

Bear Park from Home

Dear Parents of Bear Park,

Another week has arrived and slowly things are getting back to a new mode of normality, with us being able to welcome more of our families back to the Centres.

We look forward to continue in doing this over the upcoming weeks so that once again our Bear Park communities are reunited.

We hope you are safe and well and look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Wishing you all well
Sue & the Bear Park Team

Manipulative Exploration

"In mathematics education, a manipulative is an object which is designed so that a learner can perceive some mathematical concept by manipulating it, hence its name. The use of manipulatives provides a way for children to learn concepts through developmentally appropriate hands-on experience" - Wikipedia

By utilizing recycled materials at Bear Park we offer a wide range of experiences, which are both engaging and stimulating. One of our existing provocations in the Fantail room is an empty cd reel along with a pile of CD's. The children enjoy practicing stacking each CD onto the reel one by one until they have all been dispensed with. When they are finished, they take them all off and begin the process again.



Another way in which we create further manipulative ideas is by using plastic cups with milk bottle lids. Filling one cup with milk bottle lids and leaving the other one empty we invite the child/ren to transfer the lids from one cup to another by using some small tongs and counting as they go.

When the lids have all been transferred, they revisit the process and start again.

A simple way in which you can introduce manipulative play experiences into your home is through offering the opportunity of:

Threading

By providing a selection of cardboard, pieces of paper, plastic lids, pot plant containers and other recycled materials with holes punched in them, invite your child/ren to thread string, ribbon, wool or shoelaces through the holes.



Maybe they can create some threading patterns using one of the above items with multiple threading materials or maybe they wish to thread them all together to make a chain, a bracelet ...

You can also gather things from around your garden with your child/ren such as leaves, flower petals and other natural resources to thread and maybe your child/ren would like to combine some recycled and natural resources together to create a wind charm for example - the choice is theirs.

Embracing the Love for Nature through Video (Part 3)

Slowing things down with slow motion

What you need:

1. A smartphone such as Samsung, LG, or iPhone or iPad with built in slow motion and time lapse options
2. A computer or even better a large TV screen if possible to watch the details of the video

Capturing things with slow motion is the opposite of time lapse and obviously will slow things down; therefore we use it to capture something that moves relatively fast. So capturing your videos with this feature might be a bit more challenging but a lot of fun.

You could start by capturing each other running, jumping kicking a ball or your pet running and jumping. How about going on a bug hunt? But you have to be very quick.

At Bear Park we often use slow motion videos to study the movement of insects through the hundred languages, for example in the investigation of **"Butterfly-ness"**. When watching the video in slow motion ask:

"What do you notice?" "How does it move?"

Invite your child to explore the moment with his/her own body.

"Can you show me how it moves?" "Can you move like it?"

Slow motion videos can also be a great inspiration for drawing, as it offers challenges of different perspectives. It requires close observations of forms, shapes and also the relationships between shapes.



A still shot of our "Butterfly-ness" Video

For this, I suggest you choose a short sequence, which you can slow down frame by frame by moving the timeline manually. This will give you the opportunity to choose frames that show the process of change over time.

We wishing you a lot of fun, interrelating all the different languages of photography, video, movement and drawing, as well as embracing your and your child's love for nature.



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Do you Believe in Fairies?

Mini investigation idea- inspired by the Bear Park Bubble at Dilworth

“Children see magic because they look for it”
Christopher Moore

Since returning to Bear Park, the children in Dilworth’s ‘bubble’ have expressed an interest in the possibility of fairies within our garden. This has inspired a fun and imaginative mini-investigation, which I would like to share with you and hopefully this will provide some insight into how we guide learning experiences based on the children’s interests and ideas.

During our morning meeting, ākongā (learners) are invited to share news they have, and in particular ideas they might like to explore during our investigative learning in the morning to come. When one child shared her ideas about fairies, the rest of the group began to take a hold of this idea and excitedly offered their own opinions.

After observing this lively discussion the teachers determined this was certainly something the children were passionate about and could have the potential to be extended upon.

It was determined that fairies live in gardens, so we spent our investigative learning that morning, in our Centre garden searching for evidence of fairies. We respectfully collected materials that we thought could be used as a fairy garden or house and later that morning we returned to our gathered materials, mostly sticks and a variety of leaves and carefully organized them.

The children began to experiment with different ways to construct a home for the fairies, whilst the teachers observed this, they tried out different strategies of balancing and connecting the sticks and leaves - this proved to be quite a difficult task. Later we revisited the ‘fairy house’ materials and a question was posed-

“What do you think we might need to keep our fairy house stable?”



The children suggested string and ribbon, and a teacher suggested wire. With the introduction of these new materials, the fairy house began to take shape. Children worked together on the tricky task of holding together sticks and tying them so they could stand just so. Over time we began to see a three-dimensional structure take form.

From here the children began to consider aesthetics, one friend had stated with certainty that *“fairies like shiny things”*, and so it was decided that the wire was shiny enough to attract fairy guests. Then came the question of comfort, to which our vibrant leaves were the answer, placed with great care within the fairy house.

We watched and waited, and when after a day we had yet to see a fairy, it was decided to write them a letter. Would they reply? The mystery continues!

“There are no seven wonders of the world through the eyes of a child. There are seven million.” - Walt Stieglitz



Through establishing this mini investigation we have already supported children to see the value of collaborating with each other, developing trust and relying on each other’s skills in the construction of their fairy house. Imagination and creativity are stimulated through discussion about the lives of fairies, and with our letter writing we are beginning to weave in meaningful literacy experiences.

I wonder if there are fairies in your gardens at home? Do you have a collection of materials you might be able to use to make a fairy house too?

In the Forest

“The trees are our lungs, the rivers our circulation, the air our breath, and the earth our body.”
Deepak Chopra



I am very fortunate that the Waitakere Ranges are right in front of my doorstep and I can’t tell you how happy I was when I heard that we could go for walks on the beach and in the forests again. I can’t describe it, but I feel like nature has gained a new vibrancy. Perhaps being away from my favourite places has sharpened my perception; or nature has been able to be replenished, since places have been left ‘untouched’ by people for the last few weeks.

What do you think?

Generally, I think there is just nothing better than a walk in the New Zealand forest on a mild autumn day just after it has rained. Growing up in Europe, I am amazed how vibrant and dense the evergreen New Zealand forest is all year around. Especially after the rain, the air is fresh, crisp and seems to be filled with more oxygen than ever. Its earthy smell brings about a deep sense of groundedness.

Have you ever been in the forest late in the afternoon or by night-time?

The forests here are one of the safest, most mystical and wondrous places, so I invite you to go for a walk in the forest with your child/ren and family. Take your time, walk slowly and open all your senses. Perhaps you will go to a very familiar place, go early in the morning and again late in the afternoon.

I wonder, what changes do you notice?

Online Resources



Walking with Dinosaurs TV series changed the way we saw dinosaurs forever. The revolutionary show took viewers right into the dinosaur’s world, showing them as if they were alive and filmed in the wild.

You can visit this website and watch previews of some of these shows: <https://www.bbcearth.com/walking-with-dinosaurs/>



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