ECFE Families,
Instead of continuing with the choice boards we have compiled a list of activities that you can use throughout the summer. Realizing that because of COVID19 there may be restrictions about what you can plan and do, please check sites and places to make sure they are open or there are no restrictions before visiting.

It has been a new journey for us to communicate virtually and through documents. We value the relationships we have cultivated this past school year and sincerely want what is best for children and their families. Our hope is that these documents will help you continue to make lasting memories with your children.

Sincerely,
ECFE Staff

Summer Activities for Families

At Home Activities
- Pitch a tent in your backyard.
- Make a bonfire and make s'mores.
- Create an obstacle course using pool noodles, hoola hoops and items from nature (sticks or logs).
- Paint with big brushes and water. You can do this on the house, driveway or sidewalk.
- Bring your bike or other riding toys to your very own “at home” car wash. Scrub away!
- Make a tent by draping a bed sheet or tarp over something you and your child can crawl under.
- Sleep under the stars--bring your sleeping bags outside on the deck and wake-up to the birds and sun. You may catch some dew on your bag so cover your bag with plastic. (Do this in May before the mosquitoes come!)
- Create a bingo card (scavenger hunt) of things in your house, garage, yard, neighborhood, etc.
- Have your child help you prepare a meal or snack.
- Have a picnic outside.
- Create a sensory bin: sand, pine needles, seeds, or water, etc.
- Paint with shaving cream in a tray, in the bathtub or outside.
- Create a road around the house using painters tape, for delicate wood floors use string to protect the finish.
- Play red light/green light.
- Play music and have a dance party.
- Start a rock collection. Display it in an egg carton or shoebox lid.
- Gather a bundle of children’s books and read on a blanket outside.
- Play in the sprinkler.
- Have a tea party outside- use water to practice pouring and filling cups. Invite your dolls and/or animals

Nature Learning and Play
● Pretend to be a bird:
  ○ Fly around outside flapping your “wings”.
  ○ Make a nest with sticks, leaves and mud.
● Find puddles:
  ○ Play sink or float with a variety of objects.
  ○ Jump in the puddle!
  ○ Measure how deep the puddles are.
● Gather items to make nature art.
● Go on a color, shape, or sound hunt.
● Be quiet and listen for all the things you can hear and name them.
● Plant a garden with veggies you like.
● Plant a few sunflower seeds in a pot and observe what happens during the summer.
● Lay in the grass on a partly cloudy day and observe the beauty of the sky, maybe you will see a cloud animal.
● Collect rocks and sort them by color, size, texture, etc.
● Build a fort out of large sticks.
● Build a fairy house.
● Check out some nature ideas recommended through the MN Zoo.

● Build a teepee for beans to grow on.
● Bring some of your typical indoor activities outside: dress up clothes, dolls, cars, etc.
● Create a mud kitchen outside.
● For more information on activities to do in nature visit MN Children and Nature Connection.

Things to make
● **Bubbles**: https://artfulparent.com/how-to-make-homemade-bubbles/
● **Sidewalk chalk**: https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/how-to-make-sidewalk-chalk
● **Playdough**: https://stillwaterschools.org/schools/early-childhood/ecfc/parent-resources/play-dough-recipe
● **Slime**: https://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-make-3-ingredient-slime-without-borax-245904
● **Sensory bottles**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7zp7KbxbKY
● **How To Make Homemade Spray Chalk**: https://dadlifelessons.com/how-to-make-homemade-spray-chalk/
● **Soft Pretzel ABC's**
  https://simplytodaylife.com/alphabet-numbers-pretzel-snack-recipe/:
● **Moon Sand** https://afewshortcuts.com/how-to-make-moon-dough/:
- **Melted crayons:**

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### Parks, Trails and Nature Centers

*Please verify hours before you go since closings and openings can shift quickly.*

- MN DNR recommends if the parking lot is busy to find a different trail head.
- Avoid crowds and practice social distancing.

#### City Parks - as of April 22nd, 2020
- Trails are OPEN
- Playgrounds, restrooms and courts are CLOSED
- **City Parks of Stillwater**
- **Bayport**
- **Oak Park Heights**
- **Woodbury city parks trails**

#### Washington County Parks – as of April 22nd, 2020
- Fees waived through April 28th
- Can print fun nature scavenger hunts from their website.
- **Lake Elmo Park Reserve**
- **Big Marine Lake**
- **Square Lake**
- **St. Croix Bluffs Regional park**

#### State parks - as of April 22nd, 2020
- Pay for your pass online before you go.
- Some parks are waiving park fees.

#### Nature Centers – As of April 22, 2020
- **Oakdale Nature Preserve**, Oakdale
  - Discovery Center CLOSED
  - Trails OPEN
- **Maplewood Nature Center**, Maplewood
  - Building CLOSED
  - Trails OPEN
- **Tamarack Nature Center**, White Bear Township
- Discovery Hollow play area and building are CLOSED
  - Trails OPEN
    - Sally Manzara Interpretive Nature Center, Lake Elmo
      - Nature center building CLOSED
      - Trails OPEN
    - Dodge Nature Center, West St. Paul
      - Buildings CLOSED
      - Trails OPEN
  - Fawn-Doe-Rosa, opening day TBD

- Franconia Sculpture Garden, open and free, do not touch sculptures or use benches, a number or sculptures have been cordoned off.

- Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, open, do not touch sculptures, can print a self guided tour sheet

Pick your own berry farms – Check MN Grown Directory

Minneapolis Zoo
Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, closed, M-F 1:00 live zookeeper and gardener talks, old talks are available to watch also.

Train interests
St. Croix Railroad in Hudson, WI – Ride on trains, no open date posted yet.
Jackson Street Roundhouse and Museum – closed
Twin City Model Railroad Museum – closed, train activities on their site, and live cameras of the Union Depot trains
Choo Choo Bob’s train store – St. Paul, closed but taking phone orders for local delivery or shipping, they are in a couple of days a week.

Museums
- Children’s Museum
  - CLOSED as of April 22nd, 2020
  - Play ideas for home
- Bell Museum
  - CLOSED as of April 22nd, 2020
  - Download the latest MN skies guide for star watching
- Science Museum
  - CLOSED as of April 22nd, 2020
  - Learn from home activities
- Minnesota History Center
  - CLOSED as of April 22nd, 2020