

Reptiles Theme for Preschool

From Miss Cheryl at [Preschool Plan It](http://www.preschool-plan-it.com)



Fred the Bearded Dragon:

Image by Jodi Sands at [Take the Shot Photography and Custom Engraving](http://www.preschool-plan-it.com)

On the following pages you'll find over 35 themed ideas and activities for all of your Interest Learning Centers—enough for at least a week's worth of planning!

In this packet you'll find the following printable items:

- Themed Activities for Your Interest Learning Centers
- Reptile Calendar Pieces (No pattern—Just awesome reptile pictures!)
- Feed the Turtle Counting File Folder Game
- Playdough Recipe: Reptile Dough
- Activity Mat #1: Reptile Homes
- Activity Mat #2: Gila Monsters and Other Reptile Creations
- 5 Little Monkeys Swinging from A Tree Song Poster & Song Card

Let the Reptile Theme Planning Begin!



Cold Blooded and Hot Blooded Reptile Painting

Reptiles are cold blooded, unlike us (mammals) who are warm blooded.

Warm blooded creatures body temperatures adjust automatically. So in winter, our blood can adjust to keep us warm.

The bodies of cold blooded creatures (reptiles) do not do this. In fact, their bodies actually take on the temperature of the air around them. So they are hot in the summer and cold in the winter. They must take proper shelter to stay safe (find cool places to cool off in summer and warm places to be when it is cold outside).

Materials needed: In advance put bowls of each color of finger paint in the freezer to chill (not to freeze, just to get cold!). When setting up your art table, put the cold bowls of paint on the table. Then get another set of bowls with each color of finger paint and slightly heat them up in the microwave. Be sure it is only slightly warm. Each microwave is different in how quickly it heats and items get hot from the inside out. So mix the paint after heating and test it to be sure it is not too warm.

Let the children finger paint with the different temperatures of paint.

Scales Collage

Materials needed: glue, paper, variety of miscellaneous arts/crafts supplies (I especially love all those shiny sequins, flat plastic jewels, rolls of ribbon, hole punchers, etc!).

The children create their own scaly reptile! Ask them to name it and tell a story about it!

Turtle Shells

Materials needed: Coffee filters, ball point pens, pipettes, cups of liquid water color paint
The children drip paint onto the coffee filters. Your children will love to watch the colors mix and blend and make new colors. They will want to make a boatload of these so have a huge supply available! I usually place a large shower curtain or beach towel on the floor for the children to put them on to dry.

*NOTE: Have the children print their name on the filter USING A PEN, not a marker.... the marker will also spread and blend! They should print their name before decorating.

Variation: Have the children color the filters with washable markers and then spray with a spray bottle of water!

Chameleon Egg Painting

Materials needed: hard boiled eggs, watered down tempera paint, paper, shallow trays, pipettes

Have the children do all the steps to this activity:

Place paper in a shallow tray

Drop as many drops of as many colors as they want.

Place a hard boiled in the box.

Move the tray in different directions to make the egg roll through the paint.

Let dry! Pretty! Then peel and eat for lunch or snack later!

Variation: Provide cups of water mixed with vinegar and drop food coloring into each cup. Let the children color their eggs this way!

Egg Carton Sculptures

Before we get into the activity, please note: DO NOT instruct your children on how to do this! NO, their Egg Carton Reptile does NOT need to have eyes or a tail..... just let them explore and create with the materials.....no teachers' hands allowed. Deal? Okay, now....

You know all those egg cartons that are donated? Now's the time to use them!

Materials needed: egg cartons (some cut into 12 sections and some just left whole), scissors, paint, craft (tacky) glue, paint, miscellaneous arts/crafts materials.

Let the children create a sculpture. Perhaps a reptile habitat? Or a reptile? Or Just whatever they want to sculpt?!!!

They can glue pieces on top of each other, next to each other, etc. Let them use the supplies their own way! Be sure to write down stories they tell of their creations!



Blocks

The Habitat

Add new materials for the children to create and imagine with such as paper & plastic cups (for caves), paper grocery bags (to rip into long strips and twist into vines), plastic or stuffed reptiles.



Circle Time is such a great time for children to learn the social skills of being together as a large group AND to learn more about your Back to School Preschool Activities theme!

