

Storypath[™]

The Park[©]

Kindergarten

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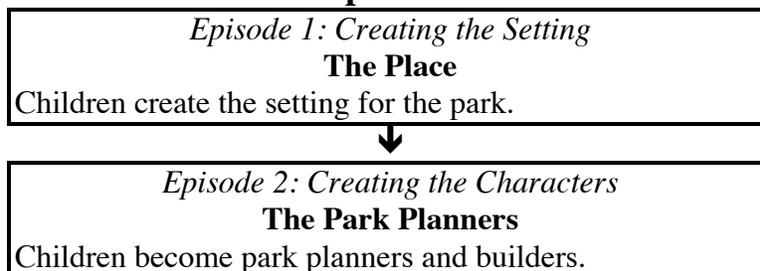
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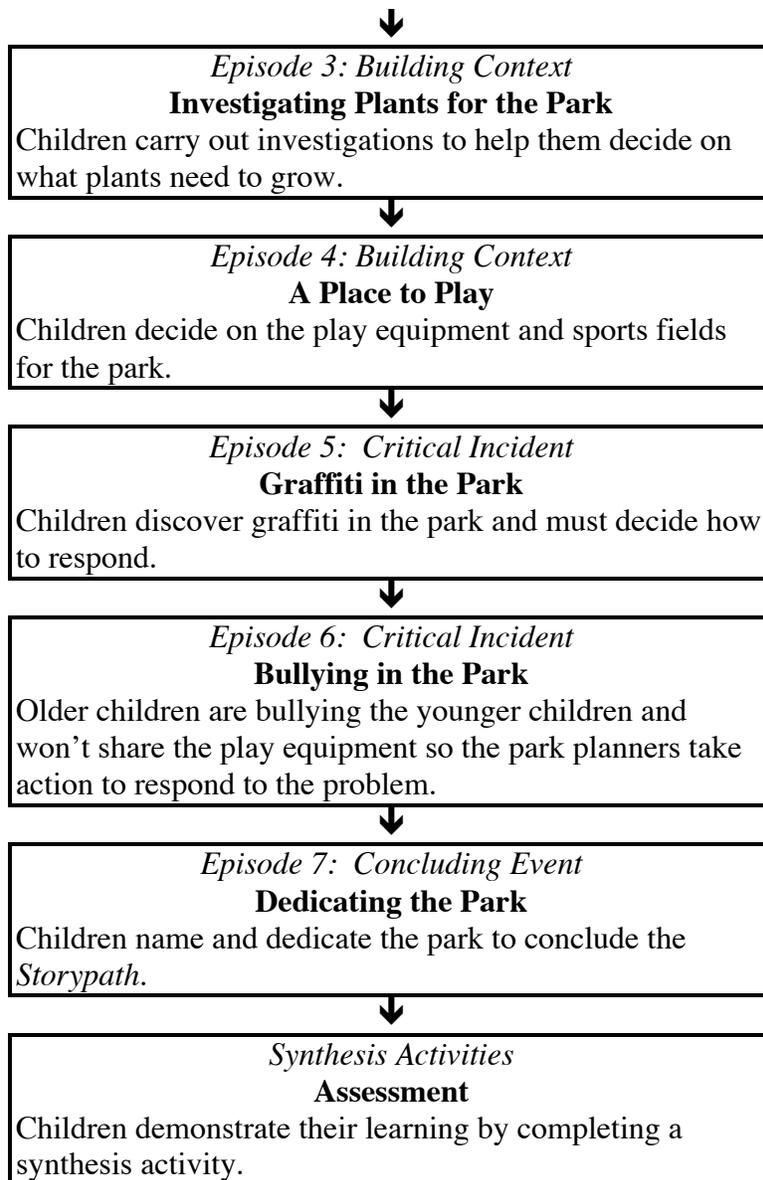
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Developing the Story

The Park unit evolves over seven episodes as children learn about the natural environment of a park, the recreational features found in parks and problems encountered. Children assume the roles of park planners as they determine a place in their community that would be a great place for a park. Through this process they also learn about the natural environment, the flowers, plants and trees suitable for a park as well as how people of all ages might use and enjoy the park. The unit naturally integrates literacy, social studies, science, and art as children decide on the flora and fauna for the park, the human-built features and how people can use and enjoy the park. The story follows the basic structure shown below, but can develop naturally as children contribute their own ideas and decisions. The *Storypath* is concluded with a park dedication.

Episodes





Building Understanding

Assessment

The Park unit offers a variety of options to genuinely assess children's learning. These methods include informal, ongoing assessments, such as observation of children's discussions and behavior; reading, writing, and speaking activities naturally integrated into learning experiences; rich opportunities for portfolio assessment; and synthesis activities at the end of the unit to assess children's learning of unit objectives.

During each episode, children will be developing complex thinking and problem-solving abilities as they deepen their knowledge about designing and creating a park for the community. The best way to assess this learning is through ongoing observation and evaluation of children's activities. Look for suggestions for ongoing assessment throughout each episode.

At the end of the unit, three synthesis options let children apply what they've learned. The third activity, "My Portfolio," shows child progress over time. Each synthesis activity includes criteria for assessment and a list of unit objectives that apply to the activity. The three topics are:

- A Story about the Park
- An Interview about the Park
- "My Portfolio"

Planning the Unit

Make Key Decisions

Plan for the learning experience. There are a myriad of possibilities for the park and you will need to decide in advance the following:

- **Locate a suitable place in your community:** If possible locate a place in the community that realistically could become a park—a vacant lot, a natural environment, or a place that the local government is actually considering for a park. If none of these options is appropriate, write a description of the setting that would be appropriate for your own community and familiar to your children.
- **Decide on the kind of park as a focus for the unit.** You may decide to have one use or multiple uses for the park—a play park, sports area, botanical garden, a natural environment, or a combination of all of these. For older children, consider parks that represent different cultures such as a Japanese, Chinese, or English garden. Children can research the cultural dimensions that are related to such parks as well as the traditional flora and fauna of such parks. For young children, it is recommended that the park be divided into two sections—a play area with swings, slides and sports field and a garden area. These two areas allow for two different learning experiences, including a science focus for the garden.

Develop reading and writing skills in context. This unit was designed so that children with limited reading and writing skills could fully participate in the unit. There are many opportunities for reading and writing, but these can be easily substituted for other activities. Therefore, this unit is ideal for establishing or sustaining a positive classroom climate, laying the groundwork for cooperative group skills, and building on young children's pre-reading and writing skills within a social studies context.

Make classroom space for the *Storypath*. You will need ample wall space for displaying the frieze—setting for the park. Additionally, you will need space to display various lists, artifacts, children's writing, and other materials that are created. Another option is to make the park three-dimensional and place on a counter or tabletop. Sometimes teachers are tempted to put the frieze in the hallway outside of the classroom. It is important, however, to display the park in the classroom where children can easily refer to it throughout the *Storypath*.

Manage class time. Plan six to eight weeks for the unit depending on how much you integrate the activities with other aspects of your curriculum and how much time is allowed for various episodes. The unit is designed to integrate reading and writing within a social studies and science context. You will want to spend significant time each week on the *Storypath* so that children stay connected to the storyline and their roles as park planners. There are opportunities to develop word banks, record the events of the *Storypath* as a whole class writing and reading activity, and for children, who are able, to write and read individually. Children also plant seeds for flowers or plants to investigate how plants grow.

Develop group skills. There are many opportunities for children to work in groups throughout the *Storypath*. Suggestions for ways to facilitate this process are integrated throughout. Page 53 includes suggestions for assessing social skills with criteria. If children have had limited opportunities to work in groups, this *Storypath* offers the possibility for developing group skills. At times in the context of the *Storypath*, you will want to stop the story to discuss group skills and reflect on how children are working together.

Customize the Unit

Adapt the unit. There will likely be times in this unit when you will want to modify the curriculum to suit your own needs and follow the logical progression of the story. Alternative activities or special arrangements are suggested at various points during the unit to assist you in adapting the unit to meet your unique needs.

Respond to neighborhood differences. Not all children have the same experiences related to parks. Generally, we think of positively about parks but in some neighborhoods, parks can be dangerous places where unsavory activities take place. In Episode 6 the critical incident presents the park as a place where children can be teased or bullied. Use children’s knowledge and experiences to critically examine how society uses parks and how we can all contribute to making parks safe and enjoyable places to visit.

Thus children may provide an unanticipated twist to the *Storypath*, or important learning opportunities will arise. The *Storypath* allows for the accommodation of those unique circumstances.

Involve Others

Involve experts. In Episodes 3, you may want to invite experts who can answer children’s questions about parks or the flora and fauna best suited for certain kinds of parks. One caution however: Invite experts when children are ready and can benefit from their special knowledge. The best time is toward the end of the episode when children have developed a knowledge base and are ready to learn more about the topic. In the concluding episode, you may want to invite the “person” who invited the children to create the park—see Episode 1.

Involve families. Parents and other family members can serve as excellent resources for you and your children. You may have family members who have special knowledge

about gardening or park planning or maintenance. Invite them to share their information. In Episode 7, children plan a dedication for the park. This is an ideal time to invite families. Children can write invitations to their families to participate in the dedication.

Involve the community. A visit to a park can enrich the *Storypath* and provide children with a deeper understanding of how parks are organized and maintained. Such activities should be carefully timed. Usually the best time for a field trip is at the end of the unit when children can knowledgeably compare and contrast their learning to the new information they encounter on the field trip.

