

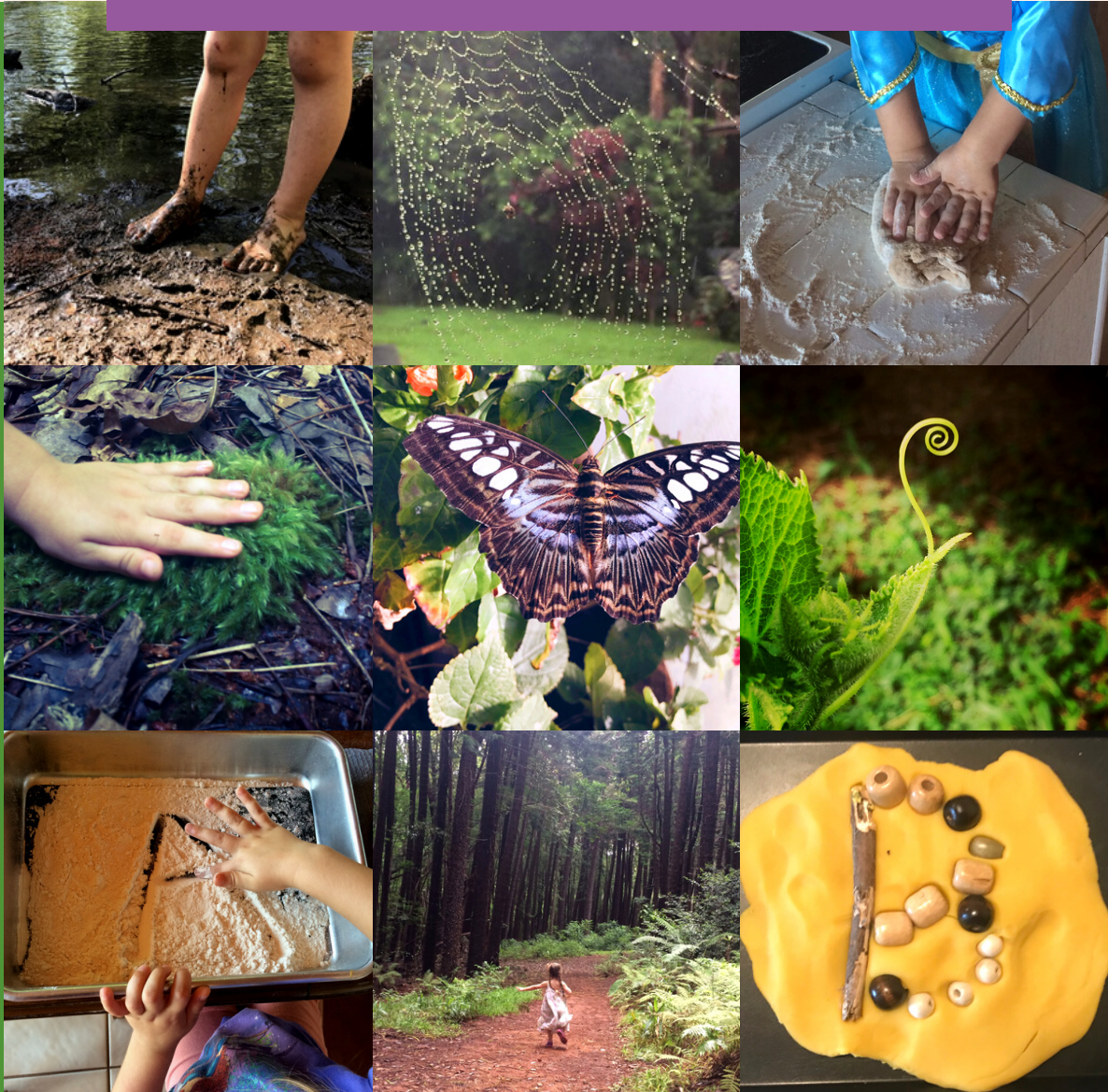
# BLOSSOM & ROOT

A COMPLETE, YEAR-LONG, EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

## Early Years

Second Edition

VOL. 1



RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 2 - 4

Weekly Nature Study, Music Study, Picture Study, Arts, Early Math and Science Foundations, Kindness and Connectivity, Literature, Kitchen Classroom Activities, and more!