Hatching the Theme #1

Materials Needed: plastic eggs (each with a reptile sorter/manipulative inside), music

Play music and pass one of the eggs around the Circle. When the music stops, the child holding the egg opens it and names it (if they know the name) or describes it. Continue with all the eggs until each child has had a turn to open one.

Encourage a discussion of the similarities and differences between the sorters. Tell the children that they are all from a group of creatures called Reptiles.

Discuss Reptile facts with them:

They hatch from hard shelled eggs on land

They are cold-blooded

They have scaly skin

They have back bones

They eat living creatures (some eat plants in addition to living creatures)

Extension: In advance, print out live version pictures of the reptiles and match the sorters to the pictures and read the names of each to the children. You can use the calendar pieces in this packet for that!

Hatching the Theme #2

You might want to do this later in the week once the children have had time to investigate reptiles throughout the theme OR do this Hatching the Theme activity instead of the previous one!

In advance, mix 2 cups of flour, 2 cups of used coffee grounds, 1 cup of salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sand and $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of water. Mix and then knead into a dough. Separate into portions (enough for the number of children in your group).

Roll each portion into a ball. Open the dough and insert a reptile manipulative inside. Close dough to cover the reptile. Let them air dry.

During Circle Time you'll need: the dried "reptile eggs" you made from above, a plastic mat (to catch the mess!), craft sticks.

Tell the children you are going to be hatching reptile eggs today! Explain what a reptile is (go over the reptile facts in the Hatching the Theme #1) and show them pictures of some reptiles (use the Calendar pieces from this packet).

Discuss any reptiles the children want to talk about. Place a mat on the floor. Place the “eggs” and some craft sticks in the middle. Have the children take turns choosing an egg? They can use the craft stick to scrape the dried dough off or smash it on the mat to break it open like an egg.

Encourage the children to describe their reptile:

What colors do they see on it?

Does it have teeth?

Does it have a tail?

What is its name?

If they don't know, can they find the matching picture (from the calendar pieces)?

I suggest you let them take their reptile home! Before doing so, perhaps have them (throughout the morning or day) draw or paint a home for their reptile and tell you a story about it.

They can then take their reptile home.

You can collect the stories with the drawings/paintings and make color copies of each page.

Make one copy of the pages into a Class Book for your Library this week.

Send a copy home to each family!

Dragon Time

Dragons are reptiles and, yup, they are real! Show the children the pictures of the Komodo Dragon and the Bearded Dragon from the calendar pieces in this pack. Discuss the differences:

Komodo Dragons are huge! 150 pounds or MORE! They are carnivores. And they are venomous/poisonous. They use their tail to knock over their prey and bite with their teeth.

Bearded Dragons are smaller and can be pets. They eat insects (like crickets and spiders) as well as green plants. Many Bearded Dragon pets eat vegetables as well. They like to be stroked (pet) as long as they have been around people and pet since they were little. They have neck pouches. When they feel threatened, they can extend, or puff out, these pouches. The pouches turn black. It is their way of showing aggression or dominance.

While researching, I found that Bearded Dragons actually do something similar to a wave with their arms! They stretch out their fingers and then move their arm in a circular motion.

Sometimes they do this as a sign of submission to another reptile. Other times they actually do this to acknowledge another of their species....so kind of like a wave and a “Hey! What’s up, dude?” action! Super cool!

Lead the children on a game of Komodo, Komodo, Bearded (instead of Duck, Duck, Goose. If those words are too difficult to say, try Dragon, Dragon, Lizard!)

5 Little Gila Monsters

I found this fun rhyme at [Preschool Express](#) written by Gayle Bittiner.

The recommendation is to do this as a finger play.

I suggest also creating some flannel pieces for it and print the numbers 1,2,3,4, and 5 on them and remove them in order!

Have one child remove a Gila Monster at each turn.

For example, with the first line, when you say “One ran away...” A child removes the monster with a 5 on it. Then say “... then there were...” Pause, let children guess and then count the remaining monsters, starting with the #1 monster: “1—2—3—4. Then there were 4!” Continue with the following verses. This is a great way to reinforce number recognition, rational counting, etc.). You’ll need to repeat the rhyme several times so that each child has a turn removing a monster from the flannel board!

Five Gila monsters and not one more,
One ran away, then there were four.

Four Gila monsters by the paloverde tree,
One ran away and then there were three.

Three Gila monsters – poisonous, it’s true,
One ran away and then there were two.

