
POD Wake Co Newsletter- June 2018

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Fri, Jun 1, 2018 at 8:30 AM

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Play and Learning: Using Natural Materials



Natural materials can afford many play and learning opportunities for children. These opportunities can range from building, counting, sorting to dramatic play. The availability of natural material and loose parts are endless as nature provides an abundance of materials right in our outdoor learning environment.

Listed are some natural materials:

- sticks
- bark wedges
- small stones
- tree cookie
- flowers
- wood chips
- pinecones
- leaves
- straw bale
- and many more



Tips: Natural Learning Initiative's [Green Desk](#) has great resources on outdoor learning environments for children. Find information on [Natural Materials for Play and Learning](#) at naturalearning.org

Registration is now open!

For Early Childhood Educators

Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Environments



Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Environments for Young Children is a non-credit certificate program for professionals and volunteers. The distance education certificate is delivered online and is self paced. The course will begin **Monday, June 4, 2018 - Sunday, August 26, 2018.**

For more information about the online certificate course, click [here](#).

June Activity



Obstacle Course

Using available materials, create an awesome obstacle course for children to enjoy time and again.

Need pointers?

Fairy House

Building fairy houses is a fun way to encourage children's creativity and enhance their developmental skills. Use natural items found outdoors, such as: rocks, stick, grass or even dirt. Allow children to use their imagination when creating their very own house. Extend children's imagination by reading fairy books or creating fairy stories of your very own. Engage with children to build positive relationships with them and to help promote experiential learning practices.

- Use tunnels to crawl through
- Ropes to step over
- Cones to jump over
- Colorful ribbon to twirl with
- Or even incorporate learning experiences by use items for children to sort, read, identify, etc.



For more information on creating obstacle course in a childcare setting. Check out [Be Active Kids](#).
Need a children's book about yoga and nature? Check out [Rachel's day in the Garden](#).

Plant of the Month

Crape Myrtle, *Lagerstroemia*

Known as the "Flower of the South", Crape Myrtles grow beautifully in most areas of North Carolina. Crape Myrtle is a favorite tree to grow for many southern gardeners due to their durability and colorful flowers. In addition, this tree is also ideal in childcare centers with children. Due to its child-size scale, climbing potential, foliage, shade and durability, we strongly recommend this plant to enhance outdoor learning environment.



To learn more about Crape Myrtle...

[Click Here](#)

Tips: Interested in plants that work well in your region? Click [here](#). For information about your state/region check with your local cooperative extension agent.

Recipe

Cucumber, Tomato, and Basil Salad

Prep time: 10 mins **Cook time:** 0 mins **Total time:** 10 mins **Servings:** 6-8

INGREDIENTS:

2 cucumbers, sliced into rounds or chopped

2 large tomatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 cup basil leaves, chopped

2 tablespoons of olive oil

1 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar

Salt and pepper (to taste)



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Gently toss all ingredients together in a bowl, and add salt and pepper to taste.
2. Serve and Enjoy!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE TO NLI?

We support outdoor learning environments for vulnerable population.

[Click Here](#)

Questions? Contact us today 1-919-515-8345 or naturalearning@ncsu.edu

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