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Activity Guidebook

Encouraging the Holistic Development of
Children Through the Five Senses



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1) Read-Aloud



What you need:

- Picture Books, Kids' Magazines

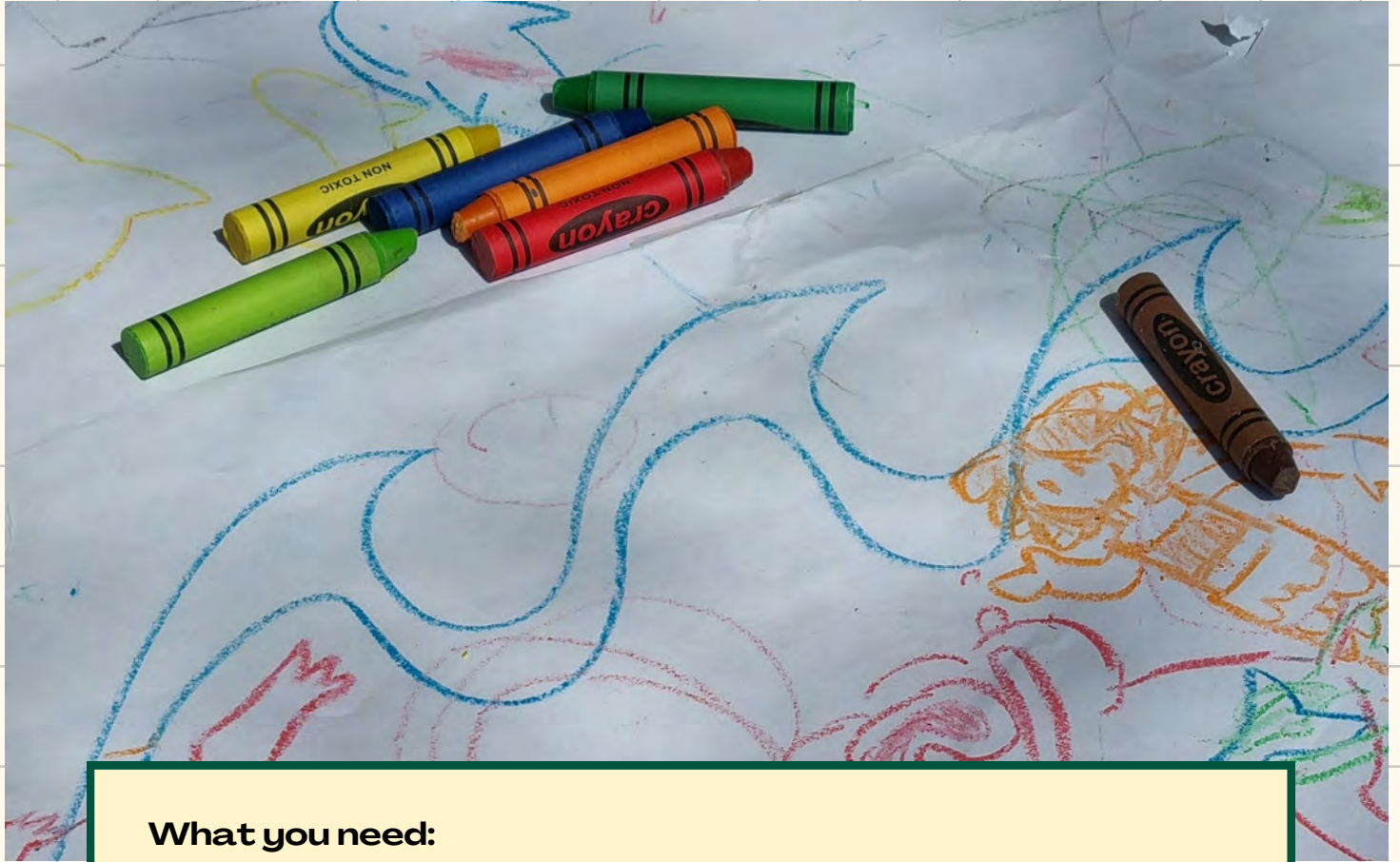
Instructions:

During our visits, one activity we engaged in frequently was reading picture books out loud with the kids. It's a good idea to try out different types of stories, and if they have a specific story or book they like, find more books with similar characters or stories.

