

Infant Activities

Birth-12 months

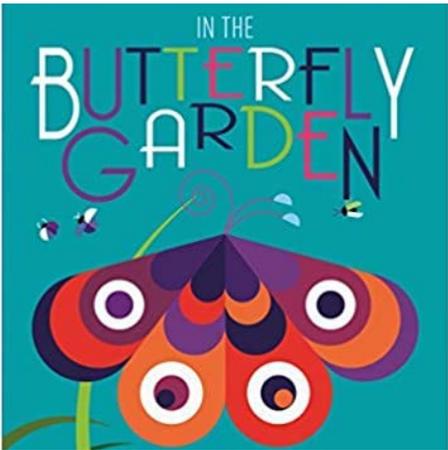
'Apelila|April

Social-Emotional Support: The Calming Pua



Kūpuna tended to their māla pua (flower garden) with great care and the pua (flowers) gave back in beauty. Connect your infant to the calming beauty of pua. Gather pua that range in color and scent. Then find a shady spot outside to relax with your infant. Show your infant one pua at a time and describe it in detail. Say, "Look at this pretty pink plumeria!" Place it under your infant's nose and model a deep breath. Say, "It smells sweet!" Supervise your infant to keep pua out of their mouth.

Cognitive Development: Plants in The Māla



By 4 months, infants have clear vision and are captivated by bright colors and shapes. Lay your infant down on a mat and read the colorful pop up book, In The Butterfly Garden by Phillippe Ug. Notice your infant's eyes tracking the colorful plants in the māla (garden). Make up your own mo'olelo (story) as you turn each page. Say, "This plant looks like a hapu'u (Hawaiian Tree Fern)!" As you read, point to different parts of the pop ups and watch your infant track your finger with their eyes.

Playful Parenting: DIY Lawn Sprinkler



Make watering the lawn playful with your infant. Repurpose a plastic bottle into a DIY water sprinkler. Poke holes on one side of the bottle then use strapping tape to connect the bottle to a hose. Turn on the wai (fresh water) and invite your infant to play in the sprinkler! You will mālama i ka 'āina while the wai splashes on your skin. As your infant crawls around, point out the connection between grass and wai. Say, "The grass is 'ōma'oma'o (green)! Mahalo wai! You keep our grass growing!"

Social-Emotional Support: Let's Pili!



Hawaiians used pili grass to build durable homes that protected them from the shifts in weather. The word pili means to "stick together" and is also used as a metaphor for a close connection to someone you love. Make a sticky grass sensory bin for your toddler to explore by mixing cornstarch, water and plastic Easter grass together. If your toddler is hesitant to touch the interesting texture, wiggle your own fingers in it to show them it's safe and okay to touch. Say, "We pili just like this grass!"

Cognitive Development: Making Puka for 'Uala



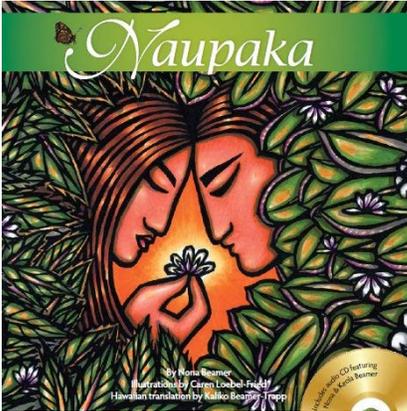
'Uala (sweet potato) was a canoe plant and continues to be a healthy source of food for many who live in Hawai'i. Plant 'uala to help supplement what you purchase from the store. Instead of buying a shovel, have your toddler help you search for a small branch with blunt edges to use as an o'o (Hawaiian digging stick). Have your toddler kōkua (help) with planting the 'uala by making puka (holes) in the soil. Using your own resources to garden and grow food helps mālama i ka āina!

Playful Parenting: Make Pretend Mahina and Kalo



Hawaiians planted crops based on moon phases. Planting kalo (taro) on certain kūkahi moons helped the plant grow upright. Kū means to rise! Make a playful connection between the mahina (moon) and planting with your toddler through pretend play. Catch your toddler's attention by creating a moon shape with your arms and say, "I am the mahina! The mahina helps the kalo kū! Show me how to kū! Stretch your arms up high! So big!" Take turns being the mahina and the kalo!

Social-Emotional Support: The Naupaka Pua



The naupaka is a small white pua (flower) found makai (ocean side) and mauka (mountain side). Read the picture book, Naupaka by Nona Beamer and learn the mo'olelo (story) behind the half-shaped blossom. After the mo'olelo is pau (over) offer to play hide and seek with your preschooler. When you find each other say, "We might be separated sometimes, but we will always find each other!" Hide and seek is a fun way to build safety and security together.

Cognitive Development: Kī Experiment



Kī (Hawaiian ti leaf) was a plant that served many purposes for Hawaiians. The leaves were used as medicine, protection and even clothing. Grow kī and teach your preschooler observation skills. Place a stalk of kī in a jar with water and leave it where it will get sunlight. Encourage your preschooler to observe the stalk frequently and describe it's growth to you. Say, "How do you know your kī stalk is growing? You're right! Those little white roots are growing from the water and the sun!" When the roots grow between 2-4 inches, plant in the ground with aloha.

Playful Parenting: Sandy Beach Kahawai



The kahawai (river) flows from uka (upland) to kai (ocean) and keeps plants healthy so they can provide shade for living things. The next time you are at the beach with your preschooler, make a pretend kahawai together. Start up shore and dig multiple kahawai down to the kai. Use gathered beach plant leaves to line the kahawai. Then have your preschooler dump a bucket of water from the top and watch how the wai (fresh water) flows down to the kai.