

# Outdoor Play: Every Day



If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.

- Rachel Carson  
*The Sense of Wonder*



## Did you know?

- Only 6% of American children aged 9-13 play outside.
  - Amy Pertschuk, Managing Director of the Children and Nature Network
- Play is the work of childhood.
  - Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, American Academy of Pediatrics
- Children cannot love what they do not know. They cannot miss what they have not experienced.
  - Mary Pipher, *The Shelter of Each Other*
- Children can be involved in three types of nature experiences:
  - 1) Vicarious: television, internet
  - 2) Indirect: controlled, timed outdoor activities
  - 3) Direct: unstructured, unsupervised, spontaneous, frequent
  - Stephen Kellert, Yale



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## OUTDOOR PLAY

### Outdoor Activities with Minimal Materials

- ♦ Outline the child's shape in chalk. Invite the child to draw the shape into an animal. Depending on the child's interest, add the animal's habitat and name the creature.
- ♦ Play hopscotch. Variation— Escargot is a traditional hopscotch drawn as a spiral, similar to a snail shell.
- ♦ Play games with balls: 4-square, kick ball, keep away, 7-Up, SPUD
- ♦ Bring back the jump rope!
- ♦ Play Hide and seek variations such as sardines (one child hides and those who find the hidden child join the hiding place until the whole group is hiding together).
- ♦ Scavenger Hunts:
  - Use a prepared list with words or photos.
  - Match colors to a handful of crayons.
  - Focus on a single sense: count sounds, collect textures, count how many different smells you find along a walk (be sure to sniff the dirt!).
  - Find leaves of different shapes or colors, leaves with/without holes, leaves with textures, etc. Help the children discover similarities and differences.

### Outdoor Activities with Minimal Materials

(continued from previous column)

- ♦ On a rainy day (or a day with moist soil), search for earthworms. Then use descriptive words such as superlatives: biggest, shortest, fastest, widest, wettest, roundest, darkest, etc.
- ♦ Adopt a tree in the yard, park, or neighborhood.
  - Discover how big the tree is by how many stretched arms/hands it takes to make a circle around the tree.
  - Figure out how many hugs it takes to go around the tree.
  - Imagine how many children would need to stand on each others' shoulders to reach the top.
  - Imagine what animals use different parts of the tree for a home or for food.
  - Draw the tree from different angles including from lying on your back and looking straight up.
  - Make leaf and bark rubbings.
  - Paint with leaves from the tree.
  - Visit the tree each season and draw the tree in a tree journal (you could call the journal: "Me & My Tree").
- ♦ Practice imitating animals through movement and voice.
- ♦ Do what birds do by constructing a nest:
  - For a hummingbird, use moss and spider webs.
  - For a robin, use grass and mud.
  - For an eagle, use sticks and twigs.
- ♦ Play in the rain:
  - Use feathers or brushes to paint on stones with your muddy media.
  - Using an old white sheet, create modern art with splash prints, muddy footprints, and muddy handprints.
  - Smash green leaves or smear flowers for extra color (use rocks or sticks to press for pigments).
- ♦ Start digging in the dirt! Look for changes in color, texture, and smell. Is the dirt different if it is wet or dry?
- ♦ Try to create a tunnel for a toad or chipmunk. How would you keep the small walls from tumbling down?
- ♦ Follow the ants. Where are they going?
  - Smear the pheromone (smell) trail (not the ants) and watch the results.
  - Add a few cookie crumbs nearby and study the response.
- ♦ Be a rock hound. Collect rocks of different types and different characteristics that can be sorted.
- ♦ Use rocks/stones to build or create ground art.
- ♦ Walk while looking into a mirror. Have a lookout (guide) available to prevent children from tripping and to make sure the area is clear.
- ♦ Play shadow tag.
- ♦ Play freeze tag.
- ♦ Engage the children in Joseph Cornell's camera game (see additional handout).





EVERY DAY

## Research Reveals

### Not-So-Fun Facts

- **Today's** kids spend only 4-7 minutes a day on unstructured outdoor play like climbing trees or playing a game of catch. Source: Changing Times of American Youth, Juster Thomas, University of Michigan
- **Most** preschoolers watch more than 32 hours of television per week. Source: Neilsen Company
- **Children** ages 8-10 years spend an average of 6 hours/day "plugged in" with television, video games, computers, and audio media during the school year. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Survey, cited USA Today 7/12/05
- **The average** kindergartener has watched more than 5,000 hours of TV by age 5. Source: Experience Life magazine, 9/04
- **The average** seven-year old suburban child has been exposed to over 20,000 advertisements and can identify 20 corporate logos yet cannot identify the trees growing in the front yard. *Where Do the Children Play? Legacy*, National Association for Interpretation, Sept./Oct. 2005

## Outdoor Play Every Day

**Children need to play outdoors!** Numerous studies are now indicating that play is **more than fun** for kids, it is **necessary** for their physical, mental, and spiritual **well-being**. In addition, outdoor play enhances **scholastic achievement** and provides long term **health benefits**.

