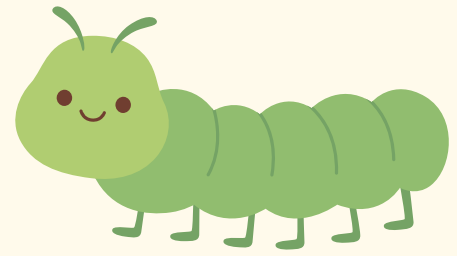




For educators, volunteers, and parents

NATURE ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

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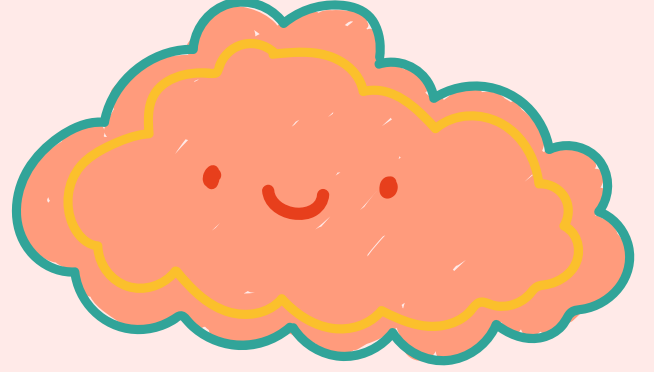
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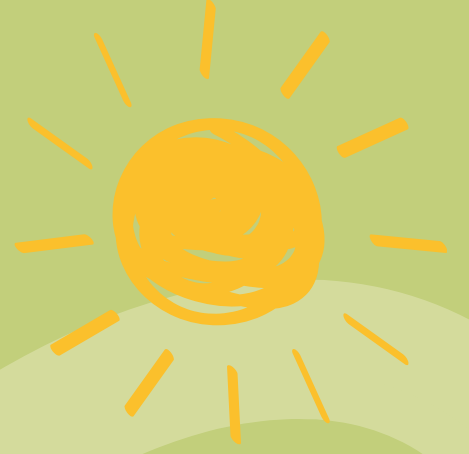
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FORWARD



The booklet you are holding is not only a series of activity suggestions, but also a guide that contains the seeds for hope, healing, and faith in the future. As Roots & Shoots Türkiye and by sharing Dr. Jane Goodall's vision and passion, we aim to support young people's and children's connection with nature to make the world we live in a better place.

The major earthquake disaster Türkiye experienced on February 6, 2023, deeply impacted us all. The lives that were lost, the houses destroyed and the lives turned upside down... During these difficult times, we did not lose our faith in the healing power of nature and what we can achieve together as a society. This booklet emerged as a product of this belief.

The activities contained within were prepared for everyone, especially children and young people in areas affected by disasters. Our aim is to ensure that the time children and young people spend with and in nature contributes to their spiritual and physical wellbeing.

Each activity strengthens the bonds of children and young people with nature, aims to help them discover the world around them, and, most importantly, to feel that they can be a part of positive change.

The activities in this guidebook are only suggestions. We invite you to use your own creativity to expand upon these activities and adapt them to the characteristics and needs of your region. Remember, every child is unique and each has the potential to establish their own special bond with nature.

Dear educators, volunteers and parents; As you guide children and young people, it is in your hands to keep their curiosity alive, encourage their questioning, and support their love for nature. In this journey, your excitement and passion will be the greatest source of inspiration for them.

As Dr. Jane Goodall often repeats: "Everything you do makes a difference, you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." We hope that this booklet helps you make small but meaningful differences every day. Remember that every time you plant a seed, every time you walk in nature, every time you see curiosity in a child's eyes, you are spreading seeds of hope for a better world.



As Roots & Shoots Türkiye, we would like to express our endless gratitude to everyone who contributed to the preparation of this booklet, especially the volunteers and experts who were with us during the field visits. This project would not have been possible without their dedicated work.

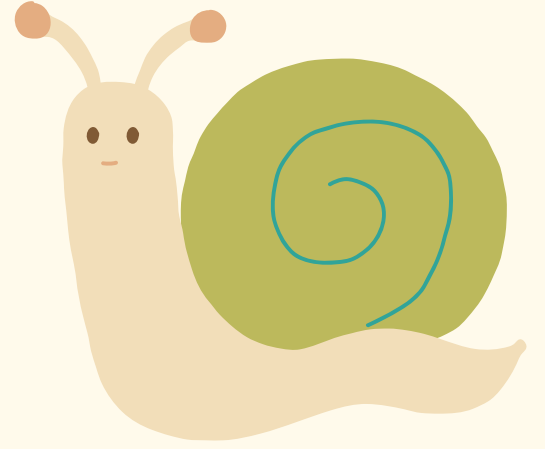
Please share your experiences, observations and suggestions with us. It is only by learning and uniting together that we can create a stronger society and a healthier planet.

We wish you all days full of nature, discovery, and hope. Each of us may seem small, but together we can create big changes!

With love, hope and solidarity,

Roots & Shoots Türkiye Team

THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF HATAY



Located in the south of Türkiye, the province of Hatay is an important ecological region that attracts attention with its rich biodiversity. Hatay, which has an important location on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, hosts a unique ecosystem through its distinctive climate conditions, geographical structure, and historical past. These unique features make Hatay, located in a transition zone between the Mediterranean and the continental climates, one of the most valuable regions of Türkiye in terms of biodiversity. While the typical Mediterranean climate prevails in the coastal parts of the province, continental climate characteristics are observed as you move inland. This climate diversity allows different plant and animal species to coexist. Hatay has a variety of habitats such as the Amanos Mountains, the Asi River, fertile plains, and the coastline. These different habitats play an important role in the region's rich biodiversity.

Hatay is one of the provinces with the richest vegetation in Türkiye. There are about 2,000 plant species in the province and more than 300 of them are endemic, with the Amanos Mountains being particularly rich in endemic species. The main plant communities include maquis and garig communities and red pine forests in coastal areas, cedar, fir and larch forests in higher areas, and wet meadows in the Amik Plain. Some of the endemic plant species found in Hatay include the Atahan dağarcığı, Zeynep ışıkcıçeği and Barışın çiçeği.

Hatay's rich vegetation and diverse habitats are home to many animal species. Some important mammal species seen in the province include the striped hyena, mountain gazelle, Egyptian fruit bat, lynx, caracal and wild goat. It is similarly a very rich region in terms of bird species. Among the reptiles, the striped Mediterranean turtle and the striped viper stand out, while endemic fish species living in the Asi River also contribute to the biodiversity of the region. This rich biodiversity is of great importance in many ways, with the endemic species in the region also being of great value for scientific research. Studies on the genetic structure, adaptation mechanisms, and ecological roles of these species are invaluable.

