

99 things to do outside with your children

Research has shown that getting out into the fresh air, sunshine and even rain and snow can have a wonderfully calming effect.

99 things to do outside with your children website:

<https://365atlantatraveler.com/fun-things-to-do-outside/>

1. Paint Your Body. Nothing cools off your kids on a warm day more than mud painting! Throw on an old swim suit, find some paint brushes, and create beautiful designs from head to toe. The fun part is running through the sprinkler to clean off, then start your painting again!

2. Make Mud Pies. Mud pies are surely where Betty Crocker got her start! You can help your tiny chef by supplying old pots, pans, spoons and such. A few bucks at Goodwill can go a long way to stocking an outdoor kitchen.

3. Design Mud Sculptures. An ordinary mud pile is transformed into a work of art with a few well-placed pebbles, sticks, leaves and such. Leave it in the sun to bake so that it can be brought inside later.

4. Create Mud Casts. With the right textured mud you can create fun hand and feet prints to preserve your day outside. Kids will enjoy helping to find the right amount of dirt and water to create the right mixture.

5. Role-Play With Toys. Race cars, dump trucks, horses and pigs...anything plastic can easily recover from a day in the mud for some excellent role-play and story telling.

6. Build Rivers and Dams. Pile the mud high on two sides to create rivers and dams that flow through the yard.

7. Construct A Mud Pit. If all this sounds like fun, but you're lacking a muddy area, you and the kids can create your own mud pit to enjoy. Find the right place in the yard -- not near the front door!

Fun Stuff To Do On A Trampoline

8. Draw With Chalk. There is nothing my kids like more than bringing chalk on the trampoline! From creative design to imaginative games, it's a safe and easy way to have fun bouncing. The water hose or next rain fall will clean it off with ease.

9. Play Some Hoops. Whether you add a hoop or simply add an old bucket to the trampoline, shooting some hoops as you bounce is fun. Maybe try H-O-R-S-E (of course) or perhaps Around The World

10. Make A Trampoline Water Park. Cool off your bouncing techniques with a sprinkler under the trampoline when it's warm outside.

11. Stretch With Twister. Take Twister to a new level by drawing it on the trampoline in chalk, then using the spinner from your board game.

12. Bounce With Balloons. And not just ordinary balloons -Water Balloons. Fill up several dozen balloons... Put them on the trampoline and start the bouncing fun.

13. Camp On The Trampoline. Bring your sleeping bags, pillows and blankets for a night under the stars. We do this at least once every summer.

14. Pop Like Popcorn. This is sometimes called Broken Egg. One person folds himself up tight in the middle of the trampoline, while everyone else bounces around him trying to make him "pop" by unfolding his arms and legs.

15. Aim For Dodge Ball. A pair of balled up socks work in a pinch!

16. Avoid The Rope Snake. Use a length of spare rope or a jump rope...whatever you have handy. One person wiggles the rope back and forth on the trampoline with the others try to jump and dodge the "snake." If you touch it, you're the snake!

Outdoor Activities in the Garden

17. Photograph Flowers. Putting a camera in a child's hands will open their eyes up to new things. Let them photograph flowers from their special perspective.

18. Enjoy A Picnic. It's amazing how much better an apple tastes when you're enjoying it on a blanket under a shade tree. Pack a picnic for the backyard or your local park.

19. Grow Beans and Herbs. We grow pole beans every summer, and the kids love it! Adventurous types can even grow them on a tee-pee style pole setup for a secret summer hideaway. Herbs are another fun things to grow with kids because they, like pole beans, grow fast...and herbs come with such amazing scents!

20. Go On A Scavenger Hunt. Nature scavenger hunts are super exciting for kids, and lead them to explore places they might not otherwise go. For kids who don't read, there are some great picture-based scavenger hunts online. Here is a link to our Pinterest board with dozens of scavenger hunt ideas.

21. Plant A Butterfly Garden. Another garden to plant is one specifically for attracting butterflies and caterpillars. Work with your kiddos to learn about which kinds of caterpillars are predominant in your area, what flowers they prefer, and when to plant them.

