

Outdoor Learning Experiences (Birth to 2 years)

<p>Learning experience: Collecting Fallen Leaves, Twigs and Flowers</p>	<p>Shared by: D K Gowri</p>
<p>Environment: This activity can be done anywhere within the immediate outdoor environment of the child/infant care premises. Areas where they are fallen leaves of different shades and sizes, twigs and blades of grass are ideal.</p>	<p>Estimated time: 15 to 20 minutes (lesser or more depending on the tolerance and quality active engagement of infant)</p>
<p>Children’s prior experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants would need to be comfortable outdoors. They would need to be able to walk, walk with assistance or carried by educarers. 	<p>Suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 – 17 months old (mobile infant) • 18 – 24 months old
<p>What children will experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants will observe and choose to pick materials from nature that appeal to them. • Infants will have the opportunity to observe intently and closely the various aspects of nature as they embark on their walk and collection as well of selection of materials. • Infants and toddlers will begin their life-long relationship with nature as they begin to discover the many wondrous lives that exist beneath the objects they discover (for example, smells that emanate when empty snail shells are picked up etc). • Infants will have the opportunity to experience the movements of the large muscles of the arms, legs, and torso when manoeuvring their bodies and using their hands and arms to bend down to pick the various objects. • Infants will enhance their balance as they maintain their stability whilst picking up objects. • Infants will refine their fine motor skills as they grasp objects of various size and shape. 	<p>EYDF Pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Intentional Programme • The Professional Educarer • The Involved Family • The Engaged Community • The Developing Child
<p>What you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baskets for collecting natural objects • Empty bottles that can be used as vases 	<p>Benefit - Risk Assessment:</p> <p><u>Benefit</u></p>

- Items from the natural environment such as bunches of leaves, twigs and flowers

- Engage the sensory system to trigger neural connections, which is conducive for complex cognitive development.
- Various movements/activities will aid balance and coordinate with their nervous system.
- Observe aesthetic appreciation.
- Freedom to repeat behaviours and skills that they have learned to promote mastery and confidence.
- Appreciation of natural materials and the diversity/individuality that those present, in terms of components of beauty.
- Promote freedom of choice, movement, along with self-expression.

Risk:

- Ant and mosquito bites may be a concern.
- Infants and toddlers may scratch themselves on branches.
- Infants may develop an aversion for the outdoor when they stumble upon perhaps a repulsive sight of dead animal or witness an adult reacting in fear in response to an insect or animal.

Management:

- Ensure the ratio of adult and infant permits easy assistance.
- Engage parents' approval and participation in this by getting hats, sunscreen, insect repellent etc.
- Send an article or short memos highlighting the rationale for this activity.
- Photo document the learning journey with parents to educate and elicit partnership of

parents in their infant and toddlers' learning journey.

- Allow infants and toddlers to take their completed nature vase home as a gift of love for parents.
- Educarers / adults must become more conscious and intentional in their responses to life forms and be aware of the impact that their own reactions have on infants and toddlers' perception of the world. Hence, adults must exemplify positive, appreciative and authentic responses to nature (fear can be shown as the 'need to be careful and cautious' of the unknown).

How to make it happen

Preparation:

1. Prepare for the activity by collected empty bottles that can hold leaves, flowers and twigs.
2. Wash the bottles so that they are suitable and safe for infants and toddlers to handle.
3. Label the bottles so that they do not get mixed up during the outdoor experience.

Procedure:

Suggestion 1: Pick up and arrange later

1. Bring infants/toddlers for a walk towards the selected areas.
2. Hold a basket out for mobile infants to select items that interest them.
3. Gather them at a strategic place, on a mat and get them to arrange items of their preference into the vases

Suggestion 2: My flower bouquet

1. Older toddlers would enjoy the challenge of managing the task of holding a 'vase' and selecting items to go into the vase
2. It would give them a sense of purpose and keep them focused on the task at hand.
3. They may struggle at first with balance at uneven ground but will cope given time and assistance.