The rich flora of Hatay is also an important resource for beekeeping and medicinal plant production. Moreover, the presence of diverse species makes the ecosystem more resistant in the face of environmental threats such as climate change. This makes the region overall more resilient to environmental changes today and in the future. The region's biodiversity is also intertwined with local culture and traditions. For example, local plant species are used in traditional medicine practices, demonstrating the importance of biodiversity in terms of cultural heritage.

Thus, Hatay's biodiversity is of great importance not only for the region but also for our country and the planet. Conservation of this richness is critical to preserving a healthy ecosystem for present and future generations. The cooperation of local authorities, scientists, and all branches of society will play a key role in protecting Hatay's unique natural heritage. The conservation and development of this singular ecosystem will make a significant contribution to not only regionally, but to biodiversity globally.

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH EMERGENCIES AND CRISES THROUGH NATURE ACTIVITIES



Emergencies, crises, or natural disasters are difficult for everyone, but especially for children. These abnormal situations can negatively impact children's emotions, thoughts, and behaviour. Nature-based activities can contribute to supporting children's wellbeing during these times. Below are some suggestions to try with children:



Conversations About Emotions

Time spent in nature can provide an appropriate setting for exploring and sharing emotions. For example, while taking a walk in a park, you can start a dialogue with questions such as “How are you feeling today? How does it make you feel to see these trees?” Being in nature can create a safe space for children to explore and express their feelings.



Building Nature-Based Habits

Together with children, you can plan regular activities in nature. You can involve children in the planning process with suggestions such as “Shall we spend time in the garden every day?” or “Shall we go to the nearby park on weekends and see what has changed?” These habits can create a sense of continuity even in uncertain times.



Reflecting on Change

By observing changes in nature, you can create opportunities to talk about the cyclical and changing nature of life. For example, “Look, this tree has lost its leaves. But they will grow again in the spring. What do you think about the situation we are living in right now?” This can help you support children in connecting with nature and expressing their own ideas.



Active Listening

During nature walks or while spending time in a garden, you can create an appropriate environment for children to share their thoughts and feelings. You can begin with questions such as “What's on your mind today? I am ready to listen to you.” These questions invite children to lead the conversation.



Conversations on Media Use

Together with children, you can make a plan about your usage of news networks and social media. For example, “How often do you think we should watch the news? What do you think about watching more nature documentaries or going for a hike instead?”



Exploring Nature

You can invite children to observe nature. Questions such as “Did you hear that bird? What do you think it might be saying?” or “What does that cloud remind you of?” can help support their imagination and observation skills.



Creative Projects

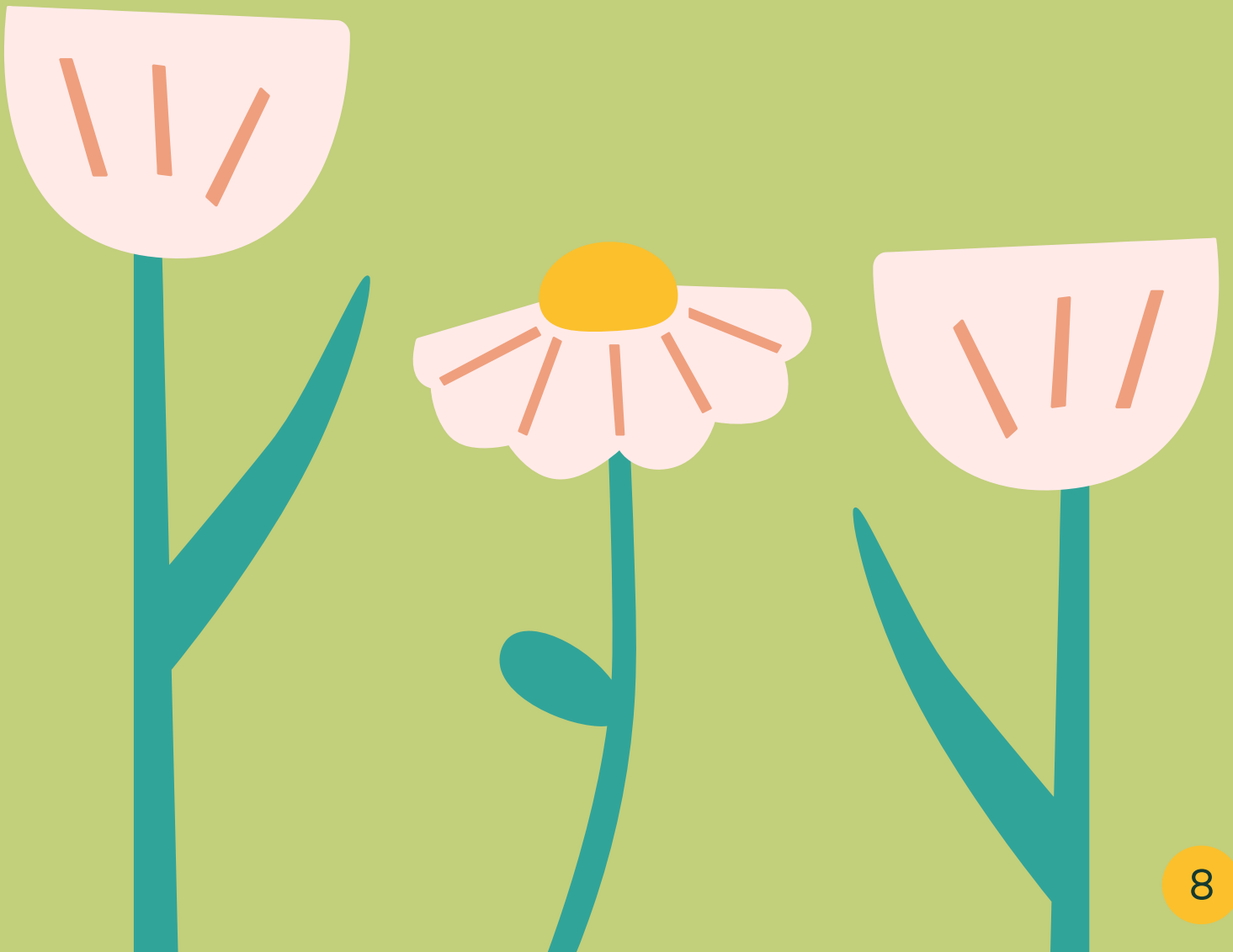
Together with children, you can collect materials from nature and make art projects. By asking questions such as “What do you want to do with these leaves? Maybe we can make a collage, what do you think?” you can encourage their creativity.

These suggestions provide a nature-inspired framework for supporting children's ability to cope with unexpected situations. Since each child's interests and needs are different, you can evaluate and adapt these suggestions together with your children.

