The Child Unplugged

NATURE ACTIVITY BOOK

Simple play ideas to connect.
Explore & Support yours babies developmenr

18
Simple Play Ideas



0-12 Months

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1.

NATURE PORTRAITS

Making nature portraits is super fun and creative and get children moving and playing outside! Ask your child to go outside and collect whatever they can find to make a face from.
If your child needs a little nudge then at the end of this document you will see some prompt cards to use alongside this activity.









YOU WILL NEED:

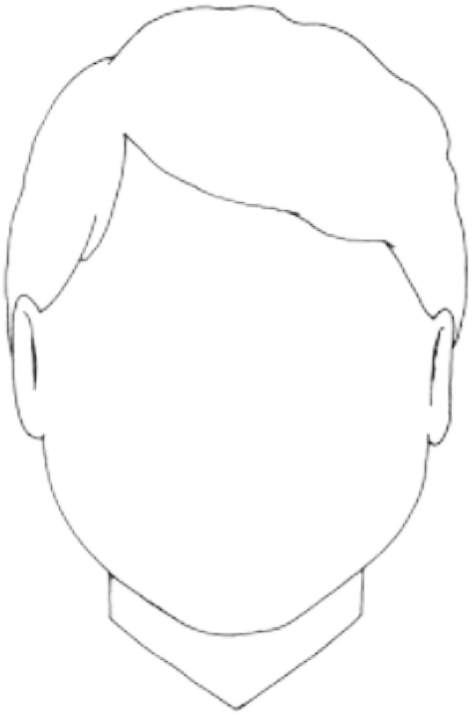
- Leafs
- Sticks
- Stones
- Flowers
- Anything goes so whatever can be forages

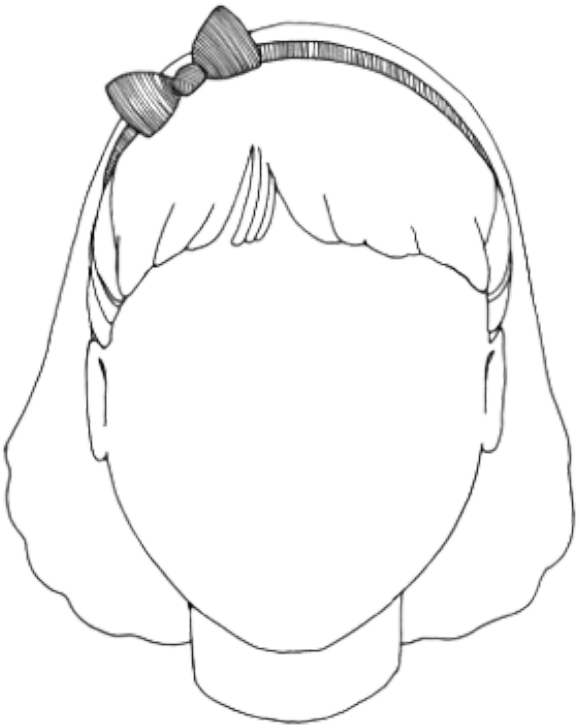
WHAT TO DO:

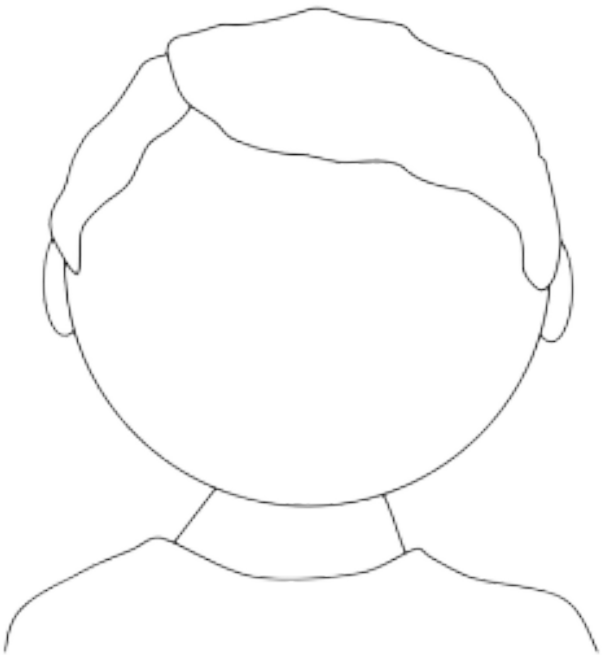
- First go out into nature and collect anything you can find.
- When back home spread all the items collected on the table or floor and now the fun begins.
- Your child can then arrange all the different loose parts on the template provided below, of course you don't need a template, you can also simply draw a circle on a piece of paper and then let them do the rest.

