

# Artwork with Nature

The benefits of this activity are myriad! Firstly, getting outside and doing some exercise with your little one will make everyone feel good and help to model a healthy, active lifestyle. Looking for and collecting fallen sticks, leaves and flowers helps to promote and encourage curiosity in their environment and natural world. And finally, creating works of art with their collection can help to foster creativity and imagination, as well as allow your little one an outlet for their artistic expression. Art time can also help little ones with their fine motor skills, concentration and allow them to get a little bit messy.

## What you'll need:

- An outdoor space (the garden, a park, bush land, it doesn't matter as long as it's outdoors)
- A mini wet bag or other bag to carry the collection
- Paper
- Glue
- Pencils, paint, crayons or textas (or all of these!)



## How to do it:

- Take your little one out on a walk to look for things to collect. It's nice to encourage children to look for leaves, sticks and flowers that have already fallen rather than to pull things off living plants and trees.
- Pop all the things you find into your bag, ready to be used in art when you get home.
- When you are ready to do some art, set out the paper, glue, paints, pencils, crayons, textas and whatever else you are using on a table.
- Let your child's inner Picasso come forth!

**Tip-** Help children to think 'outside the box' by talking about the shape of the object and what else it could be. Leaves can be stuck onto drawn trees but they could also be the roof of a house, the body of a dragon or the hair of a fantastic creature!

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# Cereal Sensory Bin

Cereal sensory bins are a fantastic indoor/outdoor activity which can be adapted to suit your toddlers interests. The tactile nature of a sensory bin fosters a toddler's creativity, curiosity and critical thinking. Using tools to develop fine motor skills, your child will be practicing practical life skills such as scooping, filling and dumping, in a focused and engaged way. Having them help with clean-up when they're done playing teaches responsibility and teamwork. A cereal sensory bin is a quick and easy activity that takes no time at all to set up and will keep your little one entertained long enough for you to sneak a nice hot coffee. Please bear in mind that your child will likely eat the cereal while playing so supervision is recommended.

## What you'll need:

- A plastic tray with a depth of 15cms or more
- Cereal such as Cheerios or Rice Bubbles
- Tools - Scoops, spoons, cup and tongs work great!



