

Spring

Spring is here and there is so much to do with little ones. Springtime offers great opportunities to get your child outdoors, moving and embracing the changes that come with the new season. This leaflet includes a list of crafts, activities and adventures for families to enjoy together and even some rainy day ideas too.

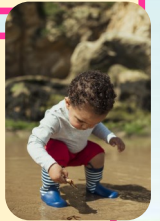
SPRING WALK

Go for a walk with your child and get them to look for signs of Spring, such as daffodils, snowdrops, crocuses, bird's nests, buds and shoots and baby animals. Discuss how Spring is different from the other seasons.



GOING ON A BUG HUNT

Take your child out into the garden or your local park and search for insects. Look under stones, behind logs, and under leaves. What can you find? Make a list of all the bugs you discover!



COLOUR CHANGING FLOWERS

You will need white flowers, water, food colouring, a jar. In the jar, mix together the water and food colouring. Cut the flower stem at an angle and place it into the water. Wait for 1-2 days and then look at the petals of the flower. Have they changed colour? Talk to your child about what they can see?

Image: Fun Learning for Kids



WORM HUNT

Little ones loving getting out after a rain shower. There are fresh smells, puddles to jump and lots of worms which have crawled up to the surface of the soil. Let them find worms, dig for worms, create homes for the worms. **Natural Science for Kids** on You Tube has a great cartoon explaining facts about worms.



EGGBOX SEEDS

You will need seeds, soil, an empty egg carton, a knife and a sharp pencil. Take your egg carton and use your knife to poke holes in the bottom. Fill with soil. Help your child make a hole in the soil with the pencil. Drop one seed into each egg section and place soil over seed.



MAKE FLOWER FACES

You could use dandelions, daisies, leaves and twigs to make lovely cheerful flower faces in your local park. Encourage your child to leave them behind for others to enjoy.



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PAPER PLATE BIRD

You will need paper plates, paint and glue. Paint the plate, once dry fold it in half. Let your child decorate as they wish—they could add feathers, glitter and coloured strips of paper. Cut out a small square of paper, colour it yellow, then fold in half for the beak. Draw on the eyes and glue on the beak.

Image—It Happens in a Blink



HOMEMADE BUBBLES

Blowing bubbles builds fine motor skills and develops oral skills as your child works to form shapes with their lips as well as expelling air. Make your own homemade bubble mixture using 50 ml washing up liquid, 300 ml water. Put washing up liquid into a container and slowly add the water. Gently stir to combine. Let the mixture rest for awhile.



BUTTERFLY PAINTINGS

You will need paint, paper, paint brushes or fingers (much more fun!),

Fold a piece of paper in half, open and encourage your child to put blobs of paint on one half of the paper. Fold the paper again. Have your child squash the paper together. Carefully open the paper and see what 'butterfly' emerges!

Image The Artful Parent



LEAF CREATURES

Take your child to a local park and pick some leaves. Encourage them to pick different shapes and sizes. Lay the leaves out on a sheet of paper and put them together in different ways to make the shape of a creature. Once you have decided on the shape, stick the leaves onto the paper and add eyes, etc to bring the creature to life.

Image—Mad Dog Mum



TULIP POTATO STAMPS

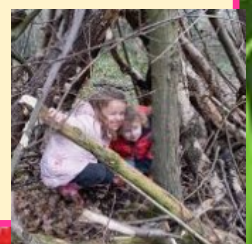
You will need potatoes, a knife, paint, paper, a paper plate and a paint brush.

Start by cutting your potatoes in half and then cutting three triangles out of the top to create a tulip shape. Pour some paint onto the paper plate and have your child dip their potatoes into it. Show them how to stamp the potato on to the paper to leave a tulip shape. Use the paint brush

DEN IN THE WOODS

A walk in the woods in Spring is lovely activity to do with children. Help them hear the birds sing, follow footprints and make stories about who or what has made the tracks. You could **build a den**, bring a picnic or just play hide and seek. Keep revising your den and add to it with each visit.

Image—Thimble and Twig



GETTING READY TO LEARN



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PLAYDOUGH CREATURES

You will need playdough and a collection of sticks, leaves and flowers from nature.

