# LETTER TO PARENTS

## *SCIENCE NEWS*

Dear Parents,

Our kindergarten class is beginning a science unit on animals. We will be observing and comparing four pairs of animals over the next several weeks: two kinds of fish (guppies and goldfish), two kinds of snails (land snails and pond snails), two kinds of earthworm (redworms and night crawlers), and two kinds of isopods (pill bugs and sow bugs). We will learn how to handle these interesting animals carefully and will all participate in the care and feeding of our animal visitors. So be prepared; your child may come home with lots of questions and stories about animals.

You can help your child learn about animals by taking walks in your neighborhood to look for animals and by talking about animals in and around your home—everything from pets to insects. We will be discussing differences and similarities in the animals we investigate and starting to develop the important attitudes of respect for life and a sense of responsibility where living organisms are concerned.

FOSS

If you are interested in seeing how we introduce animals in our class, please come by for a visit. The children will be more than happy to share their enthusiasm for life.

Sincerely, _____


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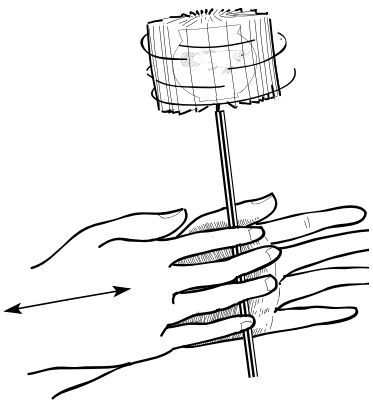
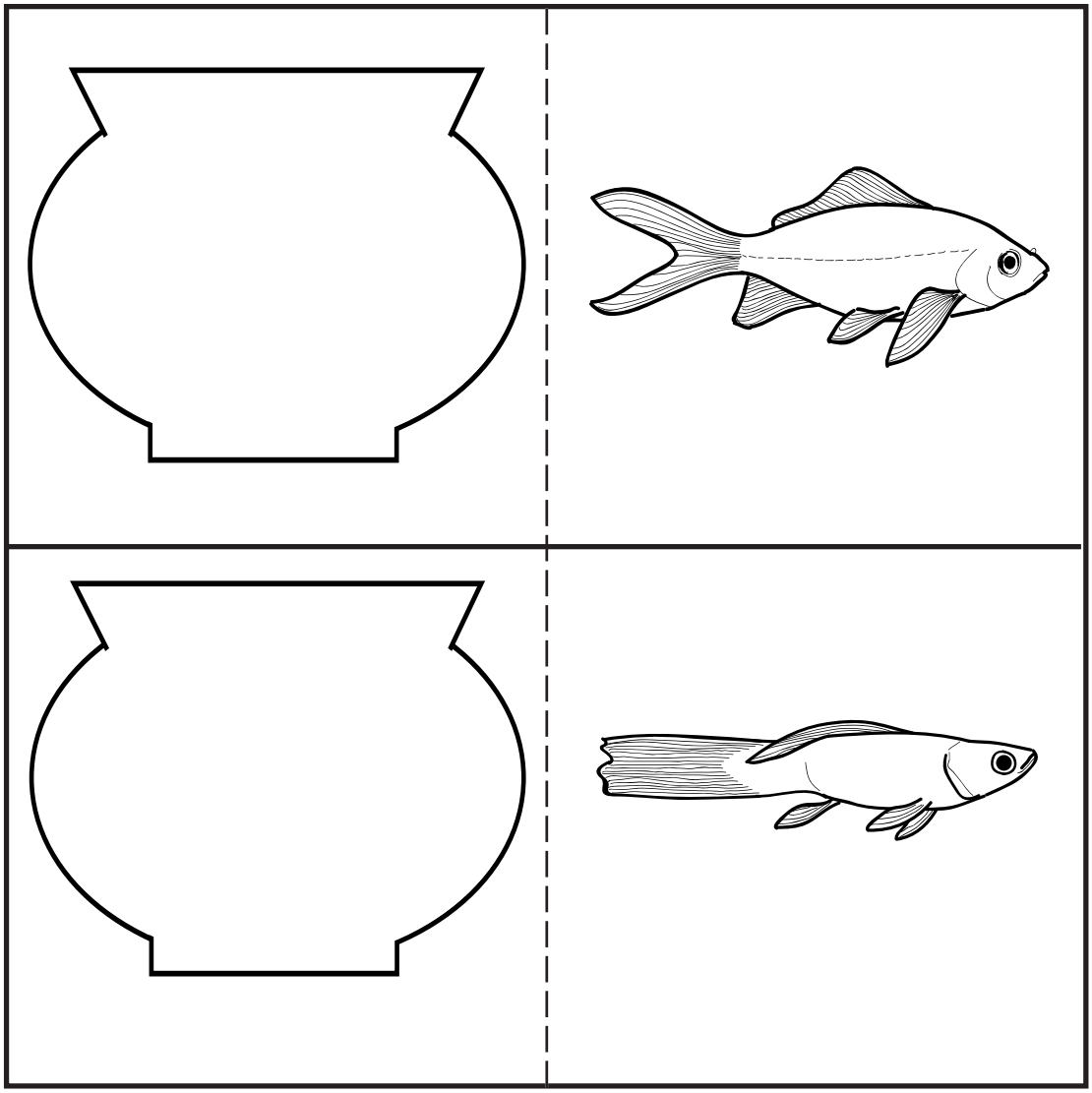
# HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

