Loose Parts: Inspiring Child-led Play

From your Nature Museum Camp Directors, Becca and Nicole

We wanted to share are a few of our notes and reflections from Summer Camp we think might inspire some fun child led play at home. We love loose parts for play at camp and we think you can bring these ideas to your play time, too!

What are loose parts:
In play, loose parts are objects and materials that can be moved, carried, used, combined, or separated in a variety of ways. A child can interact with loose parts in many ways and they can lead the play.

Why loose parts:
Some toys, for example a puzzle or toy call, have only one (or two) “fixed” or “set” ways to play or interact with that object. However, loose parts allow children more imaginative, inventive, and self-directed play. A child can decide if a stick is a spoon or a microphone! This type of play may support and help children develop independence, confidence, and problem-solving skills

Some of our favorite loose part from the camp “tool kit”:

- bowls, cups, wooden spoons, watering cans, muffin tins, wooden blocks, chalk, stumps, flowers, wood chips, stones, toy shovels and rakes, plastic buckets, ribbons, pots and pans, sticks, logs, bark, leaves, and water

Enjoy some play and let us know what loose parts you love!