



# Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Connections

For 4-H Cloverbud Volunteers working with grades K—2

## Get in Touch with Nature Play

What are your earliest memories of engaging with nature? Maybe it was hiding out in a tree fort or digging for treasure in your back yard. Chances are, the experiences that began your connection with nature were not highly structured or adult-led experiences. There is a growing body of research citing the positive impacts of unstructured play in nature, commonly called “nature play,” on children’s social, emotional, intellectual and physical well-being. Unfortunately, due to increased screen time and busy schedules, kids are getting less time for nature play than ever. How can you make sure your Cloverbuds are making the most of their time outdoors?

First, find a nature-rich environment. This could be as easy as a walk to the park, or even stepping into your own back yard. Some simple additions to your home landscape can encourage nature play. Create a dirt pile or digging pit, include water – buckets and hoses will do, and incorporate shrubs or vines to create enchanting hiding places. Add in some rocks or logs to climb on and lots of plants to explore and you’ve got your own discovery zone. If space is an issue, remember nature is everywhere! Kids will enjoy seeking out nature in the cracks of sidewalks, puddles, and container gardens.

Next, you’ve got to let go and trust nature. Young children have an innate curiosity that lets them explore the world on their own terms. As adults, we need to step back and let them experience nature with all of their senses – even if this means they get wet and muddy in the process. Think of yourself more of a facilitator and less of a teacher. Encourage questions without having to know all the answers. Most importantly, let the kids take the lead and see what you can discover together!

Sources: [www.greenheartsinc.org](http://www.greenheartsinc.org), [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)



*Kimberly Catchpole, 4-H Extension Educator,  
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Are you looking for an activity to do with your Cloverbuds that is fun and educational? Then check out this *NEW* Click it, Print it, Do it activity. Instructions are included for an “I Can Eat A Whole Plant” activity that you can do at your next Cloverbud meeting.

**EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION**

<http://www.ohio4h.org/ohio-4-h-cloverbud-connections>

## Feathers, Seeds, Pinecones, Acorns, Rocks, Oh My!

Outdoors provides an excellent learning environment for youth, especially Cloverbuds! With significant health and learning benefits for youth being outside, why not start today?

One exciting thing to do is start a collection. There are different items youth find intriguing to put in their new collection. Youth learn best when actively engaged in hands-on experiences so collecting items involves them in the learning process.

There are many items youth would enjoy exploring and collecting. Consider:

- Leaves: These are colorful, come in different sizes and shapes, and make sounds.
- Rocks: Have youth collect several, then paint and put them into a shape of an animal such as a fish.
- Feathers: Have youth look at colors, texture, and shape.
- Dead tree bark: Youth can make rubbings from dead bark. Each tree has a different pattern so they will be unique! Help them identify the tree by looking in a reference book.
- Seeds: Youth can make mosaics with seeds they collect. They can open the seeds to see what they look like inside.
- Pinecones: Search for different sizes. Consider drying them in the oven or placing them in a zip top bag in the freezer for a day to kill any insects.
- Paw prints: Make rubbings or photos of prints. Use reference books to identify the animal.

When outside, make sure youth are not collecting something that is alive. This includes insects, flowers or bark on a living tree. A good rule of thumb is: if it's alive, leave it alone. The collection can also be something not concrete or material. For example, collect memories of sounds, sights, smells, or feelings while outside. Encourage youth to draw or take a picture to make a collection rather than collecting the actual item.

*Rebecca Olinsky, 4-H Youth Development Educator,  
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## Nature: Choose and Tell

Nature Choose and Tell provides a 4-H Cloverbud member with an introduction to public speaking and skill learning. Choosing an item from nature is fun and engaging as 4-H Cloverbuds investigate and then tell others about what they have discovered. Choose and Tell activities are designed to assist volunteers in helping 4-H Cloverbuds gain confidence in speaking and sharing in front of other Cloverbuds. This is a prelude to project demonstrations.

Nature is a broad category so begin this activity with the explanation that “Nature” is anything in our world that occurs naturally. Meaning it hasn’t been built, blended, mixed or changed. Animals, bugs, plants and rocks are examples of nature. Narrowing down the possibilities will keep the learning on track. Key questions to ask begin with why or how. “How are rocks made? Why is dirt different colors?”

Worms are a great topic because they are slimy and wiggly. Even better is the fact that they make the soil healthier and what they eat turns into food for plants.

