



## HELLO PARENTS,

The natural world is a giant, open-ended laboratory which provides children with countless opportunities to discover, explore and learn. Nature inspires children to come up with new ideas and be creative. It also helps to relieve stress and anxiety, improve mood, and boost feelings of happiness and well-being. Children and adults benefit physically and mentally from simple outdoor activities, such as planting flowers and vegetables, exploring rocks and insects, watching birds, hiking in the woods or playing outside with friends. In this newsletter, we encourage you and your child to make connections with nature and enjoy outdoor learning together.

## ACTIVITIES INFANTS (3 -18 MONTHS)

### TAKE A NATURE WALK

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Take your child for a walk in the woods, local park or wherever you can interact with nature.
- Point out to your infant all the different sights and sounds around you. For example: colourful flowers, fuzzy moss on the trees, chirping birds, babbling water, rustling leaves, etc. Use descriptive language to talk about what you see.
- Pay attention to what interests your child and let them reach out and touch leaves, petals, grass, etc.
- Spend some time in silence, simply being there and enjoying the nature around you.

[Click here](#) to listen to nature walk song.

## TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

### FAMILY PICNIC

#### MATERIALS:

- Picnic basket
- Blanket
- Food and beverage
- Activity supplies

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Find a place for a picnic in your backyard, at a park or on a beach.
- Let your child help you pack the picnic basket and then set up the picnic.
- As you enjoy your picnic, observe the various plants and animals around you.
- Talk about the foods that the animals eat versus the foods that people eat and how animals and people find their food.
- Play outdoor games with your family during the picnic.

[Click here](#) to read "The Bears' Picnic" by Stan and Jan Berenstain.

[Click here](#) for more activities.

## PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

### CLOUD WATCHING

#### MATERIALS:

- Camera
- Paper
- Markers

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Choose a day with lots of interesting clouds in the sky.
- Lie with your child on the grass and look up at the sky.
- Take a few minutes to observe the white clouds moving slowly across the blue sky.
- Encourage your child to describe the clouds using words such as: fluffy, feathery, round, straight, heavy, etc.
- Ask your child whether the clouds resemble anything, such as animals or cartoon characters.
- Take turns finding different interesting shapes in the sky and describing them to each other.
- If the clouds are moving slowly, let your child take photos or draw pictures of them.

[Click here](#) to read "The Cloud Book" by Tomie De Paola.

## JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

### STONE SOUP

#### MATERIALS:

- Large container
- Stones and other objects found in nature

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Ask your child what they think stone soup is and if they would like to eat it.
- [Click here](#) to listen to "Stone Soup" by Heather Forest.
- Invite your child to make their own stone soup in the backyard.
- Together, make a pretend fire with sticks, place a container on top and fill it with water.
- Encourage your child to find stones and put them in the water to make stone soup.
- Have your child gather other natural objects from your backyard and use their imagination to transform the objects into soup ingredients. For example, grass can be green onion, sticks can be carrots, etc.
- Continue adding the ingredients to the soup and stir it until the soup looks delicious.
- Pretend to eat the stone soup together and engage in a conversation about what made it so delicious.

[Click here](#) for more activities to explore nature.

## SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

### GARDEN YOGA

#### MATERIALS:

- Markers
- Paper

#### DIRECTIONS:

- Wear comfortable clothes and walk through the garden with your friends or family members.
- Observe various plants and animals in the garden and make a list of what you have noticed. For example: a tree, a blade of grass, an ant, a frog, a bird, etc.
- Make a simple sketch next to each item on your list.
- Brainstorm with your friends or family members how each item on the list could be expressed using your bodies.
- Once you have all the poses, create a story of a walk through nature incorporating the items from the list.
- Tell the story out loud and invite everyone to participate by getting into the poses that you have come up with.
- Stay focused on what you love about nature while practicing these yoga poses.
- Continue to add more poses as you have new ideas when you visit your garden or other natural places.

[Click here](#) and [here](#) to watch Yoga Poses for Kids.



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### A TIP FOR TODAY

- Take a walk through a local park and observe plants and animals there. Collect rocks and other natural treasures.
- Plant flowers, herbs or vegetables in a pot or in the backyard.
- Take indoor activities, such as reading books, playing cards and board games, or building with blocks, outside.
- Visit local outdoor farmers' markets.
- Learn to identify birds and trees in your area.
- Observe the sky and pay attention to weather changes.