## How to do it:

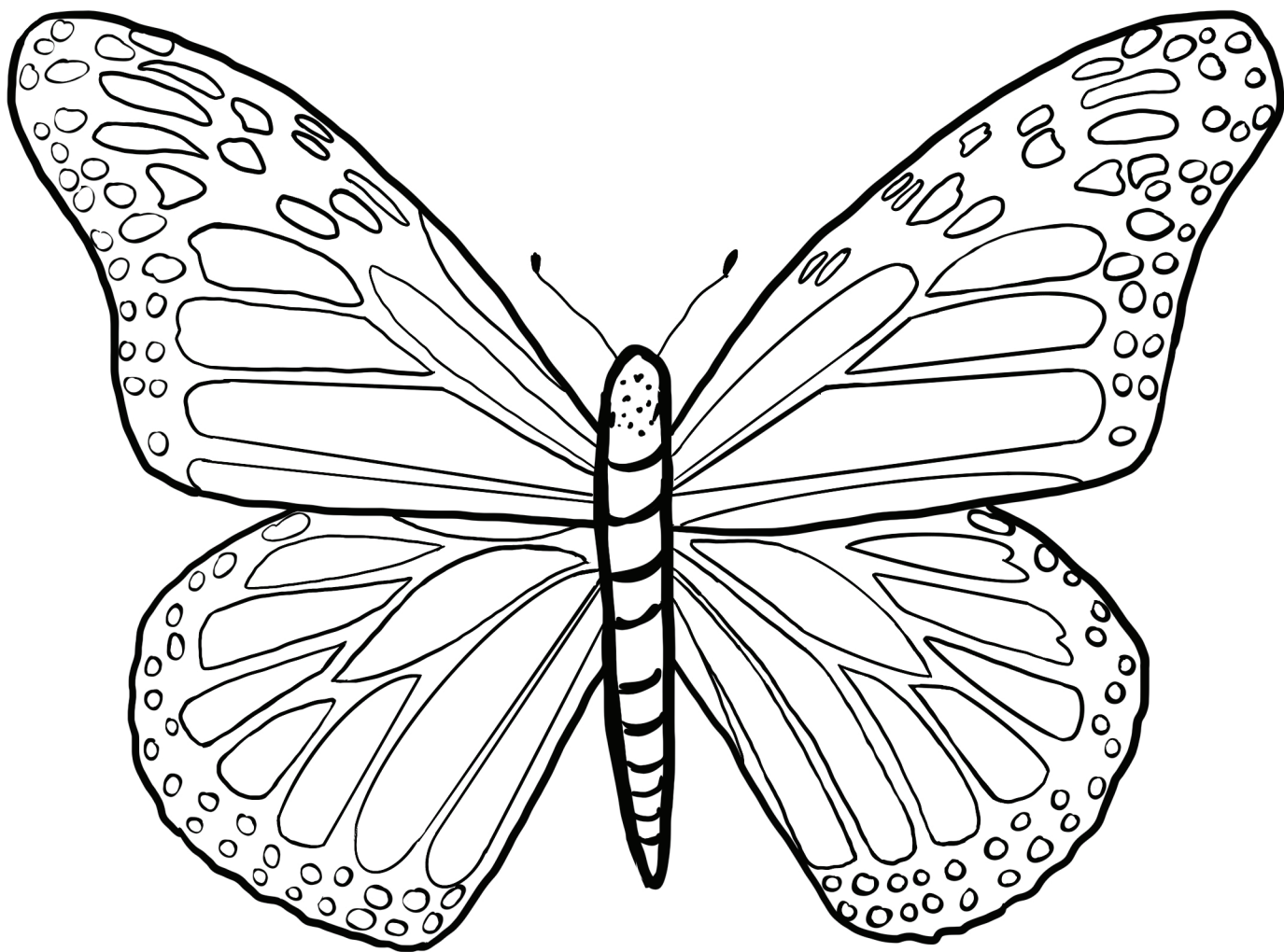
- Take your plastic tray and pour in as much or as little cereal as you're willing to clean up off the floor. Add a few tools and away you go!

## Theme ideas for your cereal sensory bin!

- **On the farm-** Set up some animals and tractors/diggers
- **Cars and trucks-** Driving through the cereal makes great crunching sounds
- **Dinosaur Stomp-** Get those dinos stomping through the cereal, crushing the pieces down to a fine powder
- **Hammer time-** Give that destructo-babe a toy hammer and let them go wild!