Remember, you can also learn together with the children. During nature activities, you can observe children's behaviour and create further opportunities for support where needed.

If you have concerns or need additional support, do not hesitate to seek help from experts.

NATURE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN



Nature Diary

Objective

This activity helps children connect with nature, develop observation skills, and explore the world around them. Regular observations of nature and recording what is seen can help children to relax.



Materials

- Notepad or paper
- Pencil and eraser
- Coloured pencils or watercolours
- Magnifying glass (if desired)
- Box or cloth bag for collecting samples from nature

Directions

1. Choose a safe and suitable place to journal with children (a garden, a park, a forest, etc.).
2. Spend 15-30 minutes in this space as regularly as possible (daily or several times a week).
3. Encourage children to explore and observe their environment. You can ask them questions such as:
 - “What do you see in the sky today?”
 - “What sounds can you hear?”
 - “Did you notice anything interesting on the ground?”
4. Suggest that they record their observations in their journals. Notes may include:
 - Weather forecasts
 - Plants and animals they see

5. Encourage children to write or draw their discoveries.
6. Suggest that they observe changes over time. For example:
 - “What changes do you see in the trees compared to last week?”
 - “What is different in nature today from our previous visit?”

Further Instructions

- This activity can be adapted according to the age of the children and the current circumstances. Younger children can make simple drawings, whereas older children can write down their observations in short notes.
- It is important to repeat the activity regularly. This can allow children to observe changes in nature and notice changes in their own emotions.

Feedback Questions

After the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“What did you like in nature today?”*
- *“Did anything surprise you?”*
- *“What did you discover during this activity?”*
- *“What would you like to observe more closely on our next visit?”*
- *“How did observing nature make you feel?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can chat about topics that are of interest to children. For example, you could ask them to share what they know about a bird or plant they have seen.
- You can suggest that they keep notes of the same tree or area to track seasonal changes.
- You can encourage them to share their nature journal with family or friends.



Birdwatching with Birdfeeders

Objective

This activity aims to help children recognize the birds in their environment and set aside time for birdwatching regularly. Seeing birds and listening to their sounds can be relaxing for children.

Materials

- Cardboard box
- Rope for hanging the feeder
- Bird feed
- Scissors
- Coloured pencils to decorate the feeder
- Notepad and pencil
- Binoculars (if available)
- Bird identification guide or tablet/phone app

Directions

1. Identify a place in a safe open space where birds can come.
 - Make a simple cardboard box with the children to hang there.
 - Punch holes in the top and thread a string through it to hang the feeder.
 - Decorate the feeder with the children.
2. Hang the feeder together in a suitable place.
3. Make a plan for the division of labour with the children to put regular feed in the feeder.
4. Set observation times together (e.g., 15 minutes in the morning every day or 30 minutes on weekends).



5. During the observation, you can do the following with the children:
 - Count the birds that arrive.
 - Note the colours and characteristics of the birds.
 - Observe the behaviour of the birds (how they feed, how they interact with each other, etc.).
6. Encourage them to record their observations in the notebook.
7. If possible, try to identify the birds you see together using a bird identification guide or app.

Further Instructions

- You can adapt the activity according to the age and interests of the children. With younger children you can do simple counting and colour identification, with older children you can research bird species and analyse their behaviour.
- Share the responsibility of keeping the feeder clean and putting out feed regularly.
- Make sure that all the materials used are environmentally friendly and talk to the children about this.

Feedback Questions

After the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“How many different bird species did you see today?”*
- *“Which bird did you enjoy observing? Why?”*
- *“Did you notice anything interesting about the behaviour of the birds?”*
- *“Why do you think some birds come more often than others?”*
- *“What did these observations teach us about birds?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can repeat the activity with each new season to see different bird species in different seasons.
- You can add listening to bird sounds to the activity.
- If possible, you can contact a local birdwatching community and share your observations with them.
- You can do research projects together on topics such as bird life cycles and migration routes.

Collecting and Planting Seeds

Objective

This activity allows children to observe the stages of plant growth by collecting and planting the seeds of local plants. This experience can allow children to connect with nature, experience taking responsibility, and develop observation skills.



Materials

- Paper or cloth bag for collecting seeds
- Label and pen
- Soil
- Flower pot or yogurt container

Directions

1. Go with the children to a local park, garden, or natural area.
2. Ask the children which plants they would like to collect seeds from.
3. Take care to collect the seeds carefully:
 - Choose ripe seeds.
 - Use a separate bag for each species.
 - Label the collected seeds.
4. When you return home/to the school, dry the seeds.
5. Prepare for sowing:
 - Fill pots or yogurt containers with soil.
 - Plant a few seeds in each pot.
 - Label the pots.

6. Plan regular maintenance and monitoring for the seeds:

- Establish a daily watering schedule.
- Set weekly measurement and observation times.

7. Record your observations in a notebook:

- Note the date of sprouting.
- Measure and record the height of the plants.
- Draw new growth such as leaves and flowers.



Further Instructions

- This can be a long-term project. Make regular observations.
- With young children you can make simple observation and care routines. With older children you can make more detailed observations and investigations.
- Remind children to respect nature when collecting seeds.
- Emphasize the importance of choosing local and seasonal plants.
- Do not collect endemic plant seeds. You can get help from experts on this subject.

Feedback Questions

During the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“Which plant seeds did we collect today?”*
- *“How are these seeds different from each other?”*
- *“How long did it take for the seeds to sprout?”*
- *“What has changed in our plants today?”*
- *“What do our plants need to grow?”*
- *“What does this process teach us about plants?”*

Additional Recommendations

- Compare the growth rates of different plants.
- You can make drawings to record the different stages of growth.
- You can observe the growth of plants in different conditions.
- You can plan to plant the plants you have grown in your garden.
- You can visit a local botanical garden and share your observations.

Art with Natural Materials



Objective

This activity allows children to create works of art with materials collected from nature. This experience can allow children to connect with nature and explore their creativity.

Materials

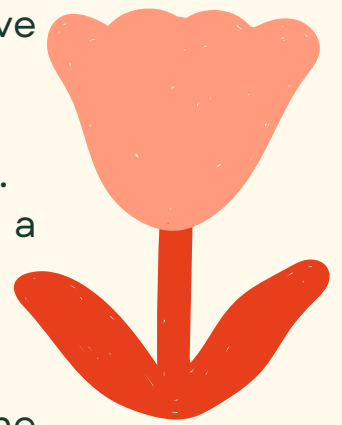
- Materials collected from nature (fallen leaves, branches, stones, pinecones, etc.)
- Cloth bag or basket
- Rope
- Paper or cardboard (to use as a surface, optional)
- Adhesive, such as glue
- Camera or phone (optional)

Directions

1. Go with the children to a safe natural area (a park, a forest, a beach, etc.).
2. Collect natural materials:
 - Ask the children which materials they can collect.
 - Discuss the importance of not harming living things while collecting.
 - Suggest collecting materials of different colours, textures and shapes.
3. Observe and discuss the environment while collecting materials:
 - “What does this leaf look like?”
 - “How could the patterns on this stone have been formed?”

