Lantern Play!

Light up a dark night

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: Lantern Play!

SUPPLIES!
- flashlights or make your own lantern with:
  - tea lights
  - translucent container or punch holes in an opaque container
  - twine or sturdy yarn for a handle

PLAY!
- set aside a special night to stay up late
- take a family walk in yard or through neighborhood in the dusk or the dark
- observe shadows
- experiment with turning over objects to view what’s happening beneath them
- enjoy the light of the lanterns in the dark of the night

MORE PLAY?
- observe the moon, the stars, the clouds
- older children may enjoy making intricate lanterns
- At MBGNA’s Pumpkins, Lanterns & Leaves festival, we chant a lantern poem at the start of our lantern walk. Make up your own song or poem.
- invite other families and friends to your lantern parade

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.
- The novelty of being outside after dark can make something very simple, very special.

SUPPLIES!

PLAY!

MORE PLAY?

CONSIDER