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# Colour Me In



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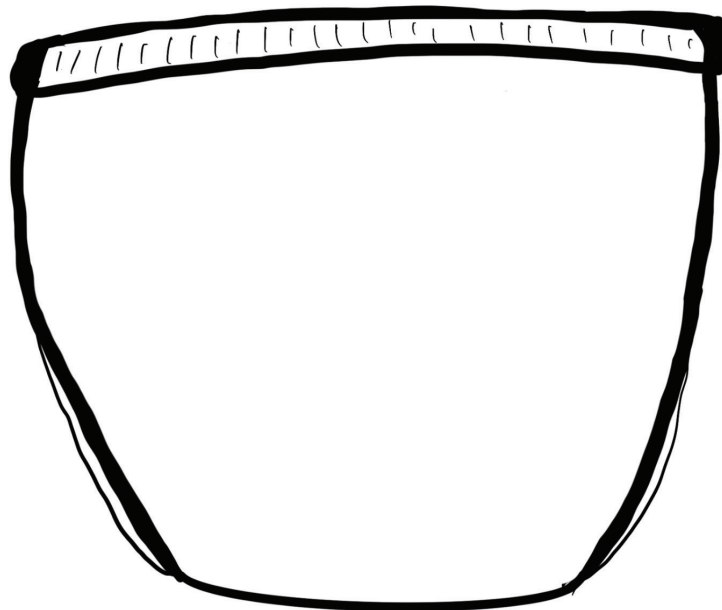
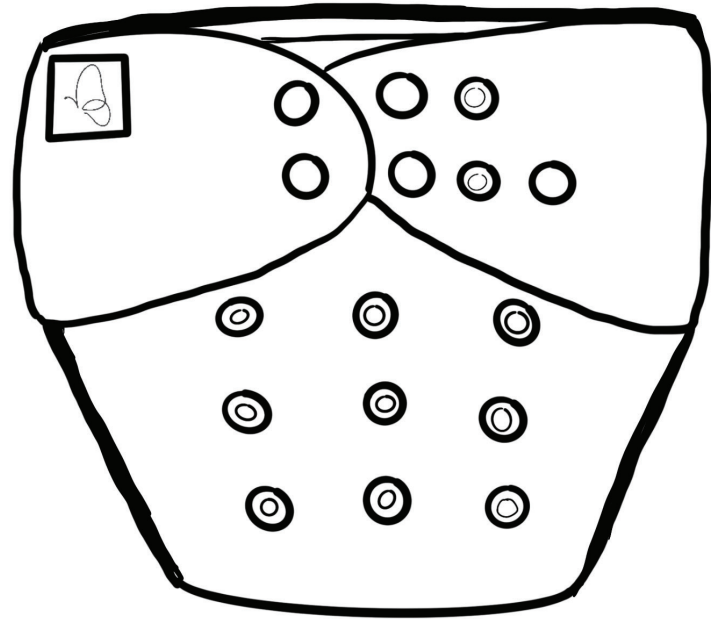


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# Design Your Own Nappy



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# Feed the Box

(toddlers to older children)

This activity is great because it can be made as simple or as complex as you like for your little one's age. For younger children, you can cut simple holes for them to pop balls through, and for older children you could use different shapes or colours and see if your child can match them up. This activity helps to build gross and fine motor skills in younger children and could help older children to develop shape and colour recognition.

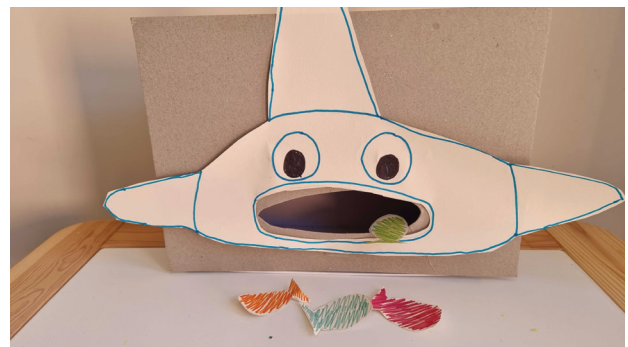
You can even extend this activity into practise packing up after your child has finished playing by encouraging them to put all the pieces into the box when they are done playing.

## What you'll need:

- A cardboard box (a shoebox would work well for this as your little one can practise taking the lid off to get the balls or blocks out and putting it back on again)
- Scissors or a Stanley knife to cut the holes
- Balls, blocks of different shapes or colours, even cut up pieces of sponge would work

## How to do it:

- Cut holes or shapes in your cardboard box.
- Optional step: colour around the holes with paint or pencils if you want one of the activities to be matching up colours
- Gather up balls, blocks or whatever you are using to put through the holes and let your child have a ball!



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# Making Playdough

The benefits of play dough are endless! Play dough is a great sensory activity that provides your little one an opportunity to explore by touch, feel, smell (and sometimes taste) and allows their imagination to run wild while they mould and build with various shapes and cutters! Involve your little one in making the dough to enhance their learning experience (and keep them occupied for 2.5 minutes).

