



Giving Providers, Parents and Businesses the Resources to Better

Our Children's Future



Parent Newsletter January 2022



Benefits of spending time outside during the winter

While it may sound warm and cozy to spend the winter months inside your house, you might be surprised at the multitude of mental and physical benefits for children spending time outdoors. It is a common misconception that being outside in cold weather can bring on illness, which is why many parents keep children inside. However, research has shown that's just not true! As long as kids bundle up and stay safe, being outside in the cold is more beneficial than staying inside.

One of the biggest health benefits from spending time outside during the winter is the Vitamin D our skin absorbs from the sun. Humans require Vitamin D for bone health and disease prevention. Vitamin D can also help protect against a plethora of diseases. Kids also burn more calories in the cold than in the heat. Spending time outdoors in the winter can also help with mental health (preventing Seasonal Affective Disorder) and help improve creativity and focus.





A bit of extra caution in the winter

While we want your kids to spend as much time outside during the winter as they can, it must be noted that going outdoors in the winter does require preparation and precaution. Dress your children appropriately for the weather in layers. You can always take off a layer if you get too warm, but it is dangerous to be outdoors with not enough protection from the cold. Another important tip is to know the weather forecast and keep an eye on the sky as you spend time outside. This will help you to avoid getting caught in a winter storm.

It is astonishing what we can gain just from spending time outdoors in the winter. It can help us improve our bodies and our minds. So, if you are feeling restless after long days spent cooped up indoors, get outside, be safe, and have fun!

<https://runwildmychild.com/outdoor-winter-activities-for-kids/>



Outdoor winter activities for kids

Frozen colored ice globes

Even if you don't have snow, you can add some magic and fun to your outdoor space by making colored ice globes. All you need to do is add a few drops of food coloring to the water in a water balloon and let them freeze (either outside or in the freezer). Once frozen, pop the balloon and you're left with a beautiful ice globe in your color of choice. Take them outside to decorate or play with.

Frozen suncatchers

Suncatchers made from ice are not only beautiful, but super easy to make! Spend some time outside gathering natural items to use in your suncatchers. The more colorful the better. Examples: branches, berries, twigs, flowers, buds, leaves. Lay out a plastic lid, paper plate, pie plate or silicone mold to use as the mold for your suncatcher. Fill the mold with water and add your natural elements to the water in any design of your choosing. Leave outside for a few hours or overnight to freeze. Gently remove the ice suncatcher from the mold and hang from a tree branch or window sill.

Snow paint

Get creative with your outdoor nature crafts this winter by making some snow paint for your kids. Combine food coloring or watercolor paints with some water and place in a spray bottle. Send your kids out to color the snow in any creative way they'd like! You'll be surprised what incredible clever creations they come up with!



Does your child's caregiver participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)? CACFP helps providers serve healthy meals and snacks to your child by reimbursing him or her for following nutritious guidelines. If your provider doesn't participate in the CACFP, talk to him or her about signing up. For more information, contact Chris Wigren, CACFP Specialist, at 716-661-9430 ext. 2269 or cwigren@chautopp.org.

Interested in starting your day care? The Chautauqua Child Care Council Can help you to get started and every step along the way. For more information call 716-664-9430 Ext. 2289 or 2290.



Do you need assistance finding quality child care? The Child Care Council can help! We provide free, customized referrals to licensed/registered child care providers in Chautauqua County. Please contact 1-800-424-4532 to get started or email Childcare@chautopp.org