Two Gila monsters warmed by the sun,
One ran away and then there was one.

One Gila monster had lots of desert fun,
It ran away and now there are none.

5 Little Monkeys Swinging in a Tree

I just love the Little Monkey songs and so do preschoolers! Hang the song poster from this pack in your Circle Area and sing away! You might also act it out at Circle with your children! Choose 5 children to be monkeys and one to be the crocodile (depending on how you sing it!)

Have the monkeys hop or jump together from one side of your Circle Area to the other, each holding a number. They hop back and forth as the rest of the children sing. The alligator comes to Circle, crawling like a crocodile of course, and uses his/her hands to make the SNAP motion and sound. The monkey holding the #5 paper hops out of circle and sits down. The children count how many monkeys are left and then continue on the same as above!

5 little monkeys swinging in a tree,
Teasing Mr. Crocodile:
“You can’t catch me! You can’t catch me!”
Along came Mr. Crocodile, quiet as could be and...SNAP!
Continue...4 little monkeys swinging in a tree...

Did You Know?

According to the [Live Science website](#), the differences between a crocodile and an alligator are:

1. Snout shape: Alligators have wider, U-shaped snouts, while **crocodile** front ends are more pointed and V-shaped.
2. Toothy grin: When their snouts are shut, **crocodiles** look like they're flashing a toothy grin, as the fourth tooth on each side of the lower jaw sticks up over the upper lip.
3. Home base: Crocodiles tend to live in saltwater habitats, while alligators hang out in freshwater marshes and lakes.

I'm Thinking of A...

Using the Calendar pieces from this packet, describe some details of a reptile to see if the children can guess which one you are describing. Then show the picture and tell them the name.



Cooking with children helps develop their math skills and helps them to learn how to follow directions. It also allows for some great conversation! Ask many questions while cooking with your children to encourage conversation! Be sure to ask specific themed questions while making these fun snacks!

Turtle Bread

The entire process of this is pretty cool for the children to be part of!

This recipe makes enough for 4 children to make their own turtle. Or, you could have them help you with all the steps but just make one large turtle together!

2 ½-3 cups flour; 1 pkg quick acting dry yeast; 1 Tbsp. sugar; 1 tsp salt; ½ c water; 1/3 c milk; 1 Tbsp. butter; 1 egg; 2 raisins per child.

1. Mix ½ cups of flour, the yeast, sugar and salt in a bowl.
2. Heat water, milk and butter. Stir into yeast mixture.
3. Stir in egg.

4. Add in enough of the remaining flour to make the mixture into a dough like texture.
With the children:
5. Sprinkle table with flour.
6. Give each child a portion of the dough.
7. Have them knead and mix until the dough is smooth (about 5 minutes)
8. Cover dough with a towel and let sit for about 10 minutes. (Measure how tall it is when you cover it and write the measurements down!).
9. While dough is rising, grease cookie sheets.
10. When 10 minutes is up, re-measure the dough! It's bigger!
11. Have the children create their own turtle. They can break the dough apart into 1 large piece for the body, a smaller part for the head, 4 balls for the feet and a piece for the tail!! But really, just let them create their own!
12. Have them press raisins into the head for eyes.
13. Measure again! Cover with a towel and let sit for 20 minutes.
14. Measure again!
15. Let children use a plastic knife to cut crisscross or other shapes lightly into the shell if they want.
16. Bake in a preheated oven of 400 F. until lightly brown (about 20-25 minutes).



Drama

Create a habitat for (human) reptiles! Add a wading pool to your area. Add soft pillows, blankets to keep warm, pretend food, books, cover with green fabric from the ceiling like a tree canopy, etc.



Easel

Reptile Homes

Provide paint that is mixed with some play sand for texture for the children to paint swamps, deserts, etc.



Gross Motor

Reptile Relay

Materials needed: Reptile calendar cards from this packet!

Encourage the children to get from one side of the play area to another moving like one of the reptiles!

Place the cards in a box and have the children reach in and choose one. That is how they will try to move!

Hop The Snake

Materials needed: jump ropes

Have 2 children hold the ends of the jump rope on the ground. The move it back and forth for the other children to jump over.

Or, simply leave the rope on the ground and make it into different shapes for them to hop in, over, around, etc.

Hide and Seek

Hide stuffed or plastic reptiles around your play area for the children to find.

