



VOLUME 4 • APRIL 20

# BEACON HEIGHTS AT HOME

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOL FAMILIES



## TAKE A PEEK!

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LITERACY

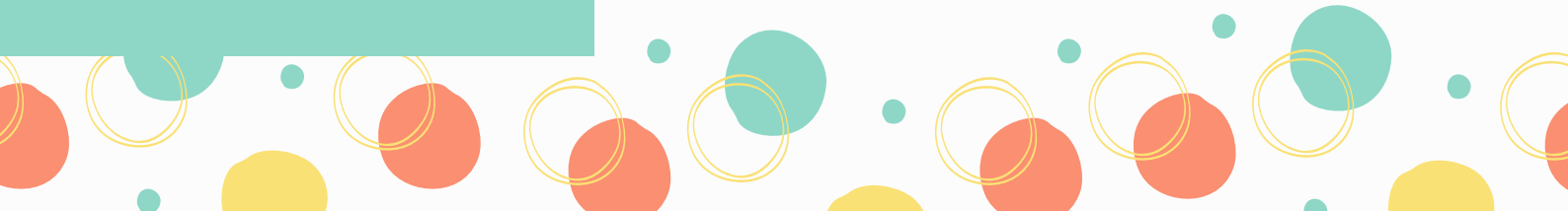
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## EARTH DAY

Our children are naturally fascinated by the world around them. If you've ever been on a "short" walk around the block that turns into 45 minutes of looking at every crack in the sidewalk, acorn in the grass, and cloud in the sky, then you get it- kids engage with the earth on a level we could all try to emulate! Celebrating Earth Day with preschoolers might ultimately be a learning experience for us grownups. How can we look at the world like our children do? And how can we better protect it so their own children can do the same?



# MOVEMENT

## NATURE PRESERVES AND TRAILS

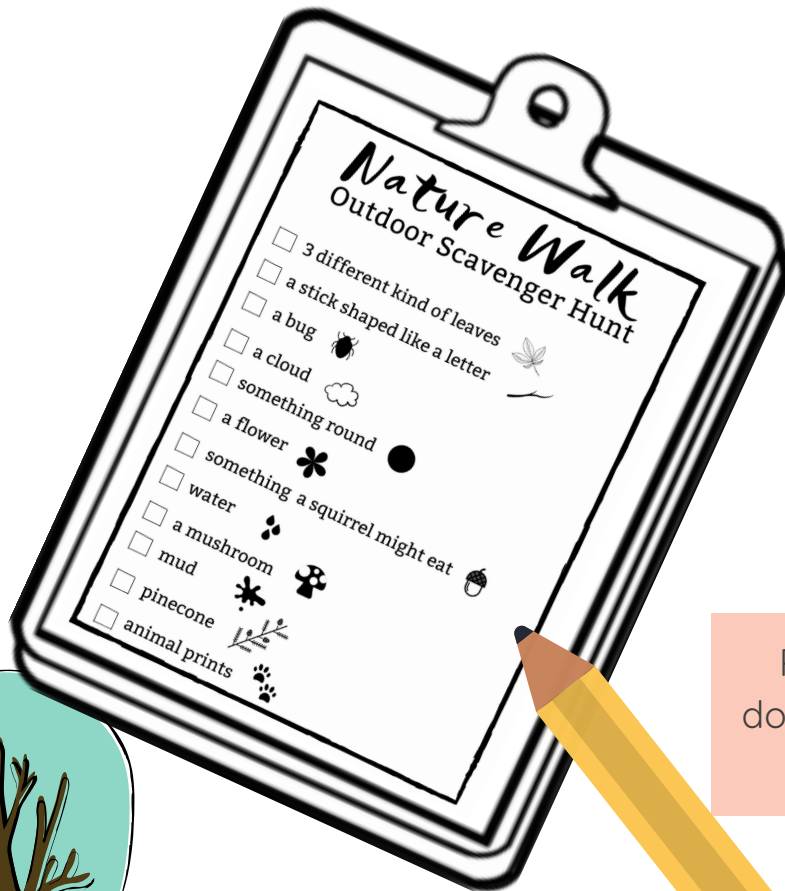
What better way to enjoy Mother Nature than to immerse yourself in it? We are fortunate to have many local nature preserves open for us to explore. The adventure (hiking) levels vary at each. Here are a few! (If you want to expand on your visit with your child; perhaps look up some pictures of the preserve and see if you can spot those areas during your time there!)

