

We Skoolhouse



Ready-Made Curriculum: Nature Exploration



A Practical Guide for Exploration

Each unit offers a suggested flow of experiences designed to support deep, meaningful learning through play. You'll notice intentional repetition—this is purposeful. Repeating activities builds memory, mastery, confidence, attention, and focus, forming the foundation for long-term learning.

The experiences are open-ended & process-driven, focusing on how children learn rather than what they produce. This allows for a range of learning styles & encourages exploration at each child's unique pace.

Flexibility Matters

Each unit includes a suggested daily activity guide to support your planning—but it's not meant to be followed rigidly or completed in a set order:

- **Follow the children's lead:** If they're deeply engaged, slow down. If interest fades, it's okay to pause and return later. Some children need time to warm up to new ideas—don't move on too quickly. Repeating an invitation over several days can spark richer engagement.
- **Move at your own pace:** Stretch a week into two, repeat activities as long as needed, and allow units to grow over time.
- **Revisit, don't rush:** There's no need to introduce a new unit each month. Returning to a familiar concept—like revisiting water after exploring texture or paint—deepens understanding and strengthens memory. Revisiting isn't starting over—it's going further.

This guide is about making space for curiosity, experimentation, and meaningful learning. Use it as a springboard—trust yourself, trust the children, and allow learning to unfold naturally.



Unit: Nature Exploration

Nature exploration invites babies to use their senses to connect with the world around them. Through touching, grasping, watching, and listening, infants explore textures, shapes, colors, and sounds found in natural materials like leaves, stones, and grass. These experiences awaken curiosity, build sensory awareness, and lay the foundation for observation and scientific thinking.

Domain	How It Supports Development
Physical	Strengthens coordination, balance, and grasp through reaching, patting, and transferring natural objects. Encourages movement during tummy time and water play.
Cognitive	Supports curiosity and problem-solving as babies notice how materials feel, move, and change. Encourages cause-and-effect discovery and early comparison skills.
Language	Builds early vocabulary through sensory words—soft, smooth, wet, cool, rough—and supports sound-meaning association through repeated labeling. Natural materials are relevant and interesting which helps learning concepts stick.
Social-Emotional	Fosters calm, shared engagement and co-regulation through slow, mindful exploration of natural elements. Nature's sensory qualities support curiosity and comfort.

Unit: Nature Exploration

Focus Materials: Leaves, pinecones, bark, smooth stones, shells, flowers, grass (real or faux), water (shallow trays), and mirrors.

Books: Touch and Feel: Nature by DK, Peek-a-Boo Forest by Lamaze, In the Tall, Tall Grass

Songs: "The Green Grass Grows All Around," "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Vocabulary: Leaf, bark, twig, pinecone, soft, smooth, rough, wet, cool, splash, light, heavy, shell, roll, float

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Nature discovery basket	Nature discovery basket	Investigation with leaves	Nature discovery basket	Investigation with leaves
Week 2	Investigation with leaves	Nature discovery basket	Tummy time on grass (or faux grass)	Tummy time on grass (or faux grass)	Water play with natural objects
Week 3	Water play with natural objects	Tummy time on grass (or faux grass)	Nature discovery basket	Investigation with leaves	Stones and shells exploration
Week 4	Stones and shells exploration	Stones and shells exploration	Tummy time on grass (or faux grass)	Nature discovery basket	Water play with natural objects

Unit: Nature Exploration

Suggested Activities

- **Nature discovery basket:** Fill a low basket with safe, natural materials (pinecones, bark, large leaves, etc.). Babies grasp, mouth, and transfer objects, exploring texture, shape, and weight.
- **Investigation with leaves:** Fresh and dried leaves offer crinkling, tearing, and tossing experiences (indoors or outdoors).
- **Tummy time on grass (or faux grass):** Provide tactile, visual, and proprioceptive input through the sensation of grass beneath the hands and body. Babies also strengthen muscles as they reach for nearby natural items (pinecones, bark).
- **Water play with natural objects:** A shallow tray with water and a few floating or sinking items (leaves, pinecones, shells) offers gentle cause-and-effect exploration.
- **Stones and shells exploration:** Offer large, smooth, cool-to-touch materials for tapping, touching, or mouthing. Babies explore texture, temperature, and weight while building motor strength.

Alternatives and Extensions:

Explore these simple variations to extend play, supporting repetition, variety, and deeper sensory learning:

- **Nature Mobile:** Hang leaves, shells, or pinecones from a branch for babies to watch, encouraging visual tracking and calm focus.
- **Floating Flowers:** Add flower petals to the water tray for a gentle color and texture variation during water play.
- **Shadow and Light Play:** Use sunlight or a soft lamp to project shadows of leaves or shells, inviting visual curiosity and focus.

