

The Egg Project

A Project by 4-Year-Old Children
at Ysleta Pre-K Center, El Paso, Texas

Length of Project: 6 weeks

Teacher: **Debbie De Anda**

Phase One

Beginning the Project

We were trying to get a project started about supermarkets when we decided to take a vote on which was our favorite food. Macaroni and cheese and pancakes were the top choices. I then planned to make pancakes for our Wednesday Cooking Experience. As I prepared the Wednesday lesson, I gathered the ingredients and kitchen tools along with some read-alouds. Eric Carle's *Pancakes, Pancakes* has always been a favorite of mine, so I chose this book. Then Wednesday's lesson began. I have a couple of students that lead the rest in many areas and speak the loudest during instruction time. We try not to ignore them because they are our windows to these 4-year-old minds. As I read *Pancakes, Pancakes*, we came to the part where the little boy needs to get eggs for his mom to make the homemade pancakes. Living on a farm, he gets the eggs from the hen. As soon as I read that part, Noah shouted, "Hey, he can't take that egg from there!" "Of course he can," Michael and I replied. "No, you get eggs from the store, not from chickens." Oh, what a connection to the supermarket, I first thought. But as I looked at Mrs. Lemos, we had the same look. We knew we had to teach about eggs and where they come from—our project began.

Phase Two

Developing the Project

We then taught ourselves about eggs and chickens. Our school library had many books on birds, eggs, and related topics. Mrs. Lemos and I researched and then knew we could do this project. As I mentioned this project to different people on campus, we found that we had a school incubator, warmer, and feeder. I also wrote to our parents to see if they could possibly be our experts on eggs. As it turned out, Michael and his family raise chickens at home. His father brought us some eggs and answered the children's questions. We watched the incubator carefully and monitored what happened. The children also researched and found many interesting facts through our books and the Internet. However, the most valuable learning experience was observing firsthand the live chicks in our classroom who arrived after 21 days. The children watched the chicks eat and walk and make sounds. They drew pictures of the chicks, and we spent lots of time discussing what we observed about these creatures.

Phase Three

Concluding the Project

As we observed the chickens, we drew pictures of the changes in the chicks. After the chickens began to grow, we returned them to Michael's family. We shared the information we had learned by writing stories and making a book about the chickens. We wrote a thank-you note to Michael's family.

Comments

This project was meaningful for our children because it began with intense interest and a need to find out whether or not their thinking about eggs was correct. Our children learned lots of new vocabulary words, research skills, and how to compare and contrast. They also discovered that little chicks can be extremely cute and fun to watch. As teachers, however, we also remembered how much fun it was to be a 4-year-old!

