



# VINS Wee Wonders Program

## Lesson Descriptions

2021/2022

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### Science and Nature Discoveries for Toddlers Ages 18 months – 3 years

Each lesson begins with a song and meeting a puppet that introduces the topic for the day. Activities, guided play, and natural materials help children experience nature and science. Lessons typically last 20-30 minutes and end with a closing song.

#### **Animals in Winter**

How do animals survive the cold winter months? Examine the fur of an otter, feel how a layer of body fat keeps you warm in cold water and make a hill for the otter to slide down!

*Note: This lesson involves placing a hand briefly in cold water. Children's hands will get wet.*

#### **Ball Ramps**

Send a ball down a ramp and see where it goes. Test out several different types of balls and see which rolls the best. Try sending a ball down a teeter totter ramp. What happens? See also *Race Car Ramps and Toddler Ramps*

*Note: This lesson includes small wooden balls, golf balls and small felt balls. If desired, only felt balls can be used.*

#### **Bats**

Step into the night and explore the world of bats. Swoop after your dinner, roost in a cave, and play hide-and-seek with a bat in its natural habitat. Take a close look at the skeleton of a bat.

#### **Bears**

Learn about the lives of black bears by touching their soft thick fur, looking at a bear skull up close, and following the tracks of a bear as it walks and climbs a tree. Crawl into a pretend bear den for a long winter's nap.



## **Beavers**

Crawl into a beaver lodge, look at a beaver skull, and touch their waterproof fur. Watch out! Slap your beaver tail to warn the baby beavers about hungry otters and bears. Help to build a pretend beaver dam at the edge of the pond using sticks.

*Note: This lesson includes using real sticks.*

## **Big Bridges**

Set up arch bridges to cross a river, and build bridges out of blocks and tree slices. Can you drive your toy car over, under and around your bridge?

## **Birds**

Touch the wings of different bird species and see if you can match the wings to the picture. Soar like a bald eagle, flap like a hummingbird and stand tall and still like a great blue heron.

## **Butterflies**

Flutter from flower to flower, but keep your eyes out for a hungry bird! Become a butterfly as you dance with colorful scarves and wrist ribbons, and match pictures of real butterfly wings.

## **Deer and Moose**

How do you measure up against a moose? Follow the tracks of a deer and a moose and touch their hooves. Feel the pelt of each animal and take a close look at their skulls.

## **Demolition**

Can you use a wrecking ball to knock down a tower of blocks? What kind of wrecking ball works the best?

## **Frogs and Toads**

Can you jump like a frog and hop like a toad? Play with a realistic toy frog as it floats in the water, hops on a lily pad, and hides from the hungry fox.

*Note: This lesson includes playing with toy frogs in bins of shallow water, and children may get wet*

## **Insects**

Turn yourself into a variety of insects as you play the *Life of an Insect* game. See if you can jump like a grasshopper or flap your wings like a honeybee. Look at real insects up close using big bug viewers. *Available in Spring and Fall.*

## **Loose Parts**

Let your imagination loose as you explore a wide array of loose parts carefully designed to inspire, engage and captivate young engineers. This collection of loose parts contains natural materials, wooden pieces and colorful fabrics.



## **Mixtures and Colors**

Watch patterns appear, shift and disappear as you explore a set of shakers and sparkle balls. Watch what happens to the food coloring in the jars of water and try to make your own swirling colors as you dance with scarves. What colors can you find in nature?

## **Our Senses**

Test out your eyesight to find hidden animals. Use your sense of touch to explore natural items and a variety of different textures. Play with loose parts that make different sounds and learn what animals depend on their hearing.

## **Owls**

Get an up-close look at the wings of different owl species, and compare their silent flight to the noisy flight of a hawk. Pretend you are an owl as you fly quietly and slowly. Listen to the call of an owl and see if you can hoot like one too!

## **Race Car Ramps**

Use engaging, unique materials to build a ramp for your race car. How far and how fast does your car go? Can you make your ramp include a tunnel? See also *Ball Ramps and Toddler Ramps*

## **Sink and Float**

Why do some things float and others sink? Choose an object, and test it out. Did it float? Did it sink? *Note: This lesson includes playing in bins of shallow water, and children may get wet.*

## **Snakes**

Explore the wonderful world of snakes as you touch a snakeskin and examine a snake skeleton. Meet a live snake ambassador from VINS.

*Note: This lesson involves a live animal. Children will need to wash their hands after touching the snake.*

## **Spiders**

Work together to build a spider web. Can you catch any flies in your web? Meet some real spiders and take a close look at what makes these animals special.

## **Tall Towers**

Use a set of rounded and square cork blocks to test your tower-building skills. These special blocks are lightweight and inspire creativity and imagination.

## **Toddler Ramps**

Take your ramp building skills outside! What can you find to roll down your ramp? A pinecone? Acorn? Leaf? Snowball? See also *Ball Ramps and Race Car Ramps*



## **Tracks**

Follow the tracks of a coyote, bear and deer and touch the feet that make the prints. Using footprint cards, set out a pattern for your friends to follow. Will they need to hop, take baby steps or use giant strides?

## **Turtles**

Touch the shell of a turtle, feel a turtle's backbone, and learn why a turtle can't walk out of its shell. Meet a turtle ambassador of VINS, and see what she likes to eat.

*Note: This lesson involves a live animal. Children will need to wash their hands after touching the turtle.*

## **Water and Ice**

Rotate through stations to explore colored ice cubes, pour water with funnels, and play with animals that call water home.

*Note: This lesson includes playing in bins of shallow water, and children may get wet.*