



VIRTUAL CHILDCARE
PARENT SUPPORT
SERVICES

VOLUME #8
NATURE

HELLO PARENTS,

A lot of us have not been going outside lately. However, it is important to add "outside time" on our daily schedules to get some fresh air. Going outside and exploring nature gives children numerous benefits. It promotes creativity and imagination, provides different stimulations, builds confidence, and reduces stress and fatigue. It also helps children enhance their physical development and sensory skills. If you are too cautious to go outside due to COVID-19, this newsletter provides activities that help children discover nature both indoors and outdoors.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 - 18 MONTHS)

OUTSIDE ACTIVITY: EXPLORING OUTSIDE SENSORY PLAY

MATERIALS:

- Loose environment parts (leaves, flowers, sticks, etc.)

DIRECTIONS:

- If you decide to go outside, have your baby sit on the grass. Take off their socks to have the full sensory experience.
- Bring to your baby loose environment parts from around you (sticks, flowers, etc.)
- As your baby is touching the objects, name and comment on each.

INDOOR ACTIVITY: LEAF SENSORY BAG

MATERIALS:

- Durable Ziploc freezer bag or double Ziploc bag
- Leaves or flowers · Tape · Water

DIRECTIONS:

- Pour some water inside the Ziploc bag.
- Add some leaves or flowers inside.
- Close the bag and tape the sides so your baby would not be able to open it.
- Give it to your baby and have them touch and explore the sensory bag.

For more nature activities for infants [click here](#).

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

OUTSIDE ACTIVITY: TAKING A STROLL

MATERIALS:

- A small bag

DIRECTIONS:

- Go for a stroll around the neighbourhood with your child.
- Have them collect nature loose parts (leaves, flowers, rocks, etc.)
- As you are out on a stroll, make sure you name the objects that your child is collecting. Also, explain what you see outside (for example: "Oh, the sun is shining so bright today!" or "That's a red flower that you found!").

INDOOR ACTIVITY: CUTTING LEAVES/FLOWERS

MATERIALS:

- Scissors (with supervision)
- Flowers and leaves that you have collected outside

DIRECTIONS:

- To enhance their fine motor skills, have your child use scissors to cut the leaves and flowers.
- As your child is cutting, comment on how big or small the pieces are.

[Click here](#) for more nature-related activities.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

OUTSIDE ACTIVITY: SCAVENGER HUNT

MATERIALS:

- A bag · Paper · Markers, colour pencils or crayons

DIRECTIONS:

- Tell your child that you are going outside on a scavenger hunt and ask them what they would like to collect.
- Have your child draw the items.
- Next to the drawings, mark the number of items to collect (for example: 8 leaves, 5 flowers, etc.).
- Go outside on a walk around the neighbourhood and look together for objects from the list you have created.
- When you go home, put the objects on the table, and then have a conversation about them.



INDOOR ACTIVITY: FROZEN FLOWERS

MATERIALS:

- Flowers · Water · Ice cube tray · A large plastic container · A cup

DIRECTIONS:

- Pick some flowers from outside with your child.
- Have your child cut the stem of the flowers and put the flowers inside each cube in the ice cube tray.
- Have your child fill the ice cube tray with water, and then put it in the freezer.
- When the water freezes, take the ice cube tray out.
- Put the frozen flower cubes inside the big plastic container.
- As your child is playing with the frozen flowers, talk to them about how the flowers are frozen inside, and ask them questions (for example: "How can we defrost the flowers?")
- Begin adding warm water, using a cup, to the container filled with the frozen flowers. Have a conversation with your child about how the frozen flowers are slowly melting.

Take a virtual visit to [National Museum of Natural History](http://NationalMuseumofNaturalHistory).

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

OUTSIDE ACTIVITY: I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE

DIRECTIONS:

- Go outside for a walk around the neighbourhood with your child.
- Begin to play "I Spy with My Little Eye": as you are walking, look at a specific thing near or a little far from you, and say, "I spy with my little eye something..." (green, round, long, etc.)
- Have your child guess what the object is.
- Take turns guessing different objects.

INDOOR ACTIVITY: FLOAT OR SINK

MATERIALS:

- Large plastic container
- Leaves, flowers, rocks, pinecones, etc.

DIRECTIONS:

- Collect leaves, flowers, rocks, pinecones, etc. during a walk with your child.
- At home, fill a large plastic container with water.
- Give your child one object at a time and ask them to guess what floats and what sinks.
- Ask them questions, such as: "Which one is heavy and which one is light?"

You can find more nature play ideas [here](#).

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

OUTSIDE ACTIVITY: BIKING/HIKING

DIRECTIONS:

- Find a trail near your neighbourhood to go biking or hiking.
- During biking or hiking, talk to your child about what they see, feel, touch, and smell outside.

INDOOR ACTIVITY: GARDENING

MATERIALS:

- Pots for plants · Soil · Seeds
- Shovels or something to scoop the soil with
- Spray bottle filled with water

DIRECTIONS:

- Ask your child what they would like to plant.
- Have your child write their name on the pot.
- Let your child use the shovel to scoop the soil inside the pot until it is filled to the top.
- Have your child place the seeds in the soil, and then put some soil on top of the seeds.
- Have them spray the soil with water.
- Have your child check on their plant and water it daily.

Take a virtual tour of the spectacular [National Parks of Canada](http://NationalParksOfCanada) and some of the most beautiful [American National Parks](http://AmericanNationalParks).

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

PLEASE, SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK, COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO CHILDCAREMAIN@NCCE1.ORG

A TIP FOR TODAY

- When you go outside, make sure you are 2 meters (6 feet) apart when you pass others and wear a face mask
- Become familiar with the environment outside and plan activities with your child based on that (for example, in spring plan an activity about rain and water)