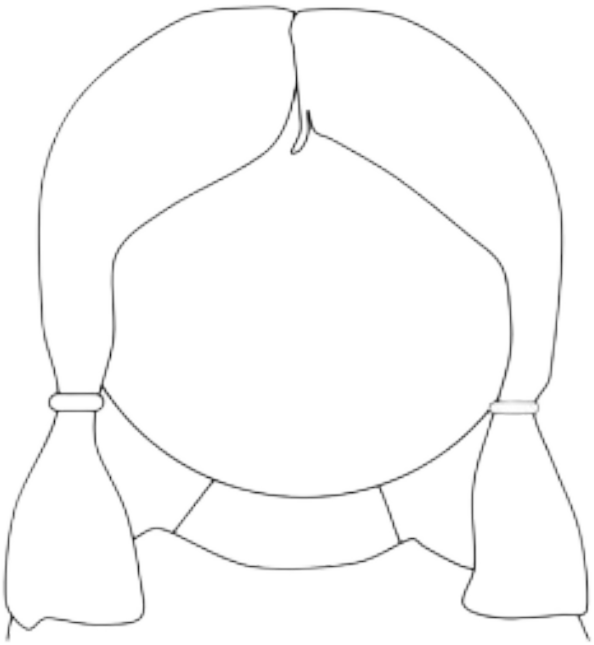
2.

TEMPLATE FOR FACES









3.

PROMPT CARDS

Prompt ideas inspire little minds and give them subjects to tackle. The intention is to get the ideas flowing, break with the fear of facing the blank canvas, and just DO.
Here are various prompts I have created that can be used with nature and lose parts independently or with playdough. You can print these and cut them out or laminate them for long-lasting use.













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4.

NATURE PATTERNS

Take buckets or bags and fill them with whatever they can. Allow plenty of time for finding and gathering as children discover shape, size, texture and colour. While they make patterns with the loose parts they've found, they'll be sorting, counting, designing and discovering symmetry. It's maths, art and science all at once.







YOU WILL NEED:
All you need is nature and some imagination (or prompt cards to help)

BENEFITS:
As children use natural materials to create patterns, they may become more aware of the environment's beauty and importance. This fosters an early sense of environmental stewardship and a desire to protect nature. Collecting items for patterns helps children engage their senses. They observe the differences between leaves, stones, flowers, and other natural elements, refining their ability to notice details. This hands-on exploration builds a stronger connection to the natural world.

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5.

NATURE CROWNS

There's little better than getting kids out in nature and letting them explore. Chances are, they'll soon have a pocket full of treasures they collected; things that caught their attention and delighted them in some way and these nature crowns are a great way to get them started.







YOU WILL NEED:

- Flexible cardboard
- Masking tape
- Glue gun or normal glue but not quite as strong
- Nature Items: pine cones, acorns, leaves, bark, twigs, pine needles etc.

WHAT TO DO:

- Measure head size, cut cardboard strip, tape into circle crown shape
- Collect nature items
- Hot glue, (or white PVC glue) the nature items around crown.

BENEFITS:

Crafting a nature crown encourages children to express themselves creatively. They can design unique crowns using materials they find outside, experimenting with colors, shapes, and textures. This activity sparks imaginative play, allowing children to step into roles like kings, queens, or forest fairies.

6.

NATURE BRACELETS

This is such a simple activity to do but it's a great way to add a bit of extra fun to a nature walk with your children or even to explore the plants growing in your own garden!









YOU WILL NEED:

- A sheet of card
- Double-sided sticky tape
- Your nature finds! such petals, leaves, twigs, feathers and even berries or small pine cones.

WHAT TO DO:

- Cut a piece of card about 22cm long and as wide as you want.
- Apply strips of double-sided tape to your card
- Put your bracelet card on by peeling off the backing from the strips and fitting the card loosely around your wrist.
- Go for a walk in nature and see what items you can find along the way. Stick them onto the bracelet as you go!

7.

NATURE FRIENDS

Get creative by making characters with wooden spatulas (or anything that children can draw on and hold up) These characters can be absolutely anything from a portrait, friends, kings and queens, fairies, superheroes, or even monsters.







YOU WILL NEED:

- Wooden spoons (or sticks or even cardboard)
- Nature
- Pens
- Glue

WHAT TO DO:

Use pen to draw the main features first and then decorate with nature.