4. Create works of art with the materials you have collected:

- Create a large mandala on the ground.
- Make a frame out of branches and fill it with leaves.
- Arrange stones by size and colour to create a pattern.
- Make a collage of leaves.



5. You can support children with questions during the creation process:

- “How can we put these materials together?”
- “Which colours and shapes fit together?”

6. If you wish, you can take photos of the creations.

7. When you are finished, you can return the materials to nature.

Further Instructions

- This activity can be done in all seasons and different materials can be found in each season.
- You can adapt the activity according to the age of the children. With younger children you can create simple shapes and patterns. With older children you can make more complex compositions and three-dimensional structures.
- When leaving the natural area, you can take care to leave it as you found it or cleaner.

Feedback Questions

During the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“Which of the natural materials were interesting to you? Why?”*
- *“How did you feel while making the artwork?”*
- *“What else can we do with the materials we collect from nature?”*
- *“Did you realize anything new about nature during this activity?”*
- *“Was making art with natural materials different from making art with other materials?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can repeat the activity in different seasons.
- You can make natural dyes and use them.
- You can make sculptures with natural materials.
- You can organize an exhibition with photographs of the works you have created.
- You can research how natural materials have been used in the history of art (e.g. the works of Andy Goldsworthy).



Goldsworthy, A. (2001). From "Working With Time"
[Photograph]. <https://doorofperception.com/2016/03/andy-goldsworthy-working-with-time/>

Creating a Mini Ecosystem

Objective

This activity aims to create mini ecosystems in jars with children. This process can help children understand how ecosystems work and explore relationships between species.



Materials

- A large glass jar, terrarium container, or aquarium
- Small pebbles or broken pieces of ceramic (for drainage)
- Activated charcoal (for water filtration)
- Humus soil
- Small plants (such as moss, ferns, succulents)
- Tiny decorative stones or cones
- Water sprayer
- Long tongs or wooden stick (for placing plants)
- Paper and pen (for observation notes)

Directions

1. Gather and prepare materials with the children:
 - Collect small plants and moss from a local park or garden.
 - Clean your jar thoroughly.
2. Place drainage materials on the bottom of the jar:
 - First put pebbles or broken pieces of ceramic.
 - Add a thin layer of activated charcoal on top.

3. Add the soil layer:
 - Remind the children that when adding soil to the jar, add just enough to ensure that the roots of the plants are completely covered.
4. Add the plants:
 - Plan with the children where to place the plants.
 - Use long tongs or wooden sticks to carefully add the plants.
5. Add decorative elements:
 - Let the children add tiny stones or pine cones as they like.
6. Moisturize your ecosystem:
 - Use a water sprayer.
7. Put the lid on the jar and place it in a suitable place:
 - Choose a bright place out of direct sunlight.
8. Observe:
 - Observe your mini ecosystem every day with the children.
 - Note changes and make drawings.

Further Instructions

- This is a long-term project. Regular observation is important.
- With young children you can make simple observations. With older children you can make more detailed observations and investigations.
- When collecting live plants, take care not to harm nature.
- You can emphasize that it is a closed system, so there is no need to water it too much.

Feedback Questions

During the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“Which living things do you see in our mini ecosystem?”*
- *“What relationships do you observe between plants?”*
- *“How does the water cycle take place inside the jar?”*
- *“What changes have you noticed in the ecosystem over time?”*
- *“How is this mini ecosystem similar to the larger ecosystems outside?”*
- *“What can we do to keep our ecosystem healthy?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can create and compare multiple ecosystems with different plant species.
- Document the development of the ecosystem with photographs.
- Observe changes in humidity and temperature in the mini ecosystem.
- Observe micro-organisms in the ecosystem (e.g. insects in the soil).
- Conduct a research project on the importance of ecosystems.



Recycling Project

Objective

The activity offers the opportunity to create new and useful products from waste. This process can allow children to explore their creativity and gain experience in reusing resources.

Materials

- Various waste materials (paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, glass jars, old fabrics, etc.)
- Natural glue (mixture of flour and water)
- Scissors
- Paint (water-based, environmentally friendly)
- Brushes
- String or twine
- Old magazines or newspapers

Directions

1. Go through the waste materials you have collected with the children:
 - Discuss the characteristics of each material (shape, texture, durability).
 - Discuss where these materials are normally thrown away and how long it takes for them to decompose in nature.
2. Brainstorm:
 - Ask: “What can we do with these materials?”
 - Take note of the children's ideas and discuss them together.
3. Decide on the project. Example projects:
 - A flower pot or pencil holder made from plastic bottles
 - A dollhouse made of cardboard boxes
 - A shopping bag made from old t-shirts



4. Carry out your project step by step:
 - Children can choose tasks (cutting, painting, gluing, etc.).
 - Remind them of safety rules and help them when needed.
5. After completing the product:
 - Discuss how to use it.
 - Talk about the benefits of recycling.
6. Display your project:
 - Organize a small exhibition at school or at home.
 - Encourage children to tell their friends or family members about their project.

Further Instructions

- For younger children, choose simpler projects (e.g. a pencil holder made from a paper roll). For older children, consider more complex projects (e.g. art from old electronics).
- Safety should always be at the forefront; be careful with sharp tools, make sure waste materials are clean and safe.
- Share that recycling is the last step. Remind them that it is important not to consume more than they need.

Feedback Questions

During and after the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“How did you feel while working on this project?”*
- *“Which material was interesting for you to work with? Why?”*
- *“If we didn't use these waste materials, where would they go?”*
- *“What other waste materials can we reuse at home or at school?”*
- *“What do we consume more than we need?”*
- *“How can we reduce consumption?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can set up a “Recycling Club” and do regular projects.
- You can start a recycling campaign at school or in the neighbourhood.
- You can make musical instruments from waste materials and form a “waste orchestra.”

Nature Bingo

Objective

This activity allows children to explore species and natural resources around them while hiking in nature. This experience can help children develop observation skills and connect with nature.

Materials

- Bingo cards
- Pencils or natural dyes
- Small stones or seeds (for marking)
- Magnifying glass (preferably)
- Local flora and fauna guide or mobile phone app



Preparation

1. Research the species and natural features of your region:
 - Local plants, trees, flowers
 - Common insects, birds, other animals
 - Characteristic stone and rock formations
2. Prepare the bingo cards:
 - Create 4x4 cards.
 - Draw or write a **nature asset** on each square.
3. Choose a safe walking route:
 - Choose a route that is suitable for the children's age and abilities.
 - Make sure that the creatures and plants on the card can be found on the route.