Extension: Place the calendar cards in front of bins. As the children find each of the animals, they match them to the correct bin.

Reptile Egg Toss

Use plastic eggs to toss to each other or to toss into the sandbox (pretending that is the reptiles home). Feel free to use hard boiled eggs to toss! They would love that!



Library

Book Suggestions for the Library

Extremely Weird Reptiles by Sarah Lovett

Hide and Snake by Keith Baker

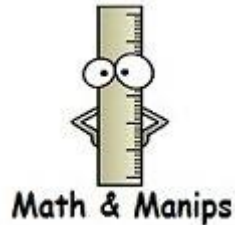
Lyle, Lyle Crocodile by Bernard Waber

Miles and Miles of Reptiles: All About Reptiles (A Dr. Seuss Book) by Tish Rabe

The Mixed-Up Chameleon by Eric Carle

To Bathe a Boa by C. Imbior Kudrna

Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein



Reptile Match Game 1

Materials needed: 2 copies of many different reptiles (you could make a 2nd copy of the calendar pieces from this packet).

Some children will want the cards face up so they can find the matches.

Other children will want them face down to try to use it as a memory game.

Some will just want to explore the pictures.

Let it all happen! Don't direct this!

Reptile Match Game 2

Materials needed: plastic eggs and pairs of reptile sorters

Place reptiles in the eggs and place them in an egg carton! The children open the eggs and match each reptile to its "twin".

Feed The Turtle File Folder Game*

Print the file folder game pieces from this packet and assemble.

The children flip over a number card and then feed the turtle the appropriate number of green leaves.

Reptile Sorting

Place a large selection of reptile sorters (or stuffed animal type reptiles) out for the children along with bowls or bins for sorting.

Let the children sort by the different attributes they choose (small, medium, large; by color, etc.)

Reptile Homes*

Provide playdough (or dry erase markers) and a couple of the "Reptile Home" mats from this packet (laminated).

The children can add reptiles with playdough or draw them to add to the scene.



Music & Move

Chameleon Musical Chairs

Talk to the children about how Chameleons change their colors. Cut out pairs of colored paper. Place one of each color on chairs and hand one of each color to the children. Play music. When the music stops, the children run and sit on the chair that has the matching colored paper.

Reptile Hatch

Reptiles hatch from eggs. Have the children curl up in a ball on the floor. Tell them they are going to hatch from their eggs slowly. Then have one of the choose the name of a reptile and they all move around like that reptile.

I'm Being Swallowed by a Boa Constrictor

This is a favorite. This poem (and song) was written by Shel Silverstein. It is in his book, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*. Everyone sits on the floor with their legs stretched out in front of them and use their hands to point to the body part of the song.

Oh, I'm being eaten
By a boa constrictor,
A boa constrictor,
A boa constrictor,
I'm being eaten by a boa constrictor,
And I don't like it--one bit.
Well, what do you know?
It's nibblin' my toe.
Oh, gee,
It's up to my knee.
Oh my,
It's up to my thigh.
Oh, fiddle,
It's up to my middle.
Oh, heck,
It's up to my neck.

Oh, dread,
It's upmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm . .



Sand & Water

Provide sand or dirt in your table. Add rocks, toy trees or real branches, plastic reptile sorters, craft sticks, spoons, bowls and a water spray bottle!



Science

Observe Snake Skins

If you can find some snake skins (a parent or friend may have one or perhaps you can order one from your local teacher store), these are great for the children to check out with magnifying glasses!

I'm Molting!

Provide white school glue and brushes. Encourage the children to brush a layer of glue onto the palm of their hand or a finger or two (be cautious using forearms. If there is hair, it will hurt a bit when peeling off).

Have the children blow on their hand (or use a fan to dry) until the glue is dry. Then have them peel off the glue to give them an idea of what a snake skin might look like when it molts. Add these to the science area to check out!

Crickets

Many reptiles eat crickets. They are pretty inexpensive at the local pet stores. Purchase some and place them in a terrarium (with a cover!!!!) for a couple of days for the children to observe! Provide journals made from plain white paper and covered in construction paper for the children to draw in when they observe.

Set crickets free in a tree, grassy area.

Swamp Goo

Make a batch of goo (equal parts of cornstarch and water) in a bin. Add reptile sorters to it! I've made it with the children and they wanted to add brown paint to make it look like mud! Awesome! Come to think of it..... just add MUD to your bin!!!

