

# Telling Stories in the Garden

Language Arts

in the

Lena Meijer Children's Garden



Teacher Packet





Describing Words



Round Robin Stories



Making a Sound Map



Writing Nature Poetry

Overview: Traveling around the Lena Meijer Children's Garden, students will experience written and oral word play activities using poetry and story formats. They will also learn how shapes of words can be spelling clues.

The Children's Garden is ADA compliant.

Main Concepts:

- Oral and written language helps us communicate ideas and feelings.
- Ideas for writing come from our experiences in a variety of settings.
- Ideas for writing come from our five senses.
- Writing stories involves choices.

Benchmarks:

English Language Arts

Standard 1. All students will read and comprehend general and technical material.

EE. 5 Respond to the ideas and feelings generated by oral, visual, written, and electronic texts, and share with peers.

Standard 2. All students will demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compositions.

EE. 1 Write with developing fluency for multiple purposes to produce a variety of texts....

Standard 3. All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, and read, and write....

EE. 1 Integrate listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing skills for multiple purposes and in varied contexts. Write a story or poem.

EE. 7 Recognize that creators of texts make choices when constructing text to convey meaning, express feelings, and influence an audience.

EE. 8 Respond to the ideas of feelings generated by texts and listen to the responses of others.

Standard 12.

EE. 3 Discuss choices in reading writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and representing that reflect aesthetic qualities, such as rhyme, rhythm of the language, or repetition.

## Activities:

### Bird's Nest

Using the subject and setting of a child-size bird's nest, the Gardens' teacher will lead discussions about how birds live. Students will discover native species of birds through specially mounted viewports. They will examine feathers and view them with magnifiers. With the teacher providing a story starter card, the students will construct a "Round Robin" story as a group.

### Kid-Sense Garden

Using the sensory textures, colors and scents of plants growing in this garden, the students will become more familiar with using adjectives for descriptions.

Students will learn that configuration clues help with word recognition.

Listening carefully to natural plant rhythm instruments and other sounds in the Garden, students will construct sound maps of their environment.

### Labyrinth

The Gardens' teacher will seek to create an awareness of the natural surroundings of this garden area and how it could affect emotions. Various kinds of poems will be shared with students so they discover new ways to create with words. Students will be asked to participate in creating a group poem that will be written with sidewalk chalk onto the labyrinth.

## Classroom Activities:

1. *The Wolf Family* by Leonard Strekfus was created especially for the Lena Meijer Children's Garden. Look for the attached image of this sculpture, post it and ask the kids to write a story about it.

Things to think about:

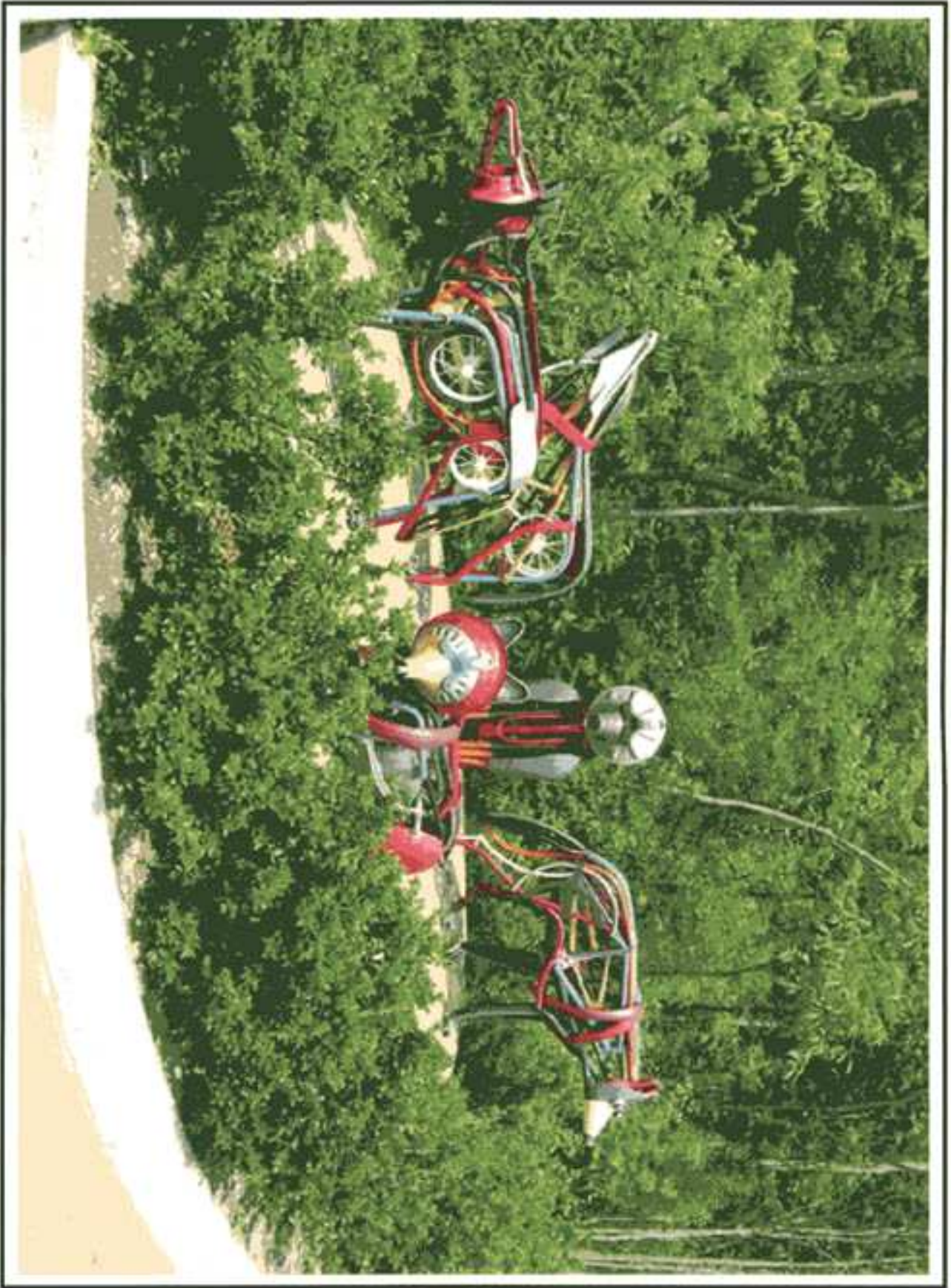
- How are the wolves' bodies positioned?
- Which wolf is the leader of the pack?
- What might they be thinking?
- What will they do next?
- What are the personalities of each character?
- What is the history of the recycled materials from which this sculpture was made?

Be sure to look for this artwork along the Sculpture Walk when you visit the Gardens.

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2. Ask students to bring a favorite stuffed animal to school. Each student would then be asked to write (or dictate) five describing words about the item or what it's wearing. All of the items will be displayed on a table in the front of the classroom. Then as the teacher begins to read slowly from the list of describing words the students may raise their hands and guess which item she/he is describing.

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3. Corduroy by Don Freeman is a popular read-aloud book. Pass around samples of corduroy material and ask students to tell how it looks and feels. Then read the story and ask students to describe Corduroy. Help them to use non-visual clues, words such as happy, sad curious or sleepy in their descriptions.

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4. Sorting Game  
Have students bring in a collection of objects such as toy cars, shells, rocks, etc. from home. As the collection grows invite students to regroup them thinking of characteristics like colors, size, textures, shapes, etc.



*The Wolf Family by Leonard Streckfus*