WHAT NEXT:

- Ask for the children to name them and ask if they have super powers
- After the children are done you could hold a puppet show

8.

HAND PRINTS

If you are living in Dubai then you will know natural mud is hard to come by BUT don't worry it can easily be replicated with some very basic incrediants and its even edible







YOU WILL NEED:
You just need to mix coco powder and cooking oil into the consistency you are looking for.

WHAT TO DO:
Cover each hand with mud and print outside or on paper.

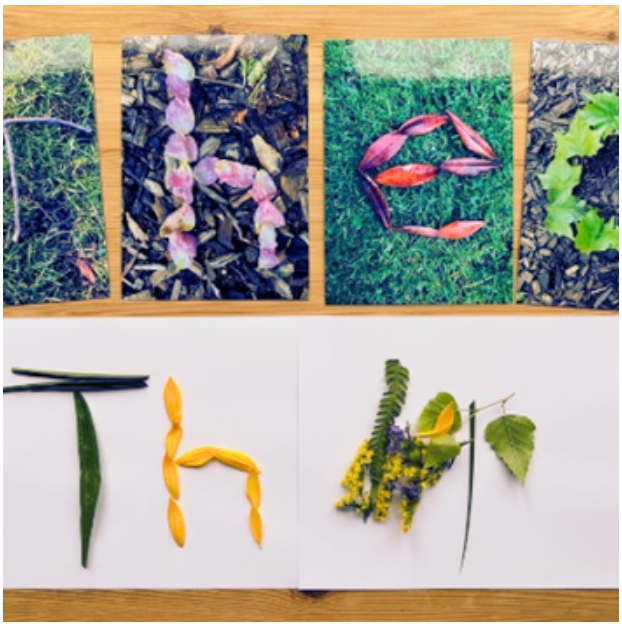
PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What does the mud feel like?
- What is mud? Where is it from?
- Why don't we get mud in Dubai?

9.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME

Creating your child's name from nature loose parts is a wonderful and engaging activity that allows children to combine art, creativity, and learning in a hands-on way. By using natural materials like twigs, leaves, flowers, stones, pinecones, acorns, and other found objects, children can form the letters of their name in a visually appealing, tactile manner.







YOU WILL NEED:

- Letters to copy (depending on age)
- Nature, loose parts

WHAT TO DO:

- Look at each letter of your name and try to recreate it using nature and place on a piece of paper
- You can also use playdough

PROMT QUESTIONS:

- What does nature help in creativity?
- What can you learn from nature collection?

10.

ROCK DROP

A ‘rock drop’ is a pay-it-forward type gesture for children (and adults) of all ages. Basically, you paint a few rocks with the sole intention of giving, find a local park or playground, then ‘hide’ your rocks for others to find.









YOU WILL NEED:

- Rocks
- Paint
- Brushes

WHAT SKILLS DOES IT TEACH:

- Creativity
- Fine motor skills
- Physical activity
- Kindness and sharing

TIPS:

- White or pale ones work best.
- Wash and dry before use.
- Choose to paint or draw on with permanent markers.
- For younger children, paint the base coat, let them dry then allow them to create.

11.

NATURE SILHOUETTES

This is a really fun activity that I love doing with my children and inevitably leads to having more fun with chalk like drawing rainbows and flowers. I love marking out hopscotch on the floor and getting the kids hoping and jumping all over the place!



YOU WILL NEED:

- Chalk
- Nature
- Space outdoors

WHAT TO DO:

Lay on the ground and use chalk to draw around each other.
Use nature loose parts to fill in the body parts

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What are the body parts? Can you name them?
- Why do we need our organs?

12.

NATURE COLLAGE TREE

This activity lets children create a “Forest of Growth” by making a tree and adding leaves that represent kind acts, personal goals, or things they are grateful for. It combines creativity, reflection, and fine motor practice while encouraging positive thinking and self-expression.



YOU WILL NEED:

- White paper or cardstock
- Black or brown construction paper (for tree silhouettes)
- Real or artificial leaves (or green paper for cutting your own)
- Scissors
- Glue stick or craft glue

WHAT TO DO:

- Cut and glue tree on paper.
- Add leaves for kind acts or gratitude.
- Decorate with messages or drawings.
- Display your “forest of growth.”

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What kind act or goal would you like to put on a leaf?
- How can you decorate your leaf to make it special?
- Which leaf are you most proud of adding to your tree?
- Who else could add a leaf to your forest?