[www.blossomandroot.com](http://www.blossomandroot.com)

Copyright 2020 Kristina Garner Blossom and Root,  
All rights reserved. ISBN# pending.  
To report errors contact [kristina@blossomandroot.com](mailto:kristina@blossomandroot.com)  
Design by Kristina Garner  
Editing by Jason Garner

*Blossom & Root*

Give Your Child a Beautiful Beginning

*Early Years Vol. 1*

A Complete, Year-Long, Early Learning Program

Recommended for Ages 2 - 4

**Blossom & Root Early Years, Vol. 1**

By Kristina Garner  
Blossom and Root Home Education /  
Hive Online Presence Management, LLC  
6547 N. Academy Blvd. #1225  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Find Us on the Web at <https://www.blossomandroot.com>

# Welcome to a Beautiful Beginning

Welcome to the second edition of Blossom and Root Early Years Vol. 1! You are about to embark on a joy-filled and wondrous year of learning and exploring with your child. Your days together will be filled with fine art, music, activities to nurture artistic expression, nature study, beautiful children's literature, discovery, hands-on learning, and so much more.

In this volume, you'll find 36 weeks of curriculum. This parent guide contains all of the activity prompts for the full year, book lists, supply lists, information about our philosophy and approach, tips for implementing each piece of the curriculum, and a clickable links list for any recommended videos, listening selections for music, and the featured artworks. The clickable links are at the end of this PDF.

Most lessons and activities are very short--ten minutes on average--and many can be integrated seamlessly into your normal day. We do recommend adding in park days, outside play, library visits, and any other activities your child enjoys, whenever possible. Free, unstructured, unscripted play should make up the bulk of the young child's day.

I wish you a wonderful year and a beautiful beginning with your child! Please feel free to reach out if you have questions. I am always happy to help!

- Kristina Garner  
kristina@blossomandroot.com

**Please note:** In this second edition, we've separated the planning pages from the parent guide, and they are a completely optional resource. Please see the separate planning PDF for more details.

## Tips for Getting Started

- **Go at your child's pace and listen to their cues.** If a certain activity captivates them, add it into your regular rotation. If another activity fails to engage them, feel free to skip it. Learning does not happen subject-by-subject here. It happens everywhere, all the time.
- **Do not feel pressured to complete every single activity, every week.** Do what you can, when you can.
- **Take some time to set up a learning environment before beginning.** A cozy reading nook, a dramatic play corner, a box of scarves for dancing to music, and a writing corner (with paper and crayons at the ready) can provide a welcoming environment for learning and discovery. These don't have to be fancy or take up a lot of space.
- **Take some time to read through this parent guide carefully before beginning,** and set aside time every few weeks to look ahead and see what you will need for upcoming lessons. Most weeks will require very little prep work.
- If you wish to print out this parent guide and / or the optional planning PDF, the best settings are black / white and double-sided, though this is completely up to you.

# Make It Yours

---

## How to Teach This Curriculum

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." – Fred Rogers

### The Three E's for Early Childhood Education

Blossom and Root Early Years Vol. 1 is built upon a concept we call "The Three E's." They are:

- Experiences
- Environments
- Engagement

The idea is that all learning in the early years can happen under the umbrella of one or more of these concepts. Let's take a closer look:

1. **Experience:** The parent educator provides opportunities for experiences that excite and stimulate the early learner. These can include field trips, open-ended activities and invitations, involving them in cooking or caring for their home, exposing them to beautiful music, art, and literature, and so on.
2. **Environments:** The parent educator provides environments that are conducive to learning and discovery. They set the stage for exploratory play, exposure to the arts, and open-ended investigations. This allows the child to engage and play, according to their interests, and at their own pace.
3. **Engagement:** The parent educator facilitates engagement during play, activities, and daily life. This gently introduces academic foundations, draws the child's attention to key patterns and sequences, and allows for open-ended discussion and curiosity to thrive.

Every activity and lesson in this curriculum is built upon the three E's. This gentle and developmentally-appropriate approach allows learning to happen organically and playfully.

### Focused Flexibility

Our Early Years curriculum is designed to be flexible yet focused. Please do not feel pressured to complete every single activity, every week. Fit in what you can, when you can, and learning will happen. If a certain activity really clicks with your child, feel free to add it to your regular schedule. If they are lackluster about another activity, skip it! Listen to their cues, and remember that every child has a unique learning style and pace.

### What Does an Average Week Look Like?

Every family and every child is unique. Our curriculum is designed to be adaptable and flexible, so that it can fit into a multitude of schedules. For a low-pressure, relaxed approach, simply plan activities into your week however you like. If you need more structure, at least to get you started, please see the suggested schedule below.

