

Bear Park from Home

Dear Parents of Bear Park,

With this edition, we delve further into the wondrous world of technology and its varied and valuable educational benefits for our children.

Also with it definitely getting cooler, we hope that you find the yummy recipe at the end of this edition a pleasant and easy suggestion for something healthy and warming to eat.

Wishing you all well

Sue & the Bear Park Team

Embracing the Love for Nature Through Video (Part 2)

Speeding things up with time-lapse

What you need:

A smartphone such as Samsung, LG, or iPhone or iPad with built in slow motion and time-lapse options.

A Tripod or create something that can hold the phone in a permanent position.

Time-lapse photography is a technique, which alters the frequency at which film frames are captured. It takes a frame spread out over a much longer period of time than in a usual video. When the sequence of the frames are played at normal speed, time appears to be moving faster.

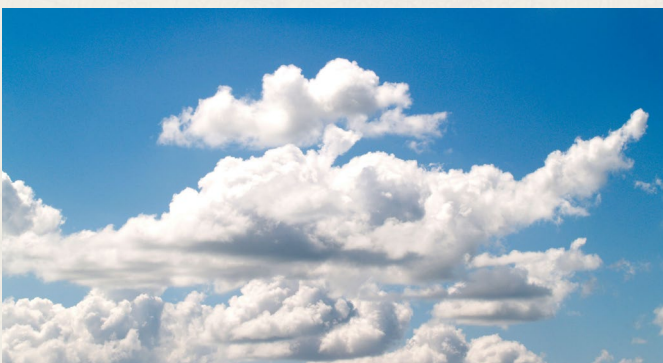
It is a great process to capture things that usually appear gradually over time and slow to the human eye, e.g. the motion of the sun, the moon, and stars in the sky or the growth of a plant.

I love capturing clouds with this feature or capturing people and their movements in a place such as the beach, a park or a street, as it makes patterns and rhythm of a place visible.

So use a tripod stand or create something that can hold the phone in a permanent position, because you are looking at capturing something over a longer period of time. I suggest starting with something still reasonably fast such as clouds or people.

*“What do you notice?” “What happens to the movement?”
“Do you notice patterns?” “Do you notice rhythm?”
“What happens to time?”*

We hope you will have a lot of fun capturing patterns of movement.



Exploring Environmental Sounds

“Sound waves travel into the ear canal until they reach the eardrum. The eardrum passes the vibrations through the middle ear bones and into the inner ear. The brain tells you that you are hearing a sound and what that sound is”. www.pdst.ie

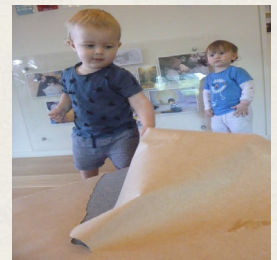
Exploring sound involves listening to and creating sounds from a wide variety of sources such as the environment, the voice, the body and instruments. Infants and toddlers can be encouraged to listen and identify familiar sounds in the immediate environment from a variety of sources such as rain falling, a door opening and closing, a phone ringing, dogs barking or cars moving.

When you hear a sound draw your child’s attention to it. You could engage them by saying, “Listen, can you hear that?” and look to where the sound is coming from. Point to your ear and show your child that you are listening for a sound. Through verbal imitation, re-create the sound to help your child figure out where the sound is coming from, for example a door knocking or a dog barking.

Older children can be encouraged to listen to, identify and describe sounds in the environment with increasing awareness, such as cars driving past, a clock ticking or tree’s blowing in the wind. Wherever you may be whether it is in a park, at the beach or in the comfort of your own home, invite your child to close their eyes and listen to the different sounds. Ask them to categorize what it is they can hear.

Additionally you could invite your child/ren to practice making their own sounds. Consider what resources you have in your home environment and see what sounds your child can create with already existing materials. Here are a few examples you could try.

- Crunching leaves
- Tapping metal tins
- Knocking on a door
- Clapping hands
- Tapping pencils
- Shaking and sloshing water bottles
- Tapping stones together
- Flapping and tearing paper
- Shells rubbing together



Maybe you could suggest that they could create their own ‘sound composition’ by placing the various objects in a sequence on the ground and then inviting you to partake in this symphony of sound.

What happens when you use a different ‘striker’ to make the sound with such as a stick, a metal spoon, and a plastic spatula?

How does this alter the original sound that you created?

What happens if you rub the striker across the object rather than hitting it - how does this sound?

What happens if you place two of the objects on top of each other? For e.g. shell on a wooden tree stump?

So the variations of composition flow. Another extension to this could be to record the sounds with your iPhone or iPad and play these back to other family members to see if they can guess how these sounds were created.



