Build a Little Bird Nest!

Imaginative engineering & design play

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 for Nature Play at Home: Build a Little Bird’s Nest!

SUPPLIES!
- bits of dried grass, tufts of straw
- fallen leaves, cut plant stems
- twine, yarn, string
- tiny stones, pebbles, bits of moss
- small plates
- faux eggs or home made play dough for making tiny bird's eggs

PLAY!
- encourage child to forage materials, or set out materials
- "imagine you're a bird building a nest"
- If an adult is joining the play, use "I wonder..." phrases like "I wonder how birds know how to build a nest," or "I wonder how birds choose supplies for a nest."
- Consider:
  - Remember to let the kiddos lead the way.
  - The difference between play and "activities" largely comes down to who leads it. In play, children lead based on their own interests and curiosity. In "activities," the adult's agenda is leading.

MORE PLAY?
- invite kiddos to help make play dough:
  - 2 c flour, 1/2c salt, 4Tbsp cream of tartar, 2 Tbsp veg oil, 2 c water, food coloring
  - mix flour, salt, cream of tartar in medium pot
  - add water, food coloring, oil
  - stir over med heat for 3-5 minutes, until mixture forms a lump in center of the pot
  - let cool completely

CONSIDER
- some favorite picture books about birds and nests: "A Nest is Noisy," "Birds, Nests & Eggs," "Mama Built a Little Nest"