Here is an *example* of a template for an average week of Blossom and Root Early Years Vol. 1:

**Monday:** Music study during free play, picture study, read the week's literature selection together

**Tuesday:** Math and science prompts, art project, option to read the literature selection again if you like

**Wednesday:** Kindness and Connectivity prompt, do the literature activity for the week

**Thursday:** Nature study, music study again during free play, option to read the literature selection again if you like (or just read library books together)

**Friday:** Kitchen classroom time, revisit picture study again briefly

Feel free to add in whatever you like: weekly visit to the library, park day, play dates, kids yoga, etc.

Blossom and Root Early Years Vol. 1 can easily be adapted to fit any schedule. Most activities will require around 10 minutes to complete, with the exception of some of the art projects and kitchen classroom (depending on what you choose to make together.) Most activities require minimal prep, which can be done in around half an hour per week.

Week	Book	Own	Borrow	Replace with
1	<i>The Old Truck</i> by Jerome and Jarrett Pumphrey and / or <i>Little Blue Truck</i> by Alice Schertle			
2	<i>Hush!</i> by Minfong Ho and / or <i>The Runaway Bunny</i> by Margaret Wise Brown			
3	<i>Little Owl's Night</i> by Divya Srinivasan			
4	<i>A Tree is Nice</i> by Janice May Udry			
5	<i>Yellow Time</i> by Lauren Stringer and / or <i>We're Going on a Leaf Hunt</i> by Steve Metzger			
6	<i>Strictly No Elephants</i> by Lisa Mantchev			
7	<i>The Very Busy Spider</i> by Eric Carle			
8	<i>Swimmy</i> by Leo Lionni			
9	<i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> by Maurice Sendak			

Week	Book	Own	Borrow	Replace with
10	<i>Bee-bim Bop!</i> by Linda Sue Park			
11	<i>I Was So Mad</i> by Mercer Mayer			
12	<i>Layla's Happiness</i> by Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie			
13	<i>The Carrot Seed</i> by Ruth Krauss			
14	<i>Knuffle Bunny</i> by Mo Willems			
15	<i>Thank You, Omu!</i> by Oge Mora			
16	<i>Harold and the Purple Crayon</i> by Crockett Johnson and / or <i>Just in Case You Want to Fly</i> by Julie Fogliano			
17	<i>Blue on Blue</i> by Dianne White and / or <i>Green on Green</i> by Dianne White			
18	<i>The Mitten</i> by Alvin Tresselt or by Jan Brett (or any other version you like)			

Week	Book	Own	Borrow	Replace with
19	<i>Blueberries for Sal</i> by Robert McCloskey			
20	<i>The Snail and the Whale</i> by Julia Donaldson			
21	<i>Jingle Dancer</i> by Cynthia Leitich Smith			
22	<i>I Wrote You a Note</i> by Lizi Boyd			
23	<i>Inch by Inch</i> by Leo Lionni			
24	<i>The Salamander Room</i> by Anne Mazer			
25	<i>The Wind Blew</i> by Pat Hutchins			
26	<i>Brave Irene</i> by William Steig			
27	<i>The Gingerbread Boy</i> by Paul Galdone (or any other version you like)			

Week	Book	Own	Borrow	Replace with
28	<i>Windows</i> by Julia Denos			
29	<i>Over in the Meadow</i> by John Langstaff (or any other version you like)			
30	<i>Max and the Tag-Along Moon</i> by Floyd Cooper			
31	<i>Swirl by Swirl</i> by Joyce Sidman			
32	<i>The Little Red Hen</i> by Paul Galdone (or any other version you like)			
33	<i>Bowwow Powwow</i> by Brenda J. Child			
34	<i>A House for a Hermit Crab</i> by Eric Carle			
35	<i>What Can You Do with a Paleta?</i> by Carmen Tafolla			
36	<i>The Three Billy Goats Gruff</i> by Paul Galdone (or any other version you like)			