Create a learning community. An open and supportive atmosphere is essential for children to engage in the discourse that is basic to the learning process of the *Storypath* approach. Children should understand the value of reflective discussions and the importance of collaborative work to deepen their understanding of complex ideas. Consequently, children should be expected to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to one another's ideas.

Include Books and Other Resources from Your Library

There are many picture books that show parks of all kinds. Make these available in your classroom for children to reference throughout their *Storypath* experience. Also, stories that elaborate on the goals and objectives of this unit can enhance children's understanding so use them throughout the *Storypath*.

Connect Local Events

Watch for local stories in the news about parks or land use and use them, as appropriate, to further develop the storyline. Use newspaper advertisements about gardening supplies and so forth to help children understand and become familiar with different text types.

Art Materials to Have on Hand

butcher paper--brown, green, and blue

construction and tissue paper--lots of greens and other colors as well

markers/colored pencils/crayons/paint/colored chalk

glue/tape

scissors

blue tack

pipe cleaners/string/yarn/fabric or wall paper scraps

poster board

other assorted craft materials

Optional: Magazine and newspaper ads for tools used by park planners

Optional: tempera paints/brushes/water cans--lots of brown, green and blue

Optional: wool fiber for hair

Science Materials to Have on Hand

Experiment 1: Investigating seed germination

Clear plastic glasses, four for each pair of students

Paper towels, two sheets for each pair

Beans— about four—for each pair

(Note: Use lima or navy bean or lentil seed packets. Another option is scarlet runner beans, as they grow very large very quickly. Be sure to check if the seeds are old because they are less likely to germinate. An overheated or dry room can also cause the seeds not to germinate.)

Water pitcher or eyedropper to water plants for each pair

Experiment 2: Investigating how plants use water

Clear plastic glasses tall enough to support a celery stalk, two for each pair

Celery stalks, two for each pair—get them as fresh as possible

Red food coloring—a good amount

Pitchers of water enough to fill one glass (for each pair) about half full

A ruler for each pair for measuring the absorption of water over a period of time

Optional: Digital camera to record and display the change over time

Experiment 3: Investigating how plants grow

Newspapers to spread on tables where children will work

Zinnia or marigold seeds, package-dated for current year

Small package of potting soil (sterilized)

Teaspoons, one for each pair

Plastic cups or egg cartons, so each child has one container for seeds.

Additional egg cartons to serve as trays for holding and transporting individual egg holders

Water for watering plants

Medicine (eye) droppers or spray bottles (Children can share these in groups of four)

Label cups with children's names

Gallon size plastic bags with ties to hold a whole egg carton or five small plastic cups

To transplant plants for taking home For each child

Container that holds about 3 cups of potting soil

Pebbles for bottom of container

3 cups potting soil

Bags to carry home the plants

Overview of Performance Standards

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking:

- Listen for information
- Focus on illustrations for details
- Speak in complete thoughts in class
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions
- Suggest solutions for problems

Reading Processes:

- Understand that pictures and text convey meaning
- Show an awareness of print in the environment
- Know and use letters and their sounds to identify and confirm text
- Recognize some words in different contexts

Writing Processes:

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing
- Draft simple sentences reflecting own experiences and understanding

Culture and Social Interaction: The study of culture and cultural diversity including the human interactions among groups and institutions.

- Demonstrate an understanding of how people interact with their physical environment and social conditions

Geography: The study of people, places, and environments.

- Identify how people create environments that reflect ideas, personality, culture, wants and needs in their communities
- Examine the interactions of people with their physical environment and the changes that occur over time

Civic Competence: The study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship that lead to a commitment to action.

- Identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation

Social Skills: The ability to work effectively in a group.

- Organize, plan, make decisions, and take action in group settings
- Work with others to decide on an appropriate course of action

Critical Thinking Skills: The ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate.

- Use criteria to make judgments through such processes as appraising ideas, considering points of view, and evaluating statements or positions on issues
- Organize ideas in new ways

EPISODE 1: CREATING THE SETTING—THE PLACE

<p>Introducing the Story Children are introduced to the <i>Storypath</i> and listen to a letter inviting them to create a park and then respond to the invitation.</p>	<p>Materials Grouping Schedule</p>	<p>Teaching Master 1-1, <i>Letter of Invitation</i>, p. 15 Teaching Master 1-2, <i>Letter of Response</i>, p. 16 Whole class Approximately 1 hour</p>
<p>Creating the Setting for the Park Children create a frieze of the park setting.</p>	<p>Materials lots of brown, green and blue Schedule</p>	<p>Optional: Activity Guide 1A, <i>Working in a Group</i>, p. 17 For the friezes: bulletin board space, about 3' high and 4' long, top third covered with blue butcher paper, bottom two-thirds with brown or green paper and easily within children's reach various colors of construction and tissue paper --lots of browns and greens colored markers/crayons/glue/scissors Optional: tempera paints/brushes/water cans-- Groups for making components of frieze 1-2 hours</p>
<p>Concluding Episode 1 Children reflect on and write about the park setting.</p>	<p>Materials Grouping Schedule</p>	<p>For the word bank: cards/thick black marker/pocket chart for displaying the words on cards For the writing activity: lined newsprint/thick black marker Whole class for word bank and descriptive writing Approximately 40 minutes</p>

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Focus on illustrations for details
- Speak in complete thoughts in class
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions

Writing Processes

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing

Geography

- Create and describe land use for a neighborhood park

Social Skills

- Organize, plan, and make decisions while creating a frieze with group members
- Determine an appropriate course of action to complete the frieze within a group

Critical Thinking

- Organize ideas from class discussion and observation in new ways and apply those ideas to the frieze

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Launching the unit

In this episode, children will create the natural environment that has been chosen for the park. To begin the *Storypath*, discuss the elements of a story with children: characters (the people in the story), setting (when and where the story takes place), and plot (important events that happen). Emphasize that this is an imaginary story. Explain that they will begin their story with a letter that has been received, Teacher Master 1-1, *Letter of Invitation*. The letter explains the context for the story and the role children will play. Read the letter and then discuss the letter using such questions as follows:

- What did the letter ask us to do? (Children should recall that they were asked to be park planners.)
- Why was our class selected for the task? (Children should recall the qualities identified in the letter.)
- What do you know about parks? (Guide the discussion so children consider the range of parks. Some children may have little experience with parks, so guide the discussion so that children think about the range of parks and make a list for later reference. Amusement parks are not the focus of this *Storypath*. You will need to guide the discussion so that you can focus on the kind of park that will achieve your learning goals.)
- What tasks might be involved in planning and creating a park? (Children should consider the range of skills needed for planning and creating a park. You may find that you will need to provide prompts to guide the discussion.)
- Should we accept the invitation? (It is hoped that the response is in the affirmative so that the story can progress.)

Responding to the letter

As a whole class activity on a large sheet of chart paper, have children write a response to the letter. This can be done with children constructing the letter with guidance from you. Guide the discussion so that children become familiar with the letter writing process and the message of the letter—willingness to plan and create the park, skills they can bring to the tasks, and enthusiasm for the project. Each child can sign the letter.

For the next lesson, explain to children that a response to the letter has been received. Read the letter inserting a description of an appropriate site in your community. The site could be a vacant lot, a natural environment in the community, or other suitable setting that could be converted to a park. If possible, select a setting that is familiar to all the children. If this is not possible, use the description in Teaching Master 1-2, *Letter of Response*. When writing a description for the setting, include information that is familiar to the children. Use Teaching Master 1-2 as a model. As you read the description of the setting, children should try to picture this place in their mind. Children will create the description as a visual representation.

Discussing the setting

Use questions to help children vividly imagine the place you've described. During the discussion, make a list of children's responses. Save it and refer to it as children construct the setting.

- What do you remember about this setting? (Guide children to recall as many specific details as possible, such as creek, trees, bushes, and other features described in the description.)
- What color stands out in the setting? (Have children list all the colors they think are appropriate to the setting you've described. Have children show the colors that are described by mixing paints, colored chalk, or crayons--this activity is most easily demonstrated with paint, but this takes the most time to organize.)
- What other things do you remember about this setting?

Connect Artistic Expression

Developmentally children will show dramatic changes in their artistic expression between the ages of five and seven. Below are some examples:

- Children will begin drawing geometric symbols and then slowly change to symbolic interpretations.
- As children mature they will add more details to their pictures.
- Children will often exaggerate or omit certain features; later features will become more representative of proportions.
- Children will use color without regard for its logical application. As they mature colors will be used in stereotypical ways—yellow sun and green grass.

CREATING THE SETTING FOR THE PARK

Starting the frieze

Organize children to work in small groups. Each group will make a component for the frieze. Explain to children that they will be creating a frieze (mural) of the setting for the park. First they will do the setting and then in a later episode add the features they decide are important for the park.

Customize Creating the Park

You may want children to make a visual representation of the park other than the frieze, such as a three-dimensional tabletop display. Have children work on their features at their desks. This will help you manage the number of children working on the main display at any one time.

Organizing the Work

There are a number of ways children can accomplish their work on the frieze. Here's one method for organizing children's work.

Step 1 Arrange children into groups. Divide the frieze into thirds horizontally and have three groups each create that section of the frieze. Pencil in the major features to keep the landscape consistent and in proportion.