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Asian Style Thai Pumpkin Soup

500g pumpkin, chopped
1 medium sweet potato, chopped
1 large onion, diced
2.5 litres vegetable stock
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 knob ginger, chopped
Sea salt & pepper
Pinch nutmeg
1 tbsp curry powder
½ cup (50g each) carrot, zucchini, parsnip and celery shredded
½ cup (50g) bean sprouts
4 Kaffir Lime Leaves
¼ bunch coriander chopped



Sauté pumpkin, sweet potato, onion and garlic with a little vegetable stock. Add spices, rest of stock and simmer for 30-40 minutes. Purée soup in a blender and check seasoning. Add the shredded vegetables just before serving and sprinkle with chopped coriander.

Using your iPhone as a Webcam & Microscope

You'll need:

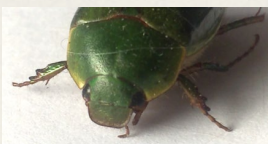
- iPhone (you might be able to use a different smartphone)
- Charging cable to connect your phone to your computer
- Computer with quick time player

You may ask why we are making so many suggestions about how to use technology to embrace the love for nature. Technology is part of our children's everyday life and has a huge impact on how they perceive and interact with reality. We believe that embracing technology as a creative tool and exploring its potentiality to connect not just to people, but also to nature, will allow children to create closer relationships with our environment.

This process does not require any apps or other equipment and is easy to set up. Using the phone this way will allow you and your child/ren to take a very close look almost as close as when using a microscope. Or, it may allow them the possibility to delve into the magical world of a microcosm, by using it like a web camera filming through your child/ren's constructions or your garden for a worm-like view.

- Connect your phone to computer via charging cable (it might ask you if you trust this computer, press "trust")
- Open up quick time player
- Go into file "new movie recording"
- This will automatically connect to your computers in-built webcam
- To change this move the cursor until a small window will appear in the image
- There is an arrow next to the recording button (circle with a red centre)
- Click onto the arrow and there will be an option between "FaceTime HD Camera" and your phone. Choose your phone

Now you are ready to go. You can choose to just to observe the enlarged image on the computer or take photos and videos.

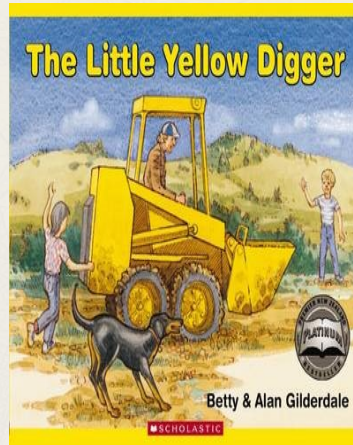


Extending the story

"Children learn through play: by doing, asking questions, interacting with others, devising theories about how things work and then trying them out and by making purposeful use of resources. As they engage in exploration, they begin to develop attitudes and expectations that will continue to influence their learning throughout life."

-Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum.

In an earlier edition of 'Bear Park from Home', we offered some ideas of ways to bring popular stories to life for young children. In this edition, I aim to extend on those ideas by illustrating ways to identify opportunities for learning presented within the story and ways to extend on these.



Today I will use the popular story 'The Little Yellow Digger' by Betty Gilderdale as an example, but hopefully, you will be inspired to try this approach with other popular stories! The Little Yellow Digger tells the story of a family's quest to create a new driveway and the challenges that arise when the weather turns against them. The story itself has a great rhythm and rhyme aspect, and easily captures the attention of young children with a new, bigger digger arriving at the turn of each page, all ending up stuck in the mud. Eventually, the crisis is resolved with the smallest digger proving to be the hero of the day.

If we take a look at what is happening in the story, there is an opportunity to take inspiration from this book to guide some interesting and fun scientific explorations - for example the way that the elements affect the diggers and their ability to work can be re-created and explored in depth using a bit of kiwi ingenuity with resources most of us will have around the home.

Invite your child to re-create the situation the little yellow digger begins the story in by filling a suitable container with soft dirt or sand. If you have toy vehicles, such as the digger these can be used to act as the characters from the story. Now that you have set the scene, try experimenting with what happens in the story, inviting your child to wonder and question each step of the journey.

Perhaps a watering can or an old plastic bottle with holes poked into it can substitute for the rain that occurs causing the dry earth to transform into mud. Once your diggers (or digger substitutes) are successfully stuck in the mud, a new experiment begins.

How can you re-create the situation necessary for the mud to harden, and then use your smallest digger to rescue the others?

This exploration may not go exactly according to plan, and that's OK! The most important thing is the process of learning. Encouraging your child to consider what they think might happen, testing out different theories, discussing what worked and what didn't, and evaluating their results. You have engaged in play with your child that provides a way to understand scientific processes in a context that is relevant, meaningful and fun!

"It's not that children are little scientists — it's that scientists are big children. Scientists actually are the few people who as adults get to have this protected time when they can just explore, play, figure out what the world is like."

— Alison Gopnik



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