

Wild & Wonder: Exploring, Creating and Building with Nature

1. Quick Start Educator Implementation Sheet

Explore – Nature Discovery Bins

Next Day Setup Idea:

- Use a muffin tin or small trays for sorting leaves, rocks, and sticks
- Add one tool such as a magnifying glass or scoop

Keep It Simple Tip: Start with 3 natural materials only and rotate them throughout the week

Create – Nature Mark Making

Next Day Setup Idea:

- Clip paper to a fence, wall, or table
- Use water or paint with leaves, sticks, or pinecones

Keep It Simple Tip: Focus on movement (press, drag, roll) instead of the final product

Build – Loose Parts Nature Construction

Next Day Setup Idea:

- Create a defined building space with a mat or tray
- Offer 5–6 loose parts such as sticks, rocks, and pinecones

Keep It Simple Tip: Ask open-ended questions instead of giving instructions

2. Educator Prompt Guide

Explore

- What do you notice?
- How are these different?
- Can you find something similar?

Create

- Tell me about what you made
- What happens when you press harder?
- How did you make that mark?

Build

- What are you building?
- How can you make it stronger?
- What could you add next?

3. What to Look For (Observation Guide)

Motor

- Using hands to grasp, place, and manipulate materials
- Coordinating two hands together

Cognitive

- Sorting, comparing, and testing ideas
- Trying new ways to use materials

Language

- Naming objects
- Describing textures or actions

Regulation

- Staying engaged
- Repeating actions
- Calming through focused play

4. Simple Documentation Template

Use this sentence structure:

[Child's name] + what they did + how they did it + skill observed

Examples:

- "Mia sorted leaves by size, comparing them and placing them into groups, demonstrating early classification skills."
- "Ethan stacked sticks and adjusted them when they fell, showing persistence and problem-solving."
- "Sofia pressed leaves into paint and explored different movements, building coordination and creativity."

5. Parent Communication Template

Subject: Nature-Based Learning This Week

This week, children explored learning through natural materials.

Body: "This week, children explored learning through natural materials."

In Explore, children investigated items like leaves, sticks, and rocks, building observation skills and early science understanding. In Create, they used natural materials to make marks, strengthening coordination and creativity. In Build, they constructed using loose parts, developing problem-solving, planning, and teamwork skills.

Nature-based play supports curiosity, confidence, and meaningful hands-on learning."

6. Behaviour & Regulation Connection

Nature-based activities support children by:

- Providing calming sensory input
- Encouraging focus and sustained attention
- Reducing overstimulation from busy environments
- Supporting independent exploration

These experiences help reduce challenging behaviours by meeting children's sensory and developmental needs.

7. Extension Ideas for Educators

- Add water to create mud or sensory mixing
- Introduce a simple nature hunt
- Build small-world scenes using natural materials
- Encourage drawing or documenting findings on paper or clipboards

8. Director / Operator Support

- Ask educators: "What did children discover today?"
- Encourage simple documentation (one photo + one sentence)
- Rotate materials instead of adding more
- Support outdoor learning opportunities when possible