# Getting Ready to Start: Supplies

---

## Supply List for Early Years Vol. 1

- large plastic tablecloth or tarp to protect work surface during art (can be used all year long)
- an old work shirt or apron to protect clothing (can be used all year long)
- folders to save / store nature study papers and artwork in
- card stock paper
- scissors
- crayons and washable markers
- oil pastels
- chalk in a few different colors (optional)
- glue (white school glue and / or glue sticks)
- clear tape
- stapler and staples
- items from around your home to use as counters: Cheerios, dried beans, pebbles, etc.
- basic kitchen items: bowls, cookie sheets, etc.
- painting paper (larger is generally better for this age)
- tissue paper or kite paper in a variety of colors
- construction paper / craft paper in a variety of colors
- copy paper / printer paper
- optional: watercolor paper, cold-press 140 lb. (used once)
- scrap cardboard
- nontoxic, washable tempera paints (sometimes called poster paints) in variety of colors
- watercolor paint in a variety of colors
- paintbrushes, various sizes
- bin or container for dramatic play
- gathered items for dress-up (ties, glasses, hats, capes, etc.)
- scarves or fabric for music time (you can often find scarves at second-hand stores)
- storage tub for sensory bins / invitations
- sand, dirt, or kinetic sand for sensory bins / invitations
- small cup or pitcher for scooping water during sensory play
- yarn (1 or 2 colors)
- needle and thread
- hot glue gun and glue (adults only)
- wax paper
- play-dough (homemade or store bought), Model Magic, or air dry clay (though clay can be difficult for little hands to work with)
- ziplock baggie, paper towels, and seeds (garden beans work well)
- cotton swabs
- paper lunch bags (just a few)
- a small, clean spray bottle
- stickers (colorful "dot" stickers for art and, optionally, animal stickers)
- aluminum foil
- paper plates (you'll need quite a few of these)
- socks for sock puppets
- up-cycled boxes, shoe boxes, etc. (save a few or ask a neighbor to save some)
- rubber bands
- sandpaper, just a few sheets
- straw (please use a cardboard one or a reusable straw if possible) and dish soap
- child-sized panty hose or tights (two pairs) for spider legs prompt
- safety pins
- glass jar with lid (for week 29 nature study)
- match (for week 29 nature study)
- camera or camera phone and a way to print out photos occasionally (at home or from a shop)
- optional: solar paper for making sun prints
- optional: sunscreen for one activity
- food coloring (week 23)
- kitchen sponges (large, unused)
- several sheets of craft felt in a variety of colors
- several prompts call for various toys and items from around your home or yard--use what you already have on-hand for these prompts
- several prompts call for images of people, animals, etc.--you can use magazines, junk mailers / catalogs, print images off the internet using an image search, photocopy images from a book (libraries often have photocopy machines on-hand), or draw your own images
- several prompts will call for food items (goldfish crackers, apples, pumpkins or substitute, etc.) and you will also need to source ingredients for the recipes you choose to make in the kitchen classroom--look ahead every few weeks to see what you'll need and when
- optional: cookie cutters in a variety of shapes for use with play-dough or in the kitchen classroom
- optional: tangrams or shape attribute blocks (you can also just cut shapes out of sturdy paper)
- optional: magnifying glass for the exploration station
- optional: items for kitchen-themed dramatic play, such as small bowls, cups, spoons, etc.--second-hand stores are a great place to find these items

Don't feel pressured to purchase every single item. Many items can be borrowed from a neighbor, shared with another homeschooling family, etc. Always look a few weeks ahead to assess what you need.

# Week 1



## *This Week in 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. Ask them questions about what they are noticing, using theirs. Use seasonal words to punctuate your observations. (Examples: "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, and provide assistance if they ask for it. If they'd like to share what they drew with you, you can write their words for them on the front or the back of their drawing. You may wish to save all of your child's nature notes in a special folder.

### **Don't Forget: Daily Outside Play!**

Provide open time to explore and play at their own pace, following their own agenda, and prompted by their own curiosity.



## *This Week in Math and Science:*

### **Environment / Experiences: Play "Feed the Monster"**

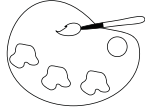
Draw a silly monster face on a stiff piece of card stock and cut out an opening for a mouth. Place this on top of a bowl. Give your child a cup of cereal, pebbles, dried beans, or another small item and tell them it's time to feed the monster. Ask them to feed the monster one piece of "food" at a time, and ask them to count (either alone or along with you) as they drop the food into the monster's mouth.

### **Engagement: Get Into the Habit of Wondering Out Loud**

For this first year, the scientific emphasis will be on observation and curiosity during your days 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?" Pick up on your child's cues. Perhaps they hear something while you're on a walk together, and they pause. You could ask, "Did you hear that bird singing?" If they're building a block tower, you could ask, "How much higher do you think you can build that tower?"

# Week 1



## *This Week in the Arts:* *Visual Arts & Drama*

### **Picture Study: *The Yellow House* by Vincent van Gogh**

When doing picture study, don't give away the name of the artwork at first. Tell your child that you are going to share a work of art with them every week. For the next few weeks, they will all be paintings by an artist named Vincent van Gogh. Show the child the painting often during the week, and casually remind them who painted it from time to time. Ask your child what colors they notice in this painting. Ask them what they think the people are doing. See the back of this parent guide for a clickable link to this week's featured work of art.

