Year 1
January Theme: Discovering the Arctic

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Required Project: Construct a play ice structure within your common space. Children should be involved in the construction and decoration of the piece. You may choose to construct any type of structure... (igloo, glacier, etc). Use this space to go on ice adventures...and play dress up in warm clothing. You should elaborate on this throughout the month by adding the snowmen and other projects to decorate your common area into an Arctic Iceland.

Overview: The purpose of this theme is to introduce the exciting region of the world called the Arctic! This is a fun and adventurous theme. The first unit should focus on the lifestyle of the people in the Arctic (transportation, food, shelter, clothing, and social customs). The children will enjoy getting to know Arctic animals in the second theme. Encourage children to use their imagination and creativity to fully discover the Arctic.

The below is meant to provide teachers with a backbone to their classroom lesson plans. All suggested items to be added to the classrooms and suggested ideas are at the teacher’s discretion. This allows teachers the freedom to modify this list to best fit their age group by adding or deleting activities and also by allowing for the children to direct activities within the theme.

*Any activities with an * in front are specifically for infants and/or toddlers; however, most activities can be adapted to accommodate these age groups as well

Unit 1 (December 31 – January 18) Arctic Lifestyle

Suggested Items to Add to Your Classrooms
- Pretend or real ice sculptures
- Hats, gloves, very warm clothing
- Eskimos and Igloos
- Pictures/maps of Alaska and other Arctic areas
Suggested Ideas for Focus on the "Whole Child"

Social/Emotional
- Pretend to be an Eskimo family – each member has a role and duties
- Snowball Stops Game – pass the snowball around and call out “snowball stops.” Use letter, number, or shape flashcards and have child who has snowball identify.
- Make different types of hot chocolate (warm) and chart who likes which best
- Have children identify body parts of an Eskimo, then cut him out, and decorate his clothing
- Have someone visit the school who has visited the Arctic and share photos and stories with the kids
- Everyone wear snow boots for the day, or just bring a pair
- *Try on different warm hats in front of a mirror

Physical (fine and gross motor)
- Make a shiny snowflake out of foil and let children decorate and hang in the classroom
- Make a 3-D igloo home, as a class or in small groups. Suggested materials can include sugar cubes or blocks.
- Creative Project – use dark paper and white cut out blocks of paper to make a picture of an igloo, as always use your creativity to elaborate
- Make a day/night picture and explain the seasonal shorter days in the Arctic.
- Paint a picture showing the Northern lights and discuss with children at circle time (You Tube has videos of the northern lights)
- Make a large snowman and play ‘pin the carrot nose on the snowman’. Each child can make children snowmen to create a mural of a large snowman family on your classroom wall.
- *Stir snow in a bowl and watch as it melts

Cognitive
- Show children snow shoes and talk about different things we put on our feet in cold weather (snow shoes, boots, ski’s, thicker socks)
- Make a positional Eskimo book. Make an Eskimo and laminate. Take a piece of yarn and tape to Eskimo and back of book so Eskimo can be placed in the house, behind the tree, etc. on each page.
- Snowflake Bingo – Make large snowflakes with a circle on each tip. Draw letters in each circle. Use flash cards to call out the letters (use other side for numbers).
- Ice melting- freeze a cup of water, ice cubes, and also use crushed ice for this project. Set out in the morning and let children see which melts first. Discuss glacier melting and taking care of our environment
- Make Arctic “opposite” flash cards
- *Demonstration of ice cubes floating in small tub or sensory table with one inch of water – closely supervise with water

Language/Communication
- Mitten match – cut out mittens in different colors. Put child’s picture on matching mittens. Play games as a class to match up the mittens.
• Cut small icebergs or Arctic fish out of Styrofoam. Label them with a letter of the alphabet. Float them in sensory table. Children can use a net to catch an iceberg or fish and identify the letter. Closely supervise if you use water in the sensory table.
• Have races to put coats, hats, and mittens on. Use this time to practice buttons and zippers. Make mastering this skill fun.
• Learn to spell the word igloo, using a fun song that rhymes and repeats
• Learn 3-5 Arctic lifestyle words in sign language and second language

Workbook Curriculum
• Workbook curriculum should be carried out daily in each classroom with (children over the age of 12 months) for 10-20 minutes, depending on age. At this time we are not mandating what brand or type of workbook. Workbooks should teach general cognitive principals for the child’s age (colors, shapes, tracing, recognition, memorization, numbers, and alphabet). The activity should be in paper form and available for parents to review at least weekly. This addition to our curriculum is a supplement needed to meet the expectations of families and further prepare children for Kindergarten. Workbook curriculum is not considered a creative art experience; it is merely a supplement to encourage cognitive growth.

Unit 2 (January 21 – February 1) Arctic Animals

Suggested Items to Add to Your Classrooms
• Plastic or stuffed Arctic animals
• Pretend dens for the polar bears
• Pretend ice glaciers
• Dog pulling sled

Suggested Ideas for Focus on the "Whole Child"

Social/Emotional
• Read the book “Mittens” and discuss the animals in the story at circle time.
• Write your own personalized story as a class of children living with a pet reindeer. Let children illustrate and help write the story. Copy and give to each parent.
• The sun shines only 6 months a year. Play flashlight tag to show ways to have fun in the dark.
• Make a cave (well supervised) for animals to hibernate in
• Be a snowflake on a windy day and dance to the music at group time

Physical (fine and gross motor)
• Make several pictures of caribou that are different sizes and colors. Then practice sorting by size, color, or other differences. Work on vocabulary words such as: small, smaller, smallest/small, medium, large.
• Fill a glove with corn starch. Have child put their hand inside, then place inside of ice water. The corn starch acts as blubber and represents how Arctic animals stay warm.
• If it snows, bring some in for the sensory table. If you do not expect snow, use artificial snow.
• Make a polar bear and discuss where they live and what they eat. Watch a polar bear discovery channel show, if your center allows for any television viewing.
• Show children how a thermometer works with hot water and ice water
• Glue fur onto Arctic animals (cut out of magazines)
Cognitive

- Make up cards on different Arctic animals. On the back of the card write 3 facts about the animal. Play a game after you have gone over then with the children. Give the clues and see if they can guess the animals.
- Make a puzzle of the North Pole and the countries surrounding it. Help children to identify items on the map.
- Teach that Mukluks are Eskimo snow boots. They are made out of animal fur to keep their feet warm. Bring in animal fur or invite a conservationist who can bring in samples of different furs.
- Compare what kind of activities children can do in hot weather vs. cold weather.

Language/Communication

- Make up a new song or change an old one. (Example: “Little Walrus’s Jumping on the Iceberg” or “Bear Paw Pokey” song)
- Make a bear paw snack and read a polar bear story.
- Invite someone from an ice skating arena to bring equipment and share their sport with the class.
- Put animal tracks all over the classroom. Have children search for a treasure where each track leads them.
- Play “I spy” something that is related to Arctic animals. (fur, animal food, paw prints, etc)
- Learn Arctic animals in sign language and second language.

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