Our suggestions:

When we read together, we usually ask them questions: how many cars do you see? What do you think is happening? While most of them are too young to understand or follow the story by themselves, they like to respond to these questions or to point out the different pictures. They're more engaged some days than others, and that's okay!

2) Drawing With Crayons



What you need:

- Crayons
- Paper or cardboard

Instructions:

If using cardboard or a large roll of paper, lay flat on hard, level ground, like concrete or wood, and let the kids use crayons and their imagination to doodle and sketch. If using smaller pieces of paper, you could also draw on tables while sitting in chairs. This activity works best if you draw alongside the kids and give them fun, creative prompts, so they feel as though they are part of an art-making process.

Our suggestions:

Let the kids be imaginative, and don't try to correct their drawings. If desired, this activity could be expanded into a way to learn the color wheel and how to draw simple shapes and incorporate them into fun drawings, integrating ideas of art theory and geometric concepts.

3) Exploring Local Nature

What you need:

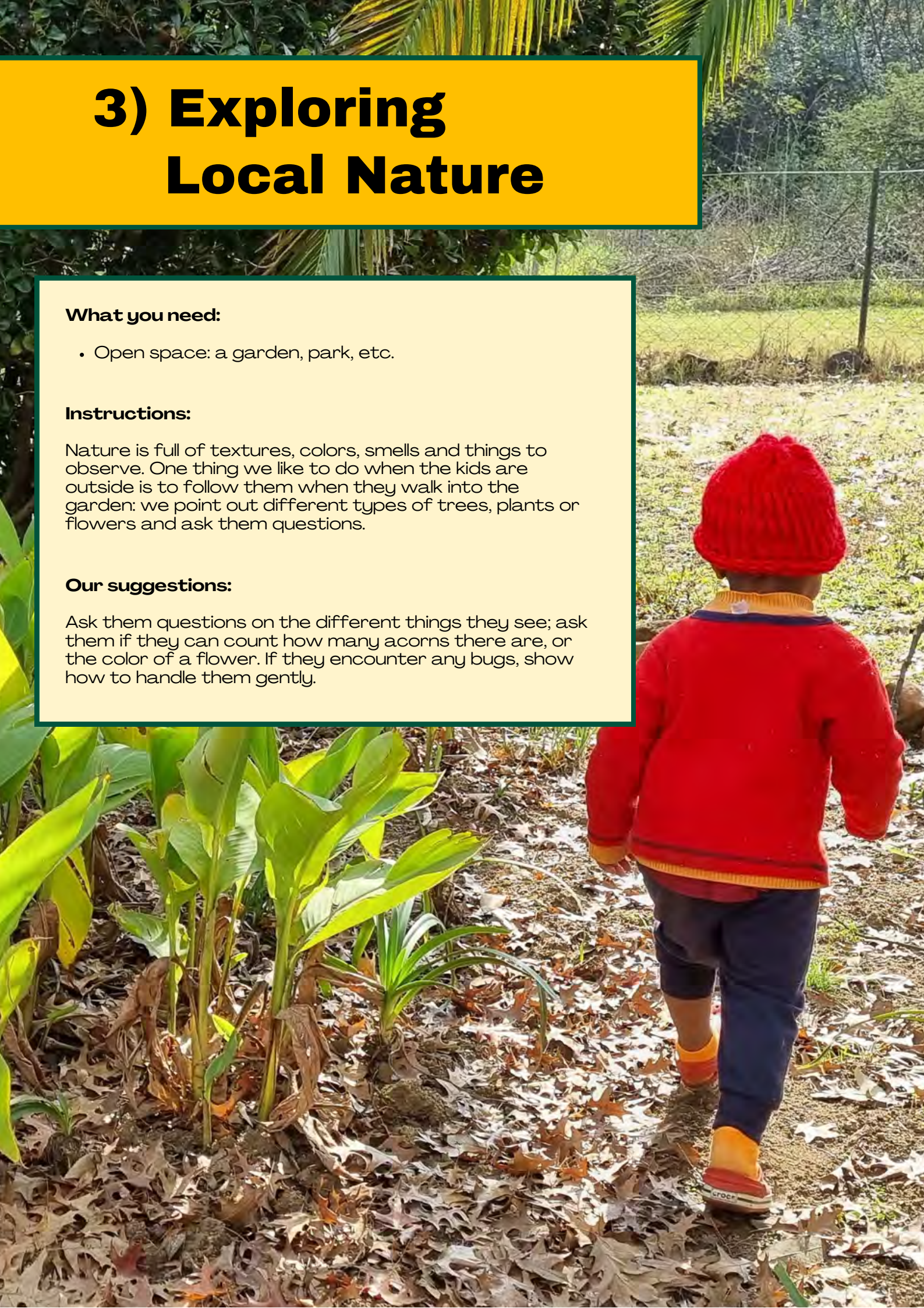
- Open space: a garden, park, etc.

