

Nature Walk

Age: Preschool-age (3-4 years)

This activity helps your child's development in this domain: Cognitive

What You Need:



- Bag or box to hold collected objects
- Soap and water or disposable cleansing wipes

! Safety Alert. After playing outside, remember to wash your hands as well as your child's hands with soap and water (or use a disposable cleansing wipe) to remove dirt and chemicals such as pesticides that may have been on the items you and your child played with.

What To Do:

1. Go for a walk outside with your child and collect natural materials such as small rocks, sticks, twigs, and dried leaves that you find on the ground.
2. Find a safe open area where all the collected items can be spread out and examined.
3. Encourage your child to sort the objects into piles of the same kinds of items. For example, she could make one pile of rocks, one of leaves, and so on. Talk about how the items in each pile are alike. Then talk about how the items in other piles are different.
4. Ask your child to sort the objects in a different way and ask her why she grouped them that way. You may be surprised at her reason.
5. Have her guess how many items are in each pile. Follow up by asking questions such as, "Which pile do you think has the most? Which one has the least?"
6. Confirm guesses by actually counting the items with her.
7. Let her create an outdoor collage (a picture made up of the objects) on the



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ground.

VARIATION:

Collect different types of leaves as you walk outside. Talk about the characteristics of the leaves. Ask questions such as, "Which leaf is the longest?" "Which one is the shortest?" and "What colors are they?" Once you have an assortment of leaves, put them in one pile. Ask your child to divide the leaves into different piles. Let her decide how to group the leaves and ask her why she sorted them that way. Together, count the number of leaves in each group and show her how to tally her findings on a piece of paper.