Directions

1. Introduce the activity to the children:
 - Distribute the bingo cards and explain how to use them.
 - Remind them of the safety rules.
 2. Start the walk:
 - Encourage children to observe their surroundings carefully.
 - Keep them interested with questions such as "Do you have the leaf of that tree on your card? "
 3. As discoveries are made;
 - Help children to mark what they find.
 - Share brief information about each asset found.
 4. Take a break:
 - Stop to rest and drink water from time to time.
 - Encourage children to share their observations during breaks.
 5. End the activity:
 - Even if not all the cards are filled, end the activity at the agreed on time
-
- Finish the walk.
- Talk about the most and least found assets.

Further Instructions

- This activity can be done in all seasons and different natural phenomena can be observed each time.
- You can adapt the cards according to the age and interests of the children. For younger children, make cards that are simpler and contain few living or non-living things. For older children, add different species or more elusive creatures.
- Remind them of the importance of respecting the natural world.



Feedback Questions

After the activity, you can ask the children the following questions:

- *"Were there any interesting things you saw today? Why did you find them interesting?"*
- *"Did you see anything that caught your attention that was not on your card?"*
- *"Which item did you have difficulty finding? Why do you think it was difficult?"*
- *"What might change if we repeated this walk in different seasons?"*

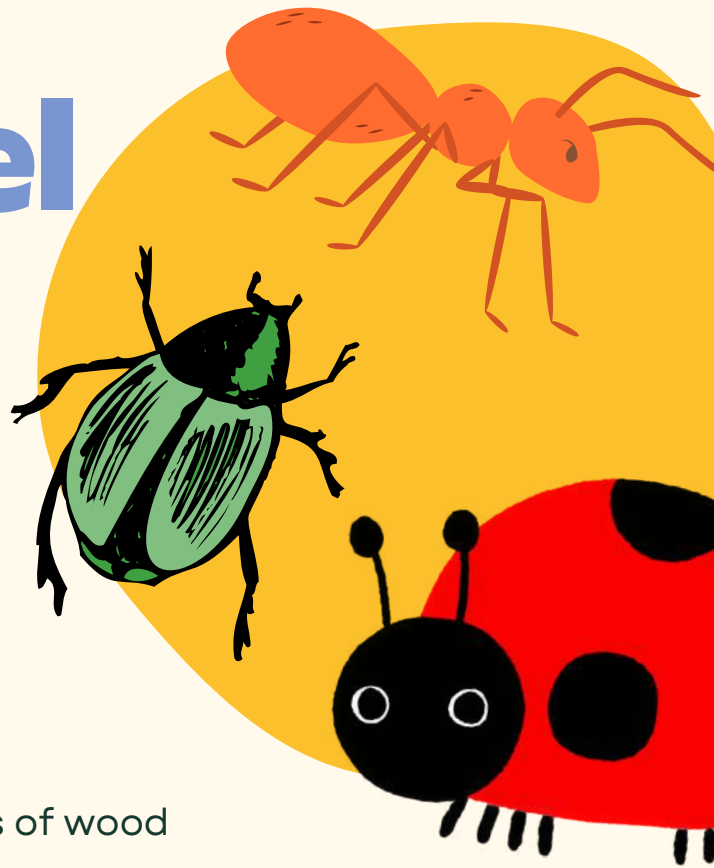
Additional Recommendations

- You can observe seasonal changes by repeating the activity in different seasons.
- You can create a nature diary by making drawings of the creatures found.
- In class or at home, you can conduct more detailed research on the creatures observed.
- You can contact a local nature conservation group and share your observations.
- Research and discuss the role of the observed species in the ecosystem.

Insect Hotel

Objective

This activity aims to build small shelters for insects together with the children. This process helps them explore the role of insects in the ecosystem and develop environmental awareness.



Materials

- Old wooden pallets or recycled pieces of wood
- Rushes or hollow reeds
- Pinecones, bark, dry leaves
- Straw or hay
- Bricks with holes (if available)
- Natural twine
- Hand drill (for adult use)
- Hammer and nails (for adult use)
- Insect identification guide or app

Perparation

1. Do some preliminary research about insects with the children:
 - What insect species are common in your area?
 - What are their habitats and needs?
 - What is the role of insects in the ecosystem?
2. Collect materials:
 - Collect natural materials (pinecones, shells, etc.) with the children.
 - Provide recycled materials.
3. Prepare a safe workspace:
 - Choose an outdoor or well-ventilated indoor space.
 - Provide necessary safety equipment (gloves, goggles).

Directions

1. Introduce the activity to the children:
 - Explain the purpose and importance of the insect hotel.
 - Discuss the different habitat needs of different insect species.
2. Create the main structure of the insect hotel:
 - Make the basic frame using wooden pallets or pieces of wood.
 - Assign age-appropriate tasks (e.g. holding boards, measuring).
3. Create the interior compartments:
 - Plan various compartments for different insect species.
 - Place bamboo sticks, pinecones, bark.
 - Use bricks with holes (if available).
4. Add natural materials:
 - Guide the children to place the materials.
 - Discuss which insects each material is suitable for.
5. Add the finishing touches:
 - Cover the hotel to protect it from the rain.
 - Decorate the hotel with the children (with natural materials).
6. Place the insect hotel in a suitable place:
 - Choose a sunny spot, sheltered from the wind.
 - Make sure there are water and sources of nectar nearby.



Further Instructions

- This is a long-term project. Make regular observations.
- Adapt tasks according to the age of the children.
- Emphasize respecting the natural habitats of insects.

Feedback Questions

During and after the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“Which insects do you think could live in our insect hotel?”*
- *“Why do insects need different habitats?”*
- *“What would our world be like without insects?”*
- *“What did you like most about this project?”*
- *“How can we improve our insect hotel?”*
- *“How has this experience affected your view of insects?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can regularly observe the insect hotel and note the insects that arrive.
- You can keep an “Insect Diary” and record your observations.
- You can compare the behaviour of insects in different seasons.
- Grow insect-friendly plants in your garden or school.
- Organize a talk by inviting a local entomologist.
- Do a research project on the role of insects in pollination.

Guide to Native Plants

Objective

This activity aims to take photos with children of plants in the area and create a simple guide. This process can help children learn about local flora and develop their observation skills.

