Leaf Play!

Leafy costume fun

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: Leaf Play!

SUPPLIES!
- leaves
- scarf, knit hat, tank top
- ribbons, paper strips
- masking tape or strips of contact paper

PLAY!
- if you have leaf piles - by all means jump around in them first!
- demonstrate your curiosity by saying “I wonder what a leaf crown would look like…”
- let child take the lead, does the child want to make a leafy crown or a leafy sash?
- set out some costume materials -- leaf stems can be poked into knit hats, scarves, leaves will stick to contact paper or masking tape

MORE PLAY?
- if you have piles of leaves, let older kiddos rake leaves into mazes and then run wild!
- older children may delight in organizing the leaves based on leaf color
- make collage-style art with the fallen leaves a la Andy Goldsworthy
- for very little children, the sensory experience of picking up, crushing, smelling the leaves is plenty of play

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 agenda is leading.
- participating in transformation play is great brain play