13.

NATURE'S BIRD CRAFT

In Nature's Bird Craft, children use real leaves of different shapes and sizes to create colorful birds on paper. By adding googly eyes, drawing wings, beaks, or branches, kids practice creativity, fine motor skills, and observation of natural textures while connecting with nature in a hands-on, artistic way.



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WHAT TO DO:

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- What kind act or goal would you like to put on a leaf?
- How can you decorate your leaf to make it special?
- Which leaf are you most proud of adding to your tree?
- Who else could add a leaf to your forest?

14.

NATURE FACE CREATIONS

Creating nature silhouettes with your child is a fantastic way to combine art, outdoor exploration, and creativity. This activity involves using natural materials—such as leaves, branches, flowers, or even the outline of trees or animals—and turning them into art, the activity offers a variety of developmental benefits.



YOU WILL NEED:

- Card board
- Nature
- White glue
- Pens

WHAT TO DO:

Pick Nature from outside your home, Cut a card board and draw different faces to stick nature using white glue. Isn't that fun to do?

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What else can you draw and stick on the card board?
- What can you learn for the nature faces making?
- How many body parts did you manage to draw?

15.

CREATE YOUR FAMILY

Creating a family from nature is a beautiful and meaningful activity where children use natural materials to represent each member of their family. This hands-on craft encourages creativity, strengthens bonds, and helps children develop a deeper connection to both their family and the natural world.



YOU WILL NEED:

- Frame
- Super gun
- Nature

WHAT TO DO:

Lay all the items on the table and using the frame as the base get yout children to start building/creating their family

PROMT QUESTIONS:

- How many people are in your family?
- How many other family members do you have, talk about names, age and the different relationships.

16.

CREATE YOUR FAMILY

Creating a family using twigs and yarn is a fun and simple craft that allows children to represent each family member in a creative, hands-on way. This activity is ideal for strengthening fine motor skills, encouraging creativity, and promoting family bonding as children reflect on their relationships and unique family roles. By using twigs for the bodies and yarn for features and details, children can design a visual representation of their family using materials found in nature.



YOU WILL NEED:

- Twigs
- White glue
- Yarn(different colors)
- Googly eyes

WHAT TO DO:

Collect twigs to make the bodies.

Put glue around the twigs and start rolling the yarns around to make different genders as shown.Make hair using yarns then stick googly eyes.

BENEFITS:

Children are able to explore their creativity through choosing materials and designing their family. The use of twigs and yarn encourages imaginative thinking as they customize each figure with personal details, clothing, and features.

17.

NATURE TRAYS

When it comes to play I think trays just make sense! These in particular are made from plastic but are incredibly versatile and easy to move from room to room, inside or out. Here are just a few ideas for nature set up, if you are looking for more inspiration make sure to follow my account called @PlayonaTray









YOU WILL NEED:

I love to use a base for each tray this could be anything from water, mud, soil, grass/astro turf, leaves and twigs and so much more.

WHAT TO DO:

Each tray should have a theme and a learning objective so deciede what this might be.

TRAYS EXPLAINED:

1. Making numbers (or letters) with loose parts found in nature.
2. Insect discovery using magnify glasses
3. Flower garden and tools
4. Herb mixing

18.

NATURE PLAYDOUGH

Nature playdough is a fantastic, hands-on activity that allows children to explore both the tactile joy of playdough and the beauty of the natural world. By incorporating natural materials like leaves, flowers, seeds, and herbs, you can make this activity not only a creative experience but also a sensory one. Children can engage in open-ended play while connecting with nature, learning about textures, colors, and the environment.









YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup salt
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar (helps improve texture)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (or any light oil)
- 1 cup water

WHAT TO DO:

Combine dry ingredients: In a saucepan, mix 1 cup of flour, 1/4 cup salt, and 2 teaspoons of cream of tartar.

Add liquids: Stir in 1 cup of water, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, and a few drops of food coloring (if you'd like to add color to your dough).

STORAGE:

When your child is done playing, store the nature playdough in an airtight container or plastic bag. The dough should last for up to 2 weeks if kept sealed. However, the natural materials you added may dry out, so it's best to use the playdough within a week for the best texture and fragrance.