Step 2 Once children are organized into groups, discuss effective ways to work together in their group using the Activity Guide 1A, *Working in a Group*, Part I. Then let them begin work. The frieze should be made from the perspective of someone looking down on and across the setting.

Step 3 Demonstrate techniques for making various features. Tissue paper--crumpled to give texture--works well for making trees and bushes. Torn paper works well for hills. Tissue paper can also be twisted to make branches of trees and bushes.

Step 4 The creek group can work at the frieze while others work at their desks making their components. Place clouds in the background, trees and bushes along the creek and other trees and bushes throughout the rest of the setting. Outline where the major features will be placed on the frieze.

Some children will finish their work before others. When groups finish, they can work with those who still have more to do--trees and bushes will often require more time.

Author Note Organizing the groups

In Downing Hall's class four groups were organized to make the following: creek (water and rocks), sky (sun, cloud, birds, butterflies), fish for stream, and trees.

Connect Creative Arts

- Discuss how items such as trees and bushes in the foreground should be larger than those in the background. This will create the illusion that background items are farther away than those in the foreground. (scale/proportion)
- Trees can be made by attaching crushed tissue paper or curled strips of construction paper to pencils. (texture)
- Paper trees folded down the middle will look more three-dimensional. (perspective)

Connect Language Arts

As children listen to the description and create the frieze, they will:

- listen for information. (listening skills)
- imagine how the setting looks. (visualize)
- create a visual representation based on a written description. (personal/creative response)

Guiding child work

As children work on the park setting, try to restrict your role to asking questions about children's various tasks in which they are engaged. Children should begin to feel ownership for the setting and make decisions about the features. If children create features that won't work well in the park, those features can be used later as problem-solving opportunities. For example, a parking lot may crowd play areas so the children will need to decide the trade offs for keeping the parking lot in its present location, reducing its size or moving it to another location. As children work, assess their

cooperative group skills. Help them, as necessary, talk about how to listen to one another's ideas, take turns, disagree respectfully, and compromise to solve problems.

Author Note Valuing the conversation

“As children work through the various tasks associated with making their frieze, important conversations will occur that reflect children’s efforts to make sense of new information, solve problems, and work collaboratively as they construct shared understandings. This is one of the valuable features of the *Storypath* approach.”

Once the frieze is completed, have each group complete Part II of the Activity Guide 1A, *Working in a Group*. If appropriate, as a class review how children worked together in their groups.

- √ Assessing children’s frieze Children should be able to
- use information from description and class discussion in making their section of the frieze.
 - make appropriate objects and place them in the appropriate places.
 - carefully prepare the frieze.
 - work effectively with their group by demonstrating one or more of the following behaviors: staying on task, taking turns, disagreeing respectfully and making compromises.

CONCLUDING EPISODE 1

Discussing the frieze

Once the frieze is complete, initiate a discussion of the park setting and the process of making it.

- What do you like about the park setting?
- Why is this a good place for a park?
- What were the benefits of all of us working together on the park setting?

Creating a word bank

Have the whole class brainstorm a list of words about the park setting. Write the words on cards and display them. The words can be stored in a pocket chart and then children can take the cards to their desks later to use them as they write.

Connect Language Arts

As optional activities for using the word bank, children can:

- write a word on one side of a card and picture of the word on the other.
- sort the words according to letter-sound relationships-for example, words that have the same beginning sound or the same vowel sound. (phonics)
- put the words in alphabetical order. (alphabetical order)
- sort the words according to function. (e.g. group words such as action words or descriptive words)

Writing about the park setting

As a whole class, have the children suggest ideas for writing about the park setting. As a whole group activity have the children suggest sentences that describe the park setting and display them around the frieze. Another option is to have children draw a picture of their park and write a sentence about their picture and display.



Letter of Invitation

(Date)

(Address)

Dear Children,

I would like to invite you in _(Name of teacher)_ class to become park planners for our community. Your class has been selected because it is my understanding that you are hard workers, willing to learn, and can imagine a park “just right” for our community. The first task is to plan the park. The second task is to create the park. Both tasks will involve a lot of work and it will be important that you can work well together. There will be problems to be solved along the way. I believe that you are the perfect class for such a project. Please let me know if you will accept the invitation.

Sincerely,

(Make up a name and title or select a name and title of someone in your community)



Letter of Response

(Date)

(Address)

Dear Children,

Thank you for agreeing to plan and create the park. I am very pleased that you have decided to do this work. The place that we are planning for the park is insert name of location for the park.

(Insert appropriate description or use the one below.)

This is a vacant lot on (name of street). The place is now empty and has a few trees and bushes. There is a creek that enters one corner of the lot and travels through the lot. People of all ages will make use of the park. I want the park to be a place where people can enjoy the plants and flowers, have a place to play and also have picnics with their families. I hope you can plan a place that will meet these uses.

I need your plans by (date).

Sincerely,

(Use the same name as in the previous letter.)



Working In a Group

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I

Below are some things to do to work together to make your section of the frieze.

1. Listen to each other's ideas.
2. Share the work.
3. Help each other.
4. Do careful work.
5. Work together to solve problems.

Part II

After you have made your section of the frieze, decide how well you have worked together. Circle the box that best tells how you did.

			We listened to each other's ideas.
			We shared the work.
			We helped each other.
			We did careful work.
			We worked together to solve problems.

EPISODE 2: CREATING THE CHARACTERS—THE PARK PLANNERS

Imagining the Children as Park Planners		
Children discuss the features of a park.	Materials Grouping Schedule	None Whole class Approximately 30 minutes
Creating the Park Planners		
Children imagine themselves as park planners and the tools they need.	Materials Grouping Schedule	Activity Guide 2A, <i>Figure</i> , p. 23 various colors of construction and tissue paper yarn/wall paper and fabric scraps colored markers/crayons/scissors glue/masking tape Optional: wool fiber for hair Optional: large sheet of construction or poster paper for mounting figure with tools Optional: Magazine and newspaper ads for tools used in parks Children work individually to create themselves as park planners 1-2 hours. The time can be divided over several days
Concluding Episode 2		
Children introduce themselves as park planners and describe the tools they will use.	Materials Grouping Schedule	None Whole class, individuals for introductions 1-2 hours spread over a few days

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Speak in complete thoughts in class
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions

Social Skills

- Participate in organizing, planning, and making decisions in making themselves as park planners

Critical Thinking Skills

- Organize ideas from class discussion in new ways to imagine themselves as park planners

IMAGINING THE CHILDREN AS PARK PLANNERS

Introducing the children as characters

Based on the kind of park children will be planning, begin a discussion of park planners by asking, “What does a park planner do?” Lead a brainstorming session and create a chart to record children’s responses to each question and to list the jobs/skills needed to create the park. The list can form a word bank that the children can refer to later when they draw or write about their jobs as park planners.

- What will be in the park? (Guide the discussion to the kind of park you’ve decided children will create.)
- What kind of play equipment will we need in the park? (Swings, seesaws, sand box, wading pool, etc.)
- What kind of trees do we want in our park? (Discuss with children trees that lose their leaves [deciduous] and trees that keep their leaves [coniferous] along with tree names that are familiar. Later children can discuss tree varieties in more detail.)
- What kind of flowers do we want in our park? (List the varieties that children know—later they can expand on their list.)
- Why are trees, plants, and flowers important to a park? (Provides shade, a place for birds and other animals, healthy environment, and looks pleasing to those who visit)
- What do we need to know about the creek that is in our park? (How to keep it clean and safe; how to keep it within its bank; how to cross the creek—bridge)

Customize Word banks

To assist with pre-reading skills, draw simple pictures with each word to help children associate the written word with its meaning.

Based on the responses to the above questions, ask children what they will need to know to create their park. Guide the discussion so that children list such things as knowing about play equipment, kinds of trees and plants, how to organize the park with the different features and how to work cooperatively.

- What kind of tools will we need to do our jobs? (Prompt children so they consider such tools as tape measures, shovels, rakes, buckets, trowels, gloves, hammers, nails, levels, etc.)
- What kind of clothes do we need to wear to do our job? (Guide the discussion so that children understand the concept of “work clothes” and why people would wear such clothing for work in a park.)

Author Note Introducing new vocabulary

“This is an ideal time to introduce new vocabulary to children in the discussion of tools. These items are concrete and introduced in context increases their understanding. If possible, display examples of the tools.”

CREATING THE PARK PLANNERS

Have each child draw him or herself as a park planner on a large sheet of paper. Discuss with children the appropriate clothing a person would wear for working in a park. Alternatively children can use the paper cut-out shape on Activity Guide 2A, *Figure* and dress the figure appropriately with pants, shirt, and hat or simply color in the details and glue the figure onto a large sheet of paper.

Author Note Making the Park Planners

“Starting with the visual representation of themselves allows children to imagine who they are in the role of park planners. As children are working, ask questions such as: Are you dressed for work? What tools will you need to do your job? Are you ready to go to work?”

- √ Assessing children as park planners Children should be able to
- follow directions for making character.
 - make/draw appropriate clothing.
 - add appropriate details to the figure.
 - demonstrate care in making figure.

Identifying the tools for the job

Explain that in order to work as park planner, they will need tools. Have children consider the tools they will need for their job referring to the previous discussion. Then ask each child to add at least four tools they will need for the job. Children can either draw pictures of the tools they need or cut out pictures from magazines or newspaper ads and glue onto their figure. To reinforce literacy skills, write the names of tools next to the visual representations. Display each figure labeled with child’s name.

