

## Helping, hunting, counting

### Getting ready

Providing preschoolers with science, math, and language enrichment in the outdoors lays an important foundation for learning in later years, and they respond well to it because they by nature are curious about the world in which they live.

### Directions

Try any or all of these simple, short activities that are best done with children ages 2 to 4, depending on their ability level.

1. Invest in an inexpensive plastic watering can or a plastic bucket with a handle, and let the child be a helper in with flower containers on a porch or patio or with garden beds in a yard. Explain how important it is for thirsty plants to get water, just like people and animals. Make it a point to not water one small, inexpensive annual plant, such as a small marigold, and over a period of time watch with the child to see how not getting water affects the plant.
2. While in the garden area, practice math and language skills. "Do you see a red flower? A purple one? How many petals does that flower have? Which flower is taller, that one or this one? How many flowers are there all together?"
3. Go on a simple verbal scavenger hunt for natural items, naming aloud as you go what the child needs to find. "Let's find a brown rock," "Can you find a leaf?" "Let's look for a short stick," etc. After collecting the items in a sack or small bucket, sit down in a comfortable spot and look at each item, talking about its characteristics or comparing it to other items. "That rock feels smooth, but that one feels rough," "What shape is that leaf?" "Which stick is longer?"
4. Count the number of things you find, then classify them (sort) them into "like" piles. The child probably will decide to sort all the rocks into one pile, all the sticks into another, and all the leaves into another. Challenge the child to find other ways to sort them, such as by size (all the larger items go in one pile, all the smaller ones in another), or by texture (smooth/rough), or by color (brown, green, etc.).

### Level 1

#### Standards met

1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 3.1.3

#### Science

#### Process skills

Measurement  
Identification  
Reporting  
Classification

#### Multiple Intelligences

Visual/spatial  
Logical/mathematical  
Body/kinesthetic  
Interpersonal  
Naturalist