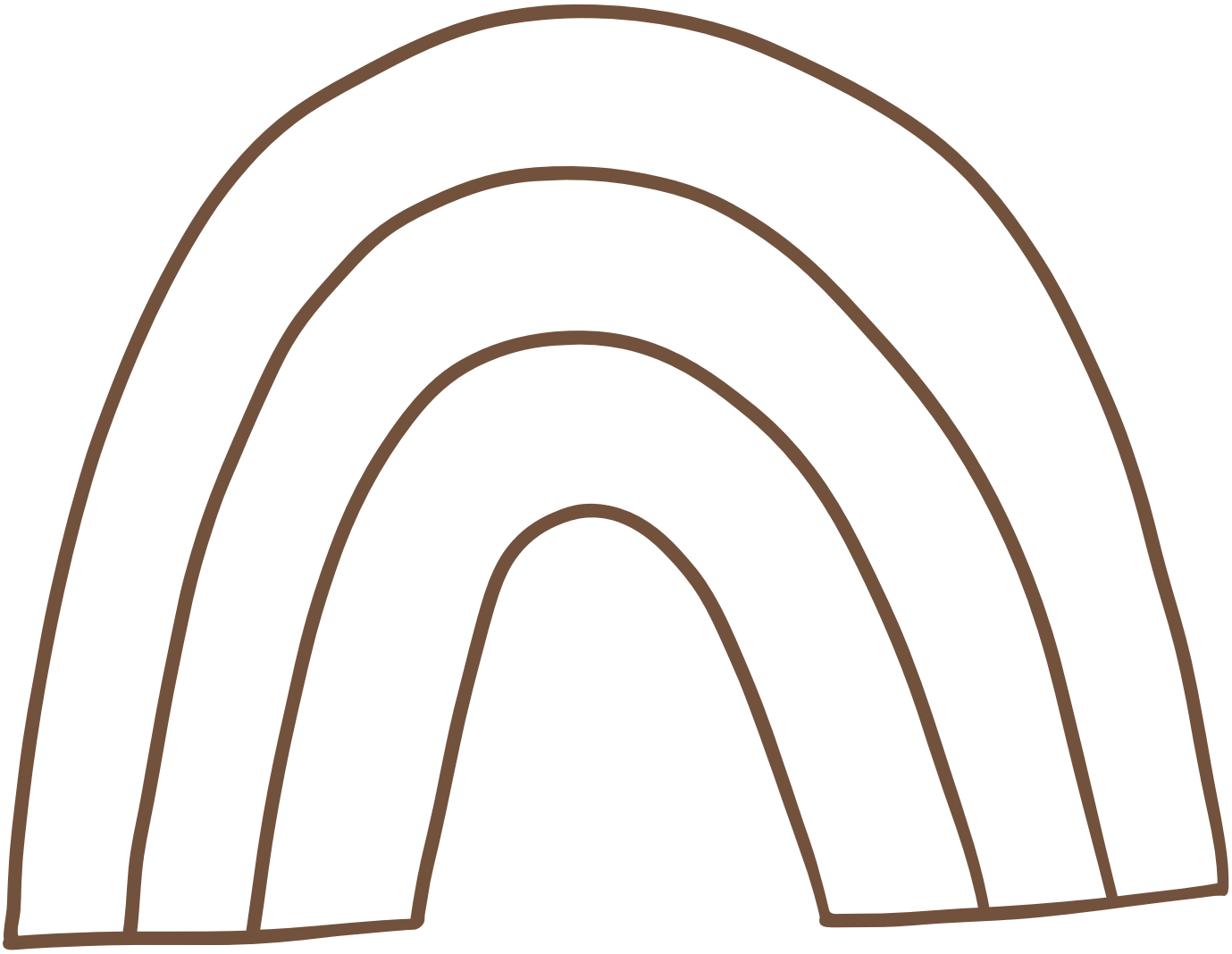
19.

PLAYDOUGH MATS

Play dough mats are a fun way to play and build skills at home. They are great educational tools while still fun and engaging. they are also a great way to develop fine motor skills - they give learners the opportunity to strengthen their hands while developing essential skills that are needed for pencil writing, as well as the dexterity and precision skills that are needed for many daily, fine motor tasks

These can be printed and used as a base for playdough, I recommend laminating them or putting them in plastic wallets first so they can be used time and time again.

If your child loves these mats then make sure to check out these downloads as I have 100s of different educational designs and learning prompts.



