they've read or places they've been? What feelings do they have looking at it?



KITCHEN CLASSROOM

Choose a recipe or cooking project to complete together. Allow your child to do developmentally-appropriate tasks to help: stirring, measuring, pouring, cutting soft items with a child-safe knife, helping with set-up and clean-up, helping to "read" the recipes, etc. See the guide on Kitchen Classroom for more information.

You may choose to combine Kitchen Classroom with "letter-sounds" lessons from Reading / Writing Readiness, Read-Together Time activities, or even Early Math Foundations activities.



EXPLORING ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Cotton Swab "Dab" Painting and Mixing Primary Colors

Materials:

- 6 cotton swabs / Q-tips
- Paint - red, blue, yellow
- large art paper
- scrap paper

Prep the Scene:

Put a squirt of each of the colors onto a plate / lid / etc. and provide 2 cotton swabs for each color. Lay out the paper / tape down if you would like.

- * remember to protect surfaces with a tarp, plastic tablecloth, etc.

Inspire, then Step Back:

Look up close at this week's picture study. Point out to your child that the picture isn't made up of lines at all, but smears of paint. On a scrap piece of paper, show them how you can create a simple image (like a flower, for example) by dabbing paint onto the paper with the cotton swabs (rather than drawing lines with them.)

Take a quick moment to talk about the colors your child will be using today. Red, yellow, and blue are PRIMARY colors, used to create all the other colors we know. On the scrap paper, show your child how dabbing blue paint into yellow paint creates green paint. Dabbing red into yellow makes orange. And dabbing blue into red makes purple.

Tell your child they can make whatever they want today and turn some music on for them to listen to as they work. Don't worry if they quickly abandon the "dab" technique for the more-familiar line-making. Your job during any "Exploring Artistic Expression" lesson this year is simply to provide inspiration, then to step aside and let your child do with it what they wish.

Week 1

THIS WEEK IN...

SAMPLE



READING / WRITING READINESS

This Week: Letter Aa

Lessons should only last 10 to 15 minutes on most days. Lessons 1 and 2 can be doubled up one day to accommodate a 4-day a week schedule. ***IMPORTANT: Read the guide before beginning!***

Lesson 1: Introduce Capital A

- Sing the alphabet song together, pointing to each letter on your letter chart as you sing.
- Tell your child you are learning about the letter A this week. Let your child find capital letter A on the chart, with your help if needed.
- Spread out uppercase letter magnets on the fridge / manipulatives on the floor and ask your child to find the capital A.
- Do a **FORMING** activity for capital A (see Reading / Writing Readiness Guide for list of activities)

Lesson 2: Finding and Tracing Capital A

- Read the letter A page(s) in your copy of *Dr. Seuss's ABC* out loud to your child.
- Ask your child to find the capital letter A on the alphabet chart again.
- Do a **FINDING** activity for capital A (see guide) AND / OR a **TRACING** activity for capital A (see guide)

Lesson 3: Introducing lowercase a (a)

- Introduce lowercase a to your child. Find it on your alphabet chart together. Tell them that sometimes, we see it written like: a, usually in print, and sometimes we see it written a, usually when we write it by hand.
- Spread out lowercase letter magnets on fridge / manipulatives on the floor and ask your child to find the lowercase a.
- Do a **MATCH-UP** activity (see guide)
- Do a **FORMING** activity for lowercase a (see guide)

Lesson 4: Finding and Tracing lowercase a (a)

- Ask your child to find the lowercase letter a on the alphabet chart again.
- Do a **FINDING** activity for lowercase a (see guide) AND / OR a **TRACING** activity for lowercase a (see guide)

Lesson 5: Letter Aa Sound

- Reread the Aa page(s) from Dr. Seuss's ABC
- Do a **LETTER SOUNDS** activity (see guide) - teach only the short-vowel sound (as in **apple**) for now.
- Option to practice printing capital and lowercase Aa on whiteboard / chalkboard THEN practice writing on paper. (see guide for suggestions regarding letter printing in early years.)



