

We Skoolhouse _____



Ready-Made Curriculum: Wood, Stone, & Earth



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: Wood, Stone, and Earth

Children explore natural materials such as wood and clay, while exploring how they feel, sound, and change through hands-on exploration. These natural resources allow children to discover how they can be used to build, balance, and create in different ways. Through observation and experimentation, children learn to see nature not just as a setting but as a partner in their creative and scientific work.

Domain	How It Supports Development
Physical	Strengthens fine and gross motor skills through lifting, stacking, and balancing. Handling wood, stones, and natural materials refines coordination and spatial awareness, while the use of clay strengthens fine motor strength and dexterity.
Cognitive	Encourages observation, classification, and prediction. Children explore texture, weight, and structure while developing scientific reasoning and problem-solving through hands-on experimentation.
Language	Expands descriptive vocabulary (e.g. smooth, rough, heavy, grainy) and supports expressive storytelling as children describe their creations and discoveries.
Social-Emotional	Fosters patience, focus, and collaboration through shared construction and natural exploration. Building with real materials nurtures respect for nature's strength and beauty.

Unit: Wood, Stone, and Earth

Focus: Hands-on exploration of the elements to foster critical thinking, observation, experimentation, motor development, and an appreciation for the natural world and its resources.

Books: He A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel, Roxaboxen by Alice McLerran, A Home Can Be...

Songs: "This Land Is Your Land," "The Green Grass Grows All Around," "The More We Get Together"

Vocabulary: Wood, bark, branch, grain, smooth, rough, pebble, stone, rock, soil, sand, clay, texture, pattern, heavy, light, strong, balance, natural, connect

Week 1: Exploring Natural Materials

Focus Concept: Exploring the properties of wood, stone, and earth.

Day	Activity	Prompt/Focus
Monday	Go on a nature hunt to collect sticks, stones, bark, and leaves for classroom exploration.	"What materials do you think we'll find outside?"
Tuesday	Combine found materials with clay, twigs, and stones for exploration where children can press, mold, and stack.	"What happens when you shape and mix them?"
Wednesday	Create a "touch and describe" table. Invite children to close their eyes and guess what they're touching.	"What does it feel like in your hands?"
Thursday	Offer natural materials, magnifiers, and paper for close observation or sketching of small details	"What do you notice when you look closely?"
Friday	Provide droppers and water bottles to test how materials change when wet.	"What happens when water touches them?"

Week 2: Discovering Strength, Balance, and Construction

Focus Concept: Exploring how materials balance, support, and connect

Day	Activity	Prompt/Focus
Monday	Offer natural materials and a simple balance scale to explore weight and comparison.	"Which materials feel heavy or light?"
Tuesday	Can you build a tower using these materials? Encourage trial, rebuilding, and testing stability.	"What helps your tower stay tall?"
Wednesday	Story Provocation: The Three Little Pigs - Children build small structures using the natural materials. Encourage testing, adjusting, and reinforcing.	"How can you make your house sturdy?"
Thursday	Revisit the Three Little Pigs provocation	"Would you do anything different with the structures today?"
Friday	Revisit favorite provocation so far and extend ideas with new materials or group collaboration.	"What should we revisit today?"



Week 3: Art From the Earth

Focus Concept: Transformation, sensory art, and individual creativity

Day	Activity	Prompt/Focus
Monday	Make clay impressions by pressing bark, rocks, and leaves into soft clay to reveal textures and patterns.	"What details can you find in your prints?"
Tuesday	Paint using nature brushes made from grass, twigs, leaves, or pine needles. Explore how texture and stroke change with each tool.	"What do you think will happen if we paint using natural materials?"
Wednesday	Invite children to paint stones or wooden slices.	"Tell me about what you did?"
Thursday	Create mandalas with natural materials—stones, seeds, petals, sticks, or leaves. (individual or collab.)	"How can we create patterns?"
Friday	Choose to sketch an image from nature or use loose parts for a transient (non permanent) art experience.	"What do you want to represent or design today?"



Week 4: Working Together with Nature

Focus Concept: Connecting and creating with natural materials & animals

Day	Activity	Prompt/Focus
Monday	Revisit a favorite activity from the unit—building, painting stones, clay impressions, or transient art. Encourage reflection and new ideas.	“What do you want to explore again or try differently?”
Tuesday	Explore animal figures and their tracks in clay (Optional: Add track identifier cards for comparison)	“Which do you notice about animal tracks?”
Wednesday	Create small world play scenes using animals and natural materials for imagination & storytelling.	“What happens in your animal's world?”
Thursday	Work together to build homes or habitats for animals using natural materials.	“What does your animal need to feel safe and comfortable?”
Friday	Reflect outdoors—observe, sketch, photograph, or discuss the journey of exploring natural materials.	“How can we continue to care for the earth?”



Integrating Wood, Stone, and Earth Across Centers

Integrating elements of your investigation across the centers gives children repeated opportunities to explore and deepen their understanding in diverse ways. When materials and provocations connected to the broader topic appear throughout the environment, children can build, imagine, experiment, and express ideas across contexts. This natural repetition strengthens memory, supports flexible thinking, and invites children to transfer and expand their knowledge. Rather than isolating learning to one area, weaving the investigation through the classroom honors how young children learn best—through play, exploration, and meaningful, ongoing connections.

Dramatic Play Area

- Transform the space into a forest home or nature workshop, with baskets of wood, stones, and bark for building and sorting.
- Add toy animals, fabric leaves, and natural textures for children to create habitats or care for the forest.
- Include aprons, clipboards, and pretend tools to inspire role play as builders, artists, or explorers of nature.



Blocks and Construction

- Mix wooden blocks with natural items—stones, wood slices, branches, bark.
- Encourage building with uneven, irregular shapes for experimentation with balance.
- Offer clay or playdough as a joining material to explore stability and strength.
- Extend play with toy animals or figures to explore habitats and imaginative structures.



Integrating Wood, Stone, and Earth Across Centers (Cont'd)

Science and Discovery Center

- Provide magnifiers, scales, and sorting trays for close observation and comparison.
- Explore textures and weights of materials; test how light, air, or water changes them.
- Include a balance scale for weighing wood, stones, and earth.

Art Studio

- Offer clay, soil, & natural pigments for pressing, painting, & printing.
- Include nature brushes, wooden slices, and stones for painting.
- Add baskets of natural materials for collage and sculpture.

Sensory Table

- Rotate materials weekly: soil, sand, stones, or water with natural objects.
- Include scoops, sifters, droppers, and small tools for mixing and layering.
- Offer clay or mud for tactile exploration and imprint-making.

Outdoor Exploration

- Nature Collection Walks: Invite children to gather sticks, stones, bark, and soil samples to bring back to the classroom for observation and reuse.
- Earth Play Station: Offer tools like shovels, buckets, and trowels for digging, scooping, and layering soil. Add water nearby for mud exploration and to observe texture changes.