**Pro tip-** once the play dough is made, pair it with some kitchen utensils and let your child go wild!

## What you'll need:

- 1 cup of flour.
- 1/4 cup of salt.
- 3/4 cup of water.
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice.
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil.
- Food colouring.



## How to make it:

- Add the water, oil and lemon juice to a medium non-stick pot and heat on low-medium heat
- Add food colouring to the water mixture.
- In a mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt.
- After the water is hot, but not boiling, slowly add the dry ingredients to the pot and use a wooden or plastic spoon to combine.
- Continuously stir until they are all combined and begin to form a ball. If there are parts that seem a bit sticky still, just flatten the dough and put the sticky side down on the bottom of the pot briefly. Flip back and forth until it isn't sticky anymore. Make sure not to cook it too long, it is better to be a bit undercooked as it will firm up as it cools down.
- Place on a sheet of baking paper until it cools, then knead the dough for a minute or two to bring it all together.

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# Musical Mats

(older kids and toddlers) -

Get out those Wipe-Clean Mats (or blankets) and have some fun! It's time to get some of that energy out, give the kids a good run around and blast some of your favourite family tunes! This is a great activity to get those steps up, have a laugh and teach your child about practicing patience and if you have multiple children, dealing with disappointment and argument resolution!

## What you'll need:

- A few Wipe-Clean Mats or blankets
- Some music
- Some energy

## How to do it:

- Set out your mats or blankets on the floor, space them out around an open room if possible.
- Pop some music on!
- Let the music play for a period of time, dance like nobody is watching, then hit pause!
- When the music is paused, run and jump on a mat!
- You could make the objective of getting to the mats the fastest or have one less mat than people and have one person miss out in each round.
- Have fun!



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# Threading Activity

Threading is a great activity to help children develop fine motor skills that are essential for being able to draw, write, do up buttons, tie shoelaces, open lunch boxes and more. Threading also helps to develop eye-hand coordination and concentration skills. This activity is a great one for when you need a little bit of a break as it allows your child to explore independently (with supervision) and can be a great way to have some quiet time!

## What you'll need:

- A colander or egg carton
- Pipe cleaners or shoelaces
- Some scissors if you are using an egg carton



## How to do it:

- If using an egg carton, turn it upside down and use your scissors to cut some holes in the bottom of each egg spot OR simply grab your colander.
- Get your pipe cleaners or shoe lace and demonstrate to your child how to thread them through the holes.
- Allow your child to take over and experiment with threading. Talk to them about which colours they're using and what happens throughout the threading process.

**Tip-** you could also use household items like penne pasta or straws to facilitate a threading activity with your child-

**The possibilities are endless!**

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# Treasure Hunt

for their favourite toy (older toddlers and kids)

This is a great activity for just after nap time or to fill some time in the morning! It can be as long or as short, as easy or as complex as you want it to be! This is a great way to spend some time with your child without having to worry about cleaning up mess or putting in too much effort.

## What you'll need:

- Your child's favourite toy (or a few toys)
- Pen
- Paper
- Your imagination

## How to do it:

- Grab your child's favourite toy, or a couple of toys and hide them in your house some where.
- Grab your pen and paper and write or draw some clues to create your treasure hunt (make sure they are age appropriate)
- Give your child the clues and guide them through the treasure hunt to find their favourite toy!



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# What's in the Wet Bag

(older kids and baby variation)

This activity is designed for sensory exploration focusing on touch and feel. By allowing children to explore the bag contents, it helps to develop their understanding of cause & effect and shape recognition. This is a great activity for some quiet time as it is no-mess and stress-free!

## What you'll need:

- A wet bag (or any other opaque bag)
- Some small items from around the house (food items are great, otherwise small toys) for babies, grab some cloth wipes
- A blindfold

## How to do it:

- Pop the blindfold on your child or skip this step for babies
- Add the small items or wipes to the bag and leave the bag open.
- Hand the bag to your child or your baby and guide them to explore the items in the bag.
- For toddlers and older children, ask them to guess what's in the bag! You could even keep score and give them a treat at the end!



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