READ-TOGETHER TIME

During the course of the year, we will be working on developing the habits that will lead to successful narration later on. However, the main goal of Read-Together Time is to enjoy quality literature together. Lesson 3 (poetry) can be combined with a weekly "poetry teatime," if this is something your family enjoys. (*We highly recommend it!*) Simply include the provided selection with the other poetry you read and explore during your teatime. ***Before beginning, be sure to read the notes on Read-Together Time in the guide.***

Lesson 1: Read Together

- Read *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter out loud to your child.
- Take a few minutes to talk about the story after you have read. (see guide for discussion tips)

Lesson 2: Read Together & Activity

- Reread *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter out loud to your child.
- Complete one of the activities suggested in the guide, in the section on Read-Together Time.

Lesson 3: Poetry

- Read "Little Bo Peep" and "Little Boy Blue" from your Mother Goose book.

Week 1

THIS WEEK IN...

SAMPLE



EARLY MATH FOUNDATIONS

Lessons should only last 10 to 15 minutes on most days.

IMPORTANT: Read the guide before beginning!

Lesson 1: Counting Out Quantities to Given Numerals

Choose any of the activities from **List 1** in the Early Math Foundations Guide. Select numerals / quantities appropriate to the level of your child's comprehension (example: 1 - 5, 1 - 10, 1 - 15, 1 - 20, etc.)

Lesson 2: Assigning Numerals to Quantities

Choose any of the activities from **List 2** in the Early Math Foundations Guide. Select numerals / quantities appropriate to the level of your child's comprehension (example: 1 - 5, 1 - 10, 1 - 15, 1 - 20, etc.)

Lesson 3: Sing a Counting Song

Choose any song from **List 3** in the Early Math Foundations Guide to sing together for today's lesson.



S.T.E.M. ACTIVITY

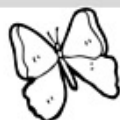
"Sink or Float" With Household Items

Gather up several household items together - blocks, coins, toys, etc. Fill a large basin (or the tub) with water and line up the items outside of it. Ask your child what they predict will happen with each item. (For example: "Do you think the coin will sink or float?") Drop the item in to see if their predictions were correct. Let the child drop each item in after they make their predictions.

** Take it one step further by making a chart. Draw two columns and write "SINK" above one and "FLOAT" above the other. As each item is tested, add it to the correct column.

How Tall Am I? (Part One)

Have your child stand up straight against a wall or door in your house. Place a ruler or another thin, stiff item on top of their head and mark on the door or wall how tall they are. Write the child's initials and date.



NATURE STUDY & NOTEBOOK

Daily Outside Free Play and...

Lesson 1 (Nature Study): Where I Live

This week, take time to walk carefully around the area outside of your house (your yard, farm, apartment complex, city street, etc.) Notice, together, all of the important perimeters, borders, features, landmarks, bodies of water, trees, signs, fences, outbuildings, etc. Are there grass, flowers, vegetables, fruit trees or vines, stones or rocks, pathways? Make a list of things you notice as you walk together (you write as your child dictates what they see.) Look at your house from different points in the outside area around it. Notice how it looks different from each perspective.

Lesson 2 (Nature Notebook): Map of Where I Live

Choose a notebook that is to become your child's nature notebook for the year. It can be any notebook, but blank pages (as opposed to lined ones) would be optimal. Better still, paper designed to be used for sketching AND water media (a little thicker than drawing paper) would be ideal. You can find something like this at an art or craft store. Tell your child that this will be their special nature notebook, to be used all year long to keep track of all your discoveries together. Let them decorate the front if they like. Now it's time to break it in!

Together, make a map of the area around your house that you observed during your walk in lesson 1. It doesn't need to be to scale, or very artistic at all - only a way to record all of the things you noticed and wrote down. With your child's dictation, work together to create the map. You can do the lion's share of the drawing, if needed. Let them color it if they like. Explain that a map is a drawing of a place from above, the way a bird would see it as they flew overhead.

Note: Lessons 1 and 2 can be done back-to-back on the same day or split up into two different lessons.



INTEREST-BASED INVESTIGATIONS

Remember to encourage ongoing exploration of subjects of interest to your child. Use Pinterest, YouTube, Netflix, local library, museums, historical sites, national and state parks, community resources, etc. to provide information, activities, and investigations inspired by your child's interests as they arise.