Reptile Dough*

Use the Reptile dough recipe from this packet with the children. Let them create their own reptiles or reptile homes or other shapes they want to make. Bake it and let cool.

On another day (or later the same day), let the children paint them with tempera paint.



My Reptile Story

Provide reptile stickers as well as stickers of trees, the desert, etc. Provide different writing tools (markers, colored pencils, crayons) for the children to create their own reptile story.

Calendar Pieces Reptile Theme



reptiles

31

Print and laminate all of these pieces.

Use a dry erase marker to print the month on the card below (after you have laminated it).

You can then erase and use again any month you'd like!



Calendar Pieces Reptile Theme



reptiles

1



alligator

2



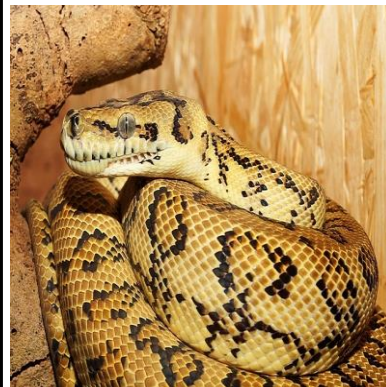
alligator

3



snake

4



snake

5



chameleon

6

Calendar Pieces Reptile Theme



chameleon

7



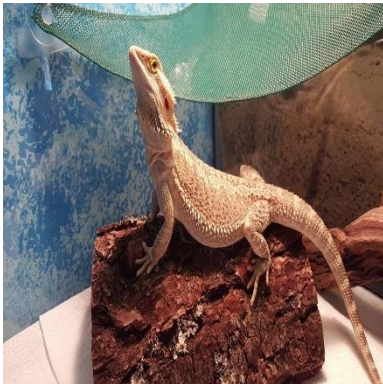
crocodile

8



crocodile

9



bearded dragon

10



bearded dragon

11



gecko

12

Calendar Pieces Reptile Theme



gecko

13



Gila monster

14



Gila monster

15



iguana

16



iguana

17



reptiles

18

Calendar Pieces Reptile Theme



Komodo
dragon

19



Komodo
dragon

20



skink

21



skink

22



lizard

23



lizard

24

Calendar Pieces Reptile Theme



turtle

25



turtle

26



snake

27



snake

28



reptile eggs

29



reptile eggs

30

Song Card & Song Poster

How to use:

- Print and laminate the song card below (it is 5" X 3").
- Place in a can or box with other cards of songs your children love!
- In transitional times (waiting to go outside or wash hands, etc.), pull out your song box or song can (I use a decorated coffee can!).
- Shuffle the cards in your hands saying "Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle" and your children yell "STOP"!
- When they yell stop, whichever card is on top is the one you sing! The kids LOVE this!

Each month you'll receive one of these cards that correspond with the song poster for the month to add to your Song Card Collection!

On the next page, you'll find the Song Poster! Print and laminate for use over the years!





5 Little Monkeys Swinging In A Tree

5 little monkeys

swinging in a tree,

Teasing Mr. Crocodile:

“You can’t catch me!

You can’t catch me!”



Along came Mr. Crocodile

quiet as could be and... SNAP!

