

STICKS & STONES

SIMPLE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN NATURE KINDERGARTEN

STICKS

Sticks are perhaps the most readily available resource within a forest environment. Open-ended, versatile, and capable of inspiring imaginative and creative play, they are valuable resources for building on children's interests and extending learning across all curricular areas.

Health & Wellbeing

Promote discussion around using sticks safely, supporting children to assess risk.

Games such as 'Pick-Up Sticks' encourage physical movement.

Using 'Talking Sticks' at Circle Time supports children to share and express feelings, thoughts and experiences.

Maths & Numeracy

Sticks can be used to measure, and can support exploration of numerical concepts through ordering or sequencing in terms of size and length.

Opportunities to develop and investigate different patterns and shapes.

Expressive Arts

Sticks can be used as instruments for rhythm-making and keeping a beat.

Children can use sticks to create sculptures, patterns, and pictures.

Social Studies

Sticks can be used to make symbols and signs to denote places or past events. This can include 'X Marks the Spot.'

Explore concepts of 'leadership'. The person holding the stick is the 'leader' or 'way finder.'

Literacy

Read stick themed stories, or use sticks as props. Popular titles include:

- 'The Stick Man' by Julia Donaldson
- 'Not a Stick' by Antoinette Portis

Nursery rhymes can include references to or actions requiring sticks. 'One, Two, Buckle My Shoe.'

Sticks can be used to mark-make in mud, sand, or dirt.

Science

Support understanding of what a stick is, where it comes from, and previous purpose.

Discuss properties of sticks, comparing how they differ.

Conduct experiments with sticks in water. Why do some float and others sink? Encourage children to make predictions and reflect on the outcomes.

Technology

Incorporate sticks into den building resources.

Children can use sticks to build a variety of structures, for example, exploring balance by building a tower higher than themselves.

Religious & Moral Education

Sticks afford opportunity for discussion and questions surrounding 'life' and 'death'. When and why do branches or twigs die and fall from trees? Consider their life cycle.

STONES

Stones, pebbles, and shells can be found in abundance on the beach. Variation in colour, size, texture, and shape make them a highly versatile resource capable of supporting learning across multiple areas of the curriculum.

Health & Wellbeing

Promote discussion around using stones safely, supporting children to assess risk.

Encourage movement through collecting or transportation of different types, shapes, and sizes of stones.

Maths & Numeracy

Stones can be sorted and classified based on colour, size, and shape.

Measure and compare the size, length, and weight of stones.

Use mathematical language to compare qualities: more, less, heavier, lighter, bigger, or smaller.

Expressive Arts

Stones can be used to make musical instruments, such as shakers.

Given that each stone is unique, they make excellent resources for children's transient art.

During 'role play', stones can be used as 'stimuli', or a special object around which the role play evolves.

Social Studies

Consider how humans use stones, both in the present and historically. Find examples in walls enroute to Nature Kindergarten sessions.

Discuss 'traditional games' that involve stones. Ponder whether they play these games in other countries.

Literacy

Reading stories with themes relating to stones. Popular titles include:

- 'On My Beach, there are Many Pebbles' by Leo Lionni
- 'Everybody Needs a Rock' by Byrd Baylor

Children can mark-make both with and on stones.

Science

Use magnifying glasses to inspect and consider the properties of stones.

Consider the differing textures. Why are some stones smooth and others rough?

Technology

Stacking stones can help children explore concepts of structure, balance, and stability.

Explore why some structures are more stable than others. How can we stack stones in a way that they balance rather than fall?

Religious & Moral Education

Discussion surrounding ways stones can be symbolic, used as markers to denote events, places, or people.

Consider use of stones in 'Cairns', or Megalithic structures such as Stonehenge.