

Art and craft – natural materials

Natural materials

Natural materials can be used in a wide range of ways to promote wonder, curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. As children make and explore collections of natural materials such as leaves, seeds, bark and rocks, they are able to actively investigate scientific concepts, be imaginative and creative.

Collect natural materials

- Go for a nature walk around the backyard, neighbourhood or park.
- Look carefully at the ground, flowers, trees and paths.
- Start a collection of natural things such as rocks, stones, leaves, bark, feathers, seed pods, sticks and straw.

Ways to use natural materials

- Sort the collection into groups such as type, where they were found, colour, size and shape.
- Match items that feel similar (e.g. rough, smooth) or look similar (shape, colour).
- Add to playdough or clay to provide opportunities for your child to combine materials (e.g. use seed pods for eyes, sticks for arms and legs).
- Create leaf rubbings to observe shapes and patterns (e.g. place leaf under blank paper and rub with crayon or pastel).
- Create a collage by arranging natural objects and use PVA to glue them to card.

Supporting your child's learning

- Encourage your child to use their senses when outdoors What can you see? What can you hear? What can you smell?
- Invite your child to dig in the dirt with garden tools to see what they can discover and collect (e.g. rocks, sticks).
- Talk about the kinds of materials you have collected What was the most common? What was hard to find? Which ones grow?
- Encourage your child to ask questions Why do the leaves change colour? How are rocks made? and help them find answers by asking a relative or using the internet.
- Provide a magnifying glass so your child can observe properties such as shape, colour, texture and pattern.
- Introduce scientific language such as veins, stem, dead, alive.
- Help your child to count the groups or the number of items in each group.
- Discuss ways to respect the environment such as collecting leaves on the ground rather than picking them and walking on a path so you do not crush seedlings.
- Store materials in clear plastic containers or snap lock bags for easy access.

The great outdoors is full of interesting natural materials waiting to be discovered. Exploring outdoor materials provides opportunities for children to learn to care for and respect their environment.

For further information, visit www.qld.gov.au/kindy

Disclaimer: the information in this resource sheet is offered as a guide only, and should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject.