

THE NATURAL LEARNER



The child is naturally curious from the moment of birth. God created him with a natural curiosity. The world around him is new and exciting. The natural learner will try to make sense of what he can see, touch, feel, smell, grab, hold and hear.

One-year-olds may use their senses to explore the world.

Two-year-olds may identify familiar objects by touch.

Three-year-olds may begin to draw shapes of objects, circles, or squares.

Four-year-olds may attend to objects and events in more planned-out ways.

Five-year-olds may have a wealth of conceptions about objects and how they work.[†]

[†]from Early Childhood Today, April 2004

REMEMBER

the child needs you to

- **help him investigate and learn from the natural world.**
- **slow down, stop, look, and listen, and encourage him to do so.**
- **provide experiences that help him explore God's creation firsthand.**
- **help him learn new words to identify what he sees and investigates.**
- **take advantage of teachable moments.**
- **provide time to think and reflect on God's creation.**
- **maintain safety by posting allergy alert signs whenever you have nature items or food in the session.**

*The natural child
may exhibit*

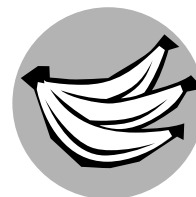
THE NATURAL CHILD MAY ENJOY

- **a desire to play outdoors**
- **pleasure in investigating nature (animals and plants)**
- **joy in watching animals in their natural settings**
- **care for the world around him**



- *investigating magnets*
- *experimenting with objects that float, sink, or objects that are hard, soft, rough, cold, heavy, or light*
- *feeding fish or birds**
 - *watching a wind chime or windsock blow in the wind*
- *taking pictures of nature items with a disposable camera*
- *measuring weight with scales*

- *watching nature around him*
- *using "feely" box*
- *tasting foods*
- *tearing paper*
- *blowing bubbles*
- *taking a nature walk*
- *experimenting with prisms*
- *walking barefoot on bubble wrap*
- *planting a seed or flower; watering plants*
- *recording what he sees (written or spoken)*
- *picture-reading books about animals, fish, plants or other nature items*
- *search the room for out-of-sight nature objects*
- *measuring water or sand*
- *petting a cat or dog or caring for other pets*
- *using a magnifying glass and binoculars*
- *making a nature collage*
- *listening to animals sounds and matching them to a picture of the appropriate animal*



TEACHERS CAN ENCOURAGE LEARNING BY

- **providing firsthand experiences with an assortment of nature items**
- **displaying tools and resources that help him observe nature**
- **providing variety in nature experiences (ability to hold as well as observe)**
- **offering a space for experiencing nature within the room**
- **providing opportunities to document what he sees in a variety of ways (drawing, counting, picture-taking)**
- **being excited about the world God has created and allowing the child to experience that creation**

* Be careful to use bird feed that does not contain chili pepper.