



## Texas Tech Coalition for Natural Learning

### ***Sink or Swim***

#### Materials:

1. Rectangle shallow bucket with top
2. Natural items of different weights (i.e., rocks, leaves, sticks, pine cones, feathers, nuts, etc.)
3. Water for filling bucket

#### Instructions:

Begin by choosing an item then (1) identify the item, (2) discuss if the item will either sink or swim when placed in the water, and (3) place item in water and describe the results. Have children independently choose items and discuss with them (or have parents participate if available) their experiences. Follow steps above, provide as little or much assistance as needed, but allow children to lead experience.



**ole!TEXAS**  
OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

*OLE! Texas is an initiative of the Texas Department of State Health Services in partnership with other state agencies, universities, and organizations across Texas. For more information and a full partner listing, visit [dshs.texas.gov/ole](http://dshs.texas.gov/ole).*



### ***Sandbox***

#### Materials:

1. Rectangle shallow bucket with top
2. Natural items of different weights (i.e., shells of different sizes, rocks, pebbles, etc.)
3. Sand for filling bucket
4. Small shovel for digging, and bucket for hold items.

#### Instructions:

Have children dig-in to search for items and (1) as they find items talk about them and where they might find the items (e.g., shells can be found at beaches; rocks can be found many places; etc.). Place items in bucket for later discussion.” After many items are found have children go through their “bucket of treasures.” Depending on the age, children may count and/or categorize items.





## ***Natural Charcoal Rubbings***

### Materials:

1. Parchment paper
2. Charcoal/chalk/graphite sticks
3. A range of natural, loose materials (i.e., variety of leaves, bark, pine cones, nuts, rocks, feathers)

### Instructions:

Begin by choosing an item then (1) place a piece of paper directly on the surface/object to take rubbing from, (2) use charcoal to rub across surface (suggest using varying pressures to reveal more sensitive surfaces), and (3) talk about the different surfaces found on each of the materials used.

Suggested questions: (1) How are the surfaces different? (2) Were some more difficult than others? (3) What do the charcoal rubbings show you?





## ***Seedlings***

### Materials:

1. Cup with a seedling: Cup, soil, and started seedling
2. Information about seedlings
3. Use Seedling Activity PDF
4. Activity materials: Crayons/markers for coloring, scissors, and glue

### Instructions:

Have the children complete the activity and (1) discuss the parts of the plant (with assistance as needed) and (2) provide children with seedling and discuss how their seedling can grow. Provide information with the seedling to take home. Encourage parents and child to grow the seedling together in their own home environment.





## ***Matching Food with Home***

### Materials:

1. Use Food Home activity PDF
2. Materials for coloring and writing

### Instructions:

Have children (and adults) complete the activity while discussing the different fruits and vegetables. Match the items “home” and talk about the different ways that they grow. Connect with the outdoor environment.





### ***Making Shade***

#### Materials:

1. Desk Lamp (AKA the sun)
2. Varying natural loose materials
3. Objects (e.g., toy people, house, etc.) for under lamp to be shaded

#### Instructions:

Have children pick up different loose items and “make shade” over objects. Discuss how the different items provide a lot or little shade. Ask children to talk about what they see making shade outside in their everyday experiences.





### ***Natural Texture (Busy) Board***

#### Materials:

1. Board with different sections that have varying natural textures
2. Natural texture examples: Bark, Pebbles/rocks, Grass, Concrete, Sand, Sticks, Leaves
3. Have additional loose matching materials available for later matching

#### Instructions:

Have children feel the different textures and try to guess what it is and where it is in the outdoor learning environment. Have loose material options that match the board texture and use these after initial identification for children to match. Discuss each of the materials with children (have adults lead this if available).





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### ***Water Play***

#### Materials:

1. Rectangle shallow bucket with top
2. Funnels/PVC pipe
3. Sand/small rocks to fill bucket
4. Other loose materials
5. Cups/spoons/bowls etc.
6. Water

#### Instructions:

Have children explore using the materials provided. Give examples if needed. Ask children questions about what they are seeing (e.g., How does the water flow change if you use more water?”. You can fill the bucket with water, or have an additional bucket for water to be scooped out of into the funnels.



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