

CREATIVITY WEEK:

Creating Collections



In this week's kick-off to Camp Tinkergarten, **we will collect nature treasures and use them in new and innovative ways.** This will give your family the opportunity to:

- Gather a supply of nature treasures for play.
- Introduce one or more play centers kids can use all summer long. Read more about how to set up simple centers [here](#).
- Bolster creativity in your campers.



What are nature treasures?

All types of objects provided by nature that we can use in our play. This includes sticks, stones, tree fruits, flowers, stems and more—all true treasures to a Tinkergarten kid!



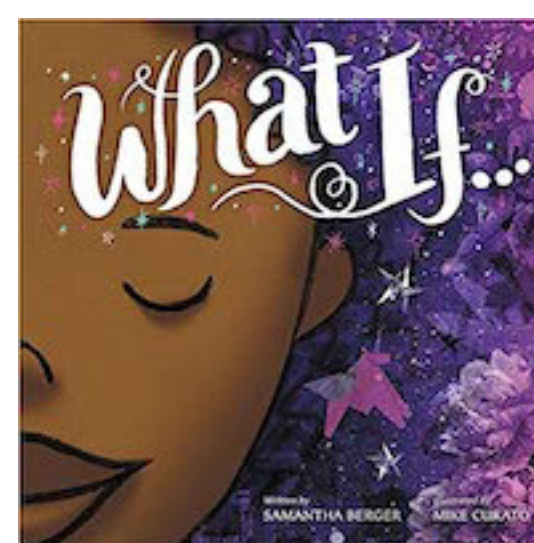
MORE ABOUT CREATIVITY

Creativity is the ability to both imagine original ideas and do what needs to be done to make them happen — a skill that kids will need to make an impact on their world and the people around them.

Fundamental to creativity is divergent thinking—the ability to continually generate new ideas using a single thing or set of things. Children are born divergent thinkers. By inviting kids to collect nature treasures and encouraging them to use those treasures in many different ways in their play, we offer them practice to strengthen their divergent thinking and, in turn, their creativity.

To find out more:

- [Why Creativity is Just as Important as Literacy](#)
- [How to Use Simple Rituals to Keep Kids Grounded This Summer](#)
- [How to Set up a Summer Schedule That Works For Your Family](#)



FEATURED BOOK

What If by Samantha Berger.

Watch and listen [here](#)! You can also purchase this book for your home library [here](#).

There are few more engaging ways to kick off camp with preschoolers than to hunt and gather for nature treasures—especially those of particular interest to them. You'll immediately get kids excited, and you'll generate a whole supply of nature treasures to use for the weeks to come!

Preschool friends also gain tremendous satisfaction through making and doing and creating things 'by myself.' Welcoming them to bring their found nature treasures into their play at any one of three centers—a mud kitchen, an art center or a water playground—inspires the independence preschoolers crave and gives them a launchpad for creativity, too.

COLLECTING WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Let kids know that you'll be kicking off Camp Tinkergarten with an expedition in search of nature treasures!

- Offer several choices for tools your child can use to collect treasures (e.g. bucket, bag, backpack, wagon).
- Warm up your senses.
[Find out how.](#)
- Searching together? Head out and search side by side! Sending your child off? Designate where they can roam and wish them good searching.
- When you finish collecting, identify a container (basket, bin or bowl) that can house your treasures for your child to use in their play.
- Or, welcome your preschooler to sort their treasures into categories, each in a different container.
- You can keep filling and sorting treasures all summer long!

CREATING WITH PRESCHOOLERS

- Prepare an Art Center, Mud Kitchen, Water Playground or another space for creating. [Here's how.](#)
- Bring the container of treasures you collected near the play center you'll use.
- Choose one or more of the following ideas for inviting your toddler to explore creatively with nature treasures.



ART CENTER: Treasure Chest

Materials: *Recycled container (e.g. cardboard or wooden box, plastic container), art supplies, nature treasures*

- Ask your child which of the treasures you collected are their very most favorite.
- Wonder what kind of container they could make to keep their favorite treasures together & safe.
- Present a recycled container or two and wonder together how we could turn the ordinary container into a treasure chest—and one that everyone could tell belonged to your child.
- Suggest ideas that help add color (e.g. paint, markers, crayons), add texture (fabric, nature treasures, tape or glue) or “windows” (cut holes) into the treasure.
- Lay out materials and let kids go!

WATER PLAYGROUND: Froggy Friends

Materials: *Markers (waterproof, ideally), acrylic paint and stones*

- Start by encouraging kids to work with you to turn stones into “froggy friends.” You can paint the stones or leave them as is and draw a froggy design on them.
- Wonder how we can keep our froggy friends cool and happy. Naturally, they’ll love to play in our water playground!
- Adding the froggy friends allows kids to bring pretend play into their water play.
- To prompt even more creative play, wonder things like, “How would froggies like to play in the water playground?” “What can we add or build in the water playground to help froggies play? Hide out? Stay safe and cozy?”



MUD KITCHEN: Summer Treats

Materials: *Water, dirt, nature treasures, cooking supplies (if you do not have mud, consider [forest putty](#)!)*

- Make sure that you have water/dirt or putty ready for kitchen play.
- Wonder how you could use the treasures you have collected and anything else around you to make summer treats.
- What are summer treats? Anything kids love to “make” in the mud kitchen. Some of our favorites? Buttercup cakes, sunshine soup, and picnic pizza pies.
- Step back and let the cooking roll. Turn the next snack time into a “feast” and enjoy pretending to delight in the “delicious” treats.



Share photos and stories of your experiences and time outside this week using #tinkergarten and #outdoorsall4 or in our free [#OutdoorsAll4 Facebook group](#), and we may just feature your photos in next week’s email!

ABOUT TINKERGARTEN

Tinkergarten® is your guide to purposeful outdoor play—the kind of play that helps kids become healthy, capable and confident learners.