

I Taught My Child Today...

by enjoying outdoor play together.



Ideas to Promote Learning Outside in Your Neighborhood

- Talk to your infant or toddler about what you see along the way as you walk together out in your yard, to the bus stop or out in the woods.
- Play “I Spy” with your little one by describing something simple nearby and letting him guess what it is. For example, say, “I see something grey and fuzzy,” as you see a grey squirrel by a nearby tree. “What is it?”
- Hang a wind chime outside your door or window to listen to as the wind blows or hang it inside near a window to catch the wind. Use different words to describe the sounds: clink, tinkle, jingle, jangle, ring, chink, clank, soft, and loud.
- Walk together to the mailbox to mail an envelope. Toddlers can help put the letter in the mailbox with your assistance. Help your toddler send his own letter or picture he drew to Grandma or another special relative. Discuss how to cross a busy street safely as you stroll along.
- Visit a neighborhood park. Kick a ball and blow bubbles. Infants will giggle as bubbles fly around. Toddlers will chase them. Lie on a blanket together on the grass and talk about the clouds in the sky. Watch for airplanes flying overhead. Listen to the sounds of birds.
- Encourage your toddler to gently touch the leaves on low bushes, a stone, the grass, moss, dried up leaves, and tree bark. Ask questions about how they feel such as, “Does this feel scratchy?”

As parents recognize the huge number of opportunities for teaching their young children through everyday outdoor experiences, they develop a new level of understanding and joy around teaching and learning. As first teachers of their little ones, parents teach sensory experiences, scientific exploration, language and social development, motor skills, and creativity. At the same time, all these activities require care about constant supervision and safety including choking hazard awareness. Bonding, fresh air and learning respect for the environment go hand-in-hand with the positive effects on cognitive development. An especially great plus for these outdoor experiences is that this increased physical activity positively affects the growing issue of childhood obesity in our country. When teaching about outdoor, neighborhood activities, your little scientist is making sense of her world as it is experienced!

Resource: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/

Infancy Leadership Circle/Erie:

A Project of New York Zero-to-Three Network —Raising Voices For Babies