Instructions:

Nature is full of textures, colors, smells and things to observe. One thing we like to do when the kids are outside is to follow them when they walk into the garden: we point out different types of trees, plants or flowers and ask them questions.

Our suggestions:

Ask them questions on the different things they see; ask them if they can count how many acorns there are, or the color of a flower. If they encounter any bugs, show how to handle them gently.



4) Making Cloud Dough



What you need:

- Cornstarch
- Hair conditioner
- Plastic bowls and bags
- (Optional) Beads, buttons, etc

Instructions:

Add equal parts of cornstarch and hair conditioner into a bowl and mix until combined. This makes a simple tactile dough for kids to play with. However, the consistency may vary; this is why we recommend putting the dough in plastic bags, and (optionally) adding beads or buttons.

Our suggestions:

Once they're put in plastic bags, suggest to draw shapes in the bags or spread the dough around. Ask them how it feels, what kind of shapes they can draw.

5) Nature Hunt

What you need:

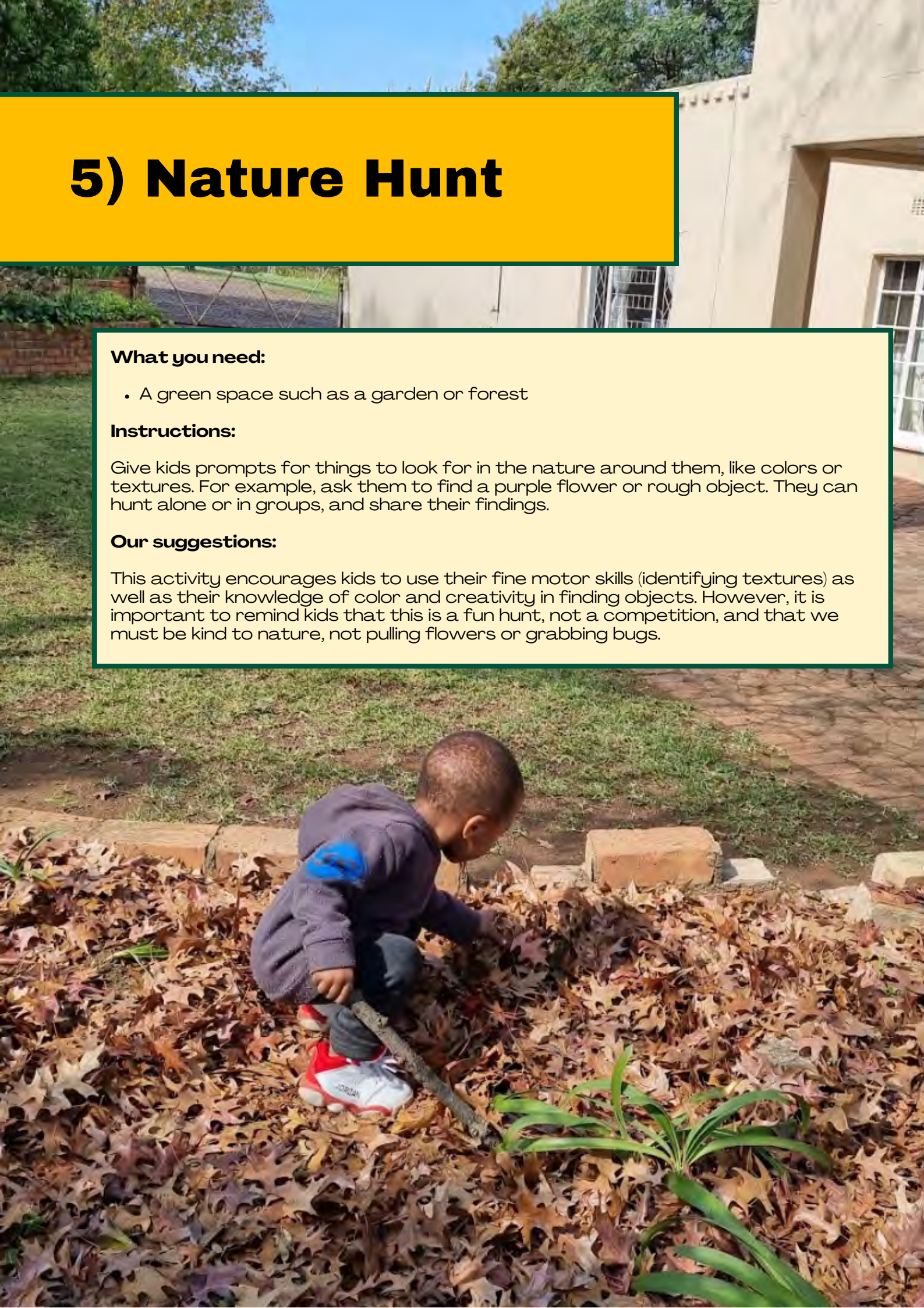
- A green space such as a garden or forest