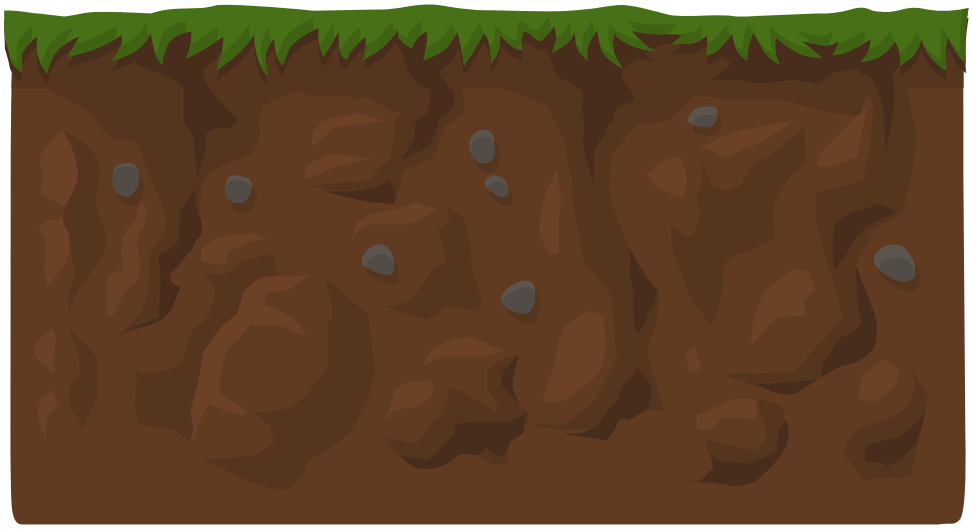
COLOUR THE RAINBOW

20.

PLAYDOUGH MATS



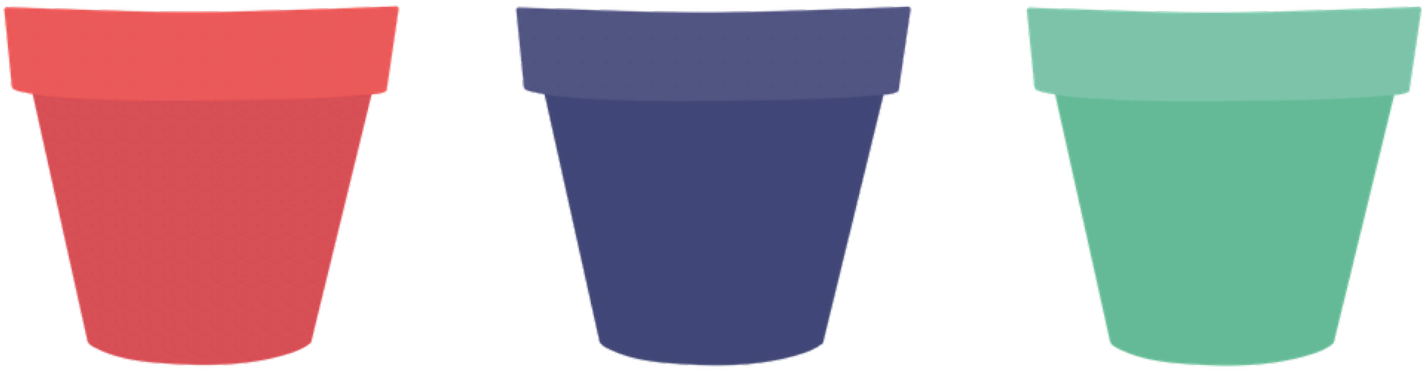
Add some plants to this soil



Can you find some worms living in the soil?

21.