Materials

- Camera or smartphone
- Notepad and pen
- Magnifier
- Plant identification guide or app
- Box
- Cardboard or notebook (to create a guide)
- Glue and scissors
- Coloured pencils or paints

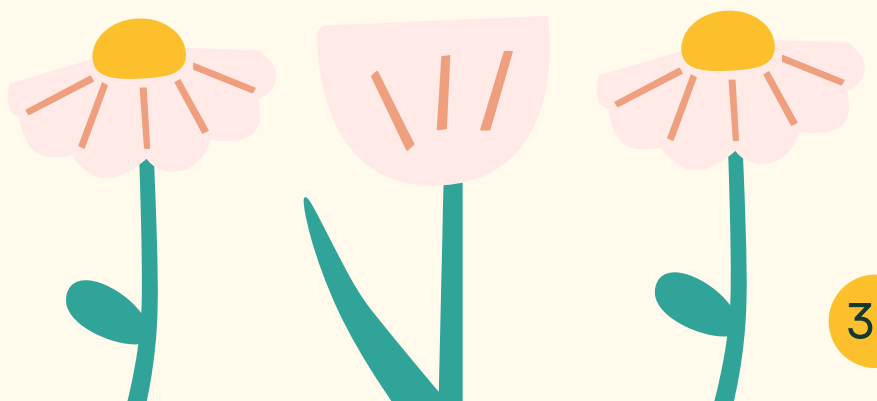
Preparation

1. Do some preliminary research on local vegetation:
 - What plant species are common in your area?
 - Are there endemic or rare species?
 - Do seasonal changes affect the vegetation?
2. Identify a safe and suitable site:
 - It could be a local park, botanical garden, or nature reserve.
 - Make sure to get the necessary permits.
3. Learn about photography and plant identification techniques:
 - Research basic photography tips.
 - Look for features used in plant identification (leaf shapes, flower structures, etc.).



Directions

1. Introduce the activity to the children:
 - Explain the importance of recognizing local plants.
 - Explain the process of creating a guide.
2. Go out in the field and start taking photos:
 - Take photos of the details of each plant (leaves, flowers, stems) from different angles.
 - Allow each child to take turns.
3. Identify the plants and take notes:
 - Try to identify species using a plant identification guide or app.
 - Take short notes on each plant (colour, size, plant-specific characteristics).
4. Collect specimens (preferably with permission):
 - Collect fallen leaves or flowers.
 - Take care not to damage the plant.
5. Laboratory/class work:
 - Transfer the photos to the computer and organize them.
 - Review the information collected.
6. Create the directory:
 - Prepare a page for each plant (photo, name, information).
 - Categorize the plants (trees, shrubs, grasses).
7. Finalize the guide:
 - Add a cover page and a table of contents.
 - Make additional pages about the uses of the plants or interesting facts about the plants.



Further Instructions

- Adapt the activity according to the age of the children. For younger children, start with fewer and easily identifiable plants. With older children you can prepare a guide with more detailed information and scientific names.
- Be careful when handling plants, warn against poisonous species or species that might cause allergic reactions.

Feedback Questions

During and after the activity, you can ask the children the following questions:

- *"Did you discover an interesting plant today? Why did you find it interesting?"*
- *"Did you encounter a plant species you have never seen before?"*
- *"What characteristics did you pay attention to when identifying plants?"*
- *"What did you learn about the living conditions of plants in this region?"*
- *"What is the role of plants in our environment? Why are they important?"*
- *"What did you like about this guide?"*

Additional Recommendations

- You can update the directory at different times of the year to observe seasonal changes.
- You can convert your guide to a digital format and share it online.
- You can do research on local uses of plants or their use in traditional medicine.
- Organize a plant identification event in your school or neighbourhood.
- Invite a local botanist or environmental expert to give a talk.

Nature Mandala



Objective

This activity aims to create mandala patterns with children using natural materials. This process allows children to practice calmness and focus while exercising their creativity.

Materials

- Various natural materials (leaves, flowers, stones, cones, twigs, etc.)
- Collection basket or bag
- A large flat surface (a flat floor in an open area or a large piece of cardboard)
- Camera or smartphone (preferred)

Preparation

1. Identify a suitable open space:
 - It can be a park, a garden or a wooded area.
 - Find a flat and wide surface.
2. Do some brief research about mandala art:
 - Research the meaning and history of mandalas.
 - Look at simple mandala patterns and examples.
3. Learn about mindfulness and focusing techniques:
 - Research simple breathing exercises suitable for children.

Directions



1. Introduce the activity to the children:
 - Explain what a mandala is and why you are doing it.
 - Emphasize the importance of using natural materials.
2. Collect materials:
 - Take a short walk around the neighbourhood with the children.
 - Collect various natural materials.
 - Be careful not to harm living things.
3. Prepare the mandala creation area:
 - Clean the floor or lay out cardboard.
 - Sort the collected materials by type.
4. Start creating the mandala:
 - Start from the centre and work outwards. You can begin by drawing a small shape in the centre of the floor.
 - Use elements of symmetry and repetition. For example, if you have chosen a flower pattern, you can repeat it 4, 6 or 8 times around the centre.
5. Practice mindfulness:
 - Occasionally stop and do deep breathing exercises.
 - Occasionally ask the children to focus on the texture and smell of the natural materials.
6. Complete the mandala:
 - Make final edits.
 - Take a photo of the completed mandala.
7. Respect nature:
 - At the end of the activity, return the materials you collected back to nature.
 - Emphasize the importance of leaving the area clean and tidy.



Further Instructions

- This activity can be adapted to all age groups. For younger children, use simpler patterns and larger materials. With older children you can work on more complex patterns and fine details.
- Pay attention to weather conditions and do the activity indoors if necessary.
- Pay attention to children with allergies and choose appropriate materials.

Feedback Questions

During and after the activity, you can ask the children the following questions:

- *"Which natural material did you like to use while making the mandala? Why?"*
- *"How did you feel while creating the mandala?"*
- *"How did you feel working with natural materials?"*
- *"Did you feel changes in your body while doing the breathing exercises?"*
- *"Did you learn anything new about nature during this activity?"*
- *"Why do we return the materials back to nature after completing our mandalas?"*



Additional Recommendations

- You can create seasonal mandalas and observe the effects of the seasons on nature.
- Instead of a group mandala, each child can make their own small mandala.
- Create an exhibition or digital collage of mandala photos.
- You can record the process of creating a mandala as a time-lapse video.
- Organize a story-writing activity on the theme of nature mandalas.
- Research and discuss mandala traditions in different cultures.

Nature Exploration Walk

Objective

This activity aims to organize a guided walk with children in a safe nature area. This process can help children recognize different plant and animal species and learn about nature.

