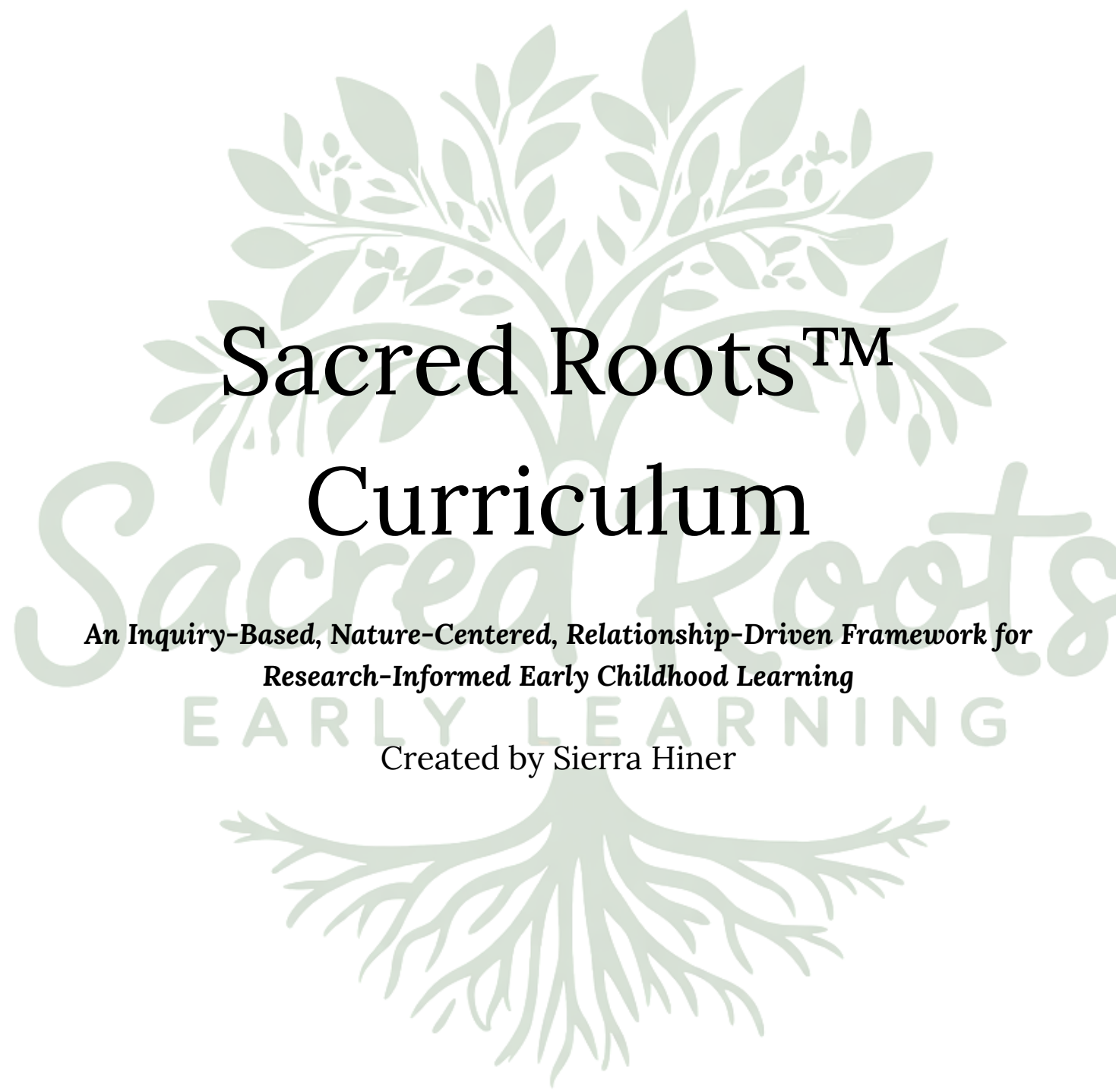




Sacred Roots™ Curriculum

*An Inquiry-Based, Nature-Centered, Relationship-Driven Framework for
Research-Informed Early Childhood Learning*

EARLY LEARNING

Created by Sierra Hiner

At Sacred Roots Early Learning, our year-round curriculum is intentionally designed around the natural rhythms of the seasons and the developmental rhythms of young children. Grounded in research and shaped by responsive observation, our approach weaves together nature-based exploration, hands-on learning, emotional literacy, and community care to support whole-child development across cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and environmental domains.

