

09/27/2012 Spider in the Classroom

While the children were playing in the housekeeping center, they noticed a spider crawling on the wall. They got all excited and asked our teacher assistant to catch it. We had just received the Insect and Spider Trunk from IDNR, so we had a couple of bug containers where we eventually caught that spider. Soon after that the children noticed, "It is very slippery for him inside", and decided to put some leaves and sticks they had collected from the playground for the science center. After observing for a while, everyone went back to playing. However everyone would periodically go to the container, "to check on Spidy", that was the name he was given. Later we found a dead fly outside and the children decided that they would feed the spider with it, so we put it inside the container. The day proceeded, and children came back to see "what Spidy is doing" numerous times. They noticed that he was not interested in the dead fly at all, and were concerned that "he would be hungry tonight". On the next day, we had a talk during the circle time. Someone mentioned that "Spidy is always hanging on the ceiling, and sleeping all the time. He must feel lonely". Someone else said "Maybe he is hungry" so we discussed what might it be.

Teacher: What do you think Spidy needs?

Children: Food. His family. Friends.

Teacher: How do you think Spidy can get food inside the container?

Children: He needs to build a web and catch a fly.

Teacher: Do you think a fly would go in the container to fly around?

Children: No, it won't.

Teacher: So what can we do to make Spidy feel better?

Child: We can let him go.

Child 1: But we like him and want him to stay

Child: He can't stay, he'll starve here. He will build a web outside. May be he'll find his family. And he'll make baby spiders then. And he'll catch many flies.

Teacher: I think you are right. He can't provide for himself inside, and eventually he'll die. We probably need to let him go outside.

Children: OK. We will let him go. We want to see.

So we took the container and went outside to release the spider on our playground tree. The children all yelled: "Bye, Spidy, we'll see you again when we go outside again!" and that was our day with a spider.

On the next day, a mom stormed in the classroom carrying a zip lock away from her saying: "Teacher, you should take this away from me, like.. NOW!" I looked inside and saw a spider! She was told over and over again by her son that we are learning about spiders, and if someone catches a spider, they can bring it to school to share and observe it with friends. That particular mom has arachnophobia, but she somehow managed to climb on the table and catch that spider in a cap and then put it in a zip lock to bring to school for us! I was amazed how far the parent involvement could go when meaningful learning is offered! That spider turned out to be a very smart one. He only stayed in the IDNR container for a couple of hours before he found a way to crawl out of it! That was another fun experience and another reason to investigate.