

ACTIVE LEARNING WITH RAE

Bringing learning to life!



Outdoor Activities for You & the Kids!



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As I film this, we are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, with the coronavirus changing life as we've known it. Although we're being asked to socially isolate, that doesn't mean we have to hide inside, becoming pale and feeble. In fact, not going outdoors is a bad idea on a regular basis. But it's a much worse idea in our current situation!



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- be vital to the immune system;
- encourage big-body play (gross motor activity), which burns the most calories; and
- makes us feel happier!

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