



Penrith Town Council

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Encouraging children to play outdoors

While keeping safe and following the ongoing social distancing rules, we can all help our children enjoy the outdoors and learn to care for the environment!

While many children are staying at home, it can be hard for parents and carers to come up with new ideas to keep them occupied. So the Town Council is working in partnership with 'Stomping Ground' as part of the 'Penrith in Bloom' initiative to offer some simple ideas for parents and carers to play outdoors with their children and learn to love the environment at the same time. They include 'Tiny Worlds and Mini Dens,' 'Nature Paint and Prints' and 'Magical Mobiles.'

TINY WORLDS AND MINI DENS

3 Things to remember to keep us safe and healthy:
Look after yourself,
Look after each other,
Look after the place you are in!

What you need

Your imagination and problem solving skills. You can do this in your park or street or garden. You will need to collect some loose natural materials like dead leaves, small stones, bark, small sticks and other things you might find in a park, garden or walk in your local area. Loose materials mean they won't be attached to a living plant or tree.

What can you make?

Begin by finding a nook of a tree or a tiny hiding place in a wall or between some plants and think who might live there, insects, small mammals, or other creatures? Think what would they need to live there, food? Or something cozy to sleep on.

You could try making a tiny tepee shape with sticks or weaving some materials together into a wall. Or you might have a different plan, like balancing leaves on top of sticks for a roof? You might have dinosaurs or farm animals that you want to build a home for!

Where this might lead

This is just a starting point, you could write or tell stories about the creatures that might live there, constructing big dens for bigger creatures including you!

Nature Connection

- Spending time in nature and being around trees helps reduce stress hormones in the body. Just 20 minutes outdoors a day gets benefits to children and adults.
- Encouraging care for animals and plants, like feeding the birds, develops the critical social skills of empathy and awareness.

For more downloads go to www.penrithtowncouncil.co.uk or www.stompingground.co.uk

Share what you've been up to outdoors today!
On Facebook Penrith In Bloom and Stomping Ground
#natureconnection #penrithinbloom
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NATURE PAINTS AND PRINTS

3 Things to remember to keep us safe and healthy:
Look after yourself,
Look after each other,
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What you need

Get experimental! You need some cotton fabric, some masking tape, containers, a small amount of water and a couple of paint brushes.

How to collect natural objects: be thoughtful, make sure you check with your adult before you pick, if you are not sure don't risk it. Consider can this tree or plant grow if I pick from it? Or if there is only one leave it alone, remember look after the place you are in so we can keep coming back to enjoy it.

What can you make?

We are looking for some natural colours, think about juicy green leaves, brown mud, black charcoal or even foods from your kitchen like turmeric powder. Remember ask an adult before you ever pick a living thing.

A pestle and mortar is ideal but you could use a plastic tub and a good stick or the back of a spoon, add a teaspoon of water into your container and start mashing up the colours separately to see what shades and textures you can make.

Then using masking tape, mark out a design on your fabric, letters can work well, paint over this tape and leave to dry before peeling the tape to reveal your artwork!

Where this might lead

This is just a starting point, you could turn your fabric into flags, try painting different surfaces, or create a rainbow of nature paints!

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MAGICAL MOBILES

3 Things to remember to keep us safe and healthy:
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Look after the place you are in!

What you need

Your creativity! You will need some treasures found in nature, some string that is biodegradable if you want to hang it outside and a stick as long as your forearm, you can go bigger but this size is good for carrying home.

What can you make?

When you're outside look for some small things that catch your eye, like a striped snail shell, a feather, a shiny stick or seed pod from last year! It is important to check with you're adult before you pick things. Don't pick things that are alive, leave things to grow!

Find a good stick and use any kind of knots to tie your treasures to your stick so they dangle down, you could use different coloured strings or wool. Make a final triangle for hanging by tying a piece of string on both ends of your stick and hanging it from the middle. A good knot to learn here is a clove hitch if you want to try out your knot skills, have a look on the internet for a tutorial!

Where this might lead

This is just a starting point, you could collect nature treasure all year long and display it at home or school, make journey sticks, make stick towers!

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Besides having fun, playing outdoors is good for young people's health and well-being. According to research, it reduces the risk of shortsightedness and infections, and it helps children develop social skills, empathy and love for the environment.

While they're playing, children often come up with their own ideas, so if they do get excited about something new, please share their ideas along with photos. With appropriate permission, we will post them on the 'Penrith in Bloom' Facebook Page @penrithinbloom and

@stompingground. Just take photos of hands if you don't have permission to photograph and publish their faces.

As time goes on, we hope to see Penrith parents/carers and children playing safely outdoors and enjoying our town's brilliant green spaces.