

Unit 4

Life Processes

Introduction

Growing up is fascinating for young students. They can do lots of things that babies can't. These centers encourage them to:

- compare growth of living things
- describe basic life processes
- identify the needs of living things

Life Processes #1

Who was a Baby?

Now that they are "big kids" preschoolers are often fascinated by babies. They enjoy being caretakers and noticing the things that they can do now that they're older.

Learning Objectives:

- The student describe the growth of a person
- The student will recognize that babies are similar, but not identical to their parents and one another.

Recommended Supplies:

Ask families to send in a baby picture of their child.

Baby things and Big kid things:

pacifier	diaper	crayons
bottle	tooth	gradiers
baby blanket	sock	backpack
natte	fork	binoculars

Procedure:

1. Show the pictures of the different kinds of fish. Talk about their characteristics and what they have in common.

2. Observe the fish in the bowl. What body parts do they notice?

3. Put children in charge of feeding the fish, cleaning the tank, and changing the water.



Life Processes #2

Seeds

Children eat beans and find seeds in their fruits and vegetables. They have experience with them. Exploring seeds provides opportunities for observation, sorting, and fine motor practice!

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe the growth of a seed into a plant
- The student will describe the basic needs of a seed to grow
- The student will sort seeds according to their attributes

Recommended Supplies:

- seeds
- collect them from fruits and vegetables
- ask parents to send in seed packets
- ask about a bag of mixed beans at the grocery.

Procedure:

1. Go for a nature walk to find and observe insects. Look under plants and in the dirt. Turn over rocks and logs.

2. Purchase mealworms or crickets at the pet store (release them outdoors when you're done).

3. Critter box

4. magnifying glasses

5. small piece of fruit, cracker, or candy



Life Processes #3

Plants

There are 2 basic types of living things: animals and plants. Set up this center to encourage preschoolers to take a closer look at many of the different types of plants in their world.

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe plants and describe their parts
- The student will describe the basic needs of a plant (food, water, air)

Recommended Supplies:

- cut flowers
- small potted plant
- magnifying glasses
- tweezers
- clear cups, soil, grass seed

Procedure:

1. Show the pictures of the different kinds of fish. Talk about their characteristics and what they have in common.

2. Observe the fish in the bowl. What body parts do they notice?

3. Put children in charge of feeding the fish, cleaning the tank, and changing the water.



Life Processes #4

Birds

There are so many different types of birds in the world - backyard birds, chickens, penguins, ostriches, ducks, and more! Students will take a closer look at birds at this center.

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe feathers and nests
- The student will describe the characteristics of a bird
- The student will identify the basic needs of a bird

Recommended Supplies:

- feathers, nests (make sure that they are empty)
- magnifying glasses
- bird-feeder supplies: plain bagels, yarn, peanut butter or cream cheese, bird seed

Procedure:

1. Show the pictures of the different kinds of fish. Talk about their characteristics and what they have in common.

2. Observe the fish in the bowl. What body parts do they notice?

3. Put children in charge of feeding the fish, cleaning the tank, and changing the water.



Life Processes #5

Fish

A fish makes a perfect class pet! If you don't have one, obtain a goldfish from the local pet store and encourage students to take a closer look at this type of animal.

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe fish and describe their characteristics
- The student will identify the basic needs of fish

Recommended Supplies:

- goldfish (or other fish) in a fishbowl (If you cannot keep the fish after this activity, ask the families if anyone would like to keep it.)
- Magnifying glasses

Book Recommendations:

- Swimming by Leo Lionni
- Fish is Fish by Leo Lionni
- The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister
- Hooray for Fish by Lucy Cousins
- Fish Eyes by Lois Ehlert

Procedure:

1. Show the pictures of the different kinds of fish. Talk about their characteristics and what they have in common.

2. Observe the fish in the bowl. What body parts do they notice?

3. Put children in charge of feeding the fish, cleaning the tank, and changing the water.



Life Processes #6

Insects

Bugs, bugs, bugs! Preschoolers are either fans or afraid of insects. Either way, allow them to explore insects on a deeper level at this center.

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe characteristics of insects
- The student will describe changes that an insect undergoes as it grows.

Recommended Supplies:

- Purchase mealworms or crickets at the pet store (release them outdoors when you're done)
- Critter box
- magnifying glasses
- small piece of fruit, cracker, or candy

Procedure:

1. Go for a nature walk to find and observe insects. Look under plants and in the dirt. Turn over rocks and logs.

2. Purchase mealworms or crickets at the pet store (release them outdoors when you're done).

3. Critter box (They are cheap!) Place them in a critter box for closer observation at the science center.

4. Encourage students to notice their body parts, and to provide water and food for them.

5. (Mealworms change into beetles if you can keep them for 4-6 weeks. It's really cool to watch!)

Book Recommendations:

- Bugs are Insects by Anne Rockwell
- The Bug Book by Sue Fliess
- The Very Lonely Firefly by Ed Emberley
- Bugs by Andrews McMeel



Life Processes #7

Spiders

Preschoolers often confuse insects and spiders, thinking that they are the same. Allow students to investigate spiders at this center and notice their different characteristics.

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe spiders and describe their characteristics
- The student will identify the basic needs of a living thing

Recommended Supplies:

- Spider puppet or toy (These are often readily available around Halloween time in the U.S.)
- Create a spider web with tape, yarn, or decorative web
- small plastic insects

Procedure:

1. Show the photographs of the spiders. Talk about them.

2. Go for a nature walk to look for spiders and spider webs.

3. Let students to play with the web. They can stick insects to it, then move the spider toward it.

Book Recommendations:

- The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle
- The Itsy Bitsy Spider by Iza Trapani
- Spiders by Gail Gibbons
- Anansi the Spider by Gerald McDermott



Life Processes #1

Who was a Baby?

Now that they are “big kids” preschoolers are often fascinated by babies. They enjoy being caretakers and noticing the things that they can do now that they’re older.

Recommended Supplies:

Ask families to send in a baby picture of their child.

Baby things and Big Kid things:

pacifier	diaper	crayons
bottle	bib	sneakers
baby blanket	cup	backpack
rattle	fork	blocks

Procedure:

1. Display the students’ baby photos. Talk about what the babies look like. Compare the baby to the child. What has changed? Can you figure out who each one is?
2. Set out a basket of objects. The students look at each object and then sort it – “Baby” or “Big Kid.”
3. Talk with students about some of the things that change as they grow up (more teeth, hair, taller, learn to walk, talk, etc.).

Learning Objectives:

- The student describe the growth of a person.
- The student will recognize that babies are similar, but not identical to their parents and to one another.



Book Recommendations:

The Baby is Here! (Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood)

I Used to Be the Baby by Robin Ballard
Baby Animals of the World

Life Processes #3

Plants

There are 2 basic types of living things: animals and plants. Set up this center to encourage preschoolers to take a closer look at many of the different types of plants in their world.

Recommended Supplies:

- cut flowers
- small potted plant
- magnifying glasses
- tweezers
- clear cups, soil, grass seed

Procedure:

1. Allow students to observe and explore the flower and plants. They can use magnifying glasses to view them closer or tweezers to take them apart.
2. Have students draw a face on the clear cup. Fill it with soil. Sprinkle grass seed on top and water. Watch the hair grow. Let the children give him a hair cut!
3. Task students with watering the plants. What happens if they don't get watered?

Learning Objectives:

- The student will observe plants and describe their parts.
- The student will describe the basic needs of a plant (food, water, air)



Book Recommendations:

In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming
Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert
Jack's Garden by Henry Cole
Mouse's First Spring by Lauren Thompson