

Spring Time Play with Your Child

Finally spring has arrived! Have you started to feel like your children are bouncing off the walls? Time to get them outside and having fun! But what to do? The first step is actually walking out the door! The fresh air and bright sun alone will make the entire family feel better. It has been a long winter and those first steps might seem a little overwhelming with excited children stumbling around at your feet, but you can do it!

Here are some fun and educational ideas to keep your children happy and entertained while you play outdoors...

As the snow melts there will be an increase of water running along the streets. With careful supervision, this game can be fun entertainment while going out for a walk. Have each of your children pick out a leaf, stick or sprig of grass. Whatever you choose, it will need to float. You can choose a start and a finish line if you wish. Or you can just see whose item floats the furthest. Set your items into the flowing stream. Watch as nature maneuvers it down and through obstacles. Cheer and get excited with your children. Make up your own rules. Have fun and enjoy the laughter!

Try going on a nature treasure walk. Before leaving home, make a list of colors, shapes, animals etc. for your young one to find. For example, 1 bird, 3 things that are red, 4 circles. As you continue on your walk, have our child record each time he/she sees one of these things. Hint: If your child can't yet read try drawing pictures or using colorful crayons for the list. When you get home see if your child can remember the items they saw, check the list and celebrate!

Teach your children about their senses. Sight is often one that we take advantage of. Help your child to learn that there are other ways to experience the world as well. Take a bandana or a scarf and cover your child's eyes. Safely and carefully lead them to your backyard or a park. Ask them to use their senses other than sight to experience the walk. Ask your child what he/she smells? Lead them to trees and get them to touch the bark and the leaves. How do they feel? Take a moment and just listen to the world. What do they hear? Try something new, trade places with your young one and let them guide you! Experience what your child wants you to, learn from them!

Splash in puddles! Dig up mud! Collect rocks! Feel that dirt under your fingernails. Remember what it was like to be a kid, because those moments and memories are soon lost and forgotten. Don't let the child in side of you slip away!

By Leah Nicholson. Leah Nicholson is an Outreach Worker at Family Services of Central Alberta, your Parent Link Centre. For more information on parenting and programs offered, call 403-343-6400 or go to www.fsca.ca.