



HELLO PARENTS,

Earth is the forth element of nature that we will focus on in this series. Earth is the outermost layer of the planet and is produced from broken down rocks, organic matter, water and air. Just like air, water and fire, earth is all around us in our everyday life. Playing with earth provides children with endless possibilities for experimenting, learning and fun. The more they know of the natural world, the more they will want to respect and protect it. This newsletter offers activities that will help your child build strong connections to the land and explore it with their bare hands and inquisitive minds.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 – 18 MONTHS)

NATURE EXPLORATION

MATERIALS:

- Blanket

DIRECTIONS:

- Set up a blanket on the grass outside.
- Encourage your child to explore their surroundings.
- Pay attention to what interests your child and let them reach to touch sticks, grass, etc.
- If your child shows interest, let them explore dirt or sand, and describe its characteristics (texture, smell, colour, etc.).

[Click here](#) for more activities.

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

MAKE A MUD PIE

MATERIALS:

- Water
- Soil
- Sticks
- Old muffin tin
- Natural items, such as rocks, shells, leaves, grass or flowers
- Container

DIRECTIONS:

- Go on a nature hunt with your child to collect fresh flowers, rocks, sticks, and shells.
- Place water, soil, sticks, natural items, in containers on the ground.
- Encourage your child to fill a muffin tin with some soil and water.
- Help your child to mix the mud well by using their hands or a stick, and keep adding more soil or water into the mud, until it reaches the consistency of a pie.
- Ask you child to decorate the mud pie with the natural items you have collected.

[Click here](#) to read "The Earth Book" by Todd Parr.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

MUD PAINTING

MATERIALS:

- Plastic cups
- Soil
- Water
- Craft sticks
- Watercolour paper
- Cookie sheet
- Tape
- Old brush

DIRECTIONS:

- Go for a walk with your child bringing plastic cups with you.
- Visit different areas and collect samples of soil from each area.
- At home, ask your child to make mud by adding water to the soil in each cup. Stir until the mud is runny like paint.
- Tape paper onto the cookie sheet.
- Encourage your child to create mud art using mud paints they have made.
- Your child can also paint with their fingers or other tools, for example a sponge, a stick, old comb or fork, etc.
- When they finish, recycle the mud paint back into the ground.

[Click here](#) to listen to "Stuck in the Mud" by Jane Clarke.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

COLLECTING ROCKS

MATERIALS:

- Bag
- Water
- Container
- Paper
- Pen

DIRECTIONS:

- Go for a walk with your child near a lake or park and collect some rocks with interesting shapes and colours.
- At home, rinse them off and dry.
- Have your child explore the rocks and notice any interesting patterns, lines or colours in the rocks.
- Prepare a container with water.
- Dip the rocks in water and observe how their colours and patterns intensify.
- Encourage your child to sort the rocks by colours, sizes, or any other characteristics they choose.

[Click here](#) for DIY nature memory match game.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

GRASSY BRICK EXPERIMENT

MATERIALS:

- Brick
- Bowl
- Water
- Pie tin
- Grass seeds
- Notebook
- Pen

DIRECTIONS:

- Soak the brick in a bowl of water overnight.
- The next day, put the brick in a pie tin and set it in a sunny spot.
- Pour water over the brick so that it runs down into the tin until the brick is sitting in about ½ inch of water.
- Sprinkle grass seeds on top of the brick.
- Observe how the grass seeds change over the days. Make sure that your brick is always submerged in ½ inch of water.
- Write your observations in the notebook. Include the date you sowed the seeds, how often you added water to the tin, when the grass seeds started to sprout, etc.
- Investigate why the grass seeds can grow in less than ideal environments, such as on a brick.
- Share your results with your friends and family.

[Click here](#) for outdoor learning and nature activities.



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FUN FACTS ABOUT EARTH

- The earth's crust is 40 km deep and contains all known life in the universe.
- Earth's crust is full of rocks and minerals which enrich the soil to grow vegetation and support life.
- Soil is alive! It is full of bacteria, fungi, algae and other tiny organisms. Without these organisms the soil would not be fertile.
- There are hundreds of millions of microbes in one gram of soil.