## *INVESTIGATION 1: GOLDFISH AND GUPPIES*

The pictures below will make two fish-in-a-bowl twirlers, one with a goldfish and one with a guppy. Cut on the solid lines so that you have two strips, each with a bowl on the left side and a fish on the right. Color the bowl and the fish. Fold each strip in half along the dotted line, so that the pictures are back to back. Push a straw or pencil up in between the two picture backs and securely tape into place. Be sure the straw or pencil spans the full length of the picture.



Hold the straw or pencil between your palms with the pictures up, spin the straw back and forth, and watch the picture. An optical illusion makes the fish look as if it were in a bowl.



# HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

## *INVESTIGATION 2: LAND AND WATER SNAILS*

Students have had several experiences closely observing animals' behaviors at the science center in the last few weeks. Play a game of animal "charades" with your child at home. Each person takes a turn at imitating the behavior of any animal he or she chooses. The rest of the family guesses what animal is being imitated. If hints are required, guessers may only ask questions that can be answered by simple yes or no answers.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# HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

## *INVESTIGATION 3: BIG AND LITTLE WORMS*

**Fun Facts about Earthworms to Read to Children**

**Directions:** Earthworms are often thought of as very lowly creatures—slimy, dirty, and unappealing. But in fact, earthworms are very important creatures in many ways. The tunnels that earthworms make helps keep soil loose, and makes it better for plants to grow. Water can travel through the soil better and plants can grow their roots deeper.

To learn more about earthworms, have your child cut out the questions and answers below. Read aloud all of the questions, then read each answer and work together to decide which question it answers. Have your child glue the questions and answers on another sheet of paper, matching each answer to its question.

**1. Q: How big can earthworms get?**

A: As earthworms burrow, they produce a covering of mucus. This helps them move through the soil. As the mucus is rubbed off, it cements the walls of the tunnel. The mucus also helps the earthworm slip away from animals that would like to eat it for dinner.

**2. Q: Why are earthworms so slimy?**

A: Earthworms don't have eyes, but they are sensitive to light.

**3. Q: How do earthworms breathe?**

A: The smallest earthworm is barely an inch long. The largest is an eight-foot giant that lives in Australia.

**4. Q: Do earthworms really eat dirt?**

A: As earthworms make their tunnels through the soil they take in food that is mixed with dirt. Some of the sand in the soil is used for grinding stones in the worm's gizzard. The soil that is not good for food passes through the earthworm. It is left behind as a "casting."