### Why Play Outdoors?

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that "free and unstructured play is healthy and, in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient."

According to the CDC, in the last 20 years, the prevalence of obese children 6-11 years has more than doubled to 17%. For children ages 12-19, the prevalence of obesity has more than tripled. Since overweight/obese adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming obese adults, today's children may be the first generation to live shorter lives than their parents. To **combat obesity**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends **one hour of physical activity per day**. (Source: Acting Deputy U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Rutstein)

Free play **helps children learn to share, cooperate and resolve problems**.

Kids who play together and organize games learn new strategies to avoid social isolation. (Source: National Association of the Education of Young Children)

One study reported that 78% of educators surveyed feel students who spend regular time in unstructured outdoor play are **better able to concentrate** and 75% of educators felt that children who spend regular time outdoors are more **creative and better problem-solvers**. (Source: National Wildlife Federation, March 2010, Survey of 2000 educators)

Regular outdoor time can be a **scholastic boon** to children with attention deficit problems, but research reveals connecting all kids with nature can help them **excel academically**. (Source: National Wildlife Federation Be Out There Executive Summary, 2003 study, Environmental Education: Improving Student Achievement)

The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that doctors are seeing a substantial rise in children with Vitamin D deficiencies due to less exposure to sunlight. The lack of Vitamin D puts children at risk for bone problems, heart disease, diabetes, and other health issues. One study indicated that 61% of American children ages 1-21 years were Vitamin D "insufficient." (Source: NWF, Kumar, Munter, Kaskel, Halipern & Melamed, 2009)

Over the course of a four-year study on antidepressant use among approximately 2 million children under 18 years of age, researchers Delate, Gelenberg, Simmons, and Motheral found antidepressant use increased by 49% ... with the fastest growing segment of users ages 0-5 years.

**Play protects children's emotional development**, whereas loss of free time in combination with a "hurried lifestyle can be a source of stress, anxiety and may even contribute to depression for many children." (Source: *American Academy of Pediatrics 2007 report, Ginsburg, National Wildlife Federation*)

**Playing** outdoors is a **naturally healthy way** to have fun!





## MAKE A CHOICE

### Make a Choice to Get Outside

- Children who play outside are more physically active, more creative in their play, less aggressive, and show better concentration. (Burdette and Whitaker, 2005; Ginsburg, et al, 2007)
- Sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008)
- The most direct route to caring for the environment as an adult is participating in "wild nature activities" before the age of 11. (Wells and Lekies, 2006)



## 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County

1. Walk barefoot in dew-soaked grass.
2. Make animal puppets using socks.
3. Design animals from leaves.
4. Imitate animal sounds.
5. Create a bird bath.
6. Find colors that match a handful of crayons.
7. Ski cross-country along park trails.
8. Go canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or boating.
9. Collect different shades of green, orange, brown, etc.
10. Find evergreen trees and compare needles.
11. Carve faces on apples or turnips - even if it's not Halloween.
12. Make footprints on the sidewalk.
13. Play "Fox and Hound" tag in the snow.
14. Examine frost on a window and write a secret message.
15. Weave grass or flower stems into crowns or mats.
16. Look for flying squirrels in the evening, check for evidence and/or build a feeding box. Visit Hidden Oaks Nature Center for details!
17. Go swimming.
18. Rake leaves.
19. Plant milkweed to attract monarch butterflies.
20. Watch moths at the porch light at night.
21. Hike in your neighborhood.
22. Lie on the ground and listen carefully.
23. Make pine cone bird feeders.
24. Take photographs in your yard, a park, or your neighborhood.
25. Play pioneers exploring the outdoors for the first time.
26. Play "LEAN."  
With 4 or more players, stand in a circle and join hands. Count off alternatively by ones or twos. Those with number one lean forward toward the middle of the circle while those with number two lean backward. Players counterbalance each other for support. Once players are balanced, slowly reverse leaners. You can also try taking a step to the right or left while still leaning.