Materials

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Water bottles
- Healthy snacks
- Sunscreen and hat
- First aid kit
- Notepad and pen
- Magnifier
- Binoculars (preferred)
- Plant and animal species guide or app
- Camera or smartphone (preferred)

Preparation

1. Identify a safe and suitable natural area:
 - It can be a local park, a nature reserve, or a forest.
 - Make sure to get the necessary permits.
2. Plan the route:
 - Choose a route that is suitable for the children's age and physical capacity.
 - Check the route on foot beforehand.
3. Do preliminary research on local flora and fauna:
 - Note interesting ecological features.
4. Review safety rules:
 - Staying in groups, not touching poisonous plants, etc.



Directions

1. Introduce the activity to the children:

- Explain the purpose of the walk and what they can expect to see.
- Share the safety rules and the importance of respecting living things.

2. Start the walk:

- Proceed at a slow and calm pace.
- Encourage children to observe their surroundings carefully.

3. Take regular breaks:

- Stop to drink water, rest and observe.
- Focus on a different element of nature at each break (trees, birds, insects, etc.).

4. Do exploration and observation activities:

- Use a magnifying glass to examine plant leaves.
- Listen to bird sounds and try to identify them.
- Feel the texture of tree bark.
- Collect natural objects (leaves, pinecones).

5. Share information:

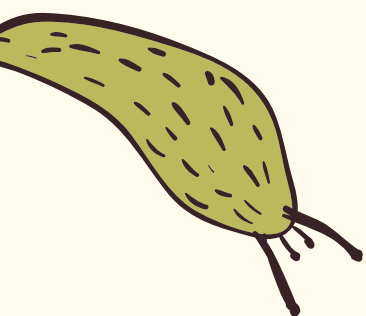
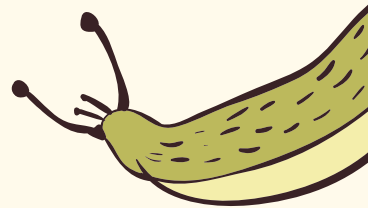
- Give information about the species you see.
- Give simple explanations about how the ecosystem works.

6. Encourage note-taking and drawing:

- Encourage children to record their observations.
- Suggest that they make drawings of what they see.

7. End the walk:

- Thank the group and ask them to share their observations.



Further Instructions

- Adjust the duration and difficulty of the walk according to the age and fitness of the group. For younger children, plan a shorter, more play-oriented walk. With older children, you can make more detailed ecological observations and discussions.
- Remind them to respect the natural world, not to interfere, and not to harm anything.
- Check the weather forecast and prepare accordingly.

Feedback Questions

During and after the walk, you can ask children the following questions:

- *"Were there any interesting things you saw today? Why did you find them interesting?"*
- *"Did you see a plant or animal species that you have never seen before?"*
- *"Did you notice how living things in nature interact with each other?"*
- *"Did you learn anything new during this walk?"*
- *"How did it make you feel to be in nature?"*
- *"What can we do to protect the spaces we see?"*

Additional Recommendations

- You can organize walks on the same route in different seasons to observe seasonal changes.
- You can organize a photo exhibition and set categories such as "Interesting leaves," "Colourful flowers," etc.
- After the walk, you can create a "Nature Diary" with the children's observations and drawings.
- Organize a special walk with a local nature guide or biologist.
- You can provide information about nature conservation projects and create opportunities for children to participate in these projects.

Examining Soil Profiles

Objective

This activity aims to profile and investigate the soil in a small area with children. This process helps children understand the layers of the soil, the living things in it, and its importance.

Materials

- Shovel or garden hoe
- Tape measure or ruler
- Magnifying glass (preferably)
- Notepad and pen
- Camera or smartphone (preferred)
- Gloves
- Small plastic containers or jars (for soil samples)

Preparation

1. Do some preliminary research about soil with the children:
 - Learn about the formation and layers of soil.
 - Try to learn about the diversity of living things in the soil.
 - Investigate the importance of soil for the ecosystem.
2. Identify a safe area to investigate:
 - Choose a school playground, park or a suitable natural area.
 - Make sure you have the necessary permits.
3. Review the safety rules.



Directions

1. Introduce the activity to the children:
 - Explain what a soil profile is and why we are studying it.
 - Emphasize the importance of soil for the ecosystem.
2. Prepare the investigation area:
 - Determine an area of about 50x50 cm.
 - Choose an area with no vegetation on the surface.
3. Make a soil profile:
 - Dig a hole about 50 cm deep in the designated area. Remember to dig carefully and be mindful of organisms that live in the soil.
 - Observe the different colours and textures during the excavation.
4. Examine the soil layers:
 - Note the colour, texture and depth of each layer.
 - Measure and photograph the layers.
 - Take small samples from each layer.
5. Observe soil organisms:
 - Examine the soil with a magnifying glass.
 - Note any living things you see (worms, insects, etc.).
6. Record observations:
 - Encourage children to write down their observations and make drawings.
7. Close the pit:
 - Carefully close the pit after the inspection is finished.

Further Instructions

- Adjust the depth of excavation and the detail of the examination according to the age of the children. For younger children you can do a more superficial examination. With older children you can do more detailed analysis and measurements.
- Emphasize that the soil and the living things in it are sensitive.
- Explain the importance of restoring the area after the investigation.

Feedback Questions

During and after the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“How many different layers did you see in the soil? How do these layers differ from each other?”*
- *“Which living things did you observe in the soil? What could be the importance of these creatures for the soil?”*
- *“What can you say about the colour and texture of the soil? Why might these features be important?”*
- *“What does the soil profile tell us about the history of this area?”*
- *“Why do you think soil health is important for plant growth?”*
- *“How do we as humans affect the soil?”*
- *“What can we do to protect the soil?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can compare soil profiles in different regions (forest, meadow, beach).
- You can make more detailed observations by examining soil samples under a microscope in class.
- Organize a talk by inviting a farmer or soil scientist.
- Create a model showing the effects of soil erosion.
- You can observe the process of soil formation by creating a compost area.



Listening to Sounds in Nature

Objective

This activity directs children's attention to the sounds of nature to help them calm down, live in the moment, and connect with nature. By increasing sensory awareness, it can help reduce stress and anxiety.

Materials

- Comfortable cushions or blankets to sit on
- Notepad and pen

Directions

1. Gather in a safe and open space (a park, a garden, or a woodland).
2. Introduce the activity:
 - *"Today we are going to try to learn how to calm down by listening to the sounds of nature."*
3. Children can sit comfortably or walk slowly.
4. Do a short breathing exercise:
 - *"If you like, close your eyes and breathe in slowly through your nose. Exhale slowly through your mouth. Let's repeat this three times."*
5. During the listening phase, listen quietly for 5-10 minutes:
 - *"Now with your eyes closed, listen to the sounds around you. Focus on sounds such as birdsong, the rustling of leaves, the sound of the wind."*
 - *"Can you hear birds in the distance?"* or *"Notice how the wind rustles the leaves."*



7. They can open their eyes at the end of the listening time. Encourage them to share the sounds they hear.

Further Instructions

- The duration of the activity can be adjusted between 10-20 minutes depending on children's age and attention span.
- For younger children, keep the duration short and give more frequent prompts. With older children, you can do a longer and more detailed listening experience.
- Ensure that children feel safe. Sit next to them or hold their hands if necessary.
- Try not to talk during the activity, only give necessary guidance.

