

Outdoor Learning Activity Ideas



Outdoor Learning Activities



Animal Habitat

What you will need:

- Children can collect natural items from around your outdoor environment. You may need to prepare some additional materials, such as feathers, leaves and twigs.

The Activity

- Ask the children to sit in a circle and discuss what types of 'homes' different animals live in and what materials they use to make these homes.
- Ask children to go and search (in the prepared outdoor area) for some items that could be used to make a habitat for an animal.
- When children return, place all of the items in the centre of the circle.
- Have a go at making some suitable homes for the animals in different locations. For example, you could make a home for a bird in a tree or a home for a hedgehog on the ground.



Musical Nature

What you will need:

- A range of natural materials around your outdoor area. You may need to prepare some additional materials and place them around your outdoor area, such as stones, wood, shells and seeds.

The Activity

- Encourage children to collect objects that they think could make interesting sounds.
- Using a small stick, drag it over the collected objects to see what sound they make.
- Let children explore what other sounds they can make using natural objects. For example, using sticks as drumsticks, placing seeds inside another item to make a shaker or tapping stones together.



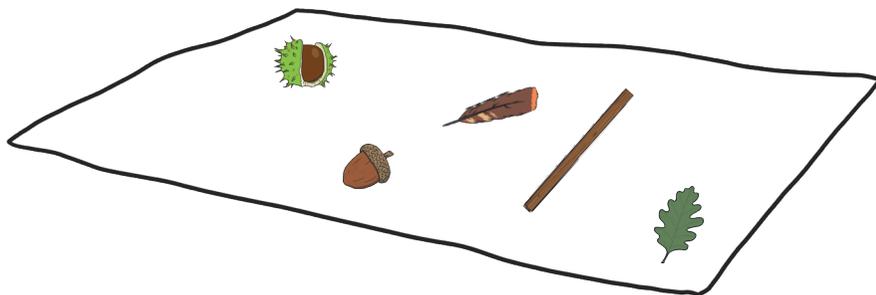
What's in Your Circle?

What you will need:

- Hoops (or string)

The Activity

- In small groups, give children a hoop (or piece of string to make a hoop with).
- Ask children to go and find a special area to place their hoops down.
- Ask them to look carefully at what is inside their hoop – leaves, sticks, plants, feathers, etc.
- Children discuss with other groups some of the different things found within their circle. Discuss what is growing and what is not. Can they predict what might change inside their hoop over time?
- Over the next few weeks, the children can revisit their hoops and see what has changed.



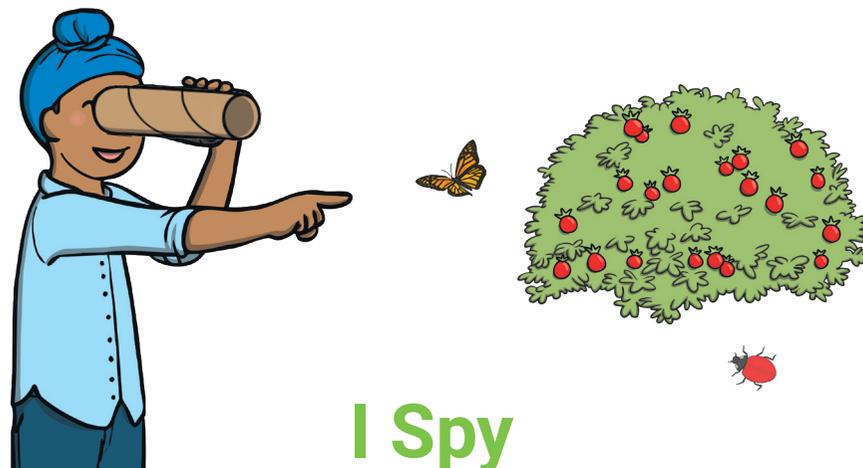
Memory Game

What you will need:

- Natural objects found around your outdoor/woodland area
- A white sheet to place your natural items on

The Activity

- Ask children to collect an interesting item from the woodland area. Remind them not to pick wild flowers, fungi or berries.
- Place all of the items that they have collected onto a white sheet to lift them and make them visible from the woodland floor.
- Tell children that they need to try to memorise all of the items in the circle.
- Children turn away as an item is removed from the middle.
- Choose one child to guess which item has been removed.



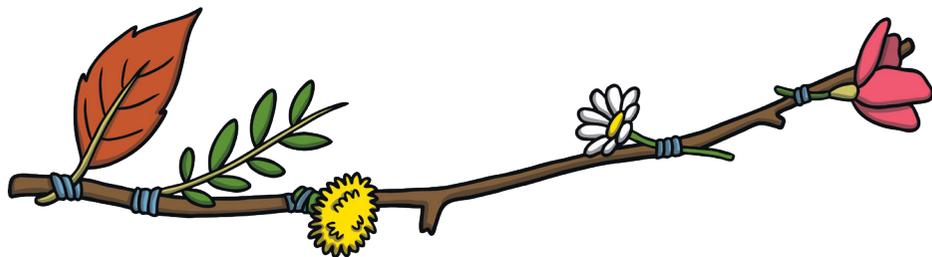
I Spy

What you will need:

- Cardboard tubes
- Outdoor/woodland area

The Activity

- Give each child a cardboard tube.
- In pairs, ask children to explore the area using the tube to focus on specific things, up close or far away.
- Encourage the children to show their partner the natural items they have found.