Instructions:

Give kids prompts for things to look for in the nature around them, like colors or textures. For example, ask them to find a purple flower or rough object. They can hunt alone or in groups, and share their findings.

Our suggestions:

This activity encourages kids to use their fine motor skills (identifying textures) as well as their knowledge of color and creativity in finding objects. However, it is important to remind kids that this is a fun hunt, not a competition, and that we must be kind to nature, not pulling flowers or grabbing bugs.



6) Toy Car Racing

What you need:

- Toy Cars
- An open space



Instructions:

Get into an open space with one toy car per child, establish a start point and a finish line, making the distance from start to finish appropriate for the size and skill level of a child. After this start the race with each child with their own car.

Our suggestions:

Sometimes the kids won't follow the race however still cheer them on as they speed down with their toy cars. You can also consider awarding small prizes or certificates to celebrate their achievements.

7) Balloon Stress Balls

What you need:

- Balloons
- Rice, in an empty 500ml plastic bottle
- Cornstarch or flour, in an empty 500ml plastic bottle
- Empty plastic bottles cut into funnels

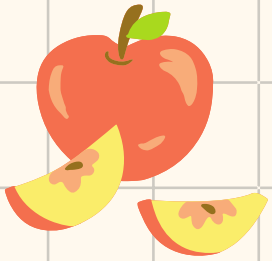
Instructions:

Lay out the balloons and let the kids pick their favorite color. Ask them if they want rice or flour, and help them fill their balloon, using the bottle-funnel. Once the balloon is filled, tie it off and let the kids use their fine motor skills to squish and shake the balloons.

Our suggestions:

Fill balloons with different amounts of rice or flour, and experiment with filling the balloons with air as well, showing the kids how the balloons feel different and make different sounds when shaken based on the ratio of air to rice/flour. Remember to keep the kids engaged by asking questions and letting them explore hands-on.





8) Snacktime

What you need:

- A variety of healthy snacks

Instructions:

