

## Worm Scenarios

Discuss ideas for how you could handle the following situations. How might you react in the moment? What actions you could take after the incident to promote your desired goals for children's learning and development?

Children's ages 3-5

1. As part of a gardening project, you decide to bring worms into the classroom to allow the children to investigate them. You purchase some night crawlers at a bait store. At circle time, as soon as you bring out a live worm to show the children, Casey, a 4 year old, screams and shouts, "I hate worms" and jumps back in apparent fear. Even when you assure Casey that "It's okay if you don't want to touch the worm," the child continues to react fearfully and won't sit back at their place on the carpet.
2. Your class has been investigating animals that live in soil, such as worms, roly pollies, and ants. At outside time, you encourage children's explorations by providing small shovels, trays, magnifying lenses, and clipboards with paper and drawing utensils. This activity is very popular. One morning at drop off time, a parent tells you that she does not want her child to dig in the dirt or to touch worms and bugs. She tells you that it's dirty, that he should not be touching things that live in the dirt because "he might get sick."
3. A group of children is at the table with you observing worms and investigating how they move. They are engrossed in the activity and making exciting discoveries. A teacher from another classroom comes into the room. When she sees what the children are doing, she loudly says, "Are those worms? Gross! Don't put those things near me!"
4. During a worm observation activity, some of the children are not being gentle with the worms. Although you have emphasized that worms are "the Earth's friends" and modeled how to handle the worms gently, you see that some are handling them as if they are not living things...stretching them out, poking them with the magnifying glass, and constantly moving them around rather than focusing on observation. You are concerned for the worms' safety.
5. During a project on worms, you decide to make a worm jar with the children so they can observe how worms make tunnels underground. The children help to layer the sand and soil and add 10 worms to the jar. For a couple of weeks, the children observe the worms tunneling, and make drawings of their observations in their science notebooks. After 3 weeks, it is time to let the worms go. The children want to say goodbye to the worms, so you spill out the worm jar and let them hunt for the worms, counting them as they find them. They discover that one of the worms isn't moving. When you look at the worm, it is obviously dead. When you tell the children this, they are very sad and want to know "Why did it die?"

