



MARCH 2009



# Family Time Work Time

A BALANCING ACT

## Building Strong Families

### Have Fun Outdoors!

When the weather cooperates, there is no better place for your child to be than the great outdoors. To be healthy children need to get fresh air and exercise. A bonus is all the learning that takes place while your child is playing in your yard or maybe at a near-by park or playground.

#### Here are some things for kids to do outdoors:

Kids are natural "collectors." They love to gather things such as acorns, pine cones, small stones, leaves, and twigs. These are "treasures" for a child.

Children love to pretend to be camping under a tent made from an old sheet or blanket. Provide some old pots, pans, and some unbreakable dishes and spoons.

Discoveries such as bugs and worms are exciting finds for a child.

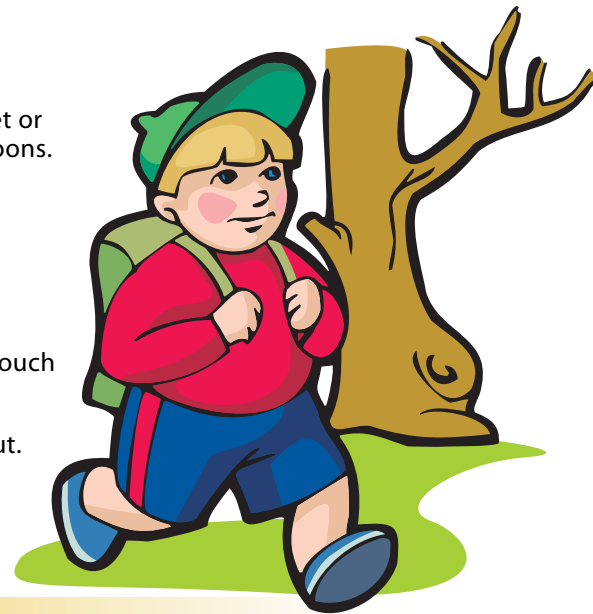
Sticks and stones can provide hours of fun.

Trees, bushes, flowers, and weeds are other outdoor things to explore.

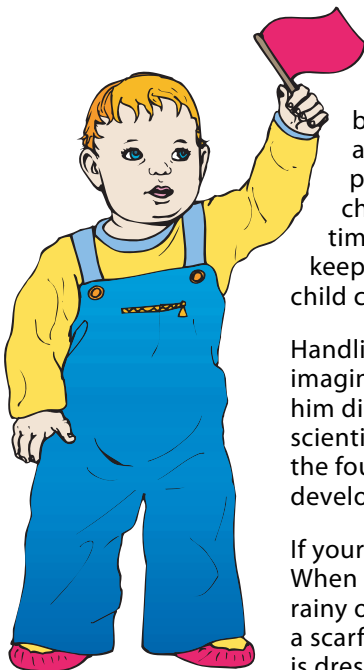
Young children learn best from their senses, when they can see, smell, and touch things.

Children can be loud when they are outdoors. They can laugh, yell, and shout.

When outdoors, children can run, play, and climb on things. They can throw balls and roll down a hill. There are so many interesting things to do outdoors!



### Play Clothes for Play



Children learn best and can be more creative when they have the freedom to explore and play with all kinds of materials. This includes taking part in messy projects such as painting, play dough or clay activities, and water play that can be done both indoors and outdoors. Some activities such as digging in the mud and sand play are just for outdoors, as well as running, climbing, and other active play. Make sure your child has clothing that is sturdy and washable for play while at child care and at home, too. Save the good clothes for family outings or other special times. Your child and the child care professionals should not have to worry about keeping clothing clean when having fun exploring and creating wonderful things at child care.

Handling messy materials can help your child learn as he explores them. He can use his imagination to create things. He may be a budding artist and early experiences will help him discover new worlds that will expand as he grows. Your daughter may be a future scientist and what she learns from playing in the mud or exploring the outdoors may be the foundation for her future. All children benefit from chances to play freely. Children develop and learn many new skills when they play.

If your child is in child care, make sure to always provide an extra set of play clothes. When a set comes home dirty be sure to take a clean set the next day. When weather is rainy or cold dress your child for that weather. This can include boots, mittens or gloves, a scarf, and a hat. The right kind of jacket or coat is important, too. Make sure your child is dressed "ready to play" every day.

## Is It Time for Check-ups?

It's up to parents to make sure their children get regular health check-ups. This not only includes medical exams and required immunizations, but also eye exams, and dental exams. Here are some basic guidelines:

- For infants, your family doctor or pediatrician will give you a schedule for visits and for immunizations. It is important to have these up-to-date. Your child will need updated immunization records for child care and for school.
- Ask your family health provider how often older children need a medical exam.
- For eye care, an infant should have an initial exam by six months of age. Children ages one to eighteen need eye exams every two to four years. If there is a family history of an eye disease, a child should have eye exams more often.
- Dental exams should start by at least age four and should happen every six months. Regular exams can help prevent serious dental problems.



## Spring Cleaning



Signs of spring are appearing, with bulbs peeking through the ground and a few hardy crocuses blooming. This is a welcome sight. Spring is almost here! It's time to think of warmer days, spring flowers, and even spring cleaning!

- Spring cleaning can help you organize your house and clothing and prepare for warmer weather. This is a project your whole family can take part in. Your kids can help you in many ways.
- Clean out closets and get rid of unused clothing. Have your child help decide on clothing and toys that are no longer used. Charity groups welcome donations of gently used clothes, shoes, and household items.
- Deep clean corners of closets and behind furniture in all your rooms.
- Your basement and garage can use reorganizing and cleaning. Check your sports equipment, garden tools, and camping equipment if you have any. Get rid of anything you no longer use.
- Check and clean outdoor furniture.
- Wash windows, inside and out. This is a job your child can help you do.

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