Week 1

SAMPLE OUR PLAN FOR THE WEEK

DAILY FREE
PLAY &
OUTSIDE
TIME!

- Composer & Picture Study
- Exploring Artistic Expression
- The Kitchen Classroom
- Reading & Writing Readiness
- Read-Together Time / Discussion / Activity
- Science, STEM, and Nature Study
- Early Math Concepts
- Interest - Led Projects
- Library Day / Extracurricular Activities
- Special Holidays / Celebrations / Events

THURSDAY

MONDAY

FRIDAY

TUESDAY

SATURDAY

WEDNESDAY

SUNDAY

A WEEK OF READING / WRITING READINESS

(Some examples of our weekly "Letter Recognition" activities routine)

"FORMING THE LETTER" ACTIVITY

1



"MATCHING THE LETTERS" ACTIVITY

4



SAMPLE

"TRACING THE LETTER" ACTIVITY

2



SAMPLE

"LETTER SOUNDS" ACTIVITY

5



SAMPLE

"FINDING THE LETTER" ACTIVITY

3



"LETTER PRINTING" ACTIVITY

6



A Beautiful Beginning

Welcome to Blossom and Root Early Years Volume 1 & 2! My name is Kristina and I created Blossom & Root Early Years out of a passion for early childhood education and for helping parents (like me) provide a strong, well-rounded, and rich educational experience for their child at home.

My very first job was working in an early childhood center as an assistant while I was still in high school. I continued working at the same center while I pursued my bachelor's degree in theatre. I began bringing my work in the arts into my work in the classroom and saw how much it improved the school experience for my students. Seeing the dramatic results inspired me to volunteer for several at-risk, urban youth outreach programs, as well as rural youth summer arts programs during my years in school. I couldn't believe the difference that exposure to the arts made in the lives of the children in those programs.

When I finished school, I kept working at the early childhood center during the day while I rehearsed shows at night. I loved teaching so much that I went back to school and received my ECE teacher qualification, and later my ECE director qualification. In addition to the arts, I filled my classrooms with lots of nature study, reading beautiful books together, and interest-led learning. I was inspired by Charlotte Mason and pieces of the Waldorf philosophy on education. I wanted my students to have a beautiful beginning, focused on nurturing the *whole* child at a pace that reflected an understanding of developmentally appropriate practices, and not the "one-size-fits-all" standards system that was beginning to take over the early childhood mindset.

In addition to working with prekindergarten and kindergarten students, I also tutored elementary students in the afternoon. These children had, for the most part, all started at our center when they were little. I had watched them grow and learn. I also watched as most of them

slowly lost their excitement for learning as they went off to public school. Children who had once loved school, and had been excited and curious, now came to me in the afternoon exhausted, uninspired, and loaded down with hours and hours of busywork to complete. It broke my heart.

Becoming a mother was the best thing that ever happened to me. But I knew, from the first day, that I wanted to homeschool them. I wanted to give them an education full of nature study, arts and culture, fine literature (instead of the tedious readers my elementary students stumbled over every afternoon), interest-led explorations, outside free play, field trips, adventure, and solid academic foundations that were built at their pace, with a hands-on and play-based approach. I couldn't stand the thought of them in public school.

In 2015, my husband and I moved to Maui - a dream we had been pursuing for seven years. I started a garden company and was able to work my hours around his, giving me the opportunity to be home with my daughters at least four days a week. I began to develop Blossom & Root Early Years, knowing that I wanted to launch into preschool for my youngest, and prekindergarten for my oldest, when the fall of 2016 came around.

While I acclimated to the world of homeschooling, I began to notice that there were not very many secular curriculum options available to homeschooling parents. The ones I could find were, for the most part, worksheet-based or required a good amount of screen time. Knowing how effective hands-on learning had been for my students, I wanted to create a curriculum that would provide the same experience for homeschooling parents as well. I made the decision to change my perspective and create a curriculum for *any* parent who was looking for an early learning experience that was hands-on, rich in arts and literature, nature-based, and dedicated to gently building a solid academic foundation at *their child's unique pace*. Blossom & Root Early Years was created to provide just that. Here's to a beautiful beginning for your child, and a lifelong love of learning!

~ Kristina Garner

www.blossomandroot.com

