If you can't go outside, bring nature indoors!

Plant your own indoor garden!
You can start plants from seeds or purchase seedlings and watch them grow. Ask children to help tend the garden to model the importance of caring for nature or grow herbs and vegetables and discuss where food comes from. Observe how plants change throughout their life cycles.

Create an indoor wildlife watching space!
Create an indoor wildlife watching space! Set up a cozy space near a window complete with a pair of child-sized binoculars and picture books or identification guides that feature local wildlife. Attract birds, butterflies and other small wildlife to visit your space with feeders or habitat-friendly plants. Encourage children to describe and identify the animals that they observe through the window.

Express yourself through a nature-based art project!
Express yourself through a nature-based art project! Help children choose a nature-based theme or topic and encourage them to create an art project about it using natural materials. Collect small objects like pine-cones, rocks, grass and leaves to incorporate into the project. Let imaginations run wild!

Bring natural loose parts indoors!
Children are natural collectors and often gather natural materials like leaves, rocks, sticks and pine-cones when out on walks. Create a space to organize and store these collections indoors so that they can be used for natural construction, art projects and for counting, math and science activities.
Dive into water play!
Set up a small tub filled with water and add a variety of natural materials, tools and elements for exploration. Simply test and observe the physical properties of water or prompt discussion of topics like the water cycle, aquatic species or our cultural connections to water.

Plant a small vegetable garden in pots or other containers!
Plant a small vegetable garden in pots or other containers! This is a great way to encourage children to learn about gardening. Smaller pots are fun for children to decorate and can be easier to relocate and reuse than large garden beds. Check out your local thrift stores or gardening supply stores for affordable gardening materials!

Create a cozy corner for crafting, reading, and relaxation!
Using blankets, picture books, and crafting supplies, you can create a designated "cozy corner" to allow children to self-regulate and have some quiet time to themselves. You can also use this space for sensory or imaginative activities like making musical instruments out of natural materials (sticks, pine cones, etc.) or creating a fairy garden!

Create a nature nook!
This can be a designated area where children learn about local wildlife and plant species, identify insects, and become aware of a variety of nature-based topics. Refresh the space each week by adding different books, tools (such as magnifying glasses and binoculars), and loose materials that you collect in your neighborhood. Ask your children what topics they would like to learn about!

RESOURCES:
Advocacy Focus, Natural Learning Initiative