22. Build a Laundry Line Tent. For reading, naps or just playing hide-and-seek you can throw a sheet over a laundry line for instant fun.

23. Make Birdfeeders. Use fruit, seeds and peanut butter to make bird feeders for your feathered friends.

24. Paint Fairy Houses. If you'd rather not plant in the dirt, you can still create a garden for attracting fairies. Paint a fairy house, then add a pebble path and your favorite fairy characters.

25. Release Ladybugs. Ladybugs are great for your garden, and interesting for your kids. We release ladybugs every year...inspecting them with magnifying glasses for hours. This is the source we've been using for years.

26. Examine Spider Webs. The best time to do this is early morning. Head out in your jammies and look over the bushes for dew-kissed spider webs. It's extra luck if you see the spider, too!

Things To Do Outside At Night

27. Jump With Xmas Lights. String white Christmas lights from the top of the trampoline netting for a festive jumping experience well into the evening.

28. Bowl In The Dark. Fill 10 water bottles with water and a glow stick for the perfect glow-in-the-dark bowling set up.

29. Watch A Movie. A sheet, a projector, and a bowl of popcorn makes the BEST way to enjoy a new movie outside. Invite the neighborhood to your own "drive-in theatre" experience.

30. Gaze At The Stars. My kids love looking at the stars at night...trying to catch a glimpse of a shooting star. Pile your pillows on the trampoline or use a kiddie pool filled with pillows and blankets to avoid the ants and scratchy grass.

31. Hunt For Eggs. It doesn't have to be Easter to enjoy an egg-hunting game. Fill those leftover plastic eggs with with glow-in-the-dark pieces for fun at night.

32. Play Flashlight Tag. It's an old-fashioned favorite that never gets tiring - flashlight tag! Think tag and hide-and-seek in the dark. The rule might be one person is "it" and they try to spot their friends hiding in the dark by using their flashlight to "tag" them!

33. Hunt At Night. Night time scavenger hunts are great challenges for kids. Include nocturnal animals like bats, or evening sounds like a hooting owl. You can also include constellations, toads, crickets, airplanes...you get the idea!

34. Dance To The Music. Turn on the music and turn out the lights. With glow sticks around your head, waist and ankles for semi-anonymous dancing excitement.

35. Toss The Rings. Use those bottles you have for bowling (#28 above) and toss glow-in-the-dark rings around their necks, like old-time circus fun.

36. Roast S'Mores. The ultimate night time adventure is a bonfire, ideal for roasting marshmallows and making s'mores. Bring a guitar and a tune to sing the night away.

Cool Things To Do At A Park

37. Toss the Disc. Play a game of Frisbee golf. Go here for the rules <https://discgolf.com/disc-golf-rules-for-recreational-play/>

38. Cache in on Fun. Check out this site for ideas <https://365atlantatraveler.com/what-is-geocaching-2/>

39. Just take a walk

40. Become a Jr. Ranger. It doesn't matter what state you're visiting, or even if you're visiting a state park, historic site, or national park -- there is probably a Junior Ranger program. These are generally free, and offer a great way for your kids to learn more about the nature and the area they're exploring.

41. Play Some Putt Putt. Putt-putt (or miniature golf) courses are excellent ways to test your kiddos' skill and agility -- and your own. There are pirate courses, roof top courses, courses open at night, and so much more.

42. Peddle the Peddle Boats. My youngest is still a little leery of kayaks, but he loves heading out on the water with a paddle boat. You can find them at many state parks for only a nominal fee.

43. Go For a Swim. From city parks with traditional public pools to historic pools going for a swim is always a fun way to get some exercise.

44. Taste Spring Water. Have your kids ever tried water right from a spring? Bring the kids and several jugs to fill while you are there.

45. Hike During a Full Moon. Many parks offer several full moon hikes each year. With the moon shining bright, it's a great way to see wildlife and explore familiar territory in a new way.