# 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County

## (continued)

27. Jump rope using variations such as “Double Dutch”.
28. Create seed and bean art.
29. Geocache.
30. Collect smells such as flowers, leaves, dirt.
31. Venture on a family night hike in your neighborhood.
32. Drop sticks in a stream and race them.
33. Create stone sculptures.
34. Play “Tarzan” and hop across a stream without getting wet (or get wet if you like).
35. Swing on a swing.
36. Paint terra cotta pots with an image of your favorite animal or flower.
37. Collect textures for an outdoor safari.
38. Make a bird house from a coffee can.
39. Count the time between seeing lightning and hearing thunder.
40. Sled on the snow.
41. Practice tying knots.
42. Lie under a tree and watch shadows through the leaves.
43. Plant violets in a garden.
44. Identify wild flowers or make up names for them.
45. Help worms cross the sidewalk after a rain storm.
46. Play “Button, button, who has the button?”
47. Follow a butterfly.
48. Imagine a conversation between 2 birds.
49. Dip a net into a pond or stream.
50. Make a bed out of pine needles.
51. Ride a bike.
52. Watch a bird build a nest.
53. Play “Kick the Can.”  
[www.familyfun.go.com/playtime/kick-the-can-708085](http://www.familyfun.go.com/playtime/kick-the-can-708085)
54. Shoot marbles.
55. Recycle a milk jug into a bird feeder.
56. Read a book outdoors.
57. Create a bouquet using grass, flowers, twigs, leaves, and cattails.
58. Make a toy from items in your backyard.
59. Climb a tree.
60. Create a bug bottle from a recycled soda container (catch and release insects).
61. Hold a buttercup (flower) under your chin (if it shines yellow, you like butter!).
62. Find ants moving their eggs and pupa under a rock.
63. Make a chart of different seeds.
64. Outline a child’s shape using chalk (then design an animal from the shape).
65. Play “Space Station”.  
Place 3 to 5 Frisbees on the ground in a large area. The Frisbees become the space stations. One person is selected to be ground control. The rest of the players are astronauts floating through space. When ground control shouts, “red alert,” the astronauts find the closest space station and touch it.
66. Learn orienteering using a compass.



## 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County (continued)

67. Start a worm compost pile.
68. Cross a grassy area without stepping on anything green (for example, hop from a dirt patch to a stone to a root).
69. Make a construction site with toy trucks.
70. Find a hideout in a bush in your yard.
71. Follow a rabbit.
72. Make a leaf house for animals.
73. Cross a creek on a fallen log.
74. Create a crown from sticks and leaves.
75. Make a flower chain with buttercups or dandelions.
76. Make a pretend dam using sticks and mud.
77. Make a home for elves or fairies.
78. Blow a dandelion seed.
79. Make a fort in your backyard.
80. Make a "divining" stick and search for water.
81. Smell a lilac or lavender bush.
82. Teach a dog a new trick.
83. Catch a falling leaf before it hits the ground.
84. Visit a farm (such as Frying Pan Park).
85. Find a feather and guess which bird it is from.
86. Make a fishing pole.
87. Find a flower for each color of the rainbow.
88. Create a forest diorama.
89. Create a flying disc golf course.
90. Grow a garden of your favorite plants.
91. Design a gift from objects found in nature.
92. Paint a gourd.
93. Catch a grasshopper and let it go.
94. Plant a hanging garden.
95. Dig a hole and look at different soil textures and smells.
96. Construct a hummingbird nest using moss and spider webs.
97. Prepare a forest puppet show.
98. Hike a trail in a park or try the Cross-County Trail.
99. Fly a kite.
100. Create a labyrinth from rocks.
101. Make a lacrosse catcher from an old milk bottle and play lacrosse using a whiffle ball.
102. Start a leaf collection.
103. Make a leaf stencil.
104. Start a lemonade stand.
105. Make a list of everything you see outdoors one morning.
106. Start a nature diary or journal.
107. Fly a maple seed helicopter.
108. Make a maze through tall grass (remember to check for ticks).
109. Watch a meteor shower.
110. Make a mobile or wind chime using natural items.
111. Make a picture frame from twigs or shells.
112. Create an art piece using a white sheet and muddy hands or feet.
113. Bake a mud pie in the sun.
114. Make musical instruments from natural items.



