

Family Focus

Building a Foundation for School Success

Getting Ready for School The Outdoors

Children need time outdoors each day to develop a variety of skills. Weather permitting, find a safe space outdoors that allows children to run, jump, skip, and explore nature. Outdoors, children can move in ways that use their whole body, such as rolling, without the confines of walls that indoor play spaces have. While outdoors, children learn through their senses and movement. Their senses are naturally stimulated through the ever-changing sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches of the world.

Outdoor play allows children to learn about the world and naturally occurring events. For example, how do plants grow? Or, how does snow or ice melt? Children can observe and react to the changing of the seasons. While experiencing nature, children learn to develop a love and respect for nature. While children can gather information from books, such as how a butterfly flies, they deepen their connection with nature when but when they observe it happening outdoors.



Try these simple outdoor activities:

- ❖ Take a blanket and book outdoors. Find a shady place to sit and read. For something new, try going outside at night and reading under the stars using a flashlight to see the book.
- ❖ Plan a picnic with your child. Have her or him help you make the menu, shop, cook, and pick where you will go.
- ❖ Take a shape walk. Pick a shape and try to find it on buildings, signs, and in the clouds.
- ❖ Take a quiet walk. What sounds do you notice while walking outdoors?
- ❖ Take a paintbrush and water outdoors. Let your child “paint” on the sidewalk. Talk about what is happening to the water as it disappears.
- ❖ Go on a transportation walk. Do you see cars, buses, or airplanes? Talk about how the modes of transportation are the same and different.

Playground Safety Tips:

- ☐ Make sure the equipment is not too hot, too cold, or too wet for children to play on.
- ☐ Always supervise children on the playground.
- ☐ Look at the playground equipment to make sure it is not broken or has loose parts.
Avoid any broken equipment.
- ☐ Make sure the equipment your child is using is correct for their age. Look for labels on the equipment that describes what age the equipment is intended for.
- ☐ Watch for tripping hazards such as tree roots or concrete.
- ☐ Make sure your child is using the equipment safely. For example, they are sliding the right way, or they are sitting in the middle of the swing.



Online Resources for families:

[Bright Hub Education.com](https://www.brighthubeducation.com) and
[Teaching 2 and 3-Year Olds.com](https://www.teaching2and3yearolds.com)

Ideas for outdoor activities

[New York State Parks](https://www.nysparks.com) and
[Fun New York.com](https://www.funnewyork.com)

Statewide resources for outdoor events and locations

Resource used for this tip sheet: [Parents.com](https://www.parents.com)



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