

BUILDER'S WORKSHOP

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What is STEM?

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. STEM education for children focuses on teaching these subjects in an integrated and hands-on manner. It aims to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills while fostering an interest in these fields. STEM activities and programs often involve experiments, building projects, coding, robotics, and other engaging activities to make learning fun and interactive for children.

Creating opportunities for STEM at home:

- Incorporate math into daily activities: include counting, measuring, and sorting activities during snack time, or playtime. Use objects like blocks or toys to introduce math concepts.
- Foster curiosity through open-ended questions: Encourage children to ask questions and explore their own ideas. E.g. Oliver: "What happens if I put this block on top?" Adult: "what do you think will happen?" (prediction) "Try and let's see what happens!"
- Engage in science experiments: Conduct simple and safe experiments that explore basic scientific concepts. For example create a vinegar and baking soda volcano, or make slime together.
- Encourage problem solving through engineering: Provide building blocks, puzzles, or construction sets, that promote spatial awareness. Encourage children to design and build their own structures.

Remember to adapt the activities to suit the age and developmental level of the children in your care. By incorporating STEM opportunities into your home child care, you can help foster a love of learning and exploration in these important fields.



STAGES OF BLOCK PLAY

Children go through various stages of block play. As they work through the learning of one stage they are ready to move on to the next stage of play. As skills advance, it is typical for children to combine several stages. The stages are developmental—each one building on the last—but children advance at their own rate regardless of their age.

Stage 1: Discovering Blocks

Stage 2: Stacking Blocks

Stage 3: Complex Stacking

Stage 4: Making Enclosures

Stage 5: Creating Bridges or Arches

Stage 6: Combining Enclosures and Bridges

Stage 7: Building with Patterns and Symmetry

Stage 8: Building Block Structures that represent objects for pretend play.

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NATURE LOVERS



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The importance of spending time in nature.

Spending time in nature has numerous benefits for children. Being outdoors allows children to engage in physical activities like running, climbing, and exploring, which helps improve their overall fitness levels. Nature provides a rich sensory experience that stimulates children's cognitive development. It exposes them to different sights, sounds, textures, and smells, which helps improve their sensory processing skills. Spending time in nature has a calming effect on children's emotions and reduces stress levels. By spending time in nature, children develop a deeper appreciation for the environment and gain a better understanding of their role in protecting it.

Bringing more nature activities to your home:

Sometimes mother nature doesn't always allow us to get outdoors, here are some ways you can bring nature into your environment:

- 1. Playdough with natural loose parts:** Instead of using typical playdough tools, add some nature elements to your playdough station: sticks, rocks, etc.
- 2. Start an indoor garden:** Having some potted plants in the house is not only good for the air you breathe, it is also a great way to invite nature into your home.
- 3. Snow in your sensory bin:** On snowy days, making a snow sensory bin is a fun way to play with this magical substance without being out in the cold.
- 4. Paint with nature:** Use elements of nature as your paint brushes, observe the different patterns different objects make on paper with paint.



"The best classrooms and the richest cupboards are roofed only by the sky"

-Margret McMillan, 1925

Try and think of your neighbourhood as an extension of your home, it is rich in possibilities and ways for children to learn through exploration, play, and inquiry.

Remember to have fun and get dirty!



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MAKERSPACE WORKSHOP

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What is a Makerspace?

A Makerspace for children is a designated area or learning environment where kids can engage in hands-on, creative, and collaborative activities. It is a space that encourages exploration, problem-solving, and the use of various tools and materials to bring their ideas to life. Makerspaces provide access to a range of resources and equipment, fostering a maker mindset and promoting skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.

Creating a Makerspace at Home:

Creating a Makerspace at home can be a fantastic way to foster creativity, hands-on learning, fine motor skills, and imagination. Here are a few steps to help you get started:

- 1. Allocate space:** Set aside a dedicated area in your home where you can work on your projects. It could be a table or corner of a room. Ideally have a shelf to store the materials available.
- 2. Define your goals:** Determine what you want to achieve with your Makerspace. Depending on your goals, and the children's interests, rotate the materials that are available for the children to use.
- 3. Tools and materials:** These can include child-friendly tools such as scissors, glue, tape, markers, paint, and craft supplies. Depending on the age group, there may be more advanced tools like circuit kits, robotics kits, or wood.
- 4. Building and construction materials:** Building blocks, LEGO, magnetic tiles, cardboard, recyclable materials, and other construction sets allow children to create structures, and inventions.



