

Printable Toolkit

A place-based, inquiry-driven curriculum framework for mixed-age home learning · Emily L · emilyliu.net

1 • Blank Unit Planner

One anchor, one unit. Fill in the right column as your family designs.

Item	Fill in
Unit Title	
Anchor An object / phenomenon / place / everyday family scene.	
Why now Season, life occasion, the child's interest.	
Age Range Children's ages and participants.	
Big Question How does this anchor connect "beside us" to "the world"?	
Notice: what the children noticed	
Wonder: what the children asked (star the bridge questions)	
Selected Lenses Choose 2-3 of the seven.	
Core Experiences Look, touch, draw, ask, measure, read, make, tell.	
Loop Plan Notice → Wonder → Explore → Make/Share → Connect/Return.	
Age Layers What the young, middle, and older children each do.	
Materials & People Materials? Visits to farmers, gardeners, elders, experts?	

Safety & Ethics Eating, tools, gathering, cultural boundaries, land relations.	
Evidence Drawings, photos, tables, maps, recordings, made work.	
Final Output Mini display, story, recipe, model, family sharing.	
Reflection What questions remain? The next anchor?	

2 • Question Bank for the Seven Lenses

Pick a lens, borrow a question, follow the child's own.

Lens	Questions
Life · life & ecology	Where does it come from? What stages does it pass through? What does it need to grow? Who helps it? Who eats or uses it? Which insects, birds, or microbes does it attract? Where does it go when it decays? How is it tied to the seasons?
Hands · hands & materials	What is it made of? How do inside and outside differ? Can it be taken apart, ground, printed, woven, built, combined? How does material support function? What does the body do while making?
Table · table & systems	Can we eat it? Who grows, ships, preserves, sells it? How does food change? Who is labouring? Is anything wasted? How do we share it?
Healing · body & healing	What traditional uses are connected to it? Which parts may be touched, which never eaten? What boundary lies between traditional uses and modern safety? How does recognition differ from ingestion or self-use?
Colour · colour & craft	What colours does it carry? Do they change? Can it dye, print, leave traces? How does colour shift under different conditions? How is it tied to traditional craft?
Story · story & expression	What is it called? How do different languages and families name it? What stories, poems, idioms, memories carry it? Can it be expressed in drawing, poetry, story, drama, or model?
Land · land & relationship	Where does it appear locally? Where does it come from and go? How is it tied to soil, water, climate, insects, people, labour? If it draws insects or animals, how do we watch without disturbing? What responsibility do we hold toward it?

3 • Anchors Through the Seasons

The best anchors are things a child has already seen, but never truly looked at.

Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Rain, puddles, new leaves, flower buds, dandelions, birdsong, soil, seeds	Peaches, tomatoes, cicadas, shadows, heat waves, ice cubes, bicycles, creek water	Fallen leaves, pumpkins, apples, migrating birds, seed pods, wind, mushrooms, markets	Snow, ice, salt, mittens, short daylight, heating, citrus, bare branches

4 • Portfolio Record Page

One page per week. Keep the child's own words.

Record	Content
This week's anchor	
The children's original questions	
Bridge questions starred	
Lenses chosen this week	
The most important observation	
Work produced	
The child's explanation / own words	
Evidence of mixed-age collaboration	
Safety & ethics reminders	
Questions still open	
The next possible anchor	