**MENGERSON NATURE RESERVE**  
**5895 STELLHORN ROAD, 46815**

**LINDENWOOD NATURE PRESERVE**  
**600 LINDENWOOD AVE, 46808**

**VANDOLAH NATURE PRESERVE**  
**16151 TOTHER RD, 46765**

**EAGLE MARSH NATURE PRESERVE**  
**6801 ENGLE RD, 46804**



Print out the attached document to take on your next walk!

# ART & DRAMATIC PLAY

## NATURE PAINT BRUSHES

### Materials:

- Leaves, grass, flowers, etc.
- Paint
- Paper
- Sticks (optional)
- Rubber bands or string (optional)



### Process:

First, have fun gathering materials! Go for a walk around the neighborhood or your yard to find natural items you might be able to paint with. You can attach leaves and grasses to sticks with rubber bands for a true "paintbrush" look, but that's totally optional! Try dipping your finds in paint and swirling on the paper -or- use leaves and flowers as stamps. Experiment and have fun!

No paint? No problem! Take your "brushes" to the sidewalk with a bucket of water on a sunny day and try "painting" with water.

## TRASH TO TREASURE

Have your child explore what's in your recycling bin!

A cereal box? A pop can? A plastic bottle?

**What can your child make with these materials?**

A robot? A house? A machine? A musical instrument? A sculpture?

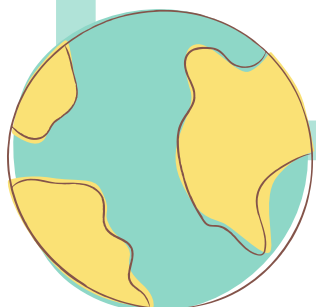
A hanging mobile?

**What else will your child need to make their idea a reality?**

Tape? Scissors? Paper? Markers?

*Don't forget to share your creations with us!*

*Email photos to [anna@beaconheights.net](mailto:anna@beaconheights.net)*



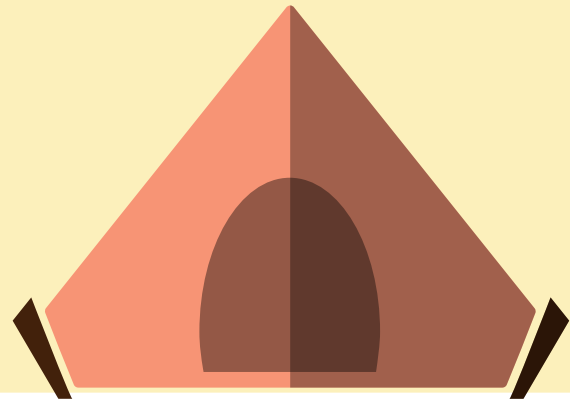
# ART & DRAMATIC PLAY

## BACKYARD CAMPING

Spending time outside is a great way to connect with and appreciate the earth. What better way to do this than camping for a day (or an hour)?!

Setting up camp is important for any camping trip. What will you need to make your tent? A blanket? Ground cloth? Sticks? String? Once you have camp set up, what else will you need for camping? Sleeping bags? Snacks? A flashlight? Books to read? Bug spray?

A campfire adds a lot to the camping experience. If you have a firepit, a real campfire would be great for your camping day(s). If you don't have a firepit, how can you make a pretend campfire? Do you need sticks? Red, yellow, and orange paper?



### DID YOU KNOW...

Any #6 plastic can be used for DIY shrinky dinks!  
Color with permanent marker,  
Cut as desired,  
Bake at 350 on foil  
for about 3 min,  
and be amazed!