Through consistent time outdoors, open-ended inquiry, and nurturing relationships, children are invited to engage deeply with the world around them and with one another. As the seasons unfold, learning expands and contracts in harmony with nature—cultivating curiosity, confidence, compassion, and a lasting sense of responsibility for themselves, their community, and the earth they share.

Fall (Autumn): September 1 – November 30, 2026

Winter: December 1, 2026 – February 28, 2027

Spring: March 1 – May 31, 2027

Summer: June 1 – August 31, 2027

SEPTEMBER — Rooting & Belonging

Month at a Glance:

September builds the emotional foundation of the year through relationship, safety, and predictable rhythms. Children learn “I feel / I need” language, practice calming tools, and co-create how we care for ourselves, each other, our classroom, and our earth.

Primary Studies

- Emotional Literacy & Relationship Building
- Community, Identity & Belonging (*anti-bias foundations*)
- Weather & Seasonal Rhythms (early fall noticing)

Learning Threads

- Establishing secure routines, trust, and classroom belonging
- Introducing breathwork: what it is, when we use it, and why it helps
- Naming feelings + identifying needs; recognizing emotions in others
- Friendship skills: inviting play, turn-taking, gentle boundaries, repair
- Community-care routines: cleaning, caring for materials, shared jobs
- Noticing fall changes: cooler mornings, shifting daylight, early leaf change

Hands-On Experiences

- Breath tools: feathers, bubbles, pinwheels, scarves
- “All About Me / All About Us” documentation (photos, drawings, dictation)
- Nature walks: collecting “signs of fall” baskets
- Emotion stones/puppets; role-play scripts for conflict repair
- Creating classroom agreements (illustrated by children)

Developmental Emphasis

- Attachment/security, self-regulation, expressive language, social confidence, early executive function

OCTOBER — Change, Trees & Light

Month at a Glance:

October supports children in noticing change in nature and in themselves, building emotional flexibility and curiosity. Trees, light, and shadow become living teachers as children explore how the world shifts across the day and season.

Primary Studies

- Trees
- Light & Shadow
- Emotional Literacy (coping with change)

Learning Threads

- Observing tree changes; comparing evergreen vs. deciduous
- Sorting and classifying leaves and seed pods
- Tracking shadows: direction, length, and time of day
- Linking change to emotions: excited, uncertain, disappointed, proud
- Practicing flexible thinking and persistence in open-ended work

Hands-On Experiences

- Bark rubbings; leaf shape rubbings and sorting games
- Shadow tracing (morning vs. afternoon) + silhouette art
- Nature mandalas with leaves/seeds; loose-parts forest building
- “Change stories” (dictated class book: “When things change, I can...”)

Developmental Emphasis

- Cognitive flexibility, observation, early science skills, emotional resilience, fine motor

NOVEMBER — Stewardship, Soil & Compost

Month at a Glance:

November deepens responsibility and community care as children learn how everyday choices impact the earth. Compost, soil, and reuse routines make stewardship tangible and meaningful.

Primary Studies

- Soil & Compost
- Recycle, Reuse, Reduce
- Community Care & Gratitude

Learning Threads

- Sorting waste systems: compost vs. recycling vs. landfill
- Observing decomposition and the role of decomposers
- Comparing soil types and textures; moisture and smell noticing
- Practicing gratitude as attention: noticing what sustains us (food, land, people)
- Strengthening shared responsibility through classroom jobs

Hands-On Experiences

- Starting/maintaining compost routines; worm/pill-bug observation
- “Trash audit” (simple count + charting with blocks/pictures)
- Reuse builds: tools, instruments, and constructions from clean materials
- Soil sensory bins; soil painting with natural pigments

Developmental Emphasis

- Cause-and-effect reasoning, responsibility, cooperation, early math/data, environmental literacy

DECEMBER — Light, Warmth & Connection

Month at a Glance:

December focuses on co-regulation, warmth, and connection as winter begins and days shorten. Children explore light and shadow while strengthening calming tools and community rituals that support emotional security.