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Old-School Fun With Friends

46. Jump Hopscotch. Grab the chalk and get going!

47. Catch Fireflies. These nights are always the best...just be sure to let the friendly bugs go!

48. Play hide-and-seek.

49. Marbles. Draw a circle in the dirt, then take turns trying to knock each other's marbles out of the circle!

50. Bat Wiffle Ball. Forget broken windows and heavy bats wiffle ball is the answer.

51. Kick Ball. Kick ball is much like baseball or softball, but it's played with a softer and larger ball. You remember those red rubber balls from high school PE? This is a super way to organize the neighborhood kids on a weeknight in the cul-de-sac.

52. Jump Rope. Give your kids their own jump rope, or use a long one for three-person fun. The best part about jumping rope is learning the songs that go with it. Miss Mary Mack Mack Mack, All Dressed In Black, Black, Black...

53. Red Light; Green Light. My kids love this one! It's great to play at the playground or in the back yard. I use pieces of construction paper when I'm calling out "Red Light" or "Green Light" to help with right-brained kid level up with the left-brained one.

54. Simon Says. Run around the house backward, water the rose bush...Simon can bark out any command.

55. I Spy. Find a comfy spot...maybe sitting on a picnic blanket and playing "I Spy" in the back yard.

56. Tap The Mallet. Have you ever played croquet? It's really not that difficult, but oh so much fun.

Outdoor Activities That Inspire Your Artist

57. Paint Garden Pots. Your summer bulbs never looked so good. Add a fresh coat of paint and a unique design to those pots by the front door...and do it outside!

58. Create Twig Frames. When the winds blow, take advantage of all those twigs, acorns and seed pods that land in the front yard but gluing them to a craft wood frame

59. Paint and Pound Leaves. Hunt for distinctive shapes and textures on a nature walk, then bring home a sample of those finds to create leaf paintings or poundings.

60. Decorate Rocks. Use acrylic paints to turn rocks into ladybugs, butterflies, Harry Potter or anything your children want. If you spray the paint with a sealer, you can keep yours in the garden.

61. String Ornaments. Take three twigs and tie them at the top so that they form a triangle. Then, use colorful yarn to wrap around the triangle. I first learned about these here, where they made them as Christmas ornaments, but we think they're fun to make throughout the year.

62. Weave With Nature. This is probably one of my favorite outdoor art activities. Start with a twig frame (you can make it as small or as large as you want). Then, wrap the loom frame with yarn in one direction. Once the yarn is secure, kids can weave any natural materials they want...grass, flowers, leaves, and more.

63. Journal In Nature. Bring your nature journal outside and journal with your kids. Help them think about how nature impacts all their senses. What do they smell? Hear? See? Feel? Keep track...and see how their answers change over the years and across the seasons.

64. Walk and Seek. Go on a nature walk and collect a few items in a bucket. Leaves, flowers, bark, rocks...then bring them home and pull out some construction paper and glue. What can you create with your findings? With some markers, that leaf might become an owl.

65. Design Garden Stones. A mold. Some concrete. A few well placed shiny pebbles. It's the making of beautiful garden stepping stones. Make your own, or try a kit.

66. Photo The Alphabet. Using leaves, trees, or other objects in nature, can you and your kiddo take a picture of every letter in the alphabet? Or maybe just the ones necessary to create their name in a photo frame?

Move Your Body Outside

67. Battle With Shaving Cream. Start with a bottle of shaving cream per kid -- you know, the old-fashioned kind. Not the gel. Follow that up with some goggles and a swim suit. And then it's war!

68. Chase Bubbles. Bubbles and kids are two great things that are great together. Want to make it even better? Make your own bubble wands out of pipe cleaners!

69. Balance on the Beam. Two bricks and a long wooden beam in the backyard make the perfect balance beam. Can you walk it? Backward? With your eyes closed?

70. Fly A Kite. We always keep a kite handy for a windy day. A small one works easier for younger kids, so they gain confidence flying it on their own.

71. Skip Rocks. It takes a little patience, but it brings great rewards. The trick is to find the right flat stones...which is an adventure unto itself.

72. Roll Down a Hill. This is always fun for kids. Another option, if the hill is steep enough - bring a cardboard box and do some summer sledding.