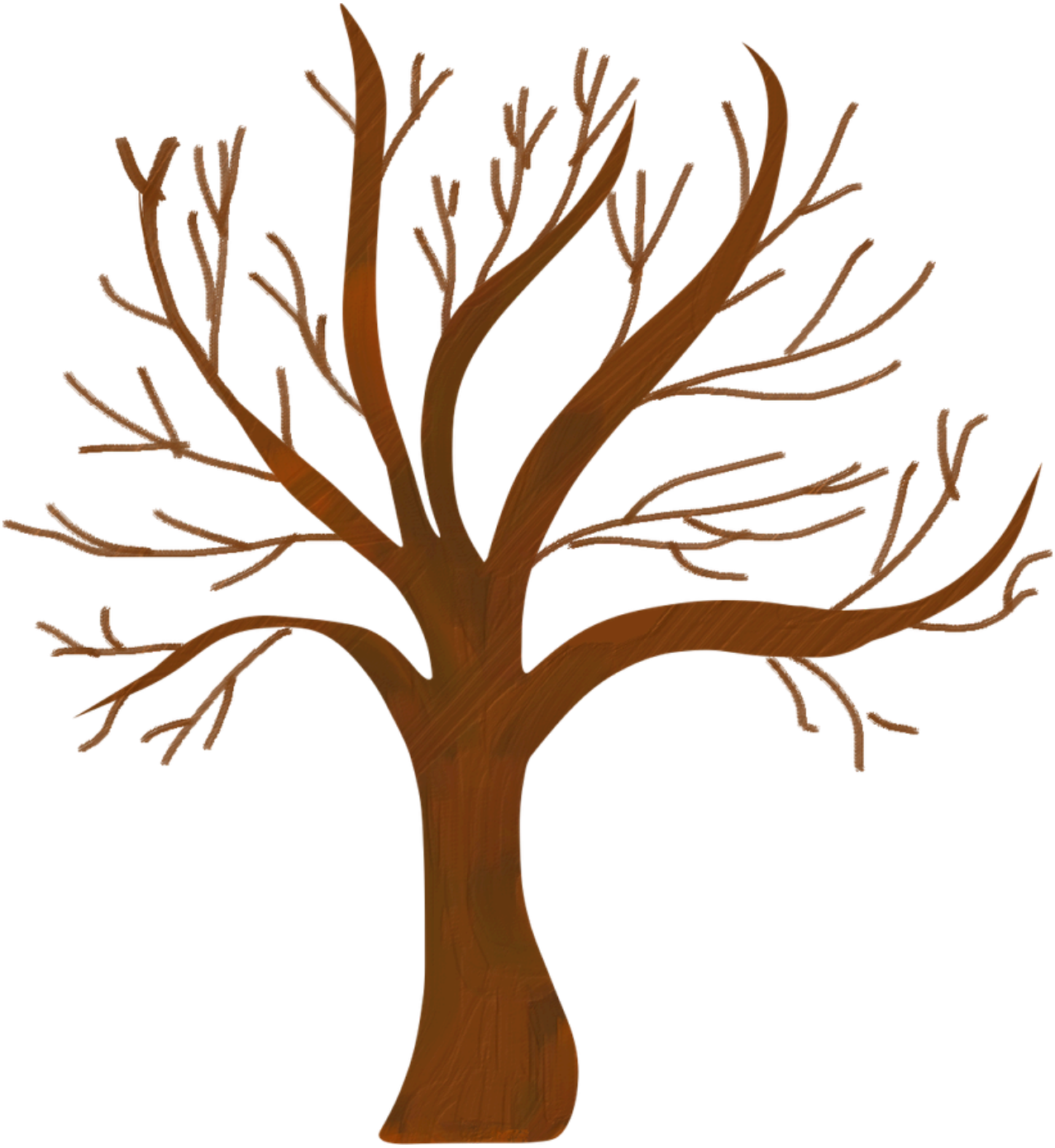
PLAYDOUGH MATS



Can you add some flowers to the pots?

22.