CHOOSE and TELL: WORMS (write or draw the following steps on index cards)

- \* Worms wiggle and dig through the soil.
- \* The tunnels that worms dig allow water and air to flow to the roots of plants.
- \* Worms eat small bits of plants in the soil. What a worm leaves behind is called castings. Castings make a type of fertilizer for plants.
- \* Castings make the soil rich in vitamins and minerals for plants to absorb through water.
- \* If you see worms in your garden you know your plants will grow nicely because your soil is healthy.
- \* Optional: Stop by a bait shop and buy a dozen night crawlers and let the kids touch and observe them.

CHOOSE and TELL: MAKE A WORM FARM

Watch this YouTube video on how to make a worm farm.

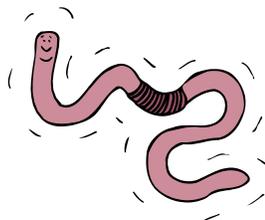
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjuYNiIM60>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntNKYJPzyiI>

Source:

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/worms/live/index.html>

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## Outdoor Activities: Exploring the Margins

As the leaves begin to change, children are drawn outside into the color-filled landscape. While outside, young children tend to exhibit three main qualities in their play: repetitive investigation, exploring the margins, and getting their energy out. Here are a few location-based ideas that allow Cloverbuds to play outside:

STREAM: Bark boat races—collect pieces of fallen bark from surrounding deadfall, break them up into hand-sized bits, place a few in a free-flowing stream, and chase them (safely) together to the finish line. Repeat endlessly. Lesson: Which pieces float faster? Why?



WOODS: Fort building—no need to get fancy here! Combine fallen sticks, old rope/twine, and three sturdy trees that form a triangle and you are all set. Take care to have adult assistance on the “roof.” Lesson: What size, thickness, weight of sticks works the best in making the walls? How about the roof?

YARD/PARK: Kids triathlon week—each day pick three unrelated physical activities (e.g.--Frisbee catch/toss, obstacle course, and bike riding) and spend a *total* of an hour playing them. The next day, repeat the concept with three completely new activities. Try to incorporate one activity each day that is new to the child. Lesson: Did you like these activities? What was your favorite? Which of them would you like to try again sometime?

GARDEN: Sunflower house—as the seed catalogs filter in around the holiday season, visit the sunflower section and pick out a variety or two. Then design a square (octagon for the adventurous) “house” for your garden next spring; don’t forget a door! This time next year it will provide hours of fun. Lesson: How many seeds will we need to do the job?



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## Campus Connections

Hello again! Great to make this Cloverbud Connection with you!

Did you know that intelligence means more than just how well you can think about something or solve problems? The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983; 1996), proposes eight ways of knowing about the world.

They are:

- ☺ Verbal linguistic – involves listening, speaking, writing, and reading
- ☺ Logical mathematical – involves counting, problem solving, and calculating
- ☺ Visual spatial – involves manipulating blocks, making images, and visualizing
- ☺ Bodily kinesthetic – involves moving, expressing with the body, and movement skills
- ☺ Musical rhythmic – involves listening, singing, playing, and composing
- ☺ Interpersonal – involves the use of social skills, working in a group
- ☺ Intrapersonal – involves processing emotions, self-mastery, and making personal connections
- ☺ Naturalist – involves the environment, observing, making relationships and finding order in the world.

The reason for sharing these intelligences is to help you become aware of the many ways we can and do engage children in the 4-H Cloverbud program. Even though children may have a preference for learning and gaining life skills from one to two particular areas, using a more balanced approach with our activities will encourage learning and ultimately healthy development. When possible, include various intelligences with 4-H Cloverbud activities by singing, sharing with others, and physical movement to name a few. In doing so, we will help 4-H Cloverbud children reach their fullest potential.



Thanks for your commitment to the 4-H Cloverbud program as we enhance the healthy development of children throughout the state!

*Scott D. Scheer, Ph.D.*

*State Extension Specialist, Preadolescent Education,  
4-H Youth Development, The Ohio State University.*

## Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Save the seeds from your Halloween Jack-O-Lantern and use them to make this tasty and high fiber treat.

-  1 ½ cups Pumpkin Seeds
-  2 tsps. Vegetable Oil or Margarine, melted
-  Pinch of Salt or Seasoned Salt

Heat oven to 300°F. Place the seeds from a freshly carved pumpkin in a bowl of water. Remove the pumpkin strings and pulp by rubbing the seeds between your hands. Place the clean seeds in a bowl and toss them with the vegetable oil or melted margarine and salt. Spread them in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 20 – 45 minutes, stirring often, until they are golden. Smaller seeds take less time. Allow them to cool completely before eating them.

Other seasonings may be used. Experiment with seasonings to discover your favorite.

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