## ROCK PAINTING

One fun activity that adds beauty and cheer to others is rock painting! Go outside and grab a few decent sized rocks. (You may want to wash and dry them before you start.) Don't have any paint? You can use food coloring mixed with a little bit of water or try Mom's old nail polishes. Paint the rocks however you feel inspired to. A pattern, a phrase, abstract art, a portrait of Miss. Carrie riding a unicorn; whatever your heart desires! Now, what to do with these beauties? You could use them as decoration in your own yard or homes. You could leave them in a neighbors yard or in a public space for someone else to enjoy discovering!



# MATH & SCIENCE

## PLANTING FROM SCRAPS

Did you know much of the produce you purchase from the store can be regrown and harvested at home just by using the scraps? Talk about a fruitful recycling project! Children LOVE planting and growing things! Why wouldn't they? They get to cut things and get their hands dirty!

And let's be honest, a plant growing overnight is basically magic! ✨

### PRODUCE:

**Lettuce, Bok Choy, Celery and Cabbage:** Cut off the bottom two inches of the plant and place flat end down in the soil. Completely cover the base with soil (the top should still show). Water regularly.

**Ginger:** Use a large piece of ginger; about 2 inches tall and 2 inches wide. Break ginger in half and plant both pieces in compost. Water regularly. After a month shoots will be visible, eventually producing more ginger.

**Green Onions:** Cut 1 inch off the bottom with roots intact. Plant pieces in soil with roots facing down. Water regularly. The pieces will begin to develop shoots that can be harvested.

**Garlic:** This plant takes a bit longer to grow. Plant a few big cloves into the soil about 2 inches deep in a pot that will get sun. Plant the cloves pointy ends up. You will be able to harvest big garlic bulbs in about 8-9 months.

**Potatoes:** When the potato has matured long enough it begins to develop little sprouts called "eyes". At this point you can plant the whole potato in the ground with the eyes facing up. Eventually a plant will grow. Once the plant begins to bloom, the potato will be ready to harvest.

### HERBS:

**Basil and Mint:** Remove all lower leaves. Place the cutting in water. After two weeks the cutting will develop roots. Plant your cutting into soil. (Plant mint in a confined space like a pot. Mint grows like a weed and will overtake any garden.)

**Rosemary and Thyme:** Remove all lower leaves from your cutting. Make sure your stem is green in color and not woody. Place the cutting in water and put near a window that gets sun. When it develops roots, plant in your garden or a pot.

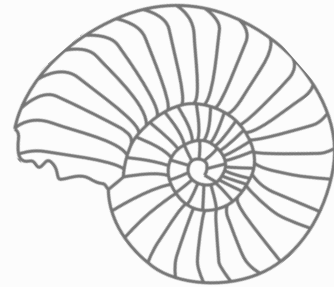
**Oregano and Sage:** Remove lower leaves leaving two to three sets. Cut the stem at 45 degree angle and place in water. Roots will develop in four weeks, then you can plant it.



