



Nature
& SEASONS

Little Gardens Tray

Dig, plant, discover!

🎯 Learning Focus

Fine motor skills, science, sensory exploration

👤 Age Range

2–6 years

🕒 Set Up Time

10 minutes

🛒 You Will Need:

- Tuff tray + stand
- Potting soil or sand
- Small plastic plant pots
- Artificial or real flowers/plants
- Small plastic garden tools (trowel, rake, fork)
- Watering can (small)
- Plastic bugs and worms
- Seed packets (real or printed)
- Pebbles and bark chips
- Gloves
- Egg carts are also great however be allergy aware if using!



HOW TO GUIDE

1. Pour Sand or potting mix directly onto the tray or into other containers.
2. You can bury plastic bugs or worms into the soil
3. Place small pots around the tray
4. Add seeds, flowers, plants to be planted
5. Place garden tools ready for use
6. Add a small watering can
7. Optional: print small “garden plan card” for older kids,

💡 Extension Ideas:

- Add a magnifying glass for bug investigation
- Include a nature journal for children to draw what they find
- Plant real seeds in pots and observe growth over weeks
- Add number markers for counting plants



Autumn Woodlands

Tray

🎯 Learning Focus

Seasonal awareness, colour recognition, sorting, language

😊 Age Range

18 months–5 years

🕒 Set Up Time

10 minutes

🛒 You Will Need:

- Tuff tray + stand
- Real or artificial autumn leaves (red, orange, yellow, brown)
- Acorns, conkers, pinecones
- Twigs and bark
- Plastic woodland animals
- Small mushroom decorations (craft or real)
- Brown crinkle paper or shredded paper
- Small baskets or bowls for sorting



HOW TO GUIDE

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Line the base of the tray with brown crinkle paper or shredded paper
2. Scatter real or artificial autumn leaves across the entire tray
3. Arrange twigs and bark around the edges to create a woodland border
4. Place pine cones, acorns and conkers in small clusters
5. Position woodland animals as if they are foraging
6. Tuck small mushrooms in corners
7. Place small baskets in the tray for collecting and sorting

Extension Ideas:

- Sort leaves by colour into the baskets
- Count the acorns and conkers
- Make leaf rubbings with paper and crayons nearby
- Discuss animal hibernation with the toy animals

VARIATIONS AUTUMN LOOSE PARTS TRAY SET UP





Arctic Explorer Tray

Freeze, discover, rescue!



Learning Focus

Science (states of matter), sensory, problem solving



Age Range

2–6 years



Set Up Time

20 minutes + overnight freezing



You Will Need:

- Tuff tray + stand
- Water + freezer-safe containers or ice cube trays
- Plastic arctic animals
- White fake snow
- (or bicarbonate of soda + shaving foam mix)
- Blue food colouring
- Salt
- Pipettes
- Warm water
- Vinegar



HOW TO GUIDE

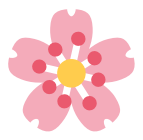
Step-by-Step Setup:

1. The night before – freeze animals inside blocks of ice in containers
2. On the day – spread fake snow across half the tray
3. Place the frozen ice blocks into the tray
4. Set out small jugs of warm water, salt, vinegar water mix and pipettes nearby
5. Let children discover the animals and try to free them using tools

Extension Ideas:

- Discuss why salt melts ice (science!)
- Warm water vs. cold water – which works faster?
- Draw pictures of arctic animals
- Learn about arctic habitats through books alongside play





Spring Flower Shop Tray

Open for business!

 Learning Focus

Role play, counting, colour, language development

 Age Range

2–6 years

 Set Up Time

15 minutes

 You Will Need:

- Tuff tray + stand
- Foam or real flowers (mix of colours)
- Small vases or jars
- Green floral foam or sand base
- Small chalkboard signs with prices
- Play money and small till or cash box
- Ribbons and wrapping paper squares
- Scissors (child-safe)
- Paper bags



HOW TO GUIDE

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Fill the base of the tray with green floral foam or sand
2. Arrange flowers by colour in clusters across the tray
3. Stand small vases or jars ready for bouquet making
4. Write prices on chalkboard signs and place near flowers
5. Set play money and a till at one corner
6. Add ribbon, wrapping paper and bags for wrapping purchases

Extension Ideas:

- Practice counting petals or flowers
- Sort flowers by colour or size
- Create a simple receipt writing station nearby
- Learn flower names – introduce vocabulary



Ocean Discovery

Tray

Explore life under the sea!

Learning Focus

Science, language, small world play, sensory

Age Range

18 months–6 years

Set Up Time

15 minutes

You Will Need:

- Tuff tray + stand
- Blue water or blue kinetic sand base (homemade)
- Blue food colouring (if using water)
- Seashells of various sizes
- Plastic sea creatures
- Blue and clear gems/glass pebbles
- Sand (one section)
- Seaweed (artificial or green ribbon strips)
- Small buckets and spades
- Magnifying glass



HOW TO GUIDE

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Create a "beach" at one end using sand
2. Fill the rest of the tray with water tinted blue OR blue kinetic sand
3. Scatter shells and clear gems across the base
4. Add seaweed (green ribbon strips work brilliantly)
5. Position sea creatures throughout – some partially hidden
6. Place buckets, spades and a magnifying glass at the edge

Extension Ideas:

- Sort sea creatures by type or size
- Match creatures to pictures on an ocean information card
- Count shells
- Discuss ocean habitats and conservation

