Natural Materials

Overview

Practise noticing how the environment changes using the physical elements, wind and rain and sun as prompts for imaginative, open-ended nature play.



Activities

Gather outdoors and invite staff to pause and tune in:
What can you feel on your skin?
What can you hear?
What is mov-ing around you?

One person calls out a natural element – wind, sun, rain – staff respond with playful actions inspired by that element.
Work in pairs. Each pair receives an element card and a playful challenge.
Pairs explore and then share with their group.

Equipment

- Element symbols – images
- Playful Challenge cards
- Wind – ribbons, bubbles
- Rain – containers, puddles
- Sun – chalk, water.

Key Questions

How do physical elements change the mood, pace and possibilities of play?
What small adjustments could make your outdoor space more responsive to weather?

Learning Outcomes

Each element exploration encourages movement, imagination and environmental awareness to experience the environment in the way children do, whilst recognising the weather as a powerful co-teacher.

Progression in Learning

- Create a mini nature play invitation with a chosen element. E.g. Wind and ribbons, sun, shadow and chalk tracing, rain and a rain catcher (bucket, cup, etc...)