

Five Easy Ways to Engage Families in Outdoor Play

Invite Families to Engage in a Nature Treasure Drive

Invite families to collect and donate age appropriate nature treasures (e.g. leaves, flowers, tree fruits) for the program. It's as simple as taking a walk around the block and seeing what you can find! Bring your treasures back to your program and place them in the collection area. Learning with nature treasures can take place inside and outside!

Hide/Seek a "Friend"

Invite families to bring an indoor object outside and take turns hiding it with their child! Encourage them to try an item that would be completely out of place in nature (stuffed animal, plastic dinosaur, etc). Purposefully start out with an easy hiding place to get the child hooked then progress into more challenging spots!

I Spy

Families can head outdoors and play a game of "I Spy" together! "I spy with my little eye something _____!" The colors, categories, shapes, and objects to spy out in nature are plentiful. Seeing the world through someone else's eyes can help you observe and connect with things you haven't noticed before.

What Can My Shadow Do?

Encourage families to have their children find their shadows, then give time for them to play and experiment with how their shadows move. They could ask "Can your shadow _____?" or "I wonder if your shadow can _____?". Play along and feel free to incorporate branches, leaves, and other natural items to transform your shadows. Shadows might be able to wave, clap, jump, wiggle, dance ... the possibilities are endless!

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