

Nature-based Play Items Guidelines

When deciding which items are suitable to bring indoors for nature-based play, conduct a risk assessment of each item as follows:

- Are there any signs of visible contamination (e.g., mould, blood or feces)?
- Is the item likely to have invisible contamination (e.g., saliva or urine)?
- Is there the potential of bringing pests into the centre (e.g., wood items with insects or insect eggs hidden inside)?
- Is it possible to clean then disinfect the item? If not, short-term use or rotation of the item must be considered.
- Other safety aspects to consider: allergies, choking hazards, poisonous items, rust, slivers, etc.

Use*



Dry freshly fallen leaves, sticks, rocks



Recycled plastic containers (e.g., yogurt tubs)

- Cleaned then disinfected before use
- Discarded when damaged



Cracker/cereal boxes

- Recyclable after use
- No direct contact with food



Soil obtained from a safe source where the component of soil is known



Permanent wooden items treated in a manner that allows them to be cleaned then disinfected (surface is sealed/non-porous)

Avoid

Leaves in contact with animal feces or otherwise contaminated (e.g., damp/soggy/mouldy leaves)

Sticks with insect holes, spider webs or other signs of pest activity

Recycled plastic containers that previously stored chemicals (e.g., detergents, disinfectants) or had hazard warnings on container

Used/dirty egg cartons:

- Absorbent, not easily cleaned
- Potential contamination from raw eggs

Empty toilet paper/paper towel rolls, tissue boxes

- Potential contamination from exposure near toilet, sinks and contaminated hands
- Absorbent, not easily cleanable

Soil with animal manure and/or added chemicals such as fertilizer

Raw wood items

- Absorbent, not easily cleanable
- Potential physical hazard

*Children should wash their hands before and after using natural items. When uncertain or to discuss further, call the Infectious Diseases Team at 705-721-7520 x 8809 for consultation.

**For more information call Health Connection at
705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit www.smdhu.org**



SCAN HERE
For more child care
resources and tools