Feedback Questions

After the activity, you can discuss the following questions with the children:

- *"Which sounds did you hear? How did these sounds make you feel?"*
- *"Did you hear a sound that you had never heard before?"*
- *"What was it like to focus only on the sounds with your eyes closed?"*
- *"Which sounds gave you peace? Why?"*
- *"Would you like to do this activity again?"*
- *"If you were to do it again, where would you want to do it?"*



Additional Recommendations

- You can repeat the activity in different natural settings (a beach, a forest, a meadow, etc.) and compare the sounds.
- You can create a "sound diary," listen to nature sounds for a few minutes every day and take notes.
- The children can draw pictures of the sounds they hear, thus transforming the auditory experience into visual expression.
- You can make a recording of the nature sounds and keep it to listen to when needed.
- In a quiet environment, you can play a game of imitating the nature sounds you hear.



Nature Colours

Objective

This activity allows children to explore colours in nature. Children can observe various colours in nature, direct their attention to colours, and interact with nature. Studying colours can help children focus their attention on the moment.



Materials

- Cardboard or paper in different colours
- Adhesive, such as glue
- Scissors
- Cloth or paper bags for collected samples
- Water bottles
- Hand sanitizer

Directions

1. Meet in a safe, open space (a park, a garden, or a woodland).
2. Explain the activity to the children:
 - *"Today we are going to explore colours in nature and build our colour collection."*
3. Distribute pieces of different coloured cardboard or paper to each child.
4. Explain the instruction:
 - *"Now everyone will try to find similar colours in nature. For example, if you have green paper, you can find green leaves, and if you have brown paper, you can find brown branches."*
5. Share the rules:
 - *"Let's pick up the fallen parts of the plants without breaking them."*
 - *"Stay in groups and stay in sight."*

6. Let them spend 15-20 minutes trying to find natural materials that match the colours.

8. At the end of the activity, encourage each child to introduce and share their colour collection with the group.

Further Instructions

- The duration of the activity can be adjusted according to the age and interest level of the children. For younger children you can use fewer colours. With older children, you can work with more types and shades of colours.
- Ensure that children feel safe and can work in small groups with an adult.
- Be considerate of children with allergies and take appropriate precautions.

Feedback Questions

After the activity, you can discuss the following questions with the children:

- *"Which colour did you like to find? Why?"*
- *"Which colour was hard to find?"*
- *"Did you learn anything new about nature during this activity?"*
- *"How did it make you feel to focus on colours?"*
- *"What surprised you the most about the colours in nature?"*
- *"How did you feel while doing this activity?"*

Additional Recommendations

- You can repeat the activity in different seasons and observe how colours change with the seasons.
- You can create temporary works of nature art (e.g. mandalas) with the natural materials you have found.
- Do an activity on shades of colour, for example trying to find different shades of green.
- You can organize a simple painting activity using colours from nature.

Breathing and Tree Meditation

Objective

Using breathing exercises and nature imagery, this activity can promote calm and a sense of safety. The image of the tree reinforces feelings of being rooted and of resilience, while breathwork can help reduce stress.

Materials

- Light and calming music
- Small bells or chimes
- Photos or images of trees

Directions

1. Find a safe and quiet outdoor or indoor space.
2. Explain the activity:
 - *"Today we will learn how to be strong and calm like a tree. We will use our breath to calm ourselves."*
3. Start a conversation by showing images of trees:
 - *"What do you know about trees? Let's observe the trees around us. What do you notice?"*
4. Tell the children that they can sit in a way they feel comfortable:
 - *"Everyone can find a position in which they feel comfortable. If you like, you can try to keep your back straight, like a strong tree trunk. But the most important thing is that you feel comfortable."*



5. Start the breathing exercise:

- *"You can close your eyes if you want. You can imagine yourself as a tree. Feel your roots going deep into the earth."*
- *"Breathe slowly and deeply. As you inhale, imagine the roots of the tree drawing water from the soil. As you exhale, imagine exhaling fresh air through your leaves."*

6. Encourage them to breathe in this way for 5-10 minutes and focus on the image of the tree. Remind them every now and then:

- *"Feel your branches swaying gently in the wind. Notice that with each breath you become stronger and calmer."*

7. Gently bring the activity to a close:

- *"When you are ready, you can open your eyes. How do you feel?"*

Further Instructions

- The duration of the activity can be between 10-15 minutes depending on the age and attention span of the children. For younger children, you can keep the duration short and give more frequent prompts. With older children, you can do a longer session with more detailed imagery.
- Some children may have difficulty closing their eyes; in such cases, they can keep their eyes open.
- It is important that children feel safe during the activity, you can sit next to them if want you to.



Feedback Questions

After the activity, you can ask children the following questions:

- *“What interested you during the activity?”*
- *“What did you feel while breathing in and out?”*
- *“Did you notice any changes in your body?”*
- *“What do you think about the idea of being strong and calm like trees?”*
- *“When else would you like to try this activity?”*

Additional Recommendations

- You can repeat the activity with different natural objects (e.g. mountains, rivers, flowers).
- After the activity, children can draw a picture of themselves as a tree.
- You can create a “tree” as a group. Children can visualize different parts of the tree.
- You can do this meditation by touching or hugging a tree.
- You can suggest that the children choose a tree that inspires them and think about it.
- You can observe how a tree changes throughout the seasons and talk about these changes.

ORGANIZATIONS YOU CAN TAKE INSPIRATION FROM

- AÇEV (Mother Child Education Foundation)
<https://www.acev.org/>

- Doğa Association
<https://dogadernegi.org/>

- Law, Nature, and Society Foundation
<https://hudoto.com/>

- Maya Foundation
<https://mayavakfi.org/>

- Nehna
<https://www.nehna.org/>

- Teachers Network
<https://www.ogretmenagi.org/>

- Suna's Daughters
<https://www.sunaninkizlari.org/>

- TEMA Foundation
<https://www.tema.org.tr/>

- Foundation of Community Volunteers
<https://www.tog.org.tr/>

- Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey
<https://tegv.org/>

- Yuva Association
<https://www.yuva.org.tr/>

- WWF-Türkiye
<https://www.wwf.org.tr/>