SNOW KITCHEN!

Winter twist on Summer fave!

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: Snow Kitchen!

SUPPLIES
- Spoons, scoops, spatulas, small bowls, pans, colanders.
- Little shakers filled with sand or simple spices: cinnamon or basil.
- A large upturned box to be the ‘range,’ or a couple of pieces of log for the ‘campfire.’
- Foraged pinecones, leaves, sticks, pebbles and stones.
- Forage your pantry, too. A half bag of frozen cranberries and a handful of birdseed came in handy here.

WAYS TO PLAY
- In Summer, make mud pies; in Winter, make snow cakes.
- Encourage children to forage items for ‘ingredients’ or set out what you’ve found in the pantry.
- Model by packing some snow into a pan or bowl and turning it out.
- Invite kiddos to make a snow kitchen or a snow camp: “I wonder what you will make in this snow kitchen…”

EXTEND THE PLAY
- Make an actual snow based treat: snow cones.
- Ahead of time, boil fruit juice until it is reduced. Chill it. Later kids collect pristine snow or set cups out to catch snow as it falls. Pour juice or syrup over the snow.
- There are recipes for maple syrup snow candy online. Take note: it requires boiling hot maple syrup.
- Visit a local nature organization that features a Maple ‘Sugar Shack.’

CONSIDER
- There is no wrong way to play.
- After introducing the concept, let the children lead the play.
- The difference between play and activities largely comes down to who leads it. In play, children lead based on their own curiosity and interests. In activities, the adult’s agenda is leading.
- Transformation play is great play for brains.