

Rock Garden

Materials

Books on landscaping and gardens • big and small rocks • garden tools • plants

What to do

1. Help the children design a garden. Bring in landscaping and gardening books for them to look at for ideas.
2. Try making an outdoor rock garden on the playground.
3. Ask the children to find rocks by their homes and bring them in. Buy some plants from your local garden store, or ask parents to donate them.
4. On a nice day, bring in gardening tools and let the children plant and set up the garden.
5. Look for big rocks on the playground or in the ground while digging up your flowerbed.
6. If you wish to keep your rock garden year after year, try planting plants that will come back each year.

★ Cookie Zingarelli, Columbus, OH

Shadow Chasers

Materials

Sunny day • sidewalk or cement play area • sidewalk chalk

What to do

1. This is a great activity to do outside on a sunny day. Discuss shadows and how they are made.
2. Let the children experiment with their shadows.
3. Challenge them to make their shadows tall, short, fat, thin, or into a letter or number. They can even combine their shadows with another child to do the same commands.
4. Ask the children to work in pairs to trace around each other's shadows, and then they can color them with sidewalk chalk.

Related book

Gregory's Shadow by Don Freeman

★ Barbara Saul, Eureka, CA

Koosh Ball Painting

Materials

Large outdoor space • old clothes • several colors of tempera paint • tin pie pans, one for each color of paint • several Koosh balls • one flat white sheet (twin or full size) • spring-type clothespins • large bucket of warm soapy water • permanent markers

What to do

1. Make sure the children wear old clothes and paint smocks or shirts for this messy activity, and do it outdoors only!
2. Pour several colors of tempera paint in the pie pans.
3. Place a Koosh ball in each pie pan.
4. Use clothespins to attach the sheet to a fence or other outdoor structure. Keep in mind that whatever you attach the sheet to will also be splattered with paint. Cover any exposed wall or fence with old newspapers, if you wish.
5. Place the pie pans several feet from the sheet.
6. Let the children take turns throwing a paint-soaked Koosh ball at the sheet.
7. Put the used Koosh balls back in the pie pans for other children to use.
8. Continue until the sheet is satisfactorily covered in paint splotches.
9. After the sheet dries, the children can use a permanent marker to sign their names to their creation. Children can also use markers to create pictures from the paint splotches.
10. Inspect the sheet with the children. Point out where two colors blended together to make a third color. Point out how three colors combined make yet another color. Name all the colors on the sheet.
11. Display for all to see.

More to do

Instead of Koosh balls, use sponges. This makes the activity much messier but provides a more satisfying splatter on the sheet.

★ Virginia Jean Herrod, Columbia, SC