Author Note Tools

“Children may identify dump trucks, bulldozers and other machinery for building the park. As long as they can logically explain how the machinery is to be used allow these ideas to stand and don’t be surprised if they have imaginative ideas for tools to do their jobs!”

Customize Adapting the activity

If you have already had children make figures of themselves prior to this *Storypath* and if those figures are still displayed, you could discuss with children what are the tools of park planners and have them make one or two examples to attach to their figure. Then follow with the writing activity that concludes this episode. The purpose of this episode is to help children imagine themselves as park planners and builders.

CONCLUDING EPISODE 2

Preparing for discussion of park planners

Explain to children that they will introduce themselves as park planners over the next several days so that everyone will know about them and the tools they need for their job.

Ask them to identify something they would be good at in creating the park. (Keep notes on their ideas so you can use them when assigning jobs in the creation the of the park.)

Model an introduction for children. One way to help children focus their introductions is to discuss how they will use their tools in making the park.

Have children practice their introductions with a partner before presenting to the class. Remind children to keep their introductions brief—talk about just one tool, and tell them that classmates may ask questions about their tools after the introductions.

Customize Pacing

To sustain children’s interest, spread children’s introductions over several days. Children could move on to Episode 3, in which they begin to plan for the plants and flowers in the park.

Connect Language Arts

Practicing and giving the introductions provides a natural context for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. (speaking/listening)

Introducing the park planners

Have children introduce themselves to the whole class, making sure their figure is easy to see during the introduction. After each introduction, encourage children to ask questions of the presenter. Ask questions yourself to stimulate children’s thinking. For example, "Do you work well with others? Are you excited about creating a park? Why? How will your tool help you do your job?"

As children give their introductions, listen for information that you can weave into the unit later. For example, a child may say that he likes to make things. Use that attribute as a reference point for a role play for building a swing set.

- √ Assessing children’s introductions Children should be able to:
- relate information about themselves as park planners in a focused way.
 - demonstrate they have practiced their introductions.
 - answer questions about themselves as park planners and logically explain how their tools will be used in creating the park.

Author Note Children’s Questions About Park Planners

“We’ve found that children are much more interested in the introductions once they understand they can ask questions. As children answer the questions, they strive to give responses that make sense in the context of the story, thus developing ownership for the experience.”

Reflecting on the park planners

After all the park planners have been introduced, have children respond to questions such as these:

- What are some things the park planners have in common? (At a minimum, all are park planners, but other similarities will be apparent after the introductions.)
- In what ways are the park planners different?

Facilitating role plays

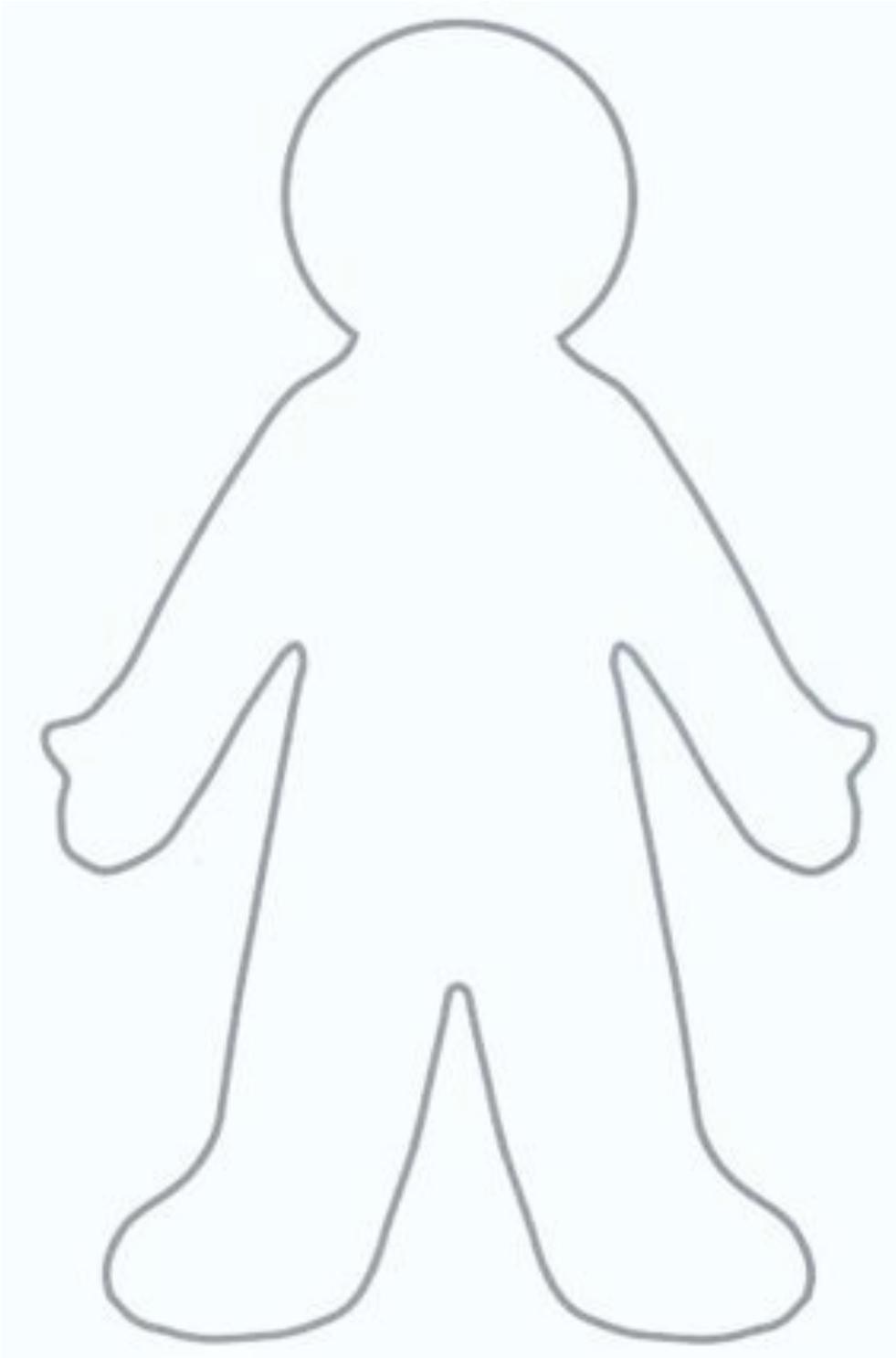
At various times during the *Storypath*, you will want to do role plays with children so they continue to think about themselves as park planners. Watch for opportunities that would allow a few children to move into the role of park planners to react or respond to a situation. An event that is directly from their own story is important to connect children to the *Storypath*.

A few children at a time can participate while others watch. Keep the role plays short--about three minutes. You can set the scene for the role play, ask a question to start the role play, or pose a problem. For example, children can discuss how they use their tool in building the park. You can prompt the role play by saying something like, "Chase, why did you decide to plant this tree in this spot?" Then prompt children as necessary to move the role play along.

The first few times children are involved in the role play, select children who you believe would be good models for others who participate later.

Connect Drama

The type of unscripted role playing suggested here deepens children's understanding of the story and boosts motivation and commitment and provides you with concrete evidence of children's understanding. (improvisation)



EPISODE 3: BUILDING CONTEXT—INVESTIGATING PLANTS FOR THE PARK

<p>Introducing the Episode Children learn about plants.</p>	<p>Materials Grouping Schedule</p>	<p>Teaching Master 3-1, <i>What Plants Need to Grow</i>, p. 31 Whole class Approximately 20-30 minutes</p>
<p>Investigating plants Children carry out investigations to help them decide what plants need to grow.</p>	<p>Materials Grouping Schedule</p>	<p>Teaching Master 3-2, <i>Making Observations</i>, p. 32 Science materials are needed for Experiment 1, 2, and 3 Materials are listed for each investigation Read the experiments to get the specifics for each experiment based on your classroom needs Children work in pairs or small groups to conduct the investigations 2-3 hours, can be spread over several days</p>
<p>Concluding Episode 3 Children decide on the plants for their park and reflect on their decisions.</p>	<p>Materials Grouping Schedule</p>	<p>Optional: Plant and seed catalogues Scissors/glue Construction/tissue/wallpaper Whole class 1-2 hours</p>

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions
- Suggest solutions for problems

Writing Processes

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing

Culture and Social Interaction

- Demonstrate an understanding of how people interact with their physical environment

Geography

- Identify how park planners create the flora and fauna to make the park an enjoyable place for their community
- Explain how the flora and fauna will change the physical environment of the park

Social Skills

- Organize, plan, and make decisions to conduct investigations and plan for the park

Critical Thinking

- Organize ideas and information from investigations to make decisions about the park

INTRODUCING THE EPISODE

Setting the stage

In this episode, children investigate how plants grow and make plans for the flora and fauna for their park. Explain that the park planners now need to think about how they can make their park a good place for plants to grow. Ask children what they think plants need to grow. Guide the discussion using questions such as these:

- What does a plant need to grow?
- What happens if a plant doesn't get enough water?
- What happens if people step on the plants?
- What do we need to know to be sure that our park is a good place for plants?

Use Teaching Master 3-1, *What Plants Need to Grow*, to guide the discussion. The information to the right is technical information for you. Explain to the children that they are going to investigate how plants grow.

