Nature provides lots of fun materials to play with. Here is how to create a collection of nature toys and 3 fun ways to use them!

**ITEMS YOU WILL NEED:**
A basket or container for collecting and an outdoor space

**OPTIONAL EXTRAS:**
Any other toys or materials from inside to add to the fun

1. Get a basket or container and search outside (in your yard or on a walk) for rocks, sticks, and other fun nature finds. Look for all different shapes and sizes and even give challenges to find specific things: smooth rocks, bumpy rocks, sticks in a Y shape, sticks that are thick, and sticks that are bendy.

2. Find a nice space outside to store your new nature toys! Decide where these toys will go when it’s time to “clean up”. You can even add toys from inside to this spot.

3. Use these new nature toys in three fun ways!

**Option 1:** Build big, winding paths out of sticks. Children can then use cars, trains, or trucks to drive around these paths.

**Option 2:** Use sticks to practice their letters by writing letters in the mud or forming letters out of sticks. When a child has interest in something such as letters and is working with an adult or an older child, this is called scaffolding and is a very effective way to achieve a learning goal.

**Option 3:** Create artistic spirals, shapes, and paths.

**TO FURTHER EXTEND THIS ACTIVITY:**
Watch a reading of *Bigger! Bigger!* here to inspire building with your new nature toys or check out a photo collection here of the treasures found in preschoolers’ pockets as you collect your nature toys.