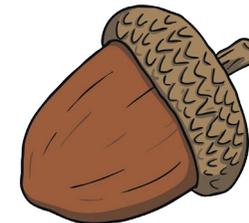
Journey Sticks

What you will need:

- Piece of string/wool (1 metre in length, 1 per child)
- Outdoor/woodland area with natural items scattered around, e.g. leaves, feathers, twigs, acorns

The Activity

- Ask children to find a stick each and wind some string/wool around the end.
- Go on a slow walk around the outdoor area and ask children to collect natural objects as they walk. Encourage them to find objects that interest them.
- Children can attach the objects to their stick by winding the string around them. Adults may need to support children with this.
- When you have finished the walk, ask children to describe the objects they have collected and explain why they chose them.



What Am I?

What you will need:

- Collection bags or baskets
- Natural objects found around your outdoor/woodland area
- Small pieces of white material for children to place their natural items on

The Activity

- Ask children to collect natural items from the woodland area.
- Ask them to get into pairs and put their items into the middle of the circle.
- Allow each child to choose an object (without touching or naming it) and describe it. Their partner then has to try to guess which object is being described to them.
- Children then swap over.
- Variation to the activity: children could ask questions to their partner to help them work out what their friend's secret object is. Once they think they have worked it out, they could touch or point to the natural object.



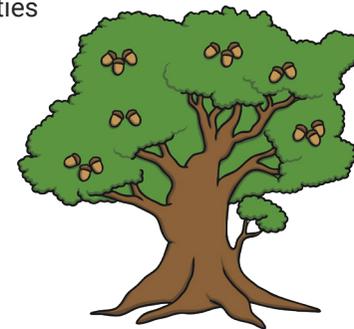
Collection Game

What you will need:

- Collection bags or boxes
- Outdoor/woodland area with natural items scattered around, e.g. leaves, feathers, twigs, acorns

The Activity

- Ask children to work in pairs to collect 8-12 natural objects.
- Ask the first child to sort the items using different criteria, e.g. soft items/hard items, etc.
- The other child has to try and guess how they've been sorted.
- Children take it in turns.



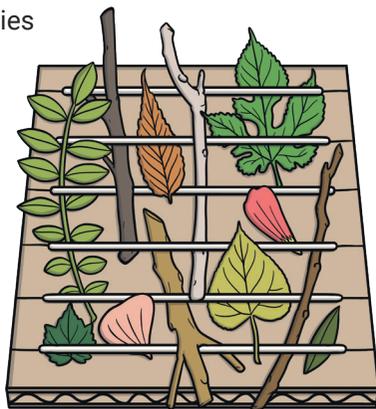
Woodland Small World

What you will need:

- Natural objects found around your outdoor/woodland area
- A camera to photograph their small world woodlands (optional)

The Activity

- Ask children to walk around the woodland area and discuss the natural things they can see. Which do they like/dislike and why?
- Ask them to use their imagination to help design their perfect woodland area, including the things they have seen that they like.
- Working together with a friend, children can use the woodland floor to create their own woodland small world using gathered natural items. They can think about where the trees and plants, paths, places to sit and places to play might be placed.
- You may wish to take photos of their small world woodlands to encourage reflection once back in your setting.



Nature Treasure Hunt

What you will need:

- Natural objects found around your outdoor/ woodland area
- Egg boxes or weaving frames to store and collect their objects on

The Activity

Ask the children to find the following:

- a green object
- a beautiful object
- a straight object
- a fluffy object
- a round object
- a yellow object
- a smooth object
- a rough object

Place an example object in the lid of their box to match the criteria you are asking them to find. For example, if you are asking the children to find something smooth, then place a smooth stone or pebble for children to explore before they search for other smooth objects.



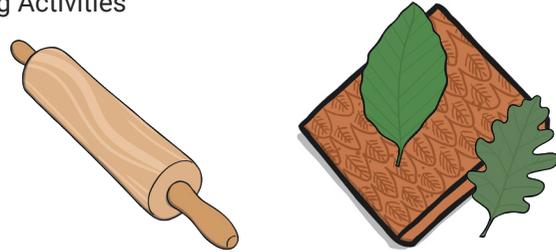
Nature Art

What you will need:

- Natural objects found around your outdoor/ woodland area
- Collection bags and baskets

The Activity

- Show the children examples of ephemeral/transient artwork (art that is only temporary). Discuss the objects that the artists have used.
- Allow time for children to explore the outside area and collect some interesting natural objects. They may like to use collecting bags and baskets.
- Ask children to work in small groups to create a piece of artwork with their objects.
- Take pictures of the children's finished artwork.
- As a class, walk around all the different pieces of artwork created and talk about different objects that have been used.



Leaf Prints

What you will need:

- Collected leaves
- Clay
- Rolling pins or a smooth stick
- Flat surface (this could be a tree stump)

The Activity

- Allow time for children to explore the outside area and collect some interesting leaves.
- Ask the children to find a flat, hard surface (this could be a tree stump) and roll a small ball of clay into a tile.
- Using their collected leaves, children can arrange their leaves onto their clay.
- Then, using their rolling pins, children can lightly roll over the leaves to push them slightly into the clay.
- Carefully, the children can then peel the leaves away to reveal the print left in the clay.
- Enjoy looking at the prints and talking about what they can see from the print left behind.



Leaf Whispers

What you will need:

- Quiet surroundings
- A collection of leaves (dry, supple, medium-sized leaves are the best for this activity)

The Activity

- Ask the children to sit in a circle.
- Tell the children that the special leaf has a secret message and that we can only hear it one at a time.
- The children are going to help the leaf to carry its message around the circle from the first child to the last.
- The adult comes up with a message to be passed around the circle, then holds the leaf first and whispers the message to the child next to them. Explain that everyone else needs to be very quiet.
- The leaf is then passed around the circle as each child whispers the message to the next.
- When the leaf comes to the last child in the circle, they say out loud what the leaf's message was. Is it the same as the one the adult said? Discuss why it may be slightly different.

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