Author Note Pacing the Episode

“Since the investigations require time for the plants to germinate and grow, continue on to the next episode to maintain momentum in the *Storypath*.”

INVESTIGATING PLANTS

Setting up the investigations

In Experiment 1, children observe how water helps seeds germinate or grow. In Experiment 2, children observe how water travels up the stem of the plant to feed the plant nutrients. In Experiment 3, children observe over time how plants grow. You can choose to do one, two or all three investigations

Customize Managing the Investigations

You can organize the investigations in several ways. One option is to model each step of the investigation and then let children work in pairs to complete each step. Another option is to set up work stations and have children rotate through each station in groups of three or four. For young children, an adult helper or “buddy” from an upper grade will ensure that the process will go smoothly.

Experiment 1: Investigating seed germination

Materials

Clear plastic glasses, four for each pair of students

Paper towels, two sheets for each pair

Beans— about four—for each pair

(Note: Use lima or navy bean or lentil seed packets. Another option is scarlet runner beans as they grow very large very quickly. Be sure to check if the seeds are old because they are less likely to germinate. An overheated or dry room can also cause the seeds not to germinate.)

Water pitcher or eye dropper to water plants for each pair

Procedure

Remind children that they are planting new plants for their *Storypath* park. Ask them what plants need in order to grow. Explain that they are going to investigate whether seeds really need water in order to start growing (germinate). Make a classroom chart to record daily observations.

Step 1 Instruct children to fold a paper towel and place it in a clear plastic glass. Do the same thing for each of the two glasses.

Step 2 Have children place lima beans between the paper towel and the plastic glass.

Step 3 Add water to one of the glasses.

Step 4 Gently place one empty plastic glass inside the other with the paper towel and beans between the two. Placing one glass inside the other will hold the beans in place and make it easier to observe the germination. Do this also for the one without water.

Step 5 Set the glasses beside each other and observe what happens to the lima beans over several days. As children inspect their beans, have them describe the changes they see to the bean with water compared to the one without. As a whole group activity, write about their observations each day--Day 1, Day 2, and so forth.

Experiment 2: Investigating how plants use water

Materials

Clear plastic glasses tall enough to support a celery stalk, two for each pair

Celery stalks, two for each pair—get them as fresh as possible

Red food coloring—a good amount

Pitchers of water enough to fill one glass (for each pair) about half full

A ruler for each pair for measuring the absorption of water over a period of time

Optional: Digital camera to record and display the change over time

Procedure

Explain to children that the park planners need to know about plants and how they grow. They may have discovered from Experiment 1 that plants need water to help them grow—they should have concluded this from Experiment 1. Ask children to consider how water moves from the soil up into the rest of the plant. Then explain they are going to investigate how plants use water. For this investigation, have the partners work through each of the steps with you guiding the process step-by-step for the whole class.

Step 1 Have children fill one plastic glass about half full with water. Leave the other one empty.

Step 2 Instruct children to put 8 to 10 drops of red food coloring into the water. Explain that the food coloring in the water will help them determine how the water travels up the plant. (If the water is clear, they won't be able to see how the plant absorbs the water.)

Step 3 Place one celery stalk in the glass with water with the base of the stalk at the bottom of the glass. Place the other stalk in the empty glass.

Step 4 Have children measure the red color as it moves up the celery stalk. Children should make their observations at the same time each day over a period of three days. Have the children observe what happens to the celery stalk with no water. After a couple of days, have children add water to the empty glass. Ask children to observe what happens.

Explain that plants have roots as do celery stalks. The roots in the ground take up water from the soil, then the water travels up the stalk tubes—like a drinking straw that can suck up water. Have children think about other plants and trees they might have in their park and what would happen if they did not have enough water.

Making observations

Display Teaching Master 3-2, *Making Observations* to discuss how scientists make careful observations to identify features of the plants they study. As a whole class show children how to complete the form related to measurements. Discuss with children why it is important to measure the celery stalk at the same time every day.

Experiment 3: Investigating how plants grow

Materials

Newspapers to spread on tables where children will work
Zinnia or marigold seeds, package-dated for current year
Small package of potting soil (sterilized)
Teaspoons, one for each pair
Plastic cups or egg cartons, so each child has one container for seeds.
Additional egg cartons to serve as trays for holding and transporting individual egg holders
Water for watering plants
Medicine (eye) droppers or spray bottles (Children can share these in groups of four)
Label cups with children's names
Gallon size plastic bags with ties to hold a whole egg carton or five small plastic cups

To transplant plants for taking home For each child

- Container that holds about 3 cups of potting soil
- Pebbles for bottom of container
- 3 cups potting soil
- Bags to carry home the plants

Procedure

Step 1 Have children fill their egg cartons almost full with potting soil—each child should have his/her own individual egg carton holder.

Step 2 Instruct children to add water by using a dropper or spray bottle to dampen soil. (The dropper or spray bottle works well because it keeps the soil from becoming over watered.)

Step 3 Distribute seeds—four to five for each child—and have them place the seeds in the egg carton holder. Cover with a teaspoon of soil, press firmly and water again.

Step 4 Have children label their plant with their name and place the plant holders in the additional egg cartons—to keep the individual plant holders upright and easily transportable.

Place the cartons in plastic bags and fasten ends with tie closures. Keep the cartons away from drafts, radiators, and direct sunlight. As soon as tiny shoots appear, remove plastic covering, move to sunny spot and keep soil damp with spray or dropper—usually every other day for watering. Cover plants at night to keep the moisture in the soil. If children over water their plants, use a paper towel to absorb the excess water.

Step 5 As a whole class activity record the seedlings' growth. Ask children what plants need to grow. Discuss the idea that plants need air, water, suitable temperature, sunlight, and soil. Explain that soil provides the nutrients to the plant. Soil is made from crumbled rocks and dead plants and insects.

As leaves appear, provide moderate indirect light, with a northern exposure if possible. After a second pair of leaves appears, give the plants a few hours of direct sunlight. Children can take the plants home to grow. Transplant the plant into a container that will hold about three cups of soil. Punch a hole in the bottom (for drainage) add a layer of small pebbles at the bottom, soil and then carefully place the plant into the soil, press soil firmly, add water.

Connect Mathematics

Measure the distance that water travels up the celery stalk (Investigation 2). Measure plant growth (Investigation 3). (measurement)

Connect Science

As children carry out the investigations in this episode, they

- determine the effect of air, water, temperature, sunlight, and soil on plants. (experiment)
- observe outcomes. (observe)

Connect Language Arts

Children learn the vocabulary associated with this episode as the new words are contextualized. Using the technical vocabulary confirms for children that they are capable of handling this information. (specialized/technical vocabulary)

Introducing new vocabulary

Children will be exposed to new vocabulary related to plants. Before children begin their work or at the point when they have the need to know, plan mini-lessons to reinforce their understanding of the new terminology. Then add these terms to the word bank:

- absorb** to soak up
germinate starting to grow
investigate to look at carefully to get information

nutrients food that is needed by plants and animals to grow

- √ Assessing investigations Children should be able to
- Follow directions.
 - Take turns in conducting the investigation.
 - Make inferences about lack of water for plants (Investigation 1 and 2).
 - Explain why air, water, temperature, sunlight, and soil is important to plant growth.
 - Appropriately use the terms absorb, germinate, investigate, and nutrients to explain plant growth.
 - Draw conclusions from their observations of plant growth.

Customize Science Investigations

There are many effective approaches to studying how plants grow; substitute these investigations for others of your own choosing.

CONCLUDING EPISODE 3

Planning for plants and trees in the park

Call a meeting of the park planners and explain that they need to consider what kind of plants they will want in their park. Have them look at their frieze and consider the best places for the plants and trees. If the setting already has plants and trees, adapt by asking if others should be added to the park. Use such questions as follows to guide the discussion:

- In our park do we need to plant flowers? Plants? Trees? Why or why not?
- What do we need to decide if we are going to grow plants in our park? (Children should be able to recall that plants need air, water, suitable temperature, sunlight, and soil for optimal growth.)
- What kinds of plants would be best for our park? (Guide children to think about the kinds of plants that are best for your location so that they understand that plants have adapted to specific climates, e.g. palm trees do not grow on the North Pole. Explain that some plants require warmer climates and more sunlight and water than others so that should guide their selection based on the local environment.)
- Where is the best place to put plants in the park? (Guide the discussion so that children consider the size of the plant related to its location and not putting it in a place where it could be trampled by people or pets.)
- Where is the best place to put trees in the park? (Children should consider the size of trees when they reach maturity, whether deciduous or conifers trees would be better—perhaps both have a place. The aesthetic beauty and shade value should also be discussed.)

Customize Invite a gardener

Invite a gardener to share specialized knowledge with the children.

Locating plants for the park (optional)

After the discussion, have children, working with a partner, look at plant catalogues suitable to your location and select two plants and two trees they would like to have in their park. These can be cut out of the catalogue and glued to a sheet of paper. Children can share why they chose the particular plants and trees. To reinforce the concepts from the earlier discussion ask about size, appropriateness to local environment, and the aesthetic value in the sharing process. (If children are able they can copy the name of the plant and tree onto the paper.) Display their work around the frieze.

Creating the plants and trees for the park

Have children make artistic representations of flowers, plants, and trees they want in their park. Guide the process by giving some size limitations so all of their work can be displayed. This is easiest done by limiting the size of paper for making the various plants. All children should make something for the frieze, then hold a meeting to decide the placement of the various flowers, plants and trees. Guide the placement so children think about suitable locations for their contribution.