Primary Studies

- Light & Shadow
- Winter Rhythms
- Community & Belonging

Learning Threads

- Noticing shorter daylight and how light changes mood and activity
- Expanding regulation tools: breath, movement, sensory supports, cozy corners
- Practicing inclusive community traditions through stories, music, and family sharing
- Strengthening empathy and repair during close indoor play

Hands-On Experiences

- Light table explorations (translucent natural objects, shapes, color mixing)
- Shadow storytelling and puppet theatre
- Making “warmth maps”: where we feel cozy, calm, and safe
- Winter nature walks: frost/ice noticing, bare branches, animal tracks if present

Developmental Emphasis

- Self-regulation, imagination, language development, empathy, sensory processing

JANUARY — Water, Ice & Stillness

Month at a Glance:

January supports sustained attention and curiosity through quiet, focused investigation of water and ice. Children practice patience, prediction, and reflection while building confidence as careful observers and scientists.

Primary Studies

- Water & Ice
- Weather & Seasonal Rhythms
- Observation & Documentation

Learning Threads

- States of matter in preschool terms: ice/water/steam
- Predicting and testing: melt times, sun vs. shade, warm vs. cold
- Practicing “scientist skills”: observe, wonder, try, record, share
- Connecting body awareness to winter needs: warmth, movement, rest

Hands-On Experiences

- Freezing natural objects in ice; melting experiments
- Evaporation noticing with trays near windows
- Winter weather charting; cloud and wind noticing
- Nature journaling (drawings + dictated observations)

Developmental Emphasis

- Attention regulation, early scientific reasoning, perseverance, fine motor, vocabulary growth

FEBRUARY — Empathy, Repair & Relationship Skills

Month at a Glance:

February strengthens friendship skills, empathy, and conflict repair as children learn what it means to care for others in real moments. The focus is emotional literacy in action—using language and tools during play, disagreement, and reconnection.

Primary Studies

- Emotional Literacy & Relationship Building (advanced practice)
- Community Care & Fairness (gentle anti-bias foundations)
- Early Signs of Life (indoors/outdoors)

Learning Threads

- Recognizing emotions and needs in self and others
- Practicing repair scripts and problem-solving steps
- Exploring fairness: “everyone belongs,” “we can make it right,” “we include others”
- Strengthening cooperative play plans and shared projects

Hands-On Experiences

- Role-play conflict scenarios with puppets
- “Kindness lab”: testing what helps others feel included
- Cooperative builds requiring roles (planner, builder, helper, reporter)
- Indoor sprouting previews (preparing for spring growth)

Developmental Emphasis

- Perspective-taking, communication, impulse control, cooperative problem-solving, moral development

MARCH — Seeds, Sprouting & New Beginnings

Month at a Glance (2 sentences):

March mirrors spring's emergence—children explore growth through seeds, sprouting, and renewed outdoor noticing. The month supports hope, responsibility, and scientific curiosity as children care for living things over time.

Primary Studies

- Seeds & Sprouting
- Soil & Compost (returning)
- Weather Shifts

Learning Threads

- Life cycles: what seeds need to grow
- Tracking changes over days/weeks (time, measurement, comparison)
- Reconnecting compost/soil to growth and nourishment
- Practicing responsibility through sustained care routines

Hands-On Experiences

- Sprouting jars; planting bulbs/beans; seed sorting and dissecting pods
- Measuring growth with blocks/string; photo documentation
- Soil comparison trays; compost-to-soil observation
- Spring walks: buds, birdsong, early insects

Developmental Emphasis

- Sequencing, prediction, persistence, early measurement/math, responsibility

APRIL — Pollinators, Insects & Interdependence

Month at a Glance:

April highlights interdependence—children discover how insects, plants, and humans rely on one another. Curiosity expands into care as children learn to observe living beings respectfully and protect habitats.

Primary Studies

- Insects & Pollinators
- Trees & Flowers
- Habitat & Care

Learning Threads

- Pollination basics through concrete experiences
- Safe observation and respectful handling practices
- Comparing insects: body parts, movement, habitats
- Linking stewardship to action: protecting living systems

Hands-On Experiences

- Pollinator walks; insect sketching; simple ID charts (pictures)
- Building “habitats” with natural materials (bug hotel concepts)
- Planting pollinator-friendly pots if appropriate
- Role-play: “How do we help living things thrive?”