Prepare your playdough. Have fun shaping it into a face. Use the items you have collected from nature to add in the face and hair, pressing them into the playdough.

Image from The Artful Parent



BEAN IN A BAG EXPERIMENT

You will need a paper towel, plastic bag that will reseal, dry bean (pinot, butter or kidney beans), tape. Fold the paper towel in half and then fold it again. Wet the paper towel. Put the paper towel in the plastic bag and add bean seed in the middle and touching the paper towel. Squeeze as much air as you can from the plastic bag, then seal it. Tape the bag to a sunny window. Check the seed every day, it should start to grow in about five days. When the roots are long, plant the bean in a pot or outside in the ground.



MAKE A FAIRY OR DINOSAUR GARDEN

A fairy or dinosaur garden will create a magical play space for your child to make their own little creative world. All you need is a pot or bucket—fill it with soil, add some plants, stones, sticks, yoghurt pots can become ponds or swimming pools, sticks with string can become a washing line etc. Add their toys and let their imaginations run wild! **Image -Born to be Adventurous**



FLOWER DISCOVERY BOTTLE

You will need flowers, a clean plastic bottle and cap, and children's scissors.

Allow your child to choose their own flowers, cut off the heads, and put them into the bottle. Put the lid on and let your child admire the flower bottle they have made.



RAIN GAUGE

All you need is a plastic bottle, a large one is best. Cut around the top of the bottle, about 5 cm from the top, then simply turn this upside down and place inside the bottle. Mark lines around your bottle, say around 5 cm apart. Place it outside in a secure place so that it is not blown away. Encourage your child to regularly check the levels of rain.



Rolling down hills

Find a hill in a park—check for hidden dangers such as rocks, sticks, stones or holes and once cleared let your kids roll down it. They will love it! But also do you know that rolling down hills is **really good for your child**? It stimulates their vestibular system, which helps to maintain and control their balance and posture,



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MAKE YOUR OWN BIRD FEEDER

You will need an empty frozen food bowl, sunflower seed and string.

Punch four holes around the bowl, cut 2 pieces of string about 20 inches each, feed one piece of string through 2 holes and tie knots and repeat. Fill with sunflower seeds and hang in the garden.



MAKE YOUR OWN BINOCULARS

You will need two toilet roll tubes, paper, child's scissors, glue, a rubber band, a pen, and felt tip pens for decoration.



Cut your paper to size, then cover your rolls with glue and wrap paper around.. Using a pen, make a hole at the side of each tube, about a third of the way down. Glue the tubes together so that the holes are on the outside. Insert the string. Leave the tubes overnight to dry. The next day, remove the elastic band and decorate the binoculars with pens. Then go wildlife detecting!

MUD PIES AND A MUD KITCHEN

Young children love playing with mud. It can be difficult to let go and let your kids get really messy but playing with mud encourages creativity and is natural for kids so put on their oldest clothes and get them into the bath afterwards.

All you need are containers, water and some soil. You could even bring a bucket when out in the woods and let your child create their own mud kitchen beside the river.



MAKE A MINIBEAST TRAP

You will need an old yogurt pot, or tub; a cover (slate or piece of wood); bait-try cheese, bacon rind, bread or fruit; trowel for digging.



Dig a hole in the ground with the trowel. Put the pot, the hole and fill the gaps around the edges with soil. Bait your trap with food to attract tiny visitors. Use the slate, tile or bit of wood to stop the rain getting in. Prop it up on the stones. Go away and wait, ideally overnight. Inspect your trap for minibeasts. Release the minibeasts carefully back into the garden

FLOWER POTIONS

You will need flowers, leaves, water, a bucket, spoon/stick and jugs/cups.

Fill your basin or bucket with water. Let your child choose natural items—flowers and leaves to add to the water to make their magic potion. Talk about what is happening. Is the water changing colour? What are you making? A Soup? Or a potion? Or perfume?



DAISY CHAIN



Using your thumbnail, carve a half-inch slit into the stem of a daisy. Push the stem of another daisy through the slit. Repeat this until the dairy chain is long enough to fit over your child's head. To connect the last daisy on the chain, make a large slit on the last daisy in the chain and link the first daisy head through the slit.