



What Can a Child Do in Nature?

101 Ideas for Parents Who Have Forgotten — and for Children Who Have Not Yet Learned

For 21st century American children, play time is most often inside time — and if there's no electrical outlet, all is lost!

In truth, the ultimate playground is still the natural outdoors, but that's unfamiliar territory to many of our kids. Even if they make it to a local park, or to the "back forty" of their farm, or even just to a vacant lot, they may not know anything to do there! Sometimes their parents don't know, either. So here are 101 simple ideas.

- Climb a tree
- Catch a grasshopper
- Dig a hole to China
- Pick ripe berries
- Smell the flowers
- Build a fort
- Hide in the bushes
- Feel fuzzy plants
- Peek into a birdhouse
- Burrow through a thicket
- Glide on a tall swing
- Collect rocks and shells
- Whack trees with sticks
- Roll down a hill
- Gaze at the clouds
- Find a secret hide-away
- Follow an animal trail
- Balance on a log
- Toast marshmallows
- Marvel at the Milky Way
- Run through open fields
- Dive into leaf piles
- Build an igloo
- Sleep in a tent
- Catch tadpoles
- Zoom down a sledding hill
- Dam up a tiny stream
- Climb up boulder piles
- Skip stones on a pond
- Dig up a carrot
- Paddle a canoe
- Catch a bluegill
- Design a tree house
- Dig in the sand
- Grow a beanpole teepee
- Make mud pies
- Walk barefoot in dew-y grass
- Paint with watercolors
- Play Pooh sticks
- Find a bright feather
- Read books under a tree
- Follow raccoon tracks
- Spy a turtle on a log
- Bicycle through a park

What Can a Child Do in Nature? *continued*

Snap a photo of a deer
Make a willow whistle
Catch a garter snake
Build a snowman
Splash in puddles
Search for Monarch chrysalises
Make your own waterslide
Chase a cottontail
Whistle a happy song
Sail a walnut-shell boat
Pen a poem
Explode touch-me-not seeds
Splash through a creek
Nap in a hammock
Make a snow angel
Watch a meteor shower
Listen to an owl calling
Catch fireflies in a bottle
Blow dandelion seeds
Create sandbox sculptures
Gather acorns for trading
Climb a hill
Follow ant trails
Watch the sun set
Dig up earthworms
Suck honeysuckle nectar
Fly a kite
Catch snowflakes on your tongue
Plant a vegetable garden

Skip down a boardwalk
Stalk a lizard
Chew on a wild onion
Feed the birds
Listen to bullfrogs
Wear a bedstraw crown
Walk in the rain
Swing on a rope
Have a snowball fight
Start a flower box
Jump from rock to rock
Race a friend
Sniff a lilac bush
Fly maple seed helicopters
Plant a tree
Go on a picnic
Play king of the hill
Find a four-leaf clover
Pick daisy petals
Look under stepping stones
Paint a gourd
Make leaf rubbings
Run through the sprinklers
Start a home bird list
Water the garden
Play hide and seek
Be a chalk artist
Day dream

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