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: Nature Curtain!

**SUPPLIES!**
- Twine, or woolen yarn
- Curtain rod, or largish tree branch suspended between supports, or simple A-frame structure
- Foraged plant parts: acorns, nuts, flowers, grassy plants, small sticks, shells, stones
- Bells, beads
- Tufts of fleece or additional woolen yarns

**PLAY!**
- Set up a structure so longish strands of twine hang down from the branch or rod like a curtain
- Take a stroll to find foraged materials
- Show child how to loosen strands on the twine to create openings to hold the foraged treasures
- Let children create hanging curtains of nature treasures

**MORE PLAY?**
- Use foraged materials as collage materials in sand trays or on paper
- Model weaving or braiding short lengths of yarn between the hanging pieces
- Make up rhymes or songs about the process
- Use fluffy natural bits and hang outside as a bird nest supply
- "Warehouse"
- Read about patterns in Nature

**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.
- Because this play includes lengths of twine, please supervise child to ensure safety.

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