When children have completed this process, take time to reflect on the experience. Ask such questions as:

- How do these flowers, plants and trees make our park a nicer place?
- Would people like to visit our park now that we have added these things?
- What will we need to do to keep our new flowers, plants, and trees growing?

Developing reading and writing processes

Children can write about their investigations as a whole group or individually. Reading and writing processes are developed when they

- copy sentences onto sheets of paper and illustrate them. (creative response)
- practice reading the sentences on their own. (independent reading)
- take sentences home to read and discuss with their families. (applying understanding)

✓ Assessing children's sentences Children should be able to:

- use the word bank as a resource for writing sentences.
- create simple sentences.
- create sentences that relate to scientific investigations.



What Plants Need to Grow

<h1>Air</h1>	<p>Plants take two gases from the air: carbon dioxide and oxygen. Carbon dioxide is used for photosynthesis. Oxygen is fuel for energy that helps plants breathe.</p>
<h1>Water</h1>	<p>Minerals in the water help plants grow. Water is taken in through the plant's roots and carried up to the leaves.</p>
<h1>Temperature</h1>	<p>Plants require a specific temperature range. Some plants can grow in very hot climates, some in temperate, and some in cold. Over many years plants have adapted and thrived in different climates.</p>
<h1>Sunlight</h1>	<p>Most plants need sunlight to grow. The sunlight converts a plant's food into usable energy to help it grow.</p>
<h1>Soil</h1>	<p>Soil helps the plant to grow by providing nutrients (or minerals). The soil also holds the plant erect.</p>



Making Observations

Date	Time	Measurement	Amount of change (from previous day)

EPISODE 4: BUILDING CONTEXT—A PLACE TO PLAY

Introducing the Episode		
Discuss with children the role of parks for play and recreational activities.	Materials Grouping Schedule	None Whole class About 20-30 minutes
Creating the Play Area for the Park		
Children create the play area.	Materials Grouping Schedule	Various colors of construction colored markers/crayons/glue/glue/ masking tape/scissors pipe cleaners/yarn/cotton balls Children work individually or in pairs About 1 hour
Concluding Episode 4		
Children share their contributions to the play areas and then write about their park.	Materials Grouping Schedule	Play and sports equipment created by children Individuals sharing to whole class About 1-2 hour spread over a couple of days

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Focus on illustrations for details
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions
- Suggest solutions for problems

Reading Processes

- Use pictures and text to convey meaning
- Know and use letters and their sounds to identify and confirm text
- Recognize some words in different contexts

Writing Processes

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing
- Draft simple sentences reflecting own experiences and understanding

Culture and Social Interaction

- Identify ways different groups use play and sports equipment in the park
- Demonstrate an understanding of how people interact with their physical environment to use the park

Geography.

- Identify how people create parks to reflect the wants and needs of their community

Social Skills

- Organize, plan, and make decisions for the play area
- Work with others to decide on the features of the park

Critical Thinking Skills

- Use criteria to make judgments about the play equipment and sporting activities
- Organize the park to meet the needs of the community

INTRODUCING THE EPISODE

Introducing the play area

Ask, “Where might people play when they come to the park?” Use questions such as the ones that follow to stimulate thinking about this topic. Record their ideas so they can be used as a reference in the design of the play area.

- What kinds of play equipment might we want in our park?
- Where in the park might people play?
- What kind of play would people like to do? (Begin by asking children to think about different age groups and what they like to do. Then guide the discussion so children consider recreational activities as well as play equipment such as swings, teeter totters, and sand box—whatever ideas children have are fine as long as they are realistic to what would be appropriate for your community.)
- How would the play area look? (Have children look at the frieze to decide on appropriate places for the play areas. The setting may dictate the kinds of activities that would take place in the park. Guide the discussion so that children consider the setting realistically.)

Author note: Imagining

“The purpose of this discussion is to encourage children to imagine the park and how it would be used by the community. Encourage them to elaborate on their ideas so that they think more deeply and extend their understanding about how people use parks.”

Connect Language Arts

Add to the word bank the terms for the various features of the play/sports area. Yarn can be used to link the words to the items on the frieze to reinforce learning.

CREATING THE PLAY AREA FOR THE PARK

Organizing the process

As children create the play area, make sure everyone has a role in its design. Creating the play area provides children with a concrete space in which to place themselves and also builds social skills as children work together planning and designing the play area. As you watch children working together, you may want to use the Social Skills Rubric at the end of the unit to help organize your observations.

There are a variety of ways to organize the play area. Here is one way to manage the process: Distribute sheets of paper cut to the size that will keep the features of the play area to scale and have children draw the features. Each child should have a feature to contribute to the play area. Alternatively, children can make three-dimensional features for the setting. These features can be attached to the frieze or set on a table in front of the frieze. Three-dimensional features will take more time and you will need to give the children ideas for constructing their equipment.

As children are working, monitor their cooperative work and design process by asking questions such as: “Do you think your swing will be popular with young children? Who

will want to use your play equipment? Will children have to take turns when playing on the ‘teeter totter’? How can children play safely on your ‘slide’?”

CONCLUDING EPISODE 4

Sharing the play features

Once the features are completed, have children share their features with the class. Children who worked together on specific features should practice presenting together. To help children focus their presentations, have them discuss these two things as they share their features:

- Name of feature (football field, goal posts, swing, slide, etc.)
- The people who most likely will use what they have made

Give children a chance to ask questions after each presentation. You may want the presentations to take place over several days to maintain interest.

- √ Assessing children’s presentations Children should be able to
- relate information about the feature in a focused way.
 - use the feature to illustrate key points.
 - use terms in context.

Author Note: Learning Process

“As a result of the questioning process, children may consider new information about their play feature and may decide to modify the feature accordingly. As the *Storypath* progresses, the park may be modified to accommodate new information.”

When the presentations are complete, have the park planners hold a meeting to decide the placement of the various features. One child can lead the discussion or you can take that role. Ask, “Where are we going to place our play equipment?” As the discussion gets underway remind children about working together to decide where to place the various features. These guidelines work well:

- Everyone has a chance to share.
- You can disagree with someone’s idea in a nice way.
- You can compromise.

Reflecting on group skills

Deciding on the placement of play features is an activity that develops cooperative learning and listening skills. Have children reflect on their cooperative groups skills as a whole class using such questions as follows:

- Did everyone have an opportunity to share their ideas?
- What did you do when you disagreed with someone?
- What are some respectful ways you can tell someone you disagree with them?
- What are some ways to work together cooperatively?
- What could you do better next time when you work with other park planners?

Writing and reading about the play areas

As a whole group activity have children dictate sentences about their park. Write the sentences so they can read about their park as a whole class activity thereby fostering their pre-reading skills. Simple picture clues can be added to support children's reading.

EPISODE 5: CRITICAL INCIDENT: GRAFFITI IN THE PARK

Introducing the Problem		
Children are introduced to the problem of graffiti in the park.	Materials Grouping Schedule	Teacher created graffiti for the frieze Whole class About 15 minutes
Responding to the Problem		
Children hold a meeting to make rules for the park.	Materials Grouping Schedule	Activity Guide 5A, <i>Rules for Our Park</i> , p. 40 Whole class 30-40 minutes, depending on how long it takes children decide on the rules for their park
Concluding Episode 4		
Children reflect on the meeting.	Materials Grouping Schedule	None Whole class About 20 minutes

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Focus on illustrations for details
- Speak in complete thoughts in class
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions
- Suggest solutions for problems

Reading Processes

- Understand that pictures and text convey meaning
- Show an awareness of print in the environment
- Know and use letters and their sounds to identify and confirm text
- Recognize some words in different contexts

Writing Processes

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing
- Draft simple sentences reflecting own experiences and understanding

Culture and Social Interaction

- Demonstrate understanding of how people interact with their physical environment and social conditions by establishing rules for the park

Geography

- Identify how people create environments that reflect wants and needs in their community

Civic Competence

- Practice civic discussion and participation using a meeting format

Social Skills

- Organize, plan, make decisions, and take action in group settings to make rules for the park
- Work with others to decide on an appropriate rules

Critical Thinking Skills

- Define issues or problems related to the park and then make decisions on how to make the park a good place to visit

INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM

Planning for the Episode

Before you begin this episode, select a controversy—the episode is organized around graffiti in the park. You may decide to select another controversy that is relevant to your own community and can be adapted for this *Storypath*. You want the specific example to result in the need for children to work together to solve the problem. When selecting the controversy, consider the following:

- Is the incident logical to the storyline and does it allow for multiple solutions?
- Is the controversy developmentally appropriate?
- Will children have ownership for the problem and work in small or large groups to find a solution?
- How will parents and other community members react to the controversy?
- Does it develop understanding of respect, care for common spaces, and the skills of civic discourse?

Setting the stage

In this episode, children will need to think about how they will respond to graffiti in the park and the rules they will need to create for the park. While children are out of the room place graffiti in the park, being careful not to destroy a child's specific feature. When children enter the room, be prepared for a strong response from children. Once children have noticed the graffiti, suggest that the park planners need to meet to respond to the problem. Briefly engage children in a discussion of the graffiti by asking questions such as the following:

- Why do we need a meeting of the park planners?
- Why might someone put graffiti in the park?
- Why is it important to respect our park?