# MATH & SCIENCE

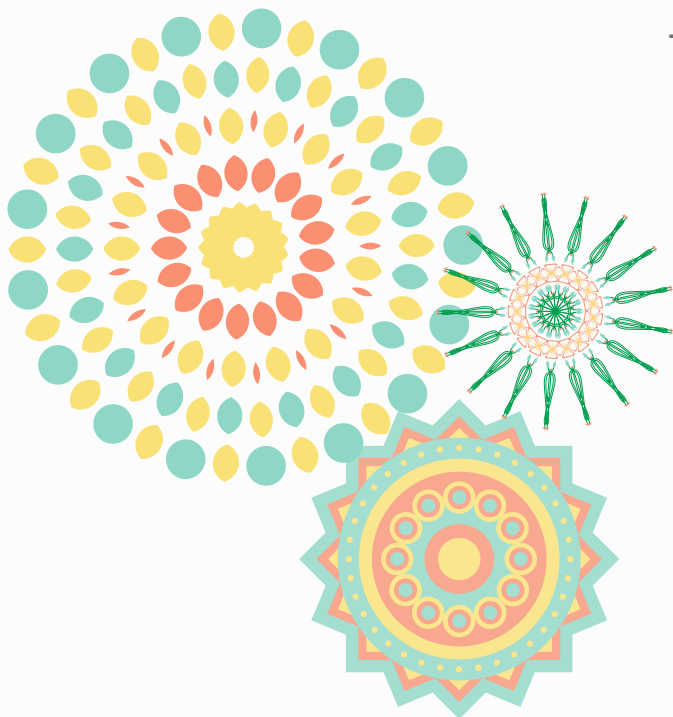
## NATURE MANDALAS

Mandala is a Sanskrit term that means "circle," and usually refers to a circular, symmetrical design. Try finding "natural" mandalas with your child- circular flower petals, tree rings, spider-webs, sea shells, and more!



**Then, try creating your own!**

1. Gather natural materials like rocks, flower petals, acorns, sticks, etc.
2. Clear an area on the ground where you'll work
3. Select one special object to be the center
4. Create your first circle around that object- This could be all one item (all flower petals, all stones...) or a pattern
5. After one circle is complete, choose another item for your second circle
6. Continue creating concentric circles for a mandala as big or small as you'd like!



## RAIN RAIN GO AWAY LET'S PLAY!

Spring doesn't always guarantee sunshine, in fact, it often means RAIN! One way to enjoy this weather is by collecting it! Can you catch the rain? How MUCH can you catch?

- Find an unused container or cup in your home.
- With a ruler measure small increments on the cup with a sharpie marker.
- Place the cup in a secure place (Spring also means wind) outside and wait!
- Write down and keep track of how much rain you collect on different days.



**What will you do with your rain water? Drink it? Water plants? Cook with it?  
We would love to hear!**

# MATH & SCIENCE

## PAPER MAKING

### Materials:

- Recycled paper
- Kitchen or bath towels
- Large bowl
- Water (hot water speeds up the process a little)
- Cookie cutters (if desired)

### Process:

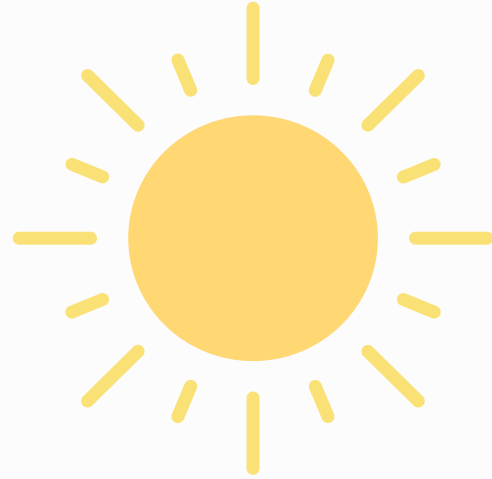
- Shred/tear/cut up the recycled paper into small pieces (roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$ " -  $\frac{1}{2}$ " strips or nickel-size pieces) and put pieces into the large bowl. (This is something children love to help with!)
- Pour water over the paper, making sure all the paper is submerged. Soak overnight.
- Lay towels on a hard surface so there are at least three layers to absorb excess water
- Mix the paper into a pulp. This can be done using a blender, mixer, food processor, or by hand. This is a great sensory experience for children. If mixing by hand, tear any large pieces into smaller ones.
- Once you have a pulp-like consistency, take a handful and squeeze some of the water out so it is a moldable consistency without a lot of excess water.
- Press the paper pulp onto the stack of towels, molding into your desired shape. If using cookie cutters, remove after shape has been formed.
- Let dry for several hours. Make sure to flip your paper occasionally so it dries evenly on both sides.
- When paper is completely dry, draw on it, paint on it, or use it however your imagination leads you!

# MATH & SCIENCE

## SOLAR OVEN

### Materials:

- Box cutter
- Box (without a top)
- Large, clear plastic bag
- Aluminum foil
- Tape
- A weight
- Pie pan (or other small container for what you will cook)
- Sunshine



### MAKING THE OVEN

**1** Using the box cutter, make a flap with one side of the box



*I used a fairly large box, but any size would work if you can fit whatever you are cooking inside it!*

**2** Using tape, line the inside with aluminum foil, trying to keep crinkling to a minimum.



*This was the prototype. However, lining the sides more completely as well as lining the bottom with foil would have made for a better oven!*

**3** Put your oven in the sun. Outside would be best, but inside will work, too. Note: If you put it outside, make sure you have a weight on it, so it won't blow away!

