

Playdoh Nature Lab / Science

Going on walks is a good way to connect with nature. When on your walk, bring a shopping bag with you, or even a pot, to collect ingredients that could be used in your Nature Lab. What kinds of potions will you stir up? What kinds of experiments will you create? As you gather natural materials, you'll also think together about what kinds of tools you'll need in the Nature Lab. These tools will be super simple - containers for cooking up a playdoh potion, something to stir your berry elixir, or to grind up some grass or leaves.

Prep

Find a spot either outside, which would be ideal, or inside where you can let the kids use water without worrying about the table or floor. Maybe put a towel underneath the table they'll be sitting at, or they can just sit on a tarp on the floor. Collect some pots and pans, bowls, wooden spoons, butter knives, measuring spoons, anything that you are willing to part with for the day. Grab some containers that you can fill with water. If you are outside, you could fill a big bucket with water and have some smaller "scoopers" or measuring cups on hand so the kids add water if their recipe needs some. If you are inside, you can fill up a bowl and put out some cups. Or your child can go to the sink themselves and get water when they need it.

Activity

Take a nature walk and collect ingredients.

Bring the ingredients back to your pretend kitchen and experiment with recipes.

- ~ playdoh
- ~ Nature ingredients
- ~ Pots, pans, kitchen utensils
- ~ Measuring cups
- ~ Eyedroppers (if you have them)

Variations

Younger kids can:

- ~ Make a mud kitchen! Instead of playdoh, dig up some dirt and mix with water to create mud recipes.
- ~ For babies and toddlers who are still putting things in their mouths, just make this activity about water play.
- ~ This activity is very play-based, so setting up a permanent outside kitchen for little ones would be so beneficial to their everyday imaginative play.
- ~ Add rocks or shells to your recipes. Or even recycled items like bottle caps and wine corks.

Older kids can:

- ~ Write recipes and make more elaborate 4-course meals.
- ~ If they are embracing the mud, make "seed bombs" with seeds and mud to plant a veggie garden.
- ~ Make a nature sculpture either in playdoh or in mud.