



Back pocket Outdoor Learning Ideas for Preschoolers (Karen DeBord, NC Cooperative Extension, NCSU)

- Involve parents in learning about the value of outdoor play by putting announcements and ideas in cubbies for parents. Explain the value of outdoor play. Give at-home outdoor ideas. Give data on the value of active play versus sedentary play.
- Involve families by planning outdoor family days (outdoor picnics, beach day, carnivals, family play day, building things together, gardening)
- Invite families to bring interesting natural items from their yards or vacations (snail shells, seashells, pine cones, birds nest, etc). Discuss item with children, place in science center. Expand the learning through related art activities, books, and musical activities about the item.
- Adorn your outside with children's art, whimsical projects you make (totem pole, wind chimes, banners or flags, natural weavings, paper mache creatures, scare crows, more)
- Take music outside (rhythm instruments, CD players, head sets on a blanket under the tree)
- If you have one outdoor idea to add this year, consider one of these ideas: A platform stage, a garden, a tree, make a hill with dirt and grass, add perennials.
- Model curiosity. Notice bugs and comment on them, ask questions about them, invite children to explore and examine nature.
- Use water outside especially in the heat; sprinklers, buckets, wagons, hose, water tables, bubbles, watering cans, and more ideas.
- Take a blanket and books outside. Use your easel painting outside, display drippy art outside.
- Use chalk on the sidewalks, paint with water and brushes, use large and small bubble blowers, dish pans.
- Use bird feeders and notice the birds. Use binoculars and find the birds that visit in a picture book. Study them. What do they eat?
- Offer collecting dishes and magnifying glasses to children. Read the temperature, read the rain gauge, watch the shadows.
- Talk about caring for nature. Model good care, allow children to weed, notice growth, water plants, take pictures of plants at different stages, chart.
- Bury treasures in the sand like an archeological dig. Talk about artifacts and history from another century.
- Use prescription type pads for parents (copy). Add your own comments and logo if you like.

Name _____ Date _____



Play Outside at least 4 times per week.

See back.

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Ideas for Outdoor Family Time

Plant flowers Collect rocks Go camping
Play with blocks Bike Swim
Paint with water on sidewalk or wall
Draw with chalk on the sidewalk Picnic
Use playdoh and cookie cutters Bubbles Walk to the library
Berry Picking Pick up litter Rake the leaves
Bird watch Watch ants Scavenger hunt Play "I spy"
Swing Collect bugs Name colors you see outside
Listen to noises outside Wash the car Plant a small garden
Repot a plant Sing Color
Walk to the store Wash the dog Read together
Make a kite Play cards Hopscotch Build a fort
Plan a trip Make sandwiches together Dance
Basketball Take a walk Go fishing
Play Touch football Climb a tree Stargaze at night

What else can you think of?

The important thing is to be together, get fresh air and move a little in the natural