



TREE FACES

Materials you need:

- A couple of handheld mirrors (Find them in the op shop or \$2 shop for very little cost)
- 1 quantity of [White Clay](#), playdough or air dry clay
- A flat surface to roll out the dough – use sticks or rolling pins
- A selection of greenery, twigs, stones and other natural materials from around the garden or yard
- A large tree (or wall if you don't have any trees to work on)

Setup for play:

- Pass the mirrors around the children and encouraging them to look at their facial features and expressions.
- Give each child a piece of clay or dough about the size of a tennis ball to work with and shape into a ball.
- Show them how to squish the dough or clay between their hands to flatten it out to make a rough circle.
- Help them to press their circle onto the bark of a tree or to a wall.
- Bring out the basket of natural materials you collected together earlier and encourage the children to create faces on their clay.
- Leave on the tree or wall for others to view.

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What are they learning with this activity?

As the children work the clay or dough and select natural materials to mimic their own features they are learning to:

- Explore, infer, predict and problem solve
- The skill of transference and representation
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and increase their spatial awareness
- Develop new vocabulary and language skills
- Recognise symbols and how things can represent other things
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Use descriptive language to name their facial features and any emotions shown
- Become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people
- Explore the unique aspects of their identity through simple actions and play
- Respect and care for natural living things
- Persevere and experience the satisfaction of a job done well and sense of achievement

Extending the play:

- Collect the photos and drawings and work with the children to set up a display for families to view.
- Set up a garden centre dramatic play area outside and add seeds to plant into old seedling containers to take home.

