



Week 1



Challenge

Create a self-portrait using natural materials! You can gather things outside in your backyard or neighborhood, or use things you've already collected, like rocks or shells. Share your creations with us on Instagram or Facebook by using the hashtag #SOLACEchallenge and tagging @swanerpreserve. You can also send a photo of your completed challenge to swanerecocenter@usu.edu!

Kahoot Quiz

This week's Kahoots quiz explores Spring on Swaner using the 5 senses. Our Kahoot quizzes require reading, and are targeted toward 3rd-5th graders, but younger youth should be able to complete them with the help of an adult or an older sibling. Kahoot quizzes are intended to test your child's knowledge, and to help them learn new information!

Kahoot is an online learning platform that allows educators to create quizzes, then engage with their students through their mobile device, tablet, or computer. Your child will need access to the internet for this activity. You can access the quiz [here](#) or download the [Kahoot app](#) then use the game pin 0498273.

Story Time

This week's story is Finding Wild by Megan Wagner Lloyd. Check out our recorded reading of this story [here](#)! Each week the story will be uploaded to YouTube to view anytime, anywhere.

This week's activities include:

Craft

Design Challenge

Outdoor Activity

Observation Activity

Dirt Playdough

Make Your Own Wind Chime

Sensory Scavenger Hunt

Scent Matching Game



Craft: Dirt Playdough

Love getting dirty without the mess? This “dirt” playdough is the perfect medium to encourage your child to use their sense of touch, sight, and even smell! Gather up some used coffee grounds and a few other kitchen ingredients, and you’ll be well on your way to creating mess-free fun!

Time Frame:

15 minutes to make, endless time to play!

Materials:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1/2 cup coffee grounds or cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons Cream of Tartar (optional)
- 2 cups water
- 1 Tablespoon oil

Procedure:

1. Add the flour, salt, coffee grounds or cocoa powder, Cream of Tartar (optional), water, and oil in a large saucepan.
2. Place saucepan on the stove over medium heat, stirring continuously until a stiff ball of dough forms (2-3 minutes).
3. Remove the warm dough from the saucepan and place it on nonstick surface (caution: possible discoloration of surface can occur). Knead for 1-2 minutes until the consistency resembles playdough.

***Dirt playdough can be stored up to 3 months in an air-sealed container**

Guiding Questions:

- What do you think will happen as we mix all of the ingredients in a saucepan? Why would we need to add heat?
- What does the playdough smell remind you of?
- Describe how the playdough feels in your hands.
- What are you going to create with your dirt playdough?

Extended Learning:

Now that you’ve made your dirt playdough, it’s time to have some fun!

- What kind of natural materials can you use to make impressions in your playdough? What would a leaf look like? Pinecone? Flower?
- Can you build a bug’s home out of your dirt playdough?
- What could we add to make our playdough smell differently?
- What shapes do you see in nature that you could recreate using your playdough?



Design Challenge: Make Your Own Wind Chime

We often hear that April showers bring May flowers—and with those storms comes wind! Even though it's still March, spring is here! This design challenge will encourage your child to use their sense of listening. Encourage them to explore the different sounds recyclable containers, caps, other household objects make, or head outside to collect natural materials to create their own wind chime!

Time Frame

30 minutes—1 hour

Materials

- Recyclable containers, such as aluminum and tin cans, yogurt containers, etc.
- Bottle caps, keys, beads, or other household items
- String, ribbon, yarn, or other materials for attaching the pieces
- Sticks, leaves, pine cones, shells, or other found natural materials
- Coat hanger, stick, ruler, or other stable piece to create the top of the wind chime
- Paint or markers to decorate, if you want!

Procedure

1. Wind chimes are thought to be good luck in parts of Asia and are used in Feng Shui. Today you'll use the design process to create a wind chime. The following instructions follow the design process.
2. Ask
 - What is the problem? We want to create a way to detect when there is wind and create interesting sounds!
 - How have others approached it? Try looking up some examples of wind chimes online, or look at wind chimes in your home or neighborhood.
 - What are your limiting factors? What materials do you have available to use?
3. Imagine
 - What are some solutions to our proposed problem? Brainstorm ideas together and choose the best one!
 - Encourage your child to explore what different sounds each of the materials make. They can try tapping them together, or use a utensil, like a stick or a spoon, as a drumstick.
4. Plan
 - Draw a picture or talk through your child's plan for their wind chime! They can also lay out the materials in an orderly fashion to see how it will look.
5. Create—follow your plan and create something! Test it out!
6. Improve
 - What works? What doesn't? What could improve your design?
 - Change or modify your design to make it better and test it again!
7. Once the design is complete, let your child decorate their wind chime, if they want! Use whatever supplies you have around your home, like crayons, markers, paint, etc.