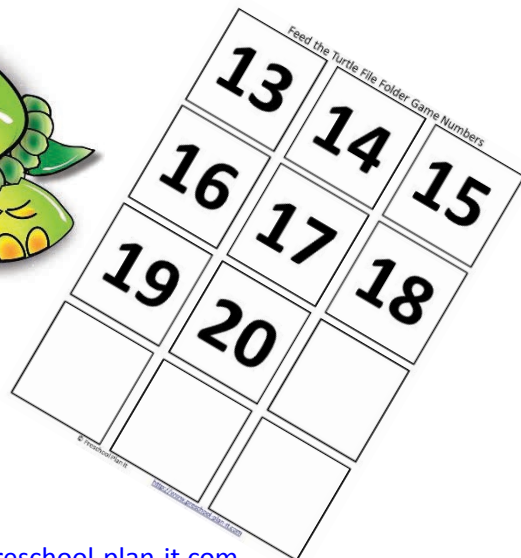
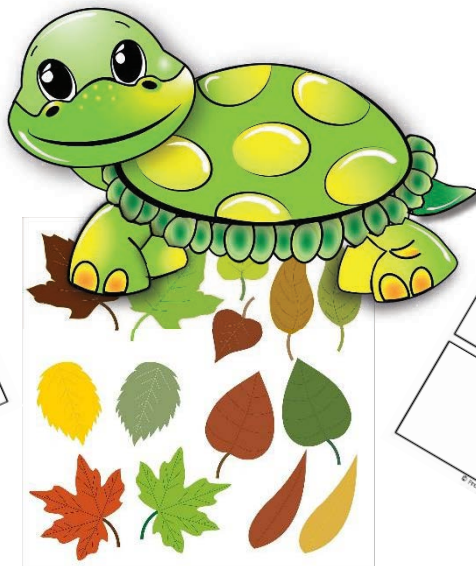
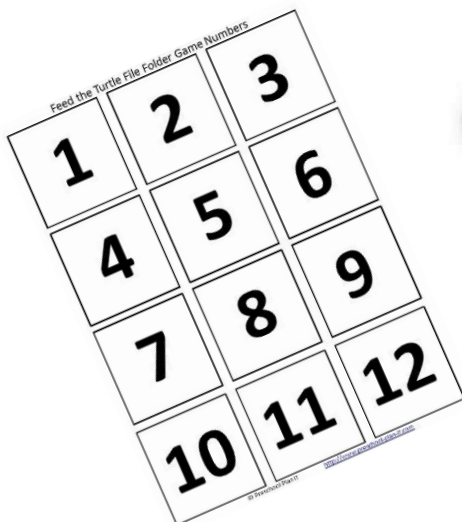
Feed the Turtle File Folder Game

How to make the file folder game:

- Print out all pages.
- Cut out game title and the instructions from this page.
- Glue title onto tab of file folder & instructions on the front.
- Laminate turtle picture page & attach inside the file folder.
- Cut out 1 or 2 sets of the leaves page and & 1 set of the number cards. Laminate and place in envelope.

Instructions:

Children place a number on the turtle page.
Children then count out that many leaves and
place them in, on or around the turtle.
Variation: Use real leaves instead of the
paper leaves!



Feed the Turtle File Folder Game Numbers



Feed the Turtle File Folder Game Numbers

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

Feed the Turtle File Folder Game Numbers

13

14

15

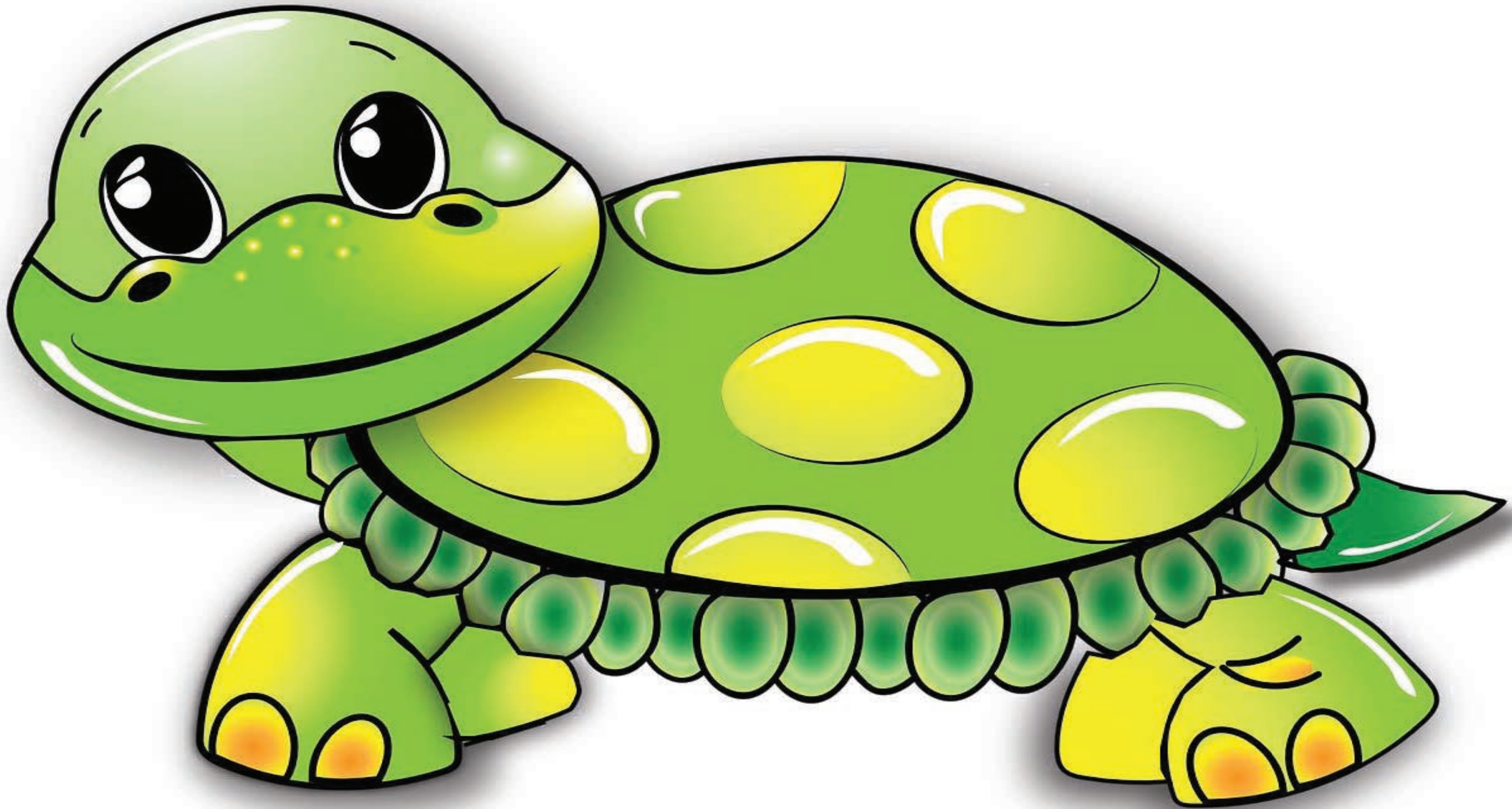
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17

