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Wild Strokes & Wandering Feet



Exploring creativity and movement through nature

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Dear Gro Families & Friends,

This week, children are exploring creativity and movement through nature. In our “Wild Strokes & Wandering Feet” theme, we are inviting children to use natural materials as tools for art while also engaging their bodies through outdoor movement and exploration.

Throughout the day, children will create with leaves, sticks, and flowers, build designs on the ground, and move in ways inspired by the natural world. These experiences support creativity, coordination, and a growing awareness of how we interact with our environment.

Try this at home:

Take a short walk and collect a few natural items. Invite your child to create a small design or picture using what they find, or move their body to match how the items might move in nature.

These simple moments help children build confidence, curiosity, and connection through play.

Creating, moving and discovering outdoors

with warm hearts,
the gro  academy
team

Cultivating Exceptional Early Childhood Professionals

All content created by The Gro Academy is aligned with WMEELS developmental domains and NAEYC developmentally appropriate practices to support whole-child learning.

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cultivating early childhood professionals

Home Extension: Leaf Toss & Catch

Small acts of care, every day

Objective:

Children build coordination and body awareness by tossing and catching lightweight natural materials.

Materials:

- Leaves or flower petals
- Open indoor or outdoor space

Instructions:

1. Invite your child to hold a leaf or petal.
2. Show how to toss it gently into the air.
3. Encourage your child to watch it fall and try to catch it.
4. Experiment with tossing higher or lower.
5. Talk about how the leaf moves as it falls.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer simple opportunities to participate, such as handing items, placing objects in a bin, or wiping with assistance. Use simple language like “help,” “clean,” and “thank you,” and focus on participation rather than completion.

Developmental Targets:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Curiosity and engagement in movement • Trying new actions
- **Health & Physical:** Gross motor coordination • Body control and balance
- **Social & Emotional:** Describing movement and observations

Wild Strokes & Wandering Feet

Children explore how nature can be both a tool for creativity and a guide for movement. Through hands-on art and active outdoor experiences, children build connections between their bodies, their ideas, and the natural world around them.

Nature Brush Painting

Exploring texture and creativity using natural tools

Objective:

Children use natural materials to create art while exploring texture and cause and effect.

Materials:

- Leaves
- Grass, pine needles, or small branches
- Washable paint
- Paper
- Shallow paint trays

Instructions:

1. Invite children to explore the natural materials.
2. Demonstrate dipping materials into paint.
3. Encourage children to make marks on paper.
4. Explore different textures and patterns.
5. Talk about how each material creates different marks.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Provide larger materials for easier grasping and focus on stamping and pressing rather than controlled strokes. Use simple language such as “soft,” “wet,” and “press.”

Developmental Targets:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Creative exploration • Trying different ways to use materials
- **Cognitive:** Creative exploration • Trying different ways to use materials
- **Health & Physical:** Cause and effect through tool use • Exploring properties of materials
- **Social & Emotional:** Self-expression through creative choices

Petal Path Movement Walk

Following pathways and moving with purpose through nature

Objective:

Children follow a nature-based path while practicing balance, coordination, and purposeful movement.

Materials:

- Leaves, petals, or small natural markers
- Open outdoor space

Instructions:

1. Create a simple path using natural materials.
2. Invite children to follow the path from beginning to end.
3. Encourage different movements (step, hop, tiptoe).
4. Add variations such as slow, fast, or balancing.
5. Invite children to help redesign or extend the path.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Create a shorter, wider path and support walking hand-in-hand if needed. Focus on simple movements like stepping and stopping, using language such as "go," "stop," and "step."

Developmental Targets:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Engagement in active play • Persistence in following a path
- **Cognitive:** Spatial awareness • Understanding direction and sequence
- **Health & Physical:** Balance • Coordination • Controlled movement
- **Social & Emotional:** Confidence in movement • Participating alongside others

Land Art Creations

Designing pictures and patterns using natural materials

Objective:

Children create designs using natural materials while exploring patterns, creativity, and spatial relationships.

