

SIGNS of SPRING!

It's just around the corner!



Play is a means of deep learning for young children. In Gaffield Children's Garden, we provide rich, open-ended Nature Play experiences. We are committed to it, knowing that these experiences will become an essential part of the child, will be transformed into intellectual pursuits, imaginative pursuits, support physical and emotional health, and promote positive regard for the Earth now and into adulthood. We encourage families to participate and replicate what we do here, in their own homes, apartments, and parks. Here is a recipe: **Nature Play at Home: Signs of Spring!**

SUPPLIES

- **Simply take a walk; in your neighborhood, in your back yard, in your school yard. Dress for the weather. Layers always make it easy to adjust to changing weather; adjustments for comfort allow for a more successful time outdoors.**
- **For a change of pace, consider a road trip to go to a big park -- metropark, county park, city park, state park or national park?**
- **Maybe a nature preserve or botanical garden? How about an arboretum?**
- **In your neighborhood, try a double-walk-day: one in the morning and one late in the day. Any differences? On a warm, sunny, late Winter day, the differences might surprise you!**
- **Just get outside. Together.**



WAYS TO PLAY

- **As you head out the door, model your appreciation of the Winter season that is waning, and your anticipation of Spring as it rounds the corner to reality. Something like: "Remember when we slipped on that ice a little bit when Winter first got really cold? Yeah, it gave us a fright at first, but then we started pretending we were iceskating on it! There's still some ice out here but I'm starting to notice some changes, too. Do you hear those birds singing? That's a sign of Spring!"**
- **Invite kiddos to also voice their reminisces of Winter and their anticipation, observations of the signs of Spring. Let them lead the way in conversation and observation. It's about conversation more than 'teaching.'**
- **Be alert of different types of 'Signs of Spring' -- animal activity, visual and auditory, buds on plants -- even early blooms, daffodil 'noses' pushing up from the soil, breezes, brisk gusts, change in the quality and direction of the sunlight. Use eyes, ears, noses, and skin.**