18

19

20



Corn Starch & Salt Modeling Dough

1 cup (250 mg) salt

½ cup (125 mg) corn starch

¾ cup (170 ml) cold water

1. Mix salt and cornstarch in saucepan (double boiler).
2. Add cold water slowly.
3. Stir.
4. Place pan in a larger pan (use double boiler) over boiling water until mix is thick and difficult to stir (stirring constantly).
5. Scoop onto wax paper or a cookie sheet to cool.
6. Knead and press to take out air bubbles and/or lumps.

Have children mold into shapes.

Let air dry for 48 hours and then paint!

If you don't use it all, wrap it tightly in waxed paper.

It should stay soft for a few days.

Playdough Mat 1: Reptile Homes

Create Reptiles

Print and laminate several of the following page.

Provide playdough for the children to create reptiles to live in and near the water, trees, etc.

(Skills: muscle development; fine motor control; eye-hand coordination, spatial relationships)

(or dry erase markers) and a couple of the “In The Swamp” mats from this packet (laminated).

The children can add reptiles with playdough or draw them to add to the scene.

Create a Reptile Home Scene

Instead of playdough, provide dry erase markers for the children to draw their own reptile scene.

Be sure to write down their “story” about what they have created!

(Skills: muscle development; fine motor control; spatial relationships, language skills)





Activity Mat 2: 5 Little Gila Monsters

This is a finger play rhyme that I found on rhyme at [Preschool Express](#) written by Gayle Bittiner.

I suggest using it at Circle Time on a flannel board and THEN creating a Palo Verde Tree for the children to create their own Gila Monsters out of playdough!

Here are some uses for the following cards:

1. Use the 5 numbered Gila Monsters and the smaller Palo Verde Tree at Circle Time (see the Circle Time activity called Gila Monsters).
2. Print and laminate the large Palo Verde Tree and laminate. The children can then use playdough to create their own Gila Monsters and place them on the tree.
3. Or, use the 5 numbered Gila Monsters for the children to practice placing on the large Palo Verde Tree as they count and retell the rhyme.

(Skills: muscle development; fine motor control; eye-hand coordination, rational counting, number recognition)

5 Little Gila Monsters Flannel Board Pieces

5 Little Gila Monsters



Palo Verde Tree Playdough Mat for Gila Monsters!





Thank you so much for being a member of

THE PRESCHOOL PLAN IT
TEACHER CLUB!!

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Have ideas for future Teacher Club Themes?

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Thanks! ~~Miss Cheryl

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