### COOKING YOUR SNACK!

**1** Think about what you will cook. Remember, this won't get as hot as your oven or stove in the house, so think about something that cooks fast without a lot of heat. We used marshmallows and graham crackers in this experiment, but a cheese sandwich would be good, too!

**2** Put your food in your pan. Put the pan inside the plastic bag, and seal it shut. Now it's time to put it in the oven! It may take several hours to bake, so be prepared!



**3** Enjoy your delicious snack!



# LITERACY

Earth Day songs and stories are on the site...Remember, you can always re-watch your favorites from past weeks!

Go to: [kidlitcrafts.net/beaconheights-videos](http://kidlitcrafts.net/beaconheights-videos)

Password: [beaconheightsfamily](http://beaconheightsfamily)

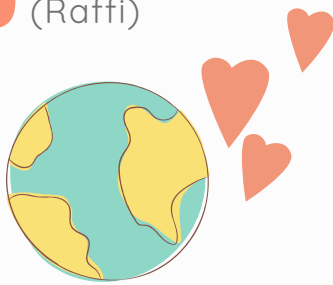
## ALL I REALLY NEED (Raffi)

All I really need is a song in my heart  
Food in my belly and love in my family  
All I really need is a song in my heart  
And love in my family.

And I need the rain to fall  
And I need the sun to shine  
To give life to the seeds we sow, to give the food we need to grow  
All I really need is a song in my heart and love in my family

And I need some clean water for drinking  
And I need some clean air for breathing  
So that I can grow up strong, take my place where I belong

All I really need is a song in my heart  
Food in my belly and love in my family  
All I really need is a song in my heart  
And love in my family

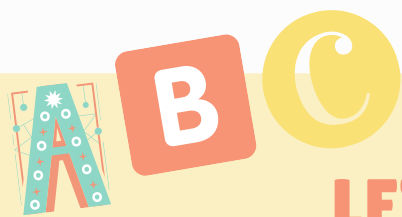


## THIS IS MY GARDEN

This is my garden  
I rake it with care  
Then I plant all kinds of  
Flower seeds there.  
The sun will come up.  
The rain will come down.  
Then all my flowers  
Come out of the ground.



Replace “flower(s)” with other things you can plant.



## LETTER HUNTS AND COLLAGES



One way to reuse materials readily available in your home is to let your child “play” with them. Take any ads, magazines, newspapers etc. you have lying around and set them down with your child and a pair of child sized scissors. (If you aren’t in the mood for scissors, your child can use a highlighter or marker instead.) Can they cut all their favorite foods out of the grocery ad? Can they find the letters of their name in the newspaper? Can they cut out people in a magazine? Can they cut out all the red items? They can then glue their hard work to a piece of paper to proudly display.

# LITERACY

## THE GREEN GRASS GREW ALL AROUND

Oh in the woods there was a tree  
The prettiest tree  
You ever did see  
And the tree was in the woods  
And the green grass grew all around, all around, and the green grass grew all around

And on that tree  
There was a limb  
The prettiest limb  
That you ever did see  
And the limb was on the tree  
And the tree in the woods  
And the green grass grew all around, all around, and the green grass grew all around

And on that limb  
There was a branch  
The prettiest branch  
That you ever did see  
And the branch was on the limb,  
And the limb was on the tree,  
And the tree was in the ground  
And the green grass grew all around, all around, and the green grass grew all around

And on that branch  
There was a nest  
The prettiest nest  
That you ever did see  
And the nest was...

