

A Letter to Families

Send families a letter introducing the study. Use the letter to communicate with families and as an opportunity to invite their participation in the study.

Dear Families,

We've noticed that children are often interested in life's most ordinary things. Whenever we go outside, there is always a lot of interest in insects. Children find them, watch them, follow them, and try to capture them. In their play at school, the children have shared their curiosity about the different types of insects they see, how insects move, where and when we see insects, and the kinds of jobs that involve insects. We think a study of insects will be a great opportunity for children to explore their interests.

We need your help gathering items for our study! If you can, we'd appreciate your help in gathering materials related to insects. We'll need many different objects and pictures related to insects. We will begin our study by collecting books or pictures of insects. Here's a list of suggested items, but feel free to send other items that you think may add to our exploration. Please label all items with your name so we can return them to you at the end of our study. We promise to take good care of them! Also, please let us know if someone in your family has a job or hobby related to insects (e.g., nature photographer, gardener, beekeeper, exterminator) and would like to share their expertise with the class. We would love to arrange a time for you to join us in our investigations.

Clear jars	specimens, e.g., wings	Photos of insects
Netting (e.g., screens, stocking) and rubber bands	or an insect leg	Non-fiction books about insects
Ant farms	Nets	Beekeeping garments or materials
Butterfly habitats	Tweezers	Non-toxic flowers or plants that attract insects
Realistic toy insects	Honeycomb	
Microscope with prepared slides	Abandoned insect nest	
showing insect	Insect collections	
	Insect houses or insect viewing spheres	
	Insect field guides	

What You Can Do at Home

Talk with your child about the different kinds of insects you see. If possible, examine harmless insects you notice in your community. What features do they have? Point out interesting features, such as the colors, patterns, where they live, how they move (e.g., do they fly, crawl, or jump?), and how some insects are harmless and some are dangerous. Notice people whose work involves insects, like gardeners, exterminators, or beekeepers. What equipment do they use? Invite your child to think about why some insects are pests and why some are helpful. What kind of supplies do you need to capture and examine insects without hurting them? Help your child to release captured insects after you've had a chance to explore them.

At the end of our study, we will have a special event to show you what we've learned. Thank you for playing an important role in our learning.