DUSK WALK & WATCH!

Winter version!

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: Nature Play at Home: Dusk Walk & Watch!

**SUPPLIES**

- Can be played in a yard, a park, balcony, or patio.
- Choose a day when you won't feel rushed.
- Dress for the weather.
- Bring a flashlight for safety, closer observation, and just because it makes the walk extra special.

**WAYS TO PLAY**

- Frame the walk as an adventure or treasure hunt.
- Consider using a whisper voice during the entire walk -- the better to really hear what's happening.
- Invite children to move outdoors with you to pay special attention to the things we don't always notice: what sounds can we hear? Is that an owl? I wonder why we hear so many roads noises during the winter? Does the air smell different to you than yesterday (particularly if there has been a significant temp change)?

**CONSIDER**

- There is no wrong way to play.
- Consider timing your Dusk Walk & Watch to a full moon.
- After introducing the concept, let the children lead the play.
- Open-ended, quiet conversations can bring deep satisfaction. You don't need to know all the answers.
- Your local children's librarian will have plenty of suggestions for read-a-longs. We are very fond of Owl Night by Yolen & Schoenherr, and Peek Inside Nightime by Milbourne.

**EXTEND THE PLAY**

- Play this right out your door or can be planned as a special trip to a nature area.
- You can model your own observations to get things started, but then give space for the kiddos to lead with their observations.
- If you're lucky enough to live near trees, know that owls move about at dusk in late Winter calling out for mates.
- If you're lucky enough to live near water -- even puddles -- consider checking them out at dusk versus daytime, or day to day at dusk to observe changes.

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