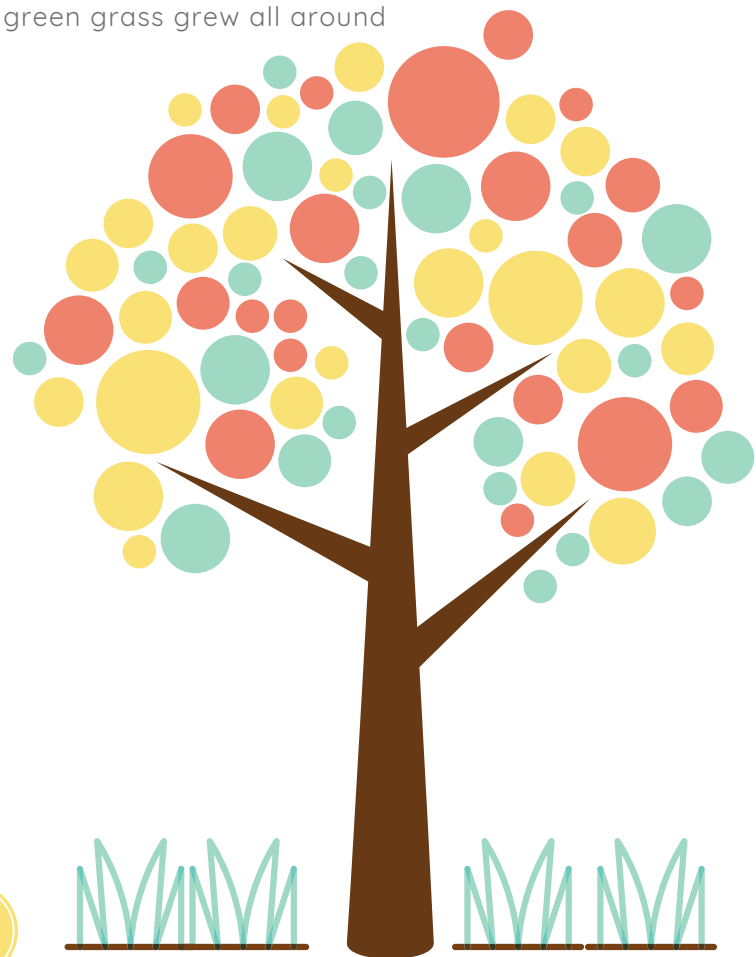
And in this nest,  
there was a egg...

And in this egg,  
there was a bird

And on this bird,  
there was a feather...

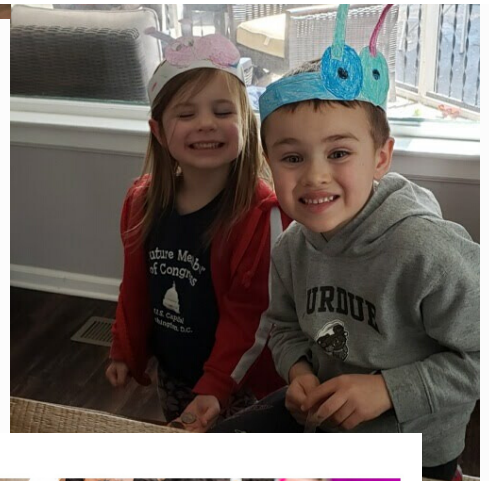
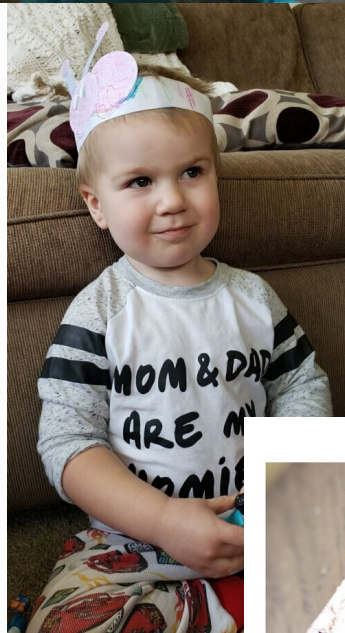
And on this feather,  
there was a flea...

And on this flea, there was a dinosaur!



# LAST WEEK'S FUN

## BUGS, BUTTERFLIES, & MORE!



Email [anna@beaconheights.net](mailto:anna@beaconheights.net) with pictures of your Earth week fun to be featured in our next newsletter!