

# Leaf Monsters

We set up a fall drama scape on the light table light as a provocation for the children to explore some of the natural materials that we were beginning to see in our community and to explore some of the holidays that were coming up; (Halloween and Thanksgiving.) We had pumpkins, gourds, leaves, sticks, and rocks, pieces of wood, acorns, chestnuts and leaves. We also added some of our animals and people to add to their play.

When we first set up the table we only had artificial leaves available. Jayden spent a lot of time at the light table exploring the materials mostly the artificial leaves. Jayden would enter the preschool daily and would go directly to the light table. He would always seem to use the materials in the same way, concentrating on mostly the artificial leaves; he would later tell us he was making a "leaf monster."



**Jayden:** "Look, look, a small leaf monster. Bigger leaf monster, bigger leaf monster, he eat these (acorns) and get bigger, bigger, "

"The leaf monster has a leaf tail, a leg, he has 5 legs. He's a boy."

"That's his tail, that's his head, he eat acorns" he will bigger(feeding his

We decided that we would extend the activity to the art table using some leaves, pinecones and chestnuts using Jayden's "leaf monster" as inspiration and also to encourage Jayden away from the light table to explore the natural materials. Jayden did explore the new materials for a short time but his interest seemed to be with the materials on the light table.

Because the other children showed an interest in the art table and the materials provided, we chose to keep it going for them to explore. We decided that at first we just wanted the children to explore and practise with the materials first before making them more permanent with glue and or tape. We left materials out as is for a week. The following week we added watered down glue with paint brushes and the children began putting their creations together on a small wooden piece of wood. Some of the children used lots of items and some very minimal. We soon found that our natural materials were running low and that we would need to collect more. We wanted to include the children in the process.

We went on a few nature walks with the children to gather materials for our art set up. The children found lots of sticks and leaves of many colours to add to our art table.

We also spent time during our circle times discussing the materials, playing guessing games with some of the materials so that the children could label and practice new language skills. We talked about their finished art work to gather information as well as get their feedback about their work. This was also an opportunity for them to share their thoughts and ideas about the work they were seeing from their friends.

## CONVERSATIONS AT CIRCLE TIME

We showed the children at circle some of the completed creations that the children made. I asked the question...Who made this? to see if the children could recognize their own work, and to get feedback from the other children.(The children are discussing their own creation.)

Sam: "I made it"

Q: "What was your idea for this one?"

Sam: "Dino."

Peneil: "I don't know I want to make a mouth."

Nikki: "It's Penny's face." (Describing Peneil's creation)

Peneil: "I made both of them different."(Penny made 3 different creations.)

Nikki: "I didn't paint it because I didn't want to paint it.

"I made a pretty bank. This is a circle, it's called a bank."

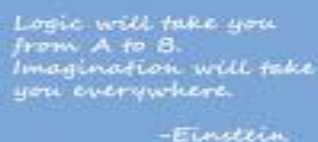
"It's a paw print. I made it myself." "I put some glue on it and stuck it.

Benita: "A caterpillar."

Natalie: "This is my home."

Some of children were very confident in describing their work and how their creations came to be, while other children simply enjoyed the process of the activity and exploring the materials. We were able to get some very detailed descriptions of some of their work, and may need assistance from parents in order to complete the children's stories. Most of the children chose to participate in the art activity, and some of the children needed a bit of encouragement.

The idea for this activity grew from an idea that Jayden had while exploring materials on the light table. Because the children worked so hard and spent so much time on their creations, we decide we needed to do something special to show their work. We decided we would organize an "Art and slide Show." We invited their parents and friends to attend. By doing this we are able to extend the activity:(get feedback from the parents; we may also get more information on the children's work as some of the children may be more comfortable describing their work in their home language, allowing us to finish the story behind their creation.



Logic will take you  
from A to B.  
Imagination will take  
you everywhere.  
-Einstein