73. Swing on a Tire. You can usually find old tires at land fills (in a special section) or on Craigslist. An old tire and rope hung from a tree is what summer is made for. Love this piece about how to do it without harming the tree.

74. Climb A Tree. When I was a kid, I was an avid tree climber, and I loved seeing everything from high above the ground...even if it is a little scary sometimes.

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All The Fun Even Without The Sun

75. Jump on the Trampoline. If there is no lightning in the sky during a rainstorm, then jumping on a trampoline in the rain is just a slice of heaven.

76. Wash Trikes. No need for a hose when the rain is falling. A bucket of suds and a sponge, and you're good to go. The family bikes will be sparkly and clean.

77. Splash in Puddles. Puddles, puddles, everywhere. They're made for jumping. How many can you find?

78. Make Rain Art. Grab some water color paint. Crush them in a plastic bag, then sprinkle them on watercolor paper that you've placed outside. You'll see a beautiful image emerge. You can also use pastels.

79. Create Music in the Rain. While the rain is falling, put out a variety objects to "hear" the different sounds they make it the rain. What's your favorite sound? Can you make high-pitches and low-pitches?

80. Swing to the Drops. Don't let a little rain stop you from swinging...can you catch the drops with your toes?

81. Float Your Boat. This is a family favorite...build paper boats and send them downstream. We learned that construction paper works a little better than newspaper in the rain. Nothing beats seeing your own boats float in the falling rain!

82. Hold Your Tongue Out. Something as simple as catching raindrops on your tongue can build a subtle bond with your kiddo. It lets them know you understand just what it's like to be a kid.

83. Build A Obstacle. The only thing that is better than an obstacle course, is an obstacle course in the rain. The flips on the trampoline, run around the tree, balance across the balance beam, 10 jumps on the jump rope...I'm sure you can think of more.

84. Dig For Worms. When the rain comes down, the worms come out. Can you catch a few?

Get Outside And Learn Something New

85. Use a Compass. Teach your kids how to use a compass use it for an outside treasure hunt is a great way to test their new skills.

86. Make A Compost Bin. Teach your children about the value of composting, and then build a compost bin together. You can use something as inexpensive as bales of hay, or go all out with a cedar slate box.

87. Whittle A Branch. Pine is a traditional whittling wood, and the south is filled with it. Show your kids how to use a pocket knife safely. (sharper knives are safer to cut with) and teach them about wood grains, knife sharpening, and various cuts.

88. Hammock With A Book. Enjoy story time while sitting, swinging, snuggling in a hammock.

89. Go Fishing.

90. Learn About Knots. Kid's minds are like sponges, so this is a great time to teach them about tying knots. From kayaking to boating to helping you tie down the camping gear on the roof of the car, this is something they will use their whole lives.

91. Yoga Outdoors. Whether you want to instill mindfulness in your little one, or just get them stretching, yoga is an awesome way to do it. Grab a mat or a towel and spread it out in the yard.

Having Fun Outdoors Away From Home

Shopping outdoors. Go to a street fair or an open-air market. It's a fun way to be outdoors, shop and see all kinds of new things from arts and crafts to food.

92. Visit a Farmers Market. A visit to the farmer's market is always fun...they are great places to take kids. They can sample the wares, see new fruits and veggies, and get some inspiration for trying new, healthy foods at home.

95. Pick Berries or Apples or pumpkins OH MY!!!. No matter the season, there is probably a U-Pick in the area for you!

96. Explore a Petting Zoo. Teach your kids about caring for animals, the work involved in raising them, and the sweet gentle spirit they possess by taking them to a local farm or petting zoo.

97. Ride a Horse. Do you remember your first time on a horse or pony? Take your kids on an empowering and exciting adventure!

Visit the local park. Go for a walk and enjoy the scenery

98. Explore a botanical garden. Every season brings new growth in the garden. Visit your local gardens, see what you might be able to do in your own yard and gardens.

99. Listen to the water. Visit a pond or lake, creek, stream or river....even a fountain and just sit and listen. Maybe skip some rocks or put your toes in. But just enjoy the power and the soothing sounds of the water.