Materials:

- Leaves
- Flowers
- Sticks
- Stones
- Open ground space

Instructions:

1. Invite children to gather natural materials.
2. Encourage them to arrange materials on the ground.
3. Support creating shapes, pictures, or patterns.
4. Observe and talk about their designs.
5. Invite children to revisit or change their creations.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer a smaller collection of materials and support simple placing and stacking. Focus on exploration and naming objects such as "leaf," "stick," and "flower."

Developmental Targets:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Creativity • Flexible thinking during design
- **Cognitive:** Patterning • Spatial awareness
- **Literacy & Language:** Describing designs and materials
- **Social & Emotional:** Confidence in movement • Participating alongside others

Wind Dancer Movement

Looking closely at the materials the earth provides.

Objective:

Children explore body movement and rhythm by responding to the idea of wind and natural motion.

Materials:

- Scarves, ribbons, or streamers
- Open indoor or outdoor space

Instructions:

1. Invite children to hold a scarf or ribbon.
2. Demonstrate slow, gentle movements like a breeze.
3. Encourage faster or stronger movements like wind.
4. Explore different directions and levels (high, low, wide).
5. Pause and start again to explore changes in movement.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Provide lightweight scarves and model simple movements such as waving or lifting arms. Focus on basic concepts like “up,” “down,” and “fast.”

Developmental Targets:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Engagement in active play • Exploring new ways to move
- **Health & Physical:** Coordination • Control of large body movements
- **Literacy & Language:** Understanding and using movement words
- **Social & Emotional:** Expressing feelings through movement • Confidence in participation

Nature Circle Creation & Movement

Building together and moving within a shared natural space

Objective:

Children collaborate to create a large circle using natural materials and explore movement within and around the space.

Materials:

- Leaves
- Flowers
- Sticks
- Stones
- Open outdoor space

Instructions:

1. Invite children to gather natural materials together.
2. Work as a group to create a large circle on the ground.
3. Encourage children to take turns adding materials.
4. Invite children to walk, step, or move inside and around the circle.
5. Reflect on the shared space and how it was created together.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Create a smaller circle and support children in placing materials with guidance. Encourage simple movements such as stepping in and out, using language like "in," "out," and "around."

Developmental Targets:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Participating in group experiences • Persistence in building
- **Cognitive:** Understanding spatial relationships • Exploring shapes (circle)
- **Health & Physical:** Controlled movement within space • Coordination
- **Social & Emotional:** Cooperation • Sense of belonging in shared activity

Facilitator Focus

Theme *Children explore how nature can inspire both creativity and movement, using natural materials to create, design, and move with purpose.*



Overview

This week's experiences invite children to engage with nature as both a creative tool and a source of movement. Through painting, building, designing, and active play, children develop coordination, creativity, and spatial awareness while strengthening their connection to the natural environment.



Facilitator Tips

- Encourage open-ended exploration rather than focusing on outcomes
- Model curiosity by noticing textures, movement, and patterns
- Support children in taking safe movement risks (balancing, changing direction)
- Use descriptive language to expand children's observations and ideas
- Allow time for revisiting and extending play experiences



Vocabulary to Emphasize

movement • balance • path • design • texture • pattern • wind • slow • fast • around • inside • outside • create

Short Sentence Prompts (for modeling language):

- "What do you notice about how this moves?"
- "How could you change your design or your movement?"
- "What happens if you try it a different way?"

Developmental Connections (WMELS Alignment)

Approaches to Learning:

- Curiosity • Engagement • Persistence • Flexible thinking • Problem-solving • Creativity

Cognition & General Knowledge:

- Cause and effect • Spatial awareness • Patterning • Understanding properties of materials

Health & Physical Development:

- Fine motor control • Gross motor coordination • Balance • Body control

Language & Literacy Development:

- Descriptive language • Expressing ideas • Engaging in conversations

Social & Emotional Development:

- Confidence • Cooperation • Self-expression • Sense of belonging



Reflection for Educators

- “What do you notice about how this moves?”
- “How could you change your design or your movement?”
- “What happens if you try it a different way?”

