



# VINS Wee Wonders Program Lesson Descriptions

2022/2023

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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.

### **Animal Homes – NEW!**

Who lives here? Look at bird nests, peer inside a den, and discover who calls a stone wall home. Peek-a-boo, I see you! Find the animal hiding behind the flap in each habitat scene.

### **Animals in Winter**

How do animals survive the cold winter months? Examine the fur of an otter and make a hill for the otter to slide down! In our songbird game, help fill our birdfeeders to keep the birds fed during the winter.

### **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 and playing with bear puppets. Follow the tracks of a bear as it walks and climbs a tree and then crawl into a pretend bear den for a long winter's nap.

### **Beavers**

Crawl into a beaver lodge to see who's inside, 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 play with some butterfly puppets.

## **Chipmunks and Squirrels – NEW!**

Can you scamper like a chipmunk or a squirrel? How many acorns can you carry in your little paws? Fill your squirrel nest with food for the winter and curl up for a rest.

## **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 antlers.

## **Demolition**

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

## **Fall Leaves – NEW!**

Toss some leaves into the air, smell them, and crinkle them in your hands. Look at all the colors and make a fall leaf rainbow. Peek-a-boo! Who's that hiding under a leaf?

*Note: If taught indoors, this lesson includes bringing lots of fall leaves into the classroom*

## **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 run wild 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

Pretend you're a hungry owl as you 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.

## 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. Can you help to feed the baby owls in their nest?

## Pumpkins – **NEW!**

How many little bright orange pumpkins can you put in the basket? Play with pumpkin seed shakers, and see what happens when you put a pumpkin in a bin of water!

## Puppies and Kittens – **NEW!**

Match adorable pictures of puppies and kittens and learn about their wild cousins, the coyote pups and bobcat kittens. What is life like for our wild canines and felines? Feel their fur, peek in a den and make sure the pups and kittens are well fed.

## Rabbits and Hares – **NEW!**

Feel the soft fur of a rabbit, count the baby bunnies and try to find the snowshoe hares that are hiding. Hop like a rabbit, but don't forget to stop and listen. Watch out! Here comes the hungry fox!

## 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 *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**

Send a ball down a ramp and see where it goes. Test out several different types of balls and see which rolls the best. What else can you find to roll down your ramp? A pinecone? Acorn? Leaf? See also *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.*

## **World of Water**

Create an imaginary pond, ocean or stream with blue scarves. Investigate the world of water as you play with animals that call water home. Can you help otter catch some fish?

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