Why should I add a Makerspace to my environment?

The purpose of a children's Makerspace is to encourage hands-on learning, creativity, and collaboration. It provides an environment where children can experiment, explore their interests, learn from mistakes, and develop a sense of confidence in their abilities. These spaces often foster a sense of curiosity and a love for learning by allowing children to engage in open-ended projects and discover their own solutions.

Remember, a Makerspace is all about exploration and creativity, so don't be afraid to experiment and have fun with your projects. Enjoy the process and embrace the learning journey!

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SENSORY SCIENCE

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What is Sensory Science?

Simply put, science refers to the act of studying the world around us. Sensory science involves engaging children in hands-on activities that stimulate their senses while helping them to better understand the world around them.

Children are naturally curious!

Two fun science activities to try at home:

Fizzy Cloud Dough

[Pinterest Link](#)

Ingredients:

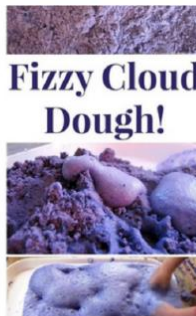
1 cup Flour

1 cup Baking Soda

1/2 cup Vegetable Oil

Mix all ingredients together forming a dough like texture

Use small droppers to add drops of vinegar to your dough and watch it fizz.



Fizzy Cloud Dough!

Magic Milk Experiment

[Pinterest Link](#)

Supplies:

Milk

Liquid Food Colouring

Dish Soap

Cotton Swabs

Pour a thin layer of milk in a shallow pan, drop a few drops of food colouring around milk. Dip a cotton swab in dish soap then put it in the milk and watch what happens.



Magic Milk
a simple science activity

Children who are curious are open to learning.

Curiosity is essential for children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.

Cultivating curiosity in children can lay the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. When children develop a natural curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, they are more likely to become self-directed learners and continue seeking answers throughout their lives.



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Child Care Providers
RESOURCE NETWORK

Importance of Dramatic Play!

Dramatic play is vital for the growth and development of toddlers and preschoolers. It offers them a valuable opportunity to explore their imaginations and express themselves. By pretending to be different characters and engaging in imaginative scenarios, children develop important social skills, such as cooperation, communication, and problem-solving. Through dramatic play, they also learn to understand and express emotions, as well as develop empathy towards others.

How do I set up a Dramatic Play Area at home?

Setting up a dramatic play area in your home can be a fun and engaging way to encourage imaginative play for your child. Here are some simple steps to create a dramatic play space:

- 1. Choose a designated area:** Select a specific area in your home, such as a corner of a room or a playroom, where you can set up the dramatic play space.
- 2. Select a theme:** Decide on a theme for your dramatic play area. It could be a kitchen, grocery store, doctor's office, or a fantasy world. Choose a theme that interests your child.
- 3. Gather props and materials:** Collect props and materials related to the chosen theme. These can include pretend food, utensils, costumes, doctor's tools, or any other items that enhance the play experience.
- 4. Encourage role-play:** Spend time playing with your child and encourage them to take on different roles within the chosen theme. Participate in their play, ask open-ended questions, and engage in conversations to spark their creativity.



1. PUT 1 CUP OF RICE IN A RESEALABLE PLASTIC BAG.
2. ADD 1/2 TSP. OF VINEGAR AND A BIT OF THE ICING GEL OR FOOD COLOURING
3. SEAL THE BAG AND SHAKE WELL.
4. SPREAD THE COLOURED RICE OUT ON A BAKING TRAY TO DRY.
5. REPEAT WITH OTHER COLOURS.
6. USE IN SENSORY PLAY, AND HAVE FUN!



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ART ATTACK

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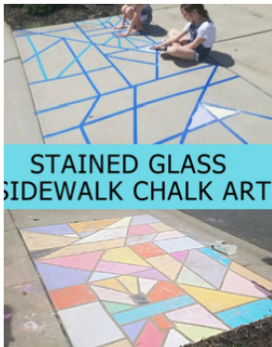
ART IN THE PARK IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF NATURE WHILE CREATING ART.

ART FOR CHILDREN IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY, SELF-EXPRESSION, AND IMAGINATION.

Extension Ideas:

Art in the park doesn't simply have to be a summer thing, here is an outdoor art activity for each season:

Summer



[Pinterest Link](#)

Winter



[Pinterest Link](#)

Spring



[Pinterest Link](#)

Fall



[Pinterest Link](#)

Creativity is
contagious,
pass it on
Albert Einstein



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