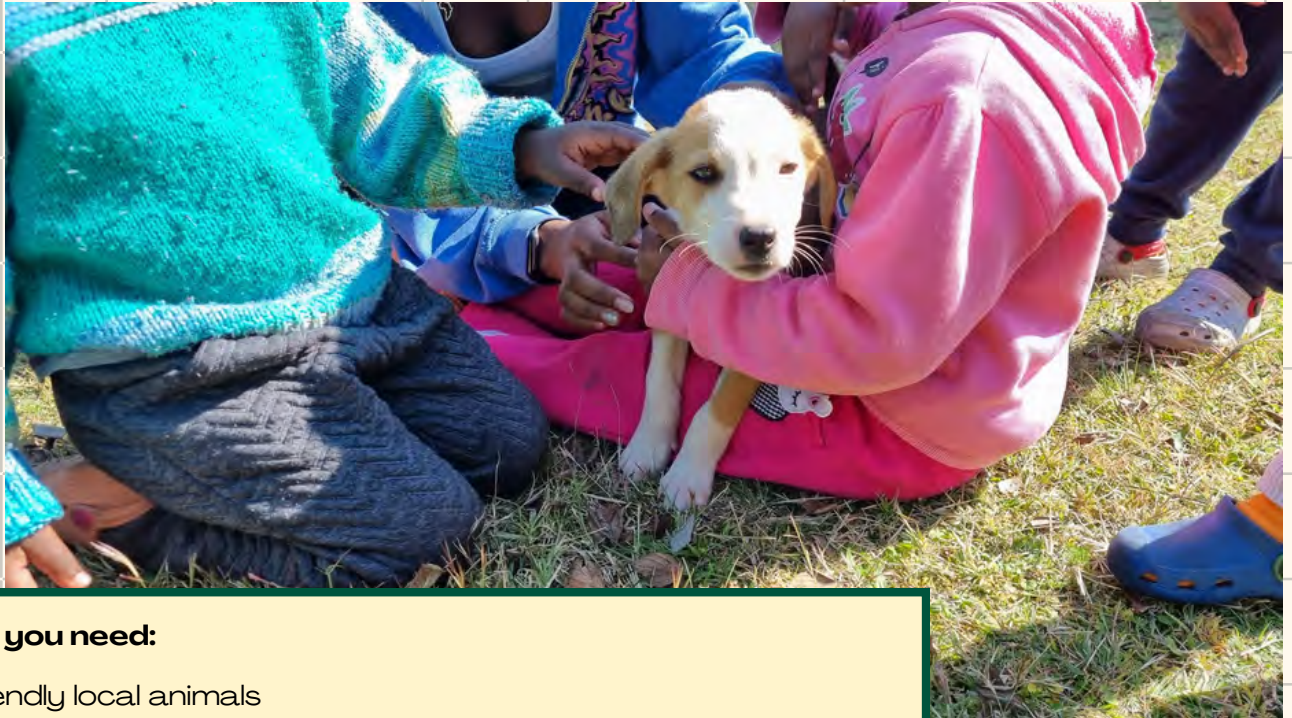
1. Gather the children in a designated area for snacktime.
2. Provide each child with a snack and a designated spot to sit.
3. Encourage the children to use their sense of taste and touch to explore and enjoy their snacks.
4. Remind them to eat slowly, savoring the flavors and textures.
5. Create a comfortable and welcoming environment for the children to interact with each other while having their snacks.
6. Ensure that any dietary restrictions or allergies are taken into consideration when selecting and distributing snacks.
7. After snacktime, encourage the children to clean up their eating areas and dispose of any waste properly.
8. Engage in conversations with the children, discussing their snack preferences and encouraging healthy eating habits.

Our suggestions:

It is essential to maintain a safe and hygienic environment during snacktime. So wash their hands before and after snacktime.



9) Interacting With Animals



What you need:

- Friendly local animals

Instructions:

1. Prepare a safe and controlled environment for interacting with animals.
2. Introduce the children to the animals, providing information about their species, characteristics, and any necessary safety guidelines.
3. Assign a responsible adult or caregiver to oversee the animal interactions and ensure the well-being of both the children and the animals.
4. Demonstrate proper handling techniques and appropriate behavior around the animals, emphasizing gentleness and respect.
5. Allow the children to observe and interact with the animals under supervision.
6. Encourage the children to use their senses of touch and sight to explore the animals' textures, fur, feathers, or scales.
7. Provide opportunities for the children to feed or groom the animals, if appropriate and safe.
8. Facilitate discussions about the animals, their habitats, and the importance of treating them with kindness and empathy.
9. Conclude the animal interaction session by reinforcing the importance of proper animal care, including the significance of responsible pet ownership and wildlife conservation.
10. Ensure that the animals' welfare remains the top priority throughout the interaction, and be ready to intervene if necessary.

10) Balloon Catch



What you need:

- Balloons

Instructions:

1. Gather the children in a safe and open area, indoors or outdoors.
2. Distribute one comfortable-sized balloon to each child.
3. Establish clear boundaries for the game within a designated area.
4. Instruct the children to pair up, standing a short distance apart.
5. Demonstrate how to gently toss the balloon, encouraging catching with both hands. Then, have the children play the game by tossing the balloon back and forth, using hand-eye coordination and reflexes.