



Using all the Senses

Give your child opportunities to use all their senses when exploring natural materials. What can you hear? How does it feel? Do you like how it smells? What does it taste like? Let's look really closely.

Collections

Collect lots of natural items. Talk about their properties. What's the same? What's different? Can they put together those that are the same?



Vocabulary

Use lots of ambitious vocabulary when talking about and describing nature: meadow, dune, glacier, prickly, smooth, gritty, rough, crooked, wavy, curved etc.

Changes

Support your child in talking about the differences between materials and any changes that they notice about them. How and why do they change? Examples are changes to ingredients when baking e.g. dissolving. What happens to bread when it is toasted? Why does ice cream melt? What happens when you boil a kettle?



Suggested Activities:

Make a Rainbow

Cut kitchen towel into the shape of a rainbow. Colour a rainbow with felt tips to about 2cm up on both sides. Attach a paper clip to the top. Fill each small container with water. Hold the rainbow with the ends slightly submerged and then watch your rainbow grow.



Freeze Nature

Place items of nature inside different sized containers and fill with water. Place in the freezer overnight and take out the next day. Allow children to investigate how to melt the ice and discuss what is happening. Once the ice has melted, the remaining water and nature makes perfect 'nature soup'.

Nature Bracelets

Wrap masking tape (sticky side up) around your child's wrist and attach nature to make a nature bracelet. Name the items, talk about how they look, feel and smell.



Make Natural Paintbrushes

Use twigs, leaves, grass, feathers and twine to create your own natural paint brushes. You could also make natural paint with yoghurt and food colouring.



Home Made Lava Lamp

Colour half a cup of water with a bright food colour. Pour vegetable oil into another glass to fill it to three quarters full. Add the coloured water to the oil, but leave a gap at the top of the glass. Drop pieces of an Alka Seltzer tablet into the glass, one piece at a time.

Make Rain

Put a tea strainer or colander over a bowl. Place cotton wool at the bottom of the strainer. Fill a glass with water and add blue colouring. Add water slowly until the cotton wool is saturated and the water begins to drip through into the bowl. Talk about how the clouds become full of water and then it begins to rain.



Viscosity

Get together liquids of different densities and colour them with food colouring. Starting with the highest density liquid add it to the bottom of a jar, being careful not to touch the sides. Continue with the next density liquid and so on. If your last liquid is rubbing alcohol, use a dropper to add if possible or it will mix with the layer beneath. Suggested liquids in order are: honey, corn syrup, washing up liquid, coloured water, olive oil, rubbing alcohol.



Dancing Raisins

Fill a glass with fizzy lemonade. Drop raisins into the glass. Wait a while and they will start to dance.

Gummy Bear Experiment

Put a gummy bear or two into different solutions and see how they change over time. Make predictions and measure the bears. Record your measurements.



Flowers & Coloured Water

Buy some white flowers (carnations work well) place each in a cup or vase with different coloured water using food colouring. Watch how they change. Talk about what's happening.



Dissolving

Gather 'ingredients' such as sugar, oil, salt, food colouring, rice, flour and vitamin tablets. With each 'ingredient' ask your child if they think it will dissolve or not? The word 'disappear' may help. Then add each item to water and mix.

Skittle Experiment

Arrange the Skittles in a circle on the outer curve of the plate. Carefully pour warm water into the middle of the plate so that the sweets are half submerged. Watch as the colour of the sweets slowly starts to creep towards the middle of the plate, making an amazing rainbow effect!



Dancing Colours

Pour milk into a shallow dish, add some drops of food colouring, then dab with a cotton bud dipped in washing up liquid. Watch the milk dance!