Author note Concept Development

“This episode provides the opportunity for children to think more deeply about such concepts as respect, responsibility, and most likely a new concept: common good. The park is a setting for everyone in the community to enjoy.”

RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM

Calling a meeting

Before beginning the meeting discuss with children how meetings will be conducted:

- The leader is in charge of the meeting.
- Children raise their hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
- Children listen respectfully to each other.
- Everyone has an opportunity to speak.

If possible have a child lead the meeting, brief the child on how to conduct a meeting of the park planners. Remind him or her that the goals of the meeting are to:

- Decide how to respond.
- Write rules for the park.

Conducting the meeting

As much as possible, let children manage the meeting. Grappling with responsibilities, fairness, and ways to work together effectively are important issues for children to resolve. Act as facilitator, moving the meeting along and assisting when necessary. When children make rules for the park, challenge their ideas so that they consider fairness and the feasibility of the rule. As the park planners discuss the problem and rules for the park, make a list of rules. You will need to help them refine the rules—keep them simple and clear.

- √ Assessing children’s meeting skills Children effectively participate in a meeting when they
- listen carefully.
 - contribute relevant ideas and suggestions related to the issue and rules.
 - reach a consensus on the issue raised.

Author Note Extending the learning

“As a result of the meeting, children may decide that they need to add more features to their park such as trash cans, bathrooms, drinking fountains, pathways, or fences. Based on time and learning needs, allow children to add such features to the park.”

Developing reading and writing activities

Have children write the rules on signs to practice their writing and reading skills. Use Activity Guide 5A, *Rules for Our Park* for their writing. Post the “signs” around the frieze.

Author note: Meeting skills

“In our experience, children will take the meeting very seriously and will respond thoughtfully. Teachers tell us that children often exceed their expectations by taking the problem seriously, listening carefully to each other, and offering relevant ideas.”

CONCLUDING EPISODE 5

Reflecting on the meeting

Have children discuss how successful they were at conducting the meeting and solving the problem. Use questions such as the ones below:

- What did you like about the meeting?
- How could we make the meeting better?
- Do you think we worked together to solve our problem?
- In what ways did we work well together?

EPISODE 6: CRITICAL INCIDENT BULLYING IN THE PARK

Introducing the Problem Children listen to a news report of bullying in the park.	Materials Grouping Schedule	Teaching Master 6-1, <i>News Article</i> , p. 45 Whole class Approximately 15-20 minutes
Preparing for the investigations Children meet to determine how to respond and then role play responses to bullying.	Materials Grouping Schedule	None Small groups Two or three 30-minute segments over a few days
Concluding Episode 6 Children reflect on their response to the critical incident.	Materials Grouping Schedule	None Whole class About one hour

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Speak in complete thoughts in class
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions
- Suggest solutions for problems

Reading Processes

- Understand that pictures and text convey meaning
- Show an awareness of print in the environment
- Know and use letters and their sounds to identify and confirm text
- Recognize some words in different contexts

Writing Processes

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing
- Draft simple sentences reflecting own experiences and understanding

Culture and Social Interaction

- Demonstrate an understanding of how people interact with their physical environment and social conditions to address bullying in the park

Civic Competence

- Identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation

Social Skills

- Organize, plan, make decisions, and take action in group settings regarding the bullying
- Work with others to decide on an appropriate course of action to respond to the bullying

Critical Thinking Skills

- Define issues or problems related to the park and then make decisions on how to make the park a safe place

INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM

Hearing and discussing a news report

In this episode, children will respond to a news article describing bullying by older kids in the park. With a sense of drama, read Teaching Master 6-1, *News Article*, to children. Call a meeting to discuss the news article and how the park planners might respond to it. Guide the discussion using questions such as these:

- Who is the article about?
- When did the event happen?
- Where did the event happen?
- What happened?
- What will happen to the park if older children continue to bully the younger children? (People will not visit the park, and it won't feel like a safe place.)
- Is there any way that the park planners can help?

Customize Reading the Article

You can add additional drama to the introduction of the bullying by copying the news article and pasting it onto your local newspaper. Then read the news item as though it appeared on the front page of the newspaper.

Author Note Addressing sensitive issues

“This critical incident provides you with an opportunity to link this particular situation--or one like it--to children's own experiences. Helping them to understand bullying allows you to address this issue without directly singling out particular children. See page 54 for more information about bullying.”

Connect Language Arts

When children listen to the news articles, they are learning that newspapers provide information about a current topic telling the reader about who, what, where and when.

RESPONDING TO THE NEWS ARTICLE

Conducting meeting

Suggest that the park planners meet to discuss how they will respond to the problem. If possible, have one of the children lead the meeting. Select a child that you believe will handle the responsibility well.

Remind the children how meetings are conducted:

- Talk one at a time.
- Wait to be called on.
- Before speaking, listen to each other.
- Be courteous.

Guiding the discussion and role plays

During the meeting, the children should believe that they are solving the problem and are in charge of the solution. To keep the discussion on track, you can ask questions such as: How do you think you should respond if someone is bullying you? On the following page

are suggestions for appropriate responses from *Skillstreaming in Early Childhood: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills* by Ellen McGinnis and Arnold P. Goldstein.

Based on the children's decisions, follow up with appropriate activities. Role play scenarios to help children practice how to respond. You should play the role of the bully. Reflect on the role plays to help children understand prosocial skills in responding to such situations. Explicitly labeling appropriate responses is especially important for children who lack skills in this area.

Using Brave Talk: Use a brave look—body posture and facial expression (not an angry or friendly look). Use a brave voice—slightly louder than a friendly voice, stating that you do not like what is happening.

Dealing with Teasing: Stop and think; try not to show you are angry. Say, “Please stop.” Walk away.

Knowing When to Tell: Decide if someone will get hurt. If no one will get hurt, use brave talk or deal with it as teasing. If someone will get hurt, tell an adult immediately.

Solving a Problem: Define the problem. Think of choices. Make a plan. Do it.

- √ Assessing children's participation Children effectively participate in a group meeting and role play when they
- listen carefully.
 - make suggestions that are consistent with the problem.
 - constructively question and evaluate the suggestions of others.
 - can provide appropriate responses for the situation through the role plays.

CONCLUDING EPISODE 6

Reflecting on the episode

Use questions such as the ones below to help children reflect on their experience:

- How well did we work together?
- What should we remember when we see people bullying others?
- Do you think the solution to the problem was a good one? Why or why not?

Adding to the word bank

Have children add to the word bank. Suggesting words that foster prosocial skills can help children develop a vocabulary for cooperation and negotiation. For example, the following words could be included: please, thank you, fair, share, take turns, friendly, and mistakes.

Writing about the critical incident

Children reflect on the critical incident by describing the problem and solution when they dictate sentences about the event. Refer them to the word bank for ideas. Write the

sentences on sheets of newsprint that can be displayed. You can read the sentences aloud to children, or they can read them as a choral reading or for independent practice.

Customize Extending the activity

Children can use other skills with sentences when they:

- copy the sentences onto sheets of paper and illustrate them. (creative response)
- practice reading the sentences on their own. (independent reading)
- take sentences home to read and discuss with their families. (applying understanding)

√ Assessing children's sentences Children should be able to:

- use the word bank as a resource for writing sentences.
- create simple sentences.
- create sentences that relate to the critical incident.



Problems in our local park

Yesterday it was reported that older children in the park were unwilling to let the younger children use the play equipment. While the younger children are patiently waiting for their turn on the play equipment, the older children first tell them they can have their turn and then won't let them. They often tease the younger children, telling them they will fall and hurt themselves so they can't use the play equipment. This is so unfair and hurtful.

This problem will be presented to the park planners to decide what to do. The park planners have worked hard to make this park a safe and friendly place for the community. What can be done?

EPISODE 7: CONCLUDING EVENT: DEDICATING THE PARK

Introducing the Concluding Event		
Children are introduced to the idea of a park dedication.	Materials	None
	Grouping	Whole class
	Schedule	About 20-30 minutes
Planning and Participating in the Dedication		
Children plan and participate in the dedication by preparing posters and speeches.	Materials	Poster paper, art supplies Food if a reception is planned
	Grouping	Small groups for making posters and speeches; whole class for dedication
	Schedule	1-2 hours, spread over several days
Concluding Episode 7		
Children reflect on the experience.	Materials	None
	Grouping	Whole class
	Schedule	30 minutes

Episode Objectives

Communication Processes—Listening/Observing/Speaking

- Listen for information
- Speak in complete thoughts in class
- Allow others to speak without unnecessary interruptions
- Contribute to group discussions

Reading Processes

- Understand that pictures and text convey meaning
- Show an awareness of print in the environment
- Know and uses letters and their sounds to identify and confirm text
- Recognize some words in different contexts

Writing Processes

- Communicate ideas and thoughts through writing
- Draft simple sentences reflecting own experiences and understanding

Culture and Social Interaction

- Identify ways groups celebrate an event—park dedication

Civic Competence

- Identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation

Social Skills

- Organize, plan, and make decisions to prepare for the park dedication
- Work with others to decide on the park dedication

Critical Thinking Skills

- Organize ideas in new ways

INTRODUCING THE CONCLUDING EVENT

Explain to children that the park will be dedicated to the community. Explain that a dedication is a ceremony or event to mark the official opening of something—in this case, the park. Use questions such as to stimulate thinking about the dedication.