Developmental Emphasis

- Systems thinking, observation, empathy for living things, vocabulary, fine motor/art

MAY — Wind, Rocks & Big Outdoor Problem-Solving

Month at a Glance:

May expands physical confidence and teamwork through bigger outdoor exploration and construction. Children investigate wind and earth materials while strengthening collaboration, planning, and resilience.

Primary Studies

- Air & Wind
- Rocks & Earth Materials
- Outdoor Engineering & Cooperation

Learning Threads

- Testing wind: what moves, how, and why
- Sorting rocks by size/texture; balance and stability challenges
- Collaborative planning: build, revise, problem-solve as a group
- Strengthening executive function through long-term outdoor projects

Hands-On Experiences

- Wind indicators (ribbons, pinwheels, streamers) and kite exploration
- Rock sorting, stacking, balance challenges, mini “erosion” demos with water
- Large loose-parts builds (bridges, forts, ramps)
- Outdoor mapping: “Where does wind live here?” “Where do rocks gather?”

Developmental Emphasis

- Gross motor, spatial reasoning, collaboration, persistence, inquiry/problem-solving

JUNE — Integration, Stewardship & Growing Independence

Month at a Glance:

June bridges spring into summer with expanded outdoor time and deeper responsibility for shared spaces. Children integrate skills across domains while practicing leadership, independence, and environmental care in daily routines.

Primary Studies

- Environmental Stewardship (summer lens)
- Gardens, Plants & Seasonal Care
- Outdoor Community Responsibility

Learning Threads

- Caring for plants and outdoor spaces as community members
- Conserving resources (water, materials) during warmer weather
- Expanding independence: managing tools/materials outdoors
- Strengthening group problem-solving and leadership roles

Hands-On Experiences

- Garden tending, harvesting, and watering routines
- Compost maintenance with “what changed?” comparisons
- Collaborative outdoor care projects (tidy trails, material stewardship)
- Nature mapping and revisiting favorite places over time

Developmental Emphasis

- Executive function, stewardship, cooperation, gross motor confidence, self-advocacy

JULY — Regulation, Water & Embodied Learning

Month at a Glance:

July centers nervous-system regulation through water play, movement, and sensory-rich learning outdoors. Children build body awareness, cooperation, and self-advocacy as they practice balancing energy, hydration, and rest in the heat.

Primary Studies

- Water, Heat & Hydration
- Sensory Regulation & Body Awareness
- Air & Wind (summer patterns)

Learning Threads

- Observing water behavior: flow, absorption, evaporation
- Listening to body cues: thirst, overheating, fatigue, overstimulation
- Practicing consent, turn-taking, and clear communication in high-energy play
- Strengthening flexible routines: active play → cool down → rest → re-engage

Hands-On Experiences

- Water channels, funnels, sponges, tubing; “move water from A to B” teamwork challenges
- Ice melting investigations (sun vs. shade)
- Cooling breathwork + slow movement/yoga
- Wind play: streamers, ribbons, natural wind indicators

Developmental Emphasis

- Sensory integration, self-regulation, gross motor development, early science, social cooperation

AUGUST — Late Summer Transition, Reflection & Re-Rooting

Month at a Glance:

August gently prepares children for fall by restoring grounding rhythms and reflecting on growth and community identity. Late-summer noticing—light shifts, cooler mornings, subtle changes in nature—supports adaptability, confidence, and readiness.

Primary Studies

- Weather & Seasonal Rhythms (late summer → early fall)
- Community, Identity & Belonging (renewal)
- Trees (early transition signs)
- Emotional Literacy (transitions & anticipation)

Learning Threads

- Re-establishing predictable routines and shared agreements
- Reflecting on “who we are together” and how we care for our community
- Naming feelings about transition (excitement, worry, pride)
- Noticing seasonal cues: shifting shadows, seed pods, drying grasses, cooler air

Hands-On Experiences

- Nature journaling: “What summer felt like” + “What I notice changing”
- Shadow comparisons again (revisiting October-style work, but late-summer lens)
- Seed pod collecting, tree observation, early leaf-change noticing
- Classroom refresh projects (children help reset spaces with ownership)

Developmental Emphasis

- Emotional resilience, reflection, executive function for routines, belonging, transition readiness