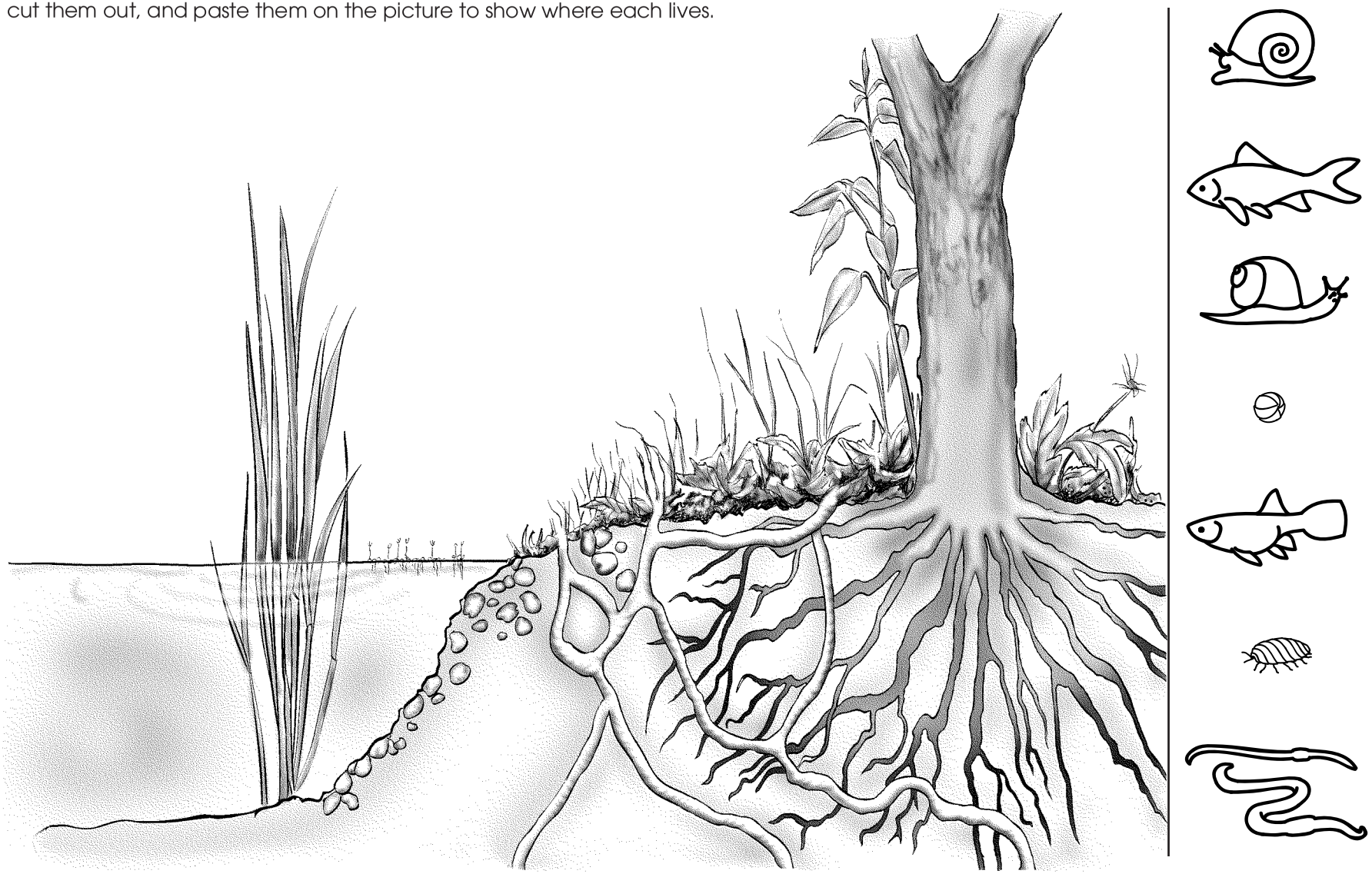
**5. Q: How do earthworms see?**

A: Worms need to breathe just like people, but they don't have noses. The air goes right through their skin.

# HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

## *INVESTIGATION 4: PILL BUGS AND SOW BUGS*

Directions: Have your child look at the picture drawn below. Have them color the different animals on the right, cut them out, and paste them on the picture to show where each lives.



# HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

## *INVESTIGATION 5: EGGS AND CHICKS*

Information for parents and caregivers:

One important concept introduced in this investigation is that organisms reproduce offspring of their own kind, and that the offspring resemble their parents and one another. This activity will help students look carefully at the similarities and differences between parents and their offspring.

**Activity Directions:**

Help your child find pictures of baby and adult animals in magazines, newspapers, or on the web. Talk about how the baby animals and the adults are alike and how they are different. If you have several pictures of the same kind of baby animal you can talk about the similarities and differences among them. For example, if you have several pictures of kittens, you might notice that they all walk on four legs, and are furry, but some have longer fur than others or the fur might be different colors. You can discuss the differences and how you still know all the kittens belong to the group of animals called cats.

Have your child bring in three or four pictures of adult animals and their babies to contribute to a class collage.