- What might we do at the dedication? (If children are familiar with dedications in their own community, use those examples in the discussion.)
- Who might attend the dedication? (People who live in the community and use the park. Community officials such as the mayor or park officials. This is also an ideal time to invite family members to class.)
- Why do you think dedicating the park is an important activity?
- What shall we name the park? (Use examples from your own community to begin the discussion. However, you may have named the park earlier; if so simply remind children of their decision.)
- How do parks get their names? (Again, use examples from your own community—parks are often named for people who originally owned the land, someone important in the community, or a special event that has occurred.)

Customize Adapting the Episode

The purpose of this episode is to bring closure to the unit. With this goal in mind, adapt the episode as needed. Plan a suitable time for the dedication and decide if any special guests will be invited.

PLANNING AND PARTICIPATING IN THE DEDICATION

Planning for the dedication

Discuss with children what they might do to prepare for the dedication. Three possible activities are preparing posters announcing the dedication, making a sign with the park's name, and making speeches for the dedication. Two or three brief speeches are probably adequate with the remainder of the class preparing posters and signs. Make sure that each child has a role in some aspect of the dedication. A ribbon-cutting ceremony can also be planned.

Deciding on the park's name

Have a meeting to decide on the park's name. Based on the earlier discussion about how parks get their name, have children create a list of ideas. Have children suggest criteria for how to decide on the name. The criteria could include a name people will recognize and something significant to the community. When children determine the criteria, then the decision on the park's name will be based on the criteria and less likely to be based on a popularity contest. Once the name is decided, a small group of children can create a banner for the sign above or on the frieze.

Making posters

Discuss with children what kind of posters they might make for the dedication. Have them list ideas for what to put on the posters such as slogans, logos, or draw pictures of

the park. This discussion will also assist the children who give speeches with an opportunity to think about what they want to say.

Establishing criteria for the posters

Ask children, “What makes a good poster?” Guide the discussion so that children identify such criteria as:

- has a clear message about the park
- is colorful and uncluttered
- attracts attention
- is carefully prepared

√ Assessing children’s posters Use the criteria identified above.

Preparing Speeches

Briefly have children outline what they want to say about the importance of the park. If possible, have them write their speeches and then work with a partner, adult volunteer or older student to help them polish their delivery.

√ Assessing children’s speeches Speeches should

- demonstrate an appreciation for park.
- demonstrate knowledge of park features.
- be clear and demonstrate practice in delivery.

Participating in the dedication

Explain to children how a dedication is conducted. Point out that the dedication will be an important event. You may want to talk about how people dress to attend a dedication. Explain that there are usually welcoming statements, after which the speeches are delivered and the posters displayed. A ribbon-cutting ceremony concludes the dedication. A reception frequently follows a dedication.

Arrange for an adult to do the welcome and introduce the speeches, thank the speech-makers, comment on the posters, conclude the dedication with the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and invite guests to a reception.

Customize Inviting guests

Invite parents or other suitable adults to “attend the dedication” and ask questions of the participants. If you know someone in your area who is a local expert on parks, invite that person to make a brief speech along with the children.

Connect Language Arts

When children prepare and present speeches, they

- use details and facts to convey their message. (details/facts)
- use and understand terms related to parks. (vocabulary)
- speak for a variety of purposes. (speak to inform)

CONCLUDING EPISODE 7

Reflecting on the dedication

Use questions such as the ones that follow to discuss the dedication:

- What did you like best about the dedication?
- Why do you think people have dedications such as this one?
- Why is it important for communities to have parks?

Preparing for the synthesis of children's learning

Children have planned and created a park. They have investigated how plants grow and worked together to solve problems. Synthesis activities allow children the opportunity to demonstrate their level of understanding and help you assess what they have learned from the unit. On the following pages you will find a selection of synthesis activities for this experience.

Teaching Master
Parent Letter

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Your child will soon be starting an integrative unit to study the role of parks in our community and what makes a park a good place for people to visit. Your child will become a park planner to learn how plants grow, the kinds of play and recreational activities appropriate for a park and how to work with others to solve problems. Children will also be developing literacy skills as they talk, write and read about their experiences.

The teaching approach I will be using is called *Storypath*, which was originally developed in Scotland. This approach is built on the key principle that learning, to be meaningful, has to be memorable, and that we can use children's enthusiasm for story-making to teach important content and skills. Active learning, cooperation, critical thinking, and reflection are essential components of the process. As the *Storypath* develops, children will gain a sense of ownership for their learning as they tackle the problems presented.

As events unfold, ask your child to share with you what is happening in the *Storypath*. You may find that they will want to learn more about particular topics at home by discussing the parks they have visited or the kinds of features they would like in a park.

You are welcome to visit our classroom during our *Storypath* time. You will be pleased to see children confronting important issues that relate to how parks are created and used and how communities come together to solve problems. I hope you will discuss these experiences with your child. At the conclusion of the unit, we will dedicate the park; I hope you can visit our classroom for that event.

Sincerely,

THE PARK

SYNTHESIS OPPORTUNITIES

The following synthesizing activities offer your children the opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned in this unit. These activities are also powerful assessment tools for you because they're multimodal. They allow for the variances in children's strengths and learning styles. They also allow you to assess children on a variety of subjects on a number of different levels.

1. A Story about the Park

Activity

Children create a story based on their experience in the *Storypath* using a sequence of at least six pictures or pictures and text. Provide children with these instructions:

- Make pictures showing what happened in the *Storypath* starting from the beginning to the end.
- Tell your story using at least six pictures or pictures and words.
- Include information in your story about what is in the park and the problems that had to be solved.

Criteria for Assessment

- The story sequence is accurate to the *Storypath*.
- The pictures and/or text tells about the park.
- The problems are shown in pictures and/or words.
- The information is well-organized and demonstrates careful preparation.

2. An Interview about the Park

Activity

Have an older student or adult interview the child about *The Park Storypath*. Provide the interviewer with these questions and criteria so learning can be assessed.

- Where is your park located?
- What special features are in your park?
- Can you name one problem that you had in the park?
- How did you solve the problem?
- What do you like best about the park? Why?

Criteria

- The learner can explain where the park is located.
- At least one special feature is named—play area, plants, or other feature that was included in the park.
- One problem is identified and the learner can explain how the class responded to the problem.
- The learner can explain what they liked best and can give a reason for his or her choice.

3. My Portfolio

Activity

Have children assemble at least two items from their experience in the *Storypath* that represent ideas or skills that they learned. Portfolios might include themselves as park planners, drawing or writing activities, pictures of their science investigations and any other items that demonstrate their learning during the unit. After children have selected the items, meet with each child to discuss these points:

- Why the item was selected.
- Why the item was important to the child's learning.

Criteria for Assessment

The portfolio is successful if

- The child can explain why each item was selected and what was learned from the item.
- The portfolio demonstrated an understanding of the park, its features, the science investigations, problems in the park, and the importance of parks to the community.
- Reflections were thoughtful and clearly communicated.

Background information on developing prosocial skills

Providing the context of the critical incident for dealing with bullying is a first step in helping young children learn prosocial skills. Helping children to identify appropriate responses to bullying is critical, especially for children who struggle with social skills. Modeling appropriate responses and providing opportunities for role plays develop these skills in the context of the *Storypath*. Use the role plays to affirm appropriate responses and consider the range of responses for a particular situation. Finally, time to reflect on the experiences serves to reinforce the prosocial skills.

Bullying is a common form of aggression and often begins in preschool. Everyone suffers from bullying—the bully, the bullied, and those who observe the bullying. Teaching children about appropriate responses in all of these roles is essential in reducing this behavior. Olweus (1991) states, “A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons” (p. 413). The behavior is verbal and/or physical and both unprovoked and repeated.

Sometimes the view is held that children will grow out of this behavior; however, that is not the case. Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) remind us that, “The evidence shows that young bullies often get worse and that instead of growing out of it, they actually grow into it. The best answer we seem to have is to attack this problem as early as possible” (p. 211). McGinnis and Goldstein (2003) maintain that bullying appears to be fairly common with approximately one in seven schoolchildren directly affected by bullying. That statistic does not include the observers, who are also affected by the bullying.

Helping children to appropriately respond to bullying can serve them throughout their schooling and beyond. McGinnis and Goldstein advocate the teaching of assertiveness skills to young children to deal effectively with being teased and with other peer provocation. They suggest the following strategies be taught to young children: “Using Brave Talk,” “Dealing with Teasing,” “Knowing When to Tell,” “Solving a Problem,” and “Saying No.” In their book, *Skillstreaming in Early Childhood*, they suggest a direct instruction approach accompanied by role playing to help children learn these appropriate responses. In Episode 6, the role playing is contextualized and suggestions for the role plays have been based on this book. Certainly there is value in practicing these skills beyond the *Storypath*, and this *Storypath* is organized as a way into this topic. Given the frequency of bullying, it is essential that as educators we address this issue in schools. Developing the prosocial skills for addressing bullying also lays an important foundation for living in a democracy.

References

McGinnis, E. & Goldstein, A.P. (2003). *Skillstreaming in early childhood: New strategies and perspectives for teaching prosocial skills*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Olweus, D. (1991). Bully/victim problems among school children: Basic facts and effects of a school-based intervention program. In D. Pepler & K.H. Rubin (Eds.). *The development and treatment of childhood aggression*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

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