



Approaches to Learning Activity for 42 to 48 Months

Fossil Detective

This activity promotes children's initiative and curiosity. They also gain practice in approaching a task with increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness.

Materials:

- Wax paper
- Bowl
- Small to make impressions in the dough
- Clues: dog food, collar, leash, paw print
- Ingredients: 1 cup used coffee grounds, 1/2 cup coffee, 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup salt

To make coffee dough: Combine the ingredients in the bowl and form the dough.

What to do:

1. Arrange the clues on a table.
2. Tell the child that a scientist use clues to determine what we know about dinosaurs. Many of those clues have been found in fossils.
3. Have the child press the dough flat on the waxed paper and make imprints of various objects — handprints, a feather, a block, a leaf — in the dough.
4. Air dry for two days or place in a low-temperature oven for 30 minutes. Mix the fossils, and encourage the child to label the original items.
5. Tell the child there is an animal in the room, but it isn't here anymore. Instruct her to look at the clues and see what she can determine about the animal. Talk about its size, what it might eat, and so on.

Variation:

1. Read a book about fossils and dinosaurs. Suggested titles include *Digging up Dinosaurs* by Alikei, *The Fossil Girl* by Bighton, or *Big Old Bones* by Carol Carrick.

