

the GET OUTSIDE

with the kids guide

50 THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR FAMILY OUTSIDE IN THE SUMMER!



Photo credit: Tom Tzeng

Getting Back Out

“For eons, human beings spent most of the formative years in nature... Healing the broken bond between our young and nature is in everyone’s self-interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demand it, but also because our mental, physical and spiritual health depend upon it.” Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods.

EASY, FUN, SIMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY

Never feel that you have to know a lot about nature to engage yourself or your kids in it. You don’t. All you have to do is have some fun outside--the rest will come naturally!

1. Bring some nature *inside*. Take a wet paper towel and wrap some seeds in it. Put the towel with seeds in a plastic baggie and tape it to a window. Watch the seeds grow!
2. Stick art. Collect sticks or rocks or leaves and place them in a design on the ground. Take a picture of your finished work.
3. Journal. Bring out a pad of paper and some colored pencils to record your thoughts or observations.
4. Skip stones. Who can resist tossing stones into the water?
5. Rock towers. The flat rocks common to many Alaska beaches are perfect for stacking into towers.
6. Magnify it. Bring along a hand lens or a magnifying glass to get really up close.
7. Get dirty! Put on your grungy pants and sit, dig, pour and ooze in the mud.
8. Leaf rubbings. All you need are some crayons and a piece of paper.
9. Collect pine cones. This simple activity can amuse kids for quite some time.
10. Alphabet walk. Walk around your street or a trail and look for items in alphabetical order. “A” is for ant, “B” is for blue sky...
11. Scavenger hunts. Make up a list of interesting things to look for such as “a house for a mouse” or “a raft for an ant”
12. Tracks. Start looking for prints and imagine with your child who made them and what they were doing? Where were they going?
13. Scat. Teach your child to use a stick to break apart scat and learn about the animals diet.
14. Quiet exploration. Sit somewhere along a trail and ask everyone in your group to be as still and quiet as possible and to listen

Tools of the Trade

Positive attitude
 Bucket or container
 Magnifying glass
 Spy glass
 Journal
 Colored pencils
 Plastic baggies

Tweezers
 Small backpack
 Nature guide
 Map
 Compass
 Camera
 Bug net



to all the sounds around them. After a few minutes, have each person share all the sounds they heard.

15. Nature books. Collect some small items from nature like grass, flower petals etc and paste them into a small book.

16. Picture books. Take pictures along your hike and prepare a simple or digital book of your adventure. Write a story to go along with your shots.

17. Color walk. Pick up some color wheels or paint chips from a home improvement store. While on your walk, try to find things in nature that match the colors in the paint chips.

18. Relationships. Ask open ended questions to your kids about how things in nature are related. "How do you think grass helps other animals?"

19. Texture walk. Find 5 soft things, 2 prickly things, 3 hard things, etc.

20. Map and compass. Introduce your children early to these important skills.

21. Name that peak. So many peaks are unnamed. That means when you hike around them or summit them, you get to name them on your map!

22. Collect minnows. Bring a bucket to the creek and see what you can find.

23. Go Boating!

24. Smell walk. Take some big breaths and seek out as many different smells as you can find.

25. Berry walk. Learn what you can eat, and what you can't! Then chow down!

26. Music in the Woods. Bring along a guitar or a harmonica and sit and play. Or even look around for items to make your own instruments like grass in between your thumbs or a stick on a hollow log.

27. Catch and release. Bug nets are much fun to catch all sorts of critters to look at.

28. Tidepools. Pull on your water shoes and start turning over rocks at low tide. You never know what you might find.

29. Cloud tales. Lie on your backs and imagine the clouds as different characters in a story.

30. Dam building. All you need are some rocks, a creek and a bit of imagination.

31. Drawing in the mud or sand. You can even play tic-tac-toe this way.

32. Make a sundial. Plug a stick in the ground in the middle of a circle and observe the shadows.

33. Bring a friend. Introduce a friend to the joys of being outside.

34. Build a fort. Fallen trees make a great starting point. Don't forget to take some pictures!

35. Outback baking. Collect some local foods and see what you can create on the trail. Our favorite is fresh picked blueberries in hot brownies.

36. Boat building. Collect driftwood or bark and test out your nautical skills.

37. Creek walking. Make sure you have your water shoes and that you know the creek ahead of time.

38. Gold panning. There is still gold and other gems to be found!

39. Plant a tree.

40. Learn some bird calls.

41. Nature Bingo. Make up your own, or try out the ones on Fundanas.

42. Nature Jeopardy. Perfect for older kids. This game will test everyone's knowledge of the outdoors.

43. Story telling. Make up your own, or bring along some nature classics.

44. Make a picture frame out of sticks.

45. Collect fallen flower petals.

46. Geology rocks! Look around Anchorage and find out which rocks are where. Notice any patterns?

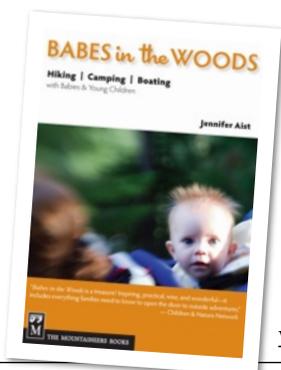
47. Plaster prints. Bring along some plaster or clay to make impressions of tracks along the trail.

48. Weather journal. Start a chart at home to record the daily weather.

49. Clean up! Bring some gloves and a trash bag to help keep our parks clean.

50. Join the invasive plant club. These guys work to keep invasive, non native plants out of our parks.

The best nature activity of all is just getting out there. So whether you hike, bike, stroll or roll, make a promise to connect with nature everyday!



www.babesinthewoods.info



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