## 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County (continued)

- 115.Design a Native American talking stick.
- 116.Create a nature scrapbook.
- 117.Bury a nature time capsule.
- 118.Make a clover necklace or crown.
- 119.Fashion a paperweight from a rock.
- 120.Make a new friend by creating a pet rock.
- 121.Create a photo collage of insects and plants in your backyard.
- 122.Catch a snowflake on your tongue.
- 123.Munch a picnic breakfast outdoors.
- 124.Run with a pinwheel that you created.
- 125.Compose a nature song and sing it outside.
- 126.Make a pine cone holiday tree.
- 127.Design a pine cone creature.
- 128.Create a nature poem using each letter of your name.
- 129.Make a pond viewer.
- 130.Carve a pumpkin; bake the seeds.
- 131.Make a mystery touch box.
- 132.Prepare a shadow puppet show on a white sheet with a flashlight after dark.
- 133.Build a rain gauge/snow gauge.
- 134.Create a rainbow with a garden hose in the bright sunlight.
- 135.Whistle using reed or grass.
- 136.Construct a robin nest using grass and mud.
- 137.Start a rock collection.
- 138.Create a sand bottle.
- 139.Search for creatures under a log.
- 140.Dig a hole in search of worms.
- 141.Let a slug slide across a piece of heavy black paper making a slug trail.
- 142.Decorate a small tree with ribbons.
- 143.Hide waterproof objects outside during a snowfall and go on a snow hunt.
- 144.Make a sun dial.
- 145.Build a snowman.
- 146.Watch a spider weave a web.
- 147.Make a star from flowers or grass.
- 148.Create a wave bottle.
- 149.Conduct a turkey survey.
- 150.Make a stick animal.
- 151.Tell a story under the stars at night.
- 152.Create a sun catcher.
- 153.Make a tent in your backyard using blankets.
- 154.Build a terrarium using a recycled bottle.
- 155.Watch a thunderstorm (from indoors).
- 156.Erect a toad house.
- 157.Explode a touch-me-not or impatiens seed.
- 158.Mark a trail using sticks or stones; follow it.
- 159.Collect outdoor items and store them in a treasure bowl.
- 160.Plant a tree.
- 161.Build a tree house (with help from an adult).
- 162.Adopt a tree in your neighborhood.
- 163.Create a tunnel for a toad or chipmunk.
- 164.Build a sand castle.
- 165.Make a scarecrow.
- 166.Grow a vegetable garden.
- 167.Decorate a walking stick.



## 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County (continued)

168. Make a walnut shell boat.
169. Create a wind vane and track the direction of the wind for a week.
170. Plant a windowsill herb garden.
171. Somersault across the yard (on the grass).
172. Make a nature wreath.
173. Imitate your favorite dinosaur plodding or dashing through the woods.
174. Learn how a carrot grows.
175. Learn about outdoor safety.
176. Visit a farmer's market.
177. Make an animal mask.
178. Create an apple print picture.
179. Design an ice sculpture by freezing water in different size/shape containers.
180. Build an igloo (using sugar cubes or outdoors in the snow).
181. Design an indoor scavenger hunt using items found outdoors.
182. Follow ants; add cookie crumbs to see if they follow them or carry them.
183. Find tadpoles in a pond.
184. Search for animal homes.
185. Search for animal tracks and draw pictures of what you find.
186. Look for animals based on certain characteristics (such as two-legged, two-winged, etc.).
187. Start an ant farm.
188. Bounce a ball on a tennis racket.
189. Zoom around on a skateboard.
190. Find natural treasures on a trail.
191. Hunt for crayfish in a local stream.
192. Play badminton.
193. Create bike courses and ride a bike/tricycle through them.
194. Go bird watching.
195. Sail boats in a stream or puddle.
196. Play Bocce ball.
197. Blow bubbles.
198. Take pictures of butterflies.
199. Count ladybugs.
200. Lie on your back and watch the clouds.
201. Play croquet.
202. Make daisy chains.
203. Imitate bird calls.
204. Hunt for minnows.
205. Play dodge ball or catch.
206. Roll down a grassy hill.
207. Look for English Ivy in your yard or a park.
208. Listen for bird calls early in the morning.
209. Follow a firefly.
210. Play flashlight tag after dark.
211. Press flowers and let them dry.
212. Look for a 4-leaf clover.
213. Build a saucer sled run.
214. Look for baby ducks at a local pond.
215. Watch for bats at dusk.
216. Listen for bullfrogs or other summer frogs.
217. Search for camouflaged animals/insects.
218. Dig for clay and make pinch pots.
219. Create a shell creature.



