

Little Woods Nature Play Area

Ideas for Helping You Child Experience and Explore Nature

Encourage your child to use their imagination as they play and remember that playing outdoors can sometimes get a little bit messy, but that's part of the fun!

1. Lay on the ground and make shapes from the clouds
2. Watch for birds at the bird feeders and bird houses
3. Turn over a rock to look for bugs
4. Dig a hole in the dirt
5. Jump from stump to stump pretending the ground is lava, water, or something else you wouldn't want to fall into
6. Build a hide away from tarps, bamboo stalks, corn stalks, or branches with leaves using the lean-to structures
7. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds of nature – what do you hear?
8. Stack rocks or pinecones and see how high you can get them
9. Make a snow angel
10. Build a pile of leaves or bark
11. Splash in the water
12. Build a snow fort
13. Pretend you're a wild animal, where would you sleep? Find food? Hide from other animals?
14. Listen to wind chimes
15. Collect leaves from the ground – how many different types can you find?
16. Try to find every color of the rainbow in the play area
17. Make shadow puppets on the fence
18. Play with snowballs
19. Build up a pile of rocks and pour water over it to create a water fall
20. Make a mud pie and decorate it with rocks, twigs, and leaves as toppings
21. Write your name or draw a picture in the dirt using a stick
22. Climb on a pile of leaves or bark
23. Pretend the log is a balance beam and create a routine
24. Practice whistling with a blade of grass
25. Play nature themed Eye-Spy
26. Play hide and go seek
27. Have a picnic
28. Try to identify bird calls
29. Place items in your child's hand with their eyes closed and have them guess what they are holding
30. Watch ants
31. Catch snowflakes on your gloves and look at their different shapes
32. Jump in a puddle
33. Watch for butterflies
34. Search for spider webs
35. Search for tracks in the snow or mud

36. Sit still and listen, what do you hear?
37. Test to see what items float in water
38. Make a boat out of leaves
39. Write a poem or song about nature
40. Read a story outside
41. Create your own story based what you see in nature
42. See how long you can keep a leaf from touching the ground with your hands or breath
43. See how long you can balance on one foot on the wooden logs
44. Take a peak in one of the bird houses, just don't disturb any birds that may be inside!
45. Count flowers on the bushes
46. Make animal calls like cawing crows, hooting owls, peeping spring peepers, or chattering squirrels
47. Blow dandelion seeds from the stem
48. Look for mushrooms
49. Make an art collage on the ground using natural materials (leaves, sticks, dirt, rocks, etc)
50. Make a dandelion chain
51. Create an obstacle course to walk through
52. Build a snow man and decorate him with items from nature
53. Play follow the leader
54. Play Simon Says
55. Build a dirt volcano
56. Crawl through the bush tunnel
57. Watch the sunrise or sunset
58. Look for rocks with as many different designs and colors as you can find
59. Play "The Sound I Never Heard"
 - a. Many things go on in nature that we never hear. For example: You could say "I heard a spider spinning it's web" or "I heard a worm crawling through the dirt" etc. What other examples can you come up with? Get creative!
60. Explore the rock wall looking for plants and bugs