Guiding Questions

- What is a wind chime? What purpose does it serve?
- What kinds of materials can you think of around the house or outside that we could use to create a wind chime today?
- What are some important parts of the wind chime?
- What worked and what didn't? How can you improve your design?
- Where would you like to hang your wind chime?
- Can you think of other sounds in nature that would sound like your wind chime?

Extended Learning

- Create a wind chime that imitates sounds you hear in nature, like bird calls or leaves shaking in trees! Hang your finished project for neighbors to enjoy as they walk by!



Outdoor Activity: Sensory Scavenger Hunt

Spring is the perfect time to ignite all of your senses! This scavenger hunt will have your child exploring their sense of touch, sight, smell, and hearing as they slow down to observe nature all around them. Take it with you on your next hike, or complete in your own backyard or neighborhood!

Time Frame:

30 minutes – 1 hour

Materials:

- [Sensory Scavenger Hunt](#)
- Pen/Pencil
- Magnifying Glass (optional)
- Binoculars (optional)

Procedure:

1. Print out the [sensory scavenger hunt](#), or pull it up on a mobile device. Grab a pen/pencil if using a paper copy.
2. Optional: grab tools to help you look more closely! This could be a set of binoculars, a magnifying glass, or a DIY bug catcher.
3. Get outside! Nature is all around us. Explore your own backyard, go for a walk around your neighborhood, or venture out on a local hike!
4. Share your findings! If completing as a group, talk about which items you found to fit the various descriptions. Compare the similarities and differences!

Remember to respect nature as you're completing this scavenger hunt. Avoid things like picking plants and squishing bugs. As always, leave no trace!

Guiding Questions:

- What are your five senses?
- Which sense isn't always safe to use? Why not?
- What is something new that you saw today?
- What was your favorite scent?
- What was the most interesting thing you touched? What did it feel like?

Extending Learning:

- Create your own sensory scavenger hunt and trade with a neighbor, sibling, or friend!



Observation Activity: Scent Matching Game

Springtime brings all sorts of new scents for us to enjoy! In this activity, your child will put their sense of smell to the test as they try to match scents. Did you know that many animals use their sense of smell to identify their family? Mother bats use their sense of smell to find their babies, because they all smell different!

Time Frame

15—30 minutes

Materials

- Cotton balls, sponges, paper towel, or another material that can absorb liquids
- 4-5 small containers (film canisters work best, but small Tupperware, envelopes, or even boxes can work!)
- 4-5 scents or fragrances, like perfume or cologne, vanilla flavoring, lemon juice, baby powder, almond flavoring, and essential oils. Be creative with what you have at home!
- [Bat print out](#) (or paper to have your child create their own bats!)

Procedure

1. Soak 2 cotton balls (or absorptive material) in each scent and place one in its own container and attach the other to a bat cut out. It's helpful to glue the cotton ball to the bat before soaking the cotton ball! If you chose not to make bat cut outs, you can just place each cotton ball in their own container.
2. Spread your bats around the room, your house, or even your backyard.
3. Give your child a container with a scent in it. Encourage them to go around and smell each bat, while they search for their baby bat (the bat that has the matching scent).
4. Once your child successfully finds their baby bat, have them try each of the other scents until they match them all.

Guiding Questions

- Do you recognize any of the scents? Identify as many of them as you can!
- Was it hard or easy to match the different scents? Which one did you think was the easiest? Which one was the hardest?
- In what ways would identifying their babies by smell help bats?

Extended Learning

- Take a nature walk outside and see if you can find nature items that smell the same or similarly. Are there any objects that smell differently than you expected them to?
- Research other animals that use their sense of smell to find their family, stay away from predators, to hunt for their prey and food, and more!