



SIGNS OF SPRING

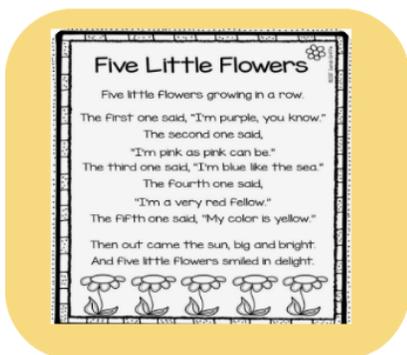
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Spring!!! One of everyone's favourite seasons. There is so much to explore outdoors as we watch signs of spring pop up throughout the community. There are also so many fun concepts to weave into your spring theme activities! With the sun shining and nature coming alive, bugs emerging, butterflies flying, adorable baby animals being born, the magic of growing plants, the beauty of flowers, and the joys of gardening, there is so much to do.

Some Spring Extension Activities

It's time to get outside, the sun is warmer and the world is coming alive. Here are some ways to embrace this new season.

- Puddle jumping
- Make a bird feeder
- Go on a worm hunt
- Dance in the rain
- Look for birds
- Roll down a hill
- Make mud pies
- Go for a spring photo walk, snap picture of the signs of spring the children notice.
- Plant flower pots.
- Find dry pavement and paint with sidewalk chalk, here's how to make sidewalk chalk paint: (<https://onmykidsplate.com/sidewalk-chalk-paint-recipe/>)
- Head out on a nature scavenger hunt. Here's a good link: (<https://creativelybeth.com/free-camping-scavenger-hunt-printable/>)



It's all about the senses...

Spring is in the air and sensory bins are a wonderful way to help your child adapt to the changing season - by exploring the changes with their senses.



<https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/spring-sensory-bins-for-kids-toddlers-preschoolers/>

Puddles are meant to be splashed in!

Puddles have a uniquely magnetic effect on children. Puddles are such simple things and yet they teach children so much. Puddles are meant to be jumped in and to do that, children need to jump! Jumping develops balance, strength, and agility in little legs. Puddles can also be kicked, stirred, and tapped, which are more great movement skills. Say "YES" to puddles!



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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WONDERS OF SPRING



PUDDLE PLAY

PUDDLE PROVOCATIONS

- Add toys around the puddles to encourage imaginative play.
- Pots, pans, cups, spoons, mortar and pestle to encourage mixing, stirring, pouring.
- Dinosaurs to create a prehistoric scene.
- Construction trucks.



HEAVY WORK TOOLS

- Puddle play is a great way to develop those large muscles through “heavy work”.
- Add shovels, buckets, large logs for rolling, or planks of wood for building bridges.
- JUMP! Jump in the puddle, over the puddle, and run through the puddle.
- **Note:** Ensure items are safe and age appropriate for the children in your care.



Gravity Rain Art

- Liquid Water Colours
- Cotton Balls
- Eye Droppers
- Glue
- Water
- Tray
- Cardstock paper

Have children glue cotton balls to the top of the paper. Use diluted water colour paint and eye droppers to drop colour onto the cotton balls. have the children tilt the paper so the paint drips down the page. Tip: This activity works great when the paper is on a vertical surface. An easel, a clip board, or even attached to a fence.



Cardboard Nature Vases

- Cardboard
- Marker & Pencil
- Nature

Adults: Cut out manageable pieces of thicker cardboard. Use marker to draw a picture of a vase or flower pot on the cardboard. Use the pencil to poke holes above the vase where children can thread flowers, or leaves through.

Children: Give children the cardboard vases and allow them to explore nature and thread flowers through the holes. You could use fake flowers also for an indoor activity.



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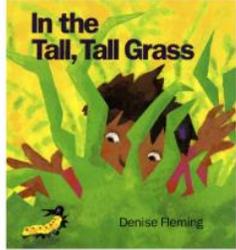


Incorporating literacy into play based activities!

Incorporating literacy into play based activities is a great way to encourage a love of reading and create a positive connection to books. It will promote language development and develop pre-reading skills, all while engaging their imagination.

Here are some ideas on how to provide these opportunities.

- **Story retell activities:** Story retell will help develop comprehension, language development, and sequencing skills. You can use toys, cards, sensory materials, sensory bottles, etc. that represent key moments in the story. As you read the book, children engage with the materials to reenact the story. Tip: This can be put out at free play time for the children to interact with independently.
- **Process art that links to a story:** After reading a story have the children participate in an open-ended art activity that can be linked to the book. (See below for ideas based on the book "In The Tall Tall Grass".)
- **Storytelling:** Encourage children to tell stories about their day or act out a page in a book. Add props for extra dramatic effect.
- **Sensory play with letters**
- **Open access to books during free play** (Ensure children can reach them independently.)



pocketofpreschool.com

Action Song!



Munching crunching
Munching crunching

Eat your leaves

Eat your leaves

Caterpillars crawling

Caterpillars crawling

Go to bed

Go to bed



Time to wake up

Time to wake up

Out you pop

Out you pop

Butterflies flying

Butterflies flying

Flutter away

Flutter away



(Tune: I hear thunder)

<https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/3729612237806697/>



In The Tall Tall Grass (Images from Pinterest!)