### **Exploring Artistic Expression: Free Painting with Yellows and Blues**

Provide your child with paper, paintbrushes, and yellow and blue paint. Let them paint whatever they like--no prompts or parameters. If the weather is nice, try painting outdoors. Let them paint as long (or short) as they like. If they would like to tell you about their painting, write their words for them on the front or the back of their painting.

### **Exploring Artistic Expression: Set Up a Dramatic Play Area**

Set up a small dramatic play corner or box in your child's main "homeschool area" in your home. Choose a location that will be easily accessible for them most of the time. Provide scarves, hats, old glasses with the lenses removed, dress-up items, etc. Start small and let it grow over time.



## *This Week in the Arts:* *Music*

### **Exploring Music: Introducing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Decide when you will do music study during your week. Tell your child you will be sharing music with them each week. Tell them that, for the next few weeks, you will be sharing music written by a composer named Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. During music study, simply play music for your child while they eat, play, or dance freely. Colorful scarves to dance with can make music study extra-special. See the back of this parent guide for suggested (clickable) music selections, or create your own playlist on YouTube, Amazon Music, etc.



## *This Week in Kindness & Connectivity:*

### **Celebrate the Beginning of the Homeschool Year with a 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 the world when it is my turn.**

*open arms out, then hug them into yourself*

# Week 1



## *This Week in Read-Together Time*

### **Read Together:**

***Little Blue Truck***

**Written by Alice Schertle**

**Illustrated by Jill McElmurry  
and / or**

***The Old Truck***

**Written and Illustrated by Jarrett Pumphrey  
and Jerome Pumphrey**

Both of these stories are excellent choices for all children, especially those fascinated by trucks and vehicles. During read-together time, snuggle up close, turn off all distractions, and savor the experience of sharing stories with your little one.

### **Exploring Literature Through Engagement: Prompts**

After you read the story together, here are some questions you could ask your child:

*The Little Blue Truck*

- Which truck do you think has better manners?
- What does the little blue truck do when the dump truck gets stuck?

*The Old Truck*

- Where did the old truck dream about going?
- How did the child help the truck when she grew up?

### **Exploring Literature Through Environment and Experiences: Truck and Mud Sensory Tub**

Fill a large plastic storage tub with about 1 inch of sand or dirt. Pour a small amount of water in one spot to make a muddy puddle. Provide toy cars, trucks, animals etc. if you have them on-hand. Place the tub where messes are welcome (on the patio, on a table covered with a trash bag, etc.) Provide a small pitcher of water for pouring and scooping. Invite your child to play freely, for as long as they like.



## *This Week in the Kitchen Classroom:*

Each week, choose a recipe or a cooking project to complete together. Allow your child to help with developmentally-appropriate tasks: stirring, measuring and pouring, cutting soft items with a child-safe knife, helping with set-up and clean-up, gathering and washing ingredients, etc. We encourage you to use family recipes, explore foods from around the world, and try new ingredients. There are several cookbooks geared toward younger children available in both print and ebook form. Here are a couple to consider:

- *My First Cookbook: Fun recipes to cook together . . . with as much mixing, rolling, scrunching, and squishing as possible!* by America's Test Kitchen
- *Little Helpers Toddler Cookbook: Healthy, Kid-Friendly Recipes to Cook Together* by Heather Wish Staller

What We Will Make This Week:

What We Need to Get:

### **Don't Forget: Provide a Literacy-Rich Environment**

- Cozy reading nook readily available
- Books where your child can access them on their own
- Regular visits to the library
- Print-rich environment
- Writing center available (this can be as simple as a jar of crayons and a drawing pad, some envelopes, etc.)
- Read for pleasure, yourself, and let your child see you doing it

# **Featured Artists and Composers / Musicians in Early Years Vol. 1 (Second Edition)**

## **Artists**

Vincent van Gogh

Yayoi Kusama

Mary Cassatt

Paul Klee

Tarsila do Amaral

Albert Namatjira

Harriet Powers

Horace Pippin

Jackson Pollock

## **Composers / Musicians**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Israel Kamakawiwo'ole (IZ)

Florence Price

Gioachino Rossini

Teresa Carreño

Antonio Vivaldi

Chen Yi

Heitor Villa-Lobos

Baaba Maal