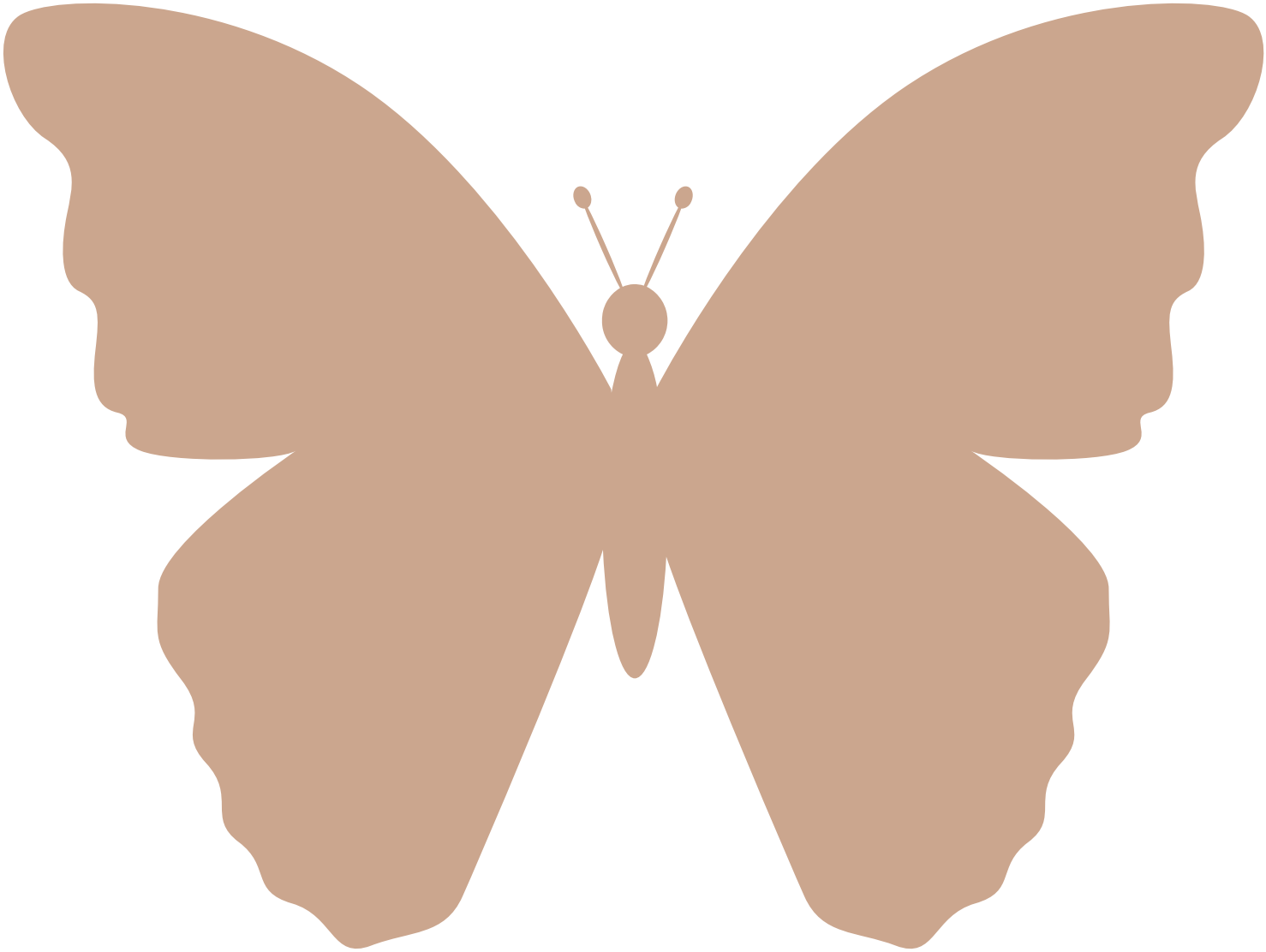
PLAYDOUGH MATS



Add leaves and roots to this tree

23.

PLAYDOUGH MATS



Add a pattern to the Butterfly

24.

SUN CATCHER

A Sun Catcher is a hands-on craft where children use colorful materials—such as tissue paper, leaves, or beads—to create designs that catch and reflect sunlight. When placed in a window, the sun catcher transforms light into vibrant patterns, encouraging creativity, fine motor skills, and a sense of wonder about light and color.



YOU WILL NEED:

- Clear contact paper or plastic sheets
- Colorful materials (tissue paper, leaves, petals, beads)
- Scissors
- Tape or string for hanging

WHAT TO DO:

- Arrange colorful materials on the sticky side of contact paper.
- Cover with another sheet to seal.
- Cut into shapes if desired.
- Hang in a sunny window to catch the light.

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and artistic expression.
- Develops fine motor skills through arranging and cutting.
- Teaches about light, color, and transparency.
- Connects children with nature (if using natural materials).

25.

CARD BOARD RAINBOW COLLAGE

In the Cardboard Rainbow Collage, children create vibrant rainbows by layering colored paper, fabric, or natural materials onto a cardboard base. This hands-on craft encourages creativity, fine motor skills, and color recognition while allowing kids to explore textures and design their own cheerful, personalized



YOU WILL NEED:

- Cardboard (cut into a rainbow or arch shape)
- Colored paper scraps, fabric, buttons, tissue paper, or recycled materials
- Glue stick or liquid glue
- Scissors
- Optional: paint, markers, glitter, cotton wool (for clouds)

WHAT TO DO:

- Cut cardboard into a rainbow or arch shape.
- Sort collage materials by color (red to violet).
- Glue each color section in rainbow order.
- Add texture items (fabric, buttons) if desired.
- Optional: glue cotton wool at the base as clouds.
- Let dry and display proudly!

BENEFITS:

- Enhances color recognition and sorting skills
- Boosts fine motor development (cutting, gluing, placing)
- Encourages creativity and self-expression
- Teaches sequencing and spatial awareness
- Provides a calming, focused craft experience