



## SPRING | Critters

### Follow That Worm: Up, Down, Over, Under

#### Summary:

We're going to take two wiggly critters--Tiny Gardeners + Earthworms--and put them together! Today, it's all about opposites and exercising.

#### Before Visiting the Garden:

**Gather:** Clear plastic containers, small shovels, gardening claws, crepe paper, tape, and gardening gloves

**Explore:** Number 11, 1952 by Jackson Pollock: How do you think the artists moved to make this painting? Pick a color and trace one of the lines through the picture.

**Read:** *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner and Illustrated by Silas Neal

#### In the Garden:

Let's go on an earthworm hunt!

- Use your gardening claws to gently rake through the dirt to find earthworms. When you find an earthworm, use a shovel to carefully scoop it into your container.
- Place some garden soil into the container. After you find several earthworms, spend some time letting your tiny gardener handle the worms.
- Talk about how it feels to touch the worms (use words like soft, warm, long, short, round, striped, etc.). Imagine together a story about the worm. Where do you think the worm was going?

#### Questions to Explore:

- Where did you find worms? Were they over the dirt or under the dirt?
- What color is the worm?
- Of the worms you found, which is the longest? Which is shortest?
- When you took the worm out of the dirt, what did it do?

#### Activity:

We're going to pretend to be worms slithering in and out of the dirt. As the worm is moving through the dirt, it is doing an important job for the plants. It is fertilizing the soil with its poop and creating tunnels that keep the soil soft and breathable.

1. Stretch your crepe paper between various obstacles in the garden such as a fence and a wheelbarrow.
2. Turn your gardener into a worm and have them tunnel over, under, and through the crepe paper soil obstacles.
3. Stretch, wiggle, and shake with your little worm and enjoy a beautiful day in the garden.

#### Beyond the Garden | Squishy Sensory Bins

On a rainy or cool spring day, spend a little time indoors exploring with a simple sensory bin.

- Grab a package of spaghetti. Cook it until just firm (you don't want it to get overcooked and sticky). Let cool and then place the spaghetti on a table or in a bin (can be as simple as a metal lasagna pan) for your tiny gardener to explore. Depending on the age of your gardener, keep an eye out so none of your spaghetti worms are accidentally consumed!

#### Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Learn about Herman the Worm: <http://extension.illinois.edu/worms/>