Nature Treasure!
Collecting for curiosity

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 Treasure Collector!

SUPPLIES!
- egg carton, or small plastic box with divided sections and lid
- weather appropriate attire
- some time on your hands

PLAY!
- announce an interest in going out for a nature treasure hunt outdoors,
- step outdoors and just start to walk around, keeping an eye out for treasures
- this game might unfold much more organically, especially if you have your kiddo has a strong collector streak
- child can add each treasure to one of the ‘cubbies’ in the egg carton or hobby box
- let child decide where to display the treasures

MORE PLAY?
- nature treasures make great loose parts play items for other play, acorns can become ‘soup ingredients’ etc
- child may enjoy matching games or sorting games with items in their collection
- older children may enjoy a game where they take each item out of the cubby and tell the story of how they found it, chronologically or otherwise, and why it is like treasure to them

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.
- Play is about fun, and it is the way young children learn about themselves and the world.
- maybe do a ‘virtual’ treasure hunt, taking photos instead of actual artifacts

SUPPLIES!
- egg carton, or small plastic box with divided sections and lid
- weather appropriate attire
- some time on your hands

PLAY!
- announce an interest in going out for a nature treasure hunt outdoors,
- step outdoors and just start to walk around, keeping an eye out for treasures
- this game might unfold much more organically, especially if you have your kiddo has a strong collector streak
- child can add each treasure to one of the ‘cubbies’ in the egg carton or hobby box
- let child decide where to display the treasures

MORE PLAY?
- nature treasures make great loose parts play items for other play, acorns can become ‘soup ingredients’ etc
- child may enjoy matching games or sorting games with items in their collection
- older children may enjoy a game where they take each item out of the cubby and tell the story of how they found it, chronologically or otherwise, and why it is like treasure to them

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.
- Play is about fun, and it is the way young children learn about themselves and the world.
- maybe do a ‘virtual’ treasure hunt, taking photos instead of actual artifacts