## 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County (continued)

- 220. Look for signs of foraging animals.
- 221. Search for fossils - real or pretend.
- 222. Look for galls (bumps) on leaves.
- 223. Make leaf or bark rubbings.
- 224. Look for dragonfly molted skins near water.
- 225. Use a magnifying glass and look for insects.
- 226. Paint a fence or sidewalk with water.
- 227. Watch for leaves changing color.
- 228. Look for letter-shaped leaves or twigs.
- 229. Look and listen for migrating geese.
- 230. Look for moss on trees.
- 231. Search for Monarch butterfly chrysalises.
- 232. Feel different textures of moss.
- 233. Hunt for mushrooms or fungi (look with your eyes but no touching or collecting).
- 234. Make homemade paper.
- 235. Soak feet in water and make water prints on the sidewalk.
- 236. Watch for the opening of night blooms on flowers/plants.
- 237. Look for beetles under logs.
- 238. Search for patterns in nature.
- 239. Look for Paw Paws or persimmon fruit.
- 240. Search for a rotting log and what lives on it.
- 241. Search for scat (animal droppings).
- 242. Look for snake trails.
- 243. Look for snow fleas (springtails).
- 244. Sit in a shady spot.
- 245. Search for glistening spider webs.
- 246. Listen for spring sounds outdoors.
- 247. Look for woodpecker holes in trees.
- 248. Draw a rainbow.
- 249. Look for caterpillars.
- 250. Play Four Square or other ball games.
- 251. Play "I Spy" in the park.
- 252. Eat watermelon cubes/slices under a tree.
- 253. Play Hackie Sack.
- 254. Post haikus (Japanese poetry) on a tree.
- 255. Play in the sprinkler.
- 256. Make garland from popcorn and put it outside for the birds to eat.
- 257. Make icicles in the winter by poking holes in a container, filling it with water, and hanging it outside to freeze.
- 258. Swing in a hammock.
- 259. Count birds.
- 260. Camp at Burke Lake Park.
- 261. Volunteer in your community garden.
- 262. Play in a creek.
- 263. Spray snow with colored water (using spray bottles).
- 264. Spin a hula hoop.
- 265. Slide in the mud.
- 266. Listen for owls in the evening.
- 267. Rake leaves into piles and jump in them.
- 268. Play on a playground in a park.
- 269. Splash in a puddle of water.
- 270. Dance in the rain.
- 271. Lie down in the snow.
- 272. Dress in a swimsuit and pretend to swim in warm rain.



## **365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County (continued)**

- 273. Draw in the mud using your toes.
- 274. Take indoor games outside to play.
- 275. Make ink from berries.
- 276. Hide in the bushes.
- 277. Pretend you are a dinosaur looking for food.
- 278. Play jacks.
- 279. Gather friends and play kickball.
- 280. Play King of the Hill.
- 281. Play leapfrog with a friend.
- 282. Collect leaves of many colors.
- 283. Collect lichen.
- 284. Play limbo with friends.
- 285. Hunt for lizards.
- 286. Toast marshmallows over a campfire.
- 287. Wash out bird feeders and restock them.
- 288. Look at the moon.
- 289. Play Monkey-in-the-Middle (keep-away).
- 290. Explore/taste honeysuckle nectar.
- 291. Play hopscotch.
- 292. Paint with mud using feathers as a brush.
- 293. Explore seed stalks.
- 294. Raise native butterflies.
- 295. Hop across your yard.
- 296. Breathe on cold glass to make a cloudy area.
- 297. Find a frozen pond.
- 298. Balance on a log or tree trunk.
- 299. Jump on a pogo stick.
- 300. Glide on rollerskates/rollerblades.
- 301. Lie on your back and take photos of the sky.
- 302. Count rings on a tree stump.
- 303. Paint a stone.
- 304. Paint a shell.
- 305. Plant silver maple seedlings.
- 306. Visit a petting zoo.
- 307. Create origami animals.
- 308. Play shadow tag.
- 309. Make your name using pebbles or seeds.
- 310. Play outdoor bingo.
- 311. Go on an outdoor scavenger hunt in the park.
- 312. Hop over rocks or stones.
- 313. Explore what you find when you turn over a rock or stone.
- 314. Jump over a stick or log.
- 315. Fly paper airplanes.
- 316. Play basketball using a basket on the ground.
- 317. Look for flying squirrels just after sundown.
- 318. Draw patterns in the snow or dirt.
- 319. Play Pooh Sticks (Winnie-the-Pooh game).
- 320. Create rain art with dry poster paint and paper plates.
- 321. Play red light, green light.
- 322. Play Red Rover.
- 323. Find resin on a pine tree.
- 324. Climb on rocks.
- 325. Create a new jump rope rhyme.
- 326. Look for salamanders.
- 327. Make a sand painting of a nature scene.
- 328. Make trail signs using sticks/twigs.
- 329. Play "Simon Says" while exploring a park.
- 330. Plant seeds.



