

Natural art – How to do it.

The '50 Things to Do Before You're Five' activity, 'Natural Art', is a fun way to play with natural materials in a way which sparks your child's creativity with no cost involved. As children explore, and create their art with you, they learn about the world and hear lots of new vocabulary. From mud monsters to twig towers, every creation is a chance to imagine, describe and discover.

Start by heading outside – your garden, a local park, a woodland, or even a walk down the road is perfect for collecting natural treasures. Children can gather anything that has fallen to the ground, like leaves, twigs, pinecones, or stones – just avoid picking anything still growing. Give your child a bag and let them lead you on this journey of exploration.

Once they have collected their natural treasures, lay everything out and chat about what they found. Explore the textures, smells, colours, and shapes together. Then talk together about what they might create from their treasures. They may make a caterpillar from leaves, a wand from a twig, or a tower of pinecones.

Talking with your children about their natural art is a beautiful way to:

- Inspire creativity and calm – Encouraging imaginative play while offering a soothing, mindful experience.
- Build language and communication skills – Through conversations about their creations, children learn to describe, explain, and express their ideas.
- Explore science through play – Mixing materials, observing textures, and discovering concepts like floating, sinking, and colour blending.
- Develop early maths skills – By noticing patterns and comparing sizes.



Talking Together in Cambridgeshire's Festival of Stories

Arlo and the pinecone bee

One sunny morning, Arlo and Nana set off on a walk. Arlo, with a little rucksack on their back, was ready for adventure. "Let's find some treasure to make nature art!" Nana said.

As they wandered through the park, a bee buzzed past Arlo's nose and landed on the flower. "It's a bee!" Arlo whispered, while watching the bee closely.

A little later, Arlo spotted a pinecone beneath the tree. Arlo picked up the pinecone and smiled, "This one looks like a bee!" and then pretended to make it fly.

Back at home they laid out their treasures on a blanket. Arlo ran inside and brought out a book about bees. Together, Arlo and Nana looked at the pictures of bees with their black and yellow stripes and tiny wings. "Can we give my bee some stripes and wings?" Arlo asked. "Let's see what we can find," said Nana.

Together they explored Nana's craft box. Arlo chose yellow wool, and then Nana found some black wool. Arlo wrapped the wool around the pinecone, and Nana helped take the ends in. "My bee needs wings!" Arlo said. Nana cut some oval shapes from an old shopping bag and showed Arlo how they moved like wings. They carefully tied the wings on to the pinecone.

"Buzz, buzz!" Arlo shouted, flying his pinecone through the air. Buzz the bee was born – from a moment of wonder, a spark of imagination and a little help from nature.

