



A few things are always a guarantee with toddlers – they want to explore new things and do the BIG KID things. Learning how things feel, how they can work together, and cause and effect are essential and learned through PLAY. Creating opportunities where your child can explore safely can take some of the anxiety away from us as they explore and learn.



Materials Needed: Growing Butterflies!

- **Butterfly growing kit** – You can buy a butterfly growing kit from a few different places.
The Bug Museum in Bremerton [Bremerton Bug and Reptile Museum \(bugmuseum.com\)](http://Bremerton Bug and Reptile Museum (bugmuseum.com)), Amazon Amazon.com: butterfly kit for kids w live caterpillars, and most school supply companies will have a version too.
- **Supplies** – Once the butterflies hatch, they need to stay in the cage for five days. You can feed them slices of oranges, apples, and other fruits. In addition, your kit will come with materials and items you can use to feed the butterflies once they have hatched.
- **Release** – You can hold them on your fingers before you let the butterflies fly away and help pollinate flowers and add to our natural environment. It is fun to look closer and notice their eyes, feet, wings, and colors. Fruit juices, sugar water, or even Gatorade can be used to attract butterflies to your finger to get a good look.



How to:

The kits come with everything you need to start your science experience with. The caterpillars will eat the food they come in. They will then create their chrysalis on the piece of paper at the top of the container. Once all the caterpillars are attached at the top, you will transfer the paper to the net. In about ten days, the butterflies will hatch. There are directions on making nectar for the butterflies, and they also suggest putting in some citrus and apple slices in the net for the butterflies to eat on. Do not remove the butterflies until the directions tell you. Their wings will need to dry

out a bit. My family has done this project a few times – it is an excellent way to introduce bugs into your child's world. They are fun to watch and very interactive, and when you are ready to release them, they will sit on your finger before they fly away. The first time we did this, we were stationed at Ft. Hood in Texas, and monarch butterflies fly a path through North America and Mexico every spring. My daughter has always been willing to touch bugs, frogs, worms, and fish. My son's life was a bit different before we adopted him, so touching bugs and tolerating bugs has been a slower process for him, but he is always curious.

This activity encourages language development by giving you opportunities to use descriptive language, action words, and silly sounds. Eye/hand coordination and fine motor development with picking up the small food items and adding the items to the net/cage. Observing and narrating what is happening is an experience you cannot duplicate in many ways in our daily life. As a parent, this is a great way to model how to handle new objects, living things that move and can be unpredictable, and gives your child a chance to be the 'caretaker' of another living thing.



Having your child see you playing and exploring, they will try to imitate you – and then you can imitate them. This supports self-confidence as you show your child that you believe they are someone to follow.



Our goal is to have our children initiate engagement with us. Learning that they can invite you to interact with them, mimicking each other with actions and sounds while expanding their ability to stay engaged in an activity for a more extended period. Expanding on the length of engagement allows for more time to explore, play, and **play is how children learn.**

Being silly and doing something unexpected and new can be exciting and encourage exploration.

Remember – *when we model and they mimic, that is the beginning of understanding communication. When we mimic them, we tell them their ideas and choices are powerful, which can encourage them to want to do more.*

Again – use your imagination, plan for what works best for your family and child and HAVE FUN!

Lesson Plan developed by AnnMarie Adams, Special Education Teacher

Photo Credits: AnnMarie Adams (children Emily and Killian)

Additional photos of Emily and touching bugs and critters.

Looking for Ant Lions 2012



Found a beetle 2012



Found a cicada 2012



Found Mr. Toad 2011



2019 Butterflies again.