## 365 Ways to Enjoy Playing Outdoors in Fairfax County (continued)

- 331. Make a vegetable salad.
- 332. Put worms in a sensory table with dirt.
- 333. Shake snow from the branches of a tree.
- 334. Spray flowers outdoors with a spray bottle of water.
- 335. Make a map of places you find bird nests.
- 336. Make a pine cone bouquet.
- 337. Act like a squirrel and hide nuts (or toys).
- 338. Play stick ball.
- 339. Make stilts from cans and rope.
- 340. Skip stones in a pond or lake.
- 341. Count the number of birds at a bird feeder.
- 342. Look for groundhogs.
- 343. Act like a rabbit and hop around the yard.
- 344. Watch the sunset.
- 345. Stomp through frozen puddles wearing boots.
- 346. Help clean your local park.
- 347. Visit a pumpkin patch.
- 348. Sleep under the stars in your backyard.
- 349. Sit under a tree and look up toward the top.
- 350. Twirl around outside and try to walk straight.
- 351. Make a snowman using birdseed for the face.
- 352. Make a fruit salad at a picnic table.
- 353. Visit an apple farm and pick apples.
- 354. Make applesauce, apple muffins, or apple pie and have a snack under a tree.
- 355. Play freeze tag and pose like animals.
- 356. Draw with chalk on the sidewalk or driveway.
- 357. Draw the stars and then connect the dots.
- 358. Hop like a frog then slither like a snake.
- 359. Squish your toes and fingers in the mud.
- 360. Play miniature golf in your backyard.
- 361. Play animal charades.
- 362. Build a snow fort.
- 363. Make potpourri using dried lavender and other flowers that smell good.
- 364. Act like a tree and sway in the breeze.
- 365. Visit a nature center and talk with a naturalist to discover more fun things to do outdoors in Fairfax County.

### Online Resources

Fairfax County Parks Authority (Nature Centers and more)  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks)

Backyard Nature  
[www.backyardnature.com](http://www.backyardnature.com)

Sharing Nature Worldwide  
[www.sharingnature.com](http://www.sharingnature.com)

National Wildlife Federation  
[www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)

Arbor Day/Nature Explore  
[www.arborday.org/explore](http://www.arborday.org/explore)

Exploring Nature Educational Resource  
[www.exploringnature.org](http://www.exploringnature.org)

Nature for Kids  
[www.natureforkids.net](http://www.natureforkids.net)

Outdoor Nature Child  
[www.outdoor-nature-child.com](http://www.outdoor-nature-child.com)

Children and Nature Network  
[www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)

USDA Plants Database  
<http://plants.usda.gov>

Northwest Prairie Wildlife Research Center  
[www.npwrc.usgs.gov](http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov)

Arbor Day Foundation Tree Guide  
[www.arborday.org/trees/treeGuide/browseTrees.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/trees/treeGuide/browseTrees.cfm)

Environmental Protection Agency  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Butterflies and Moths of North America  
[www.butterfliesandmoths.org](http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org)

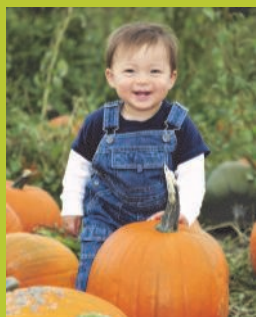
Smithsonian Institution North American Mammals  
[www.mnh.si.edu/mna](http://www.mnh.si.edu/mna)





## RESOURCES

### Learn More About Nature Activities



## Recommended Resources



**I Love Dirt!: 52 Activities to Help You and Your Kids Discover the Wonders of Nature**, Jennifer Ward, Trumpeter, 2008

**Sharing Nature With Children**, Joseph Cornell, Dawn Publications, 1998

**Hands-On Nature: Information and Activities for Exploring the Environment with Children**, Lingelbach, Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 1986

**Young Naturalist's Notebook**, Alexandra Littlehales, Hearthsong, 2004

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**WoodsWalk: Peepers, Porcupines, and Exploding Puff Balls!**, Art and Robbins, Storey Books, 2003

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**NAEYC Recommended List of Children's Books About Nature (online resource)**

[www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200801/BTJRecommendedNatureBooks.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200801/BTJRecommendedNatureBooks.pdf)



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