This is a fantastic book to incorporate into your programming, it has endless possibilities for play based activities. Above are pictures of a few examples.

Clay Bug Provocation: Using plasticine as a base, children are invited to create their own bug to go in the tall tall grass. Green cardstock squares are used as a background, and the children are given access to age appropriate loose parts to create their bugs. Googly eyes, wood shapes, pipe cleaners, etc.

Growing Tall Tall Grass: Children can grow their own tall grass using grass seed. They can create their own bugs to add to it.

Painting Tall Grass: Using different tools, children can create tall grass on yellow paper (like the cover of the book). Tool ideas: toothbrushes, combs, scrub brushes, string, fingers.

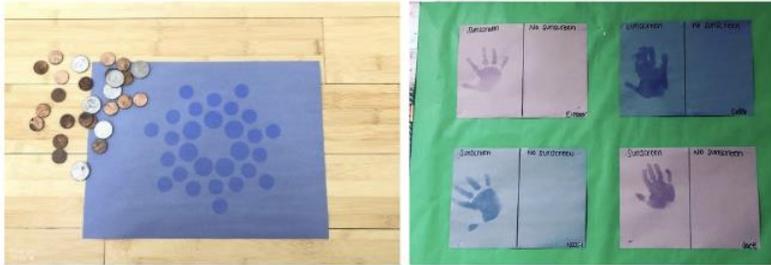
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FUN IN THE SUN


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SUMMER SUN SCIENCE!

Sun Print Art

- **Construction paper (you pick the colour)**
- **Coins**
- **Optional: Baking sheet**
- **Optional: Anything that would fit on the construction paper and wouldn't melt in the sun**

1. Place the construction paper on the baking sheet. You can skip this step if you are doing this outside.
2. Arrange the coins and anything else you have that won't melt in the sun on the construction paper.
3. Leave everything outside in the sun for a couple of hours. Depending on how much sun you get, the time will vary.

Sunscreen Painting (great for demonstrating how sunscreen protects our skin)

- **Construction paper (you pick the colour)**
- **Sunscreen**
- **Paint brushes**

1. Use either a paint brush or a handprint to paint on the construction paper.
2. Leave outside in the sun for a couple of hours. Depending on how much sun you get, the time will vary.

Colour Nature Hunt!

- Find an empty egg carton and colour the bottom of each hole a different colour.
- Outside have the children hunt for pieces of nature that match the colours.
- Tip: you can also play this inside with small toys!





SUMMER SCIENCE EXPLORERS

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What a great combination - the warm summer days outdoors and the fun and discovery of introducing science to your little ones. This is a fun time to get children engaged in hands-on messy play that helps them explore the world around them. Summer science activities can help kids understand the practical applications of scientific concepts in the real world by connecting science to everyday experiences. There are so many fun things you can do - here are a few great ideas:



Swing Painting Process Art



Children will love to experiment with how high they can swing and reach different parts of the cardboard.

[Pinterest](#)



Make a sand volcano at the park. All you need is sand, a bucket, baking soda, and vinegar. Children will love making this over and over again and watching it erupt.

[Pinterest](#)

DIY Mud Kitchen



Do you want hours of great fun for your little ones? Setting up a simple mud kitchen offers so many learning and discovery benefits. All you need is a table, a few pots and pans, spoons, some dirt, and water.



Children love to colour with chalk, try this simple twist with your everyday sidewalk chalk to create a super cool science experiment.

[Pinterest](#)



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MOBILE MUD KITCHEN


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What is a mud kitchen?

Simply put, a mud kitchen is a dedicated space where your child can take the concept of mud pies to a whole new level. It is an outdoor play station that allows children to engage in pretend and messy play by cooking with mud, sand, and water. Mud Kitchens allow children to be outside in nature and use their senses to work, play, and create

Mud Kitchens do not have to be fancy and expensive, here are some DIY ways to create this learning environment yourself.

Children don't need fancy to have fun!

Any space can be set up as an "invitation to play" an "invitation to create" and an "invitation to get messy". When it comes to mud kitchens, all you need is a space, some buckets, some dirt, and some water. These two images below are very simple set-ups but still foster the same learning and development as any of the fancier mud kitchens we might see.



[Pinterest](#)



[Pinterest](#)

Expand your play and incorporate a scavenger hunt theme to your mud kitchen. These great free printable recipe cards add another level of outdoor play.



[Pinterest](#)

The Mud Kitchen Song
(Sings the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

When you're in the mud kitchen
Grab a pan

When you're in the mud kitchen
Grab a pan

When you're in the mud kitchen
It is fun to do some mixing

When you're in the mud kitchen
Grab a pan

When you're in the mud kitchen
Make a pie

When you're in the mud kitchen
Make a pie

When you're in the mud kitchen
It is fun to do some mixing

When you're in the mud kitchen
Make a pie

We are happy in the kitchen
We love mud!

We are happy in the kitchen
We love mud!

We are happy in the kitchen
It is fun to do some mixing

We are happy in the kitchen
We love mud!

Resource Bank
early years
Work by Sara Peir



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TEDDY BEAR PICNIC

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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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