

Week of the Young Child, April 10–16, 2011

This event is sponsored annually by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose of this celebration is to spread the news that young children are important! Across the nation, those who care for young children use this time to build community awareness of the needs of young children and their families.

 week of the
young child

Creativity and Play

The creative arts and play enhance children's literacy skills, math skills, and social studies and science knowledge. In addition, the creative arts and play support physical and social/emotional development, including interpersonal skills.

The organizations below have resources related to creativity and play. Visit the Web sites for complete information about available resources and activities.

Association of Children's Museums
www.childrensmuseums.org

National Program for Playground Safety
www.uni.edu/playground/

National Art Education Association
www.arteducators.org

Ultimate Block Party
www.ultimateblockparty.com

[Click here](#) for more ideas to celebrate the Week of the Young Child.

Earth Day – April 22, 2011

Since 1970, Earth Day has helped foster awareness of taking care of the earth and the natural resources we use. Recycling materials, reusing materials, and reducing the amount of trash and waste are some ways that people help take care of the environment. You may wish to start your own classroom recycling center. Encourage families to donate paper towel rolls, empty bottles, tissue boxes, ribbon, wrapping paper, old greeting cards, yarn, fabric scraps, etc., to use in your centers. Encourage children to invent new ways to use all of the recycled goodies.

Make an Earth Day Crown

Materials and Preparations:

- Assorted colors of construction paper cut into 8" x 24" strips. Cut pointed triangles along one side of each strip. (Save triangles to use for future projects.)
- Assorted art materials including crayons, markers, tape, and nature stickers
- Chart paper and marker

Learning Experiences:

- Invite children to choose a construction paper strip.
- Encourage them to decorate their crowns with things they love about our planet Earth (animals, sun, beach, trees, etc.). Children may wish to dictate words or a sentence for you to write on the crown.
- Fit crown to each child's head and secure with tape.
- As a class, wear crowns and brainstorm a list of ways to help keep the Earth clean. Which items can we do in our classroom? at home? elsewhere?



Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day – April 28, 2011

Designed to be more than a career day, the Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work[®] program goes beyond the average practice of “shadowing” an adult. Exposing young children to what a parent or mentor does during the work day is important, but also 1) shows the value of an education, 2) helps them discover the power and possibilities associated with a balanced work and family life, 3) provides an opportunity to share how they envision the future, and 4) allows them to begin steps toward their end goals in a hands-on and interactive environment that is key to their achieving success. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Arbor Day – April 29, 2011

Arbor Day is a nationally celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and care. National Arbor Day was founded by J. Sterling Morton in 1872 and is celebrated on the last Friday in April. Talk with children about all of the ways trees help us convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, filter pollutants from water and air, protect us from wind and sun, beautify our planet, etc. Consider an open area outside, away from power lines and play areas, to plant a class tree sapling. Track and document its growth through photographs, measurements, and descriptions all year long. For more information on Arbor Day and activity ideas for your classroom, visit www.arborday.org.



Cooling Shade

(Taken from [Passports, Trees](#))

Materials and Preparations:

- Similar-sized ice cubes
- Plates

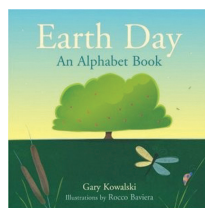
Learning Experiences:

- Does a tree's shadow really make things that much cooler? Conduct this experiment to find out.
- Place one ice cube on a plate and place it in direct sunlight. Place another ice cube on another plate and place it in the shade of a tree. Be sure ice cubes are about the same size and both plates are placed on grass. Invite children to make predictions of what they think will happen.
- Invite children to watch the ice cubes closely and explain what happens. Which cube melts faster? Why?
- As an extension to this experience, time how long it takes each ice cube to melt. How long did it take the ice cube in the sun to melt? the ice cube in the shade?

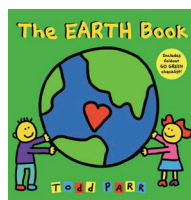
Books to Share



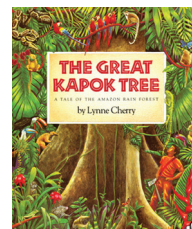
It's Earth Day!
by Mercer Mayer



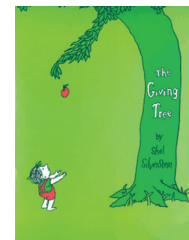
Earth Day: An Alphabet Book
by Gary Kowalski



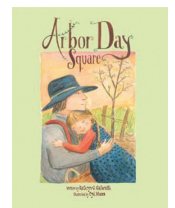
The Earth Book
by Todd Parr



The Great Kapok Tree
by Lynne Cherry



The Giving Tree
by Shel Silverstein



Arbor Day Square
by Kathryn O. Galbraith