



HELLO PARENTS,

Spending time with family strengthens family ties. Families who enjoy group activities will develop strong relationships and handle stressful situations with ease. Children who spend time with their loved ones have self-confidence and develop positive behaviours. When children have a strong bond with family, they will feel a sense of security in their everyday life. In this newsletter, you will find backyard activities that will strengthen your relationship with your child.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 -18 MONTHS)

EXPLORE NATURE IN THE BACKYARD

MATERIALS:

- A few bowls or trays
- Water
- Measuring cups, spoons and scoops
- Running water with hose

DIRECTIONS:

- When it is warm outside, place your child on the grass in the backyard.
- Sit next to your child and talk to them. Comment on what they see and touch.
- Join them to explore nature. Encourage your child to grab the grass, pick up leaves, touch flowers, etc.
- Offer your child bowls or trays which are filled with a few inches of water.
- Follow your child's lead to splash the water, empty or refill the bowls with water or with grass etc.
- Add measuring cups, spoons and scoops for more fun.
- For older infants, you may provide running water with a hose.

[Click here](#) for more outside activity ideas.

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

DIG AND COLLECT

MATERIALS:

- Bucket
- Shovel or scoop

DIRECTIONS:

- Together with your child bring the shovel and bucket to the backyard.
- Encourage your child to dig and point to things like: worms, insects, rocks, etc.
- Talk about what you see and ask simple questions.
- Encourage your child to collect some rocks, sticks, insects etc., and find a place in the backyard to keep their collections.
- Together you can compare the sizes, colours and texture of your collections.

[Click here](#) to listen to "Up, Down and Around" by Katherine Ayres.

PRESCHOOL (2.5 YEARS – 5 YEARS)

WATER TAG WITH THE FAMILY

MATERIALS:

- Bucket with water
- Sponges

DIRECTIONS:

- On a very warm day help your child fill the bucket with water and invite the rest of the family to join.
- Together, decide who is going to be the "it" player. Whoever is "it" will throw the sponge first.
- The person who is "it" soaks a sponge in the water and throws the soggy sponge at other players to make them "it."
- Continue this process until all players have had a turn being "it."

[Click here](#) for more ideas.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

BACKYARD CITY

MATERIALS:

- Backyard natural materials (sticks, leaves, rocks, etc.)
- Household recycled materials
- Chalk
- Paint
- Marker

DIRECTIONS:

- Together with your child choose a big empty space in your backyard where you can build a small city.
- Encourage your child to collect natural materials in the backyard or recyclable household materials.
- Map out a backyard city boundary with small stones or wooden pieces.
- Encourage your child to use tree branches to create city elements, such as: school, park, fire station, shopping mall, theatre, library, beach etc.
- Have your child use chalk, paint or markers to decorate the bigger wood pieces, containers or cardboard boxes. Create different buildings or places.
- You may decorate the backyard city by planting flowers.

[Click here](#) for more ideas.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

HELIUM HOOP GAME

MATERIALS:

- A hula hoop (a lightweight stick can also be used)

DIRECTIONS:

- [Click here](#) to see how to play helium hoop game.
- Invite your family members to play this helium hoop game in the backyard.
- Explain the rules of the game to all players.
- Ask all players to put their index fingers under the hoop's (or a lightweight stick's) edge.
- Start with the hoop at roughly waist level.
- All players must try to lower the hoop to the floor while keeping their two fingers touching the underside of the hoop at all times.
- This game provides an opportunity for the entire family to have fun together.

[Click here](#) for 10 backyard nature activities for the whole family.



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

A TIP FOR TODAY

- Encourage your child to incorporate natural resources into play.
- Plant a garden or flowers together with your child.
- Explore nature with your child.
- Have a picnic together in the backyard.
- Create a backyard scavenger hunt where your child may collect items from nature.