

Outdoor Exploration

For Toddlers (18 - 34 months)

6 Benefits of Nature Exploration for Toddlers

#1 Promotes Early Language Development:

When toddlers are exposed to rich sensory environments their minds are active. Nature provides an abundance of sensory experiences which in turn activates the intake of the child's mind. Babies become more curious, and this combination encourages early language development.

#2 Make Sense of the World:

Inviting toddlers to explore nature coincides with their natural instincts to become scientists and explorers.

Nature exploration develops the formation of babies' synapses while they are trying to make sense of the world.

#3 Physical Development:

Children acquire a large percentage of their gross motor skills before age 5. Toddlers' outdoor experiences in nature may offer new opportunities to pull up, toddle, and walk. Observing older children running and jumping also benefits their physical development.



#4 Healthy Sleep:

Everyone sleeps better when they are exposed to fresh air and sunlight, especially toddlers. Developing regular routines for getting out in nature helps infants create their own body rhythms and develops healthy sleep patterns.

#5 Builds Immune System:

Children who spend more time outdoors have stronger immune systems. The exposure to outdoor elements such as sun, wind, rain, and snow increases toddlers' immune systems more than indoor environments.

#6 Good for the Entire Family:





Toddlers sense the stress of their caregivers. Exploring nature together is an ideal activity, as getting outdoors can decrease depression, anxiety, and tension in adults.

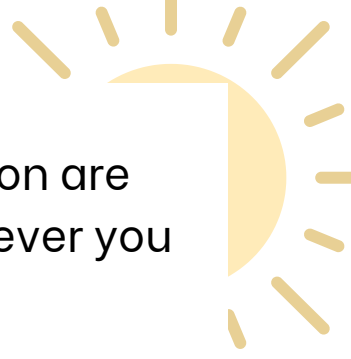


Tips for Parents of Toddlers


#1 Let the toddler take the initiative: Play only when the little one feels like playing. If they are forced into playing, they will not benefit from the activity and may be traumatized. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you let the toddler guide themselves through activities.

#2 Play Multiple Activities in a Week: Have an activity schedule where you play several outdoor activities in a week to nurture every skill and milestone of the toddler.






#3 Be Interactive: Communication and interaction are essential for your toddler to grow socially. Whenever you play with the toddler, make it a point to have a meaningful conversation. That will improve their communication skills and vocabulary.



#4 Play in Groups: When a toddler plays in groups, they exercise several skills such as social, language, and cognitive. For that reason, preschoolers are encouraged to have group play at childcare centers. When playing outdoors, you can do the same thing. Playing as a family also counts as group play.



#5 Be Alert: Toddlers can get super excited and may forget their surroundings. In the process, they may not realize where they are running or walking. Therefore, toddler outdoor games should be played under adult supervision.



Toddler Activities

Mud hand impressions

You will need: Your toddler

How to: You could use any mud, but it is best enjoyed with the fine sand. On the sand, show the toddler how to make a hand impression. Let the toddler do the same. You could also leave marks on the sand with your feet as you walk away.

Skills developed: Tactile sensory development.



Fastest Rope Pullers

You will need: long, soft rope, a tricycle or small toy car

How to: This outdoor toddler activity is best played with at least four people. Divide the group into two teams. Tie one end of the rope to the tricycle and hand the other end to one team. Mark a point on the ground till which they need to pull. Ask the toddler to tug the tricycle towards them as fast as they can. Repeat the activity with the other team.

Skills developed: Gross motor skills, muscle dexterity, team-building skills

Garden hide and seek

You will need: A partner and the toddler

How to: Find a nice place, such as a park, to play the game. Let your partner and toddler be the team that hides, and you be the seeker. Your partner should encourage the toddler to find hiding spots such as behind trees, bushes, thickets, etc. You could make the activity more enjoyable by asking the toddler to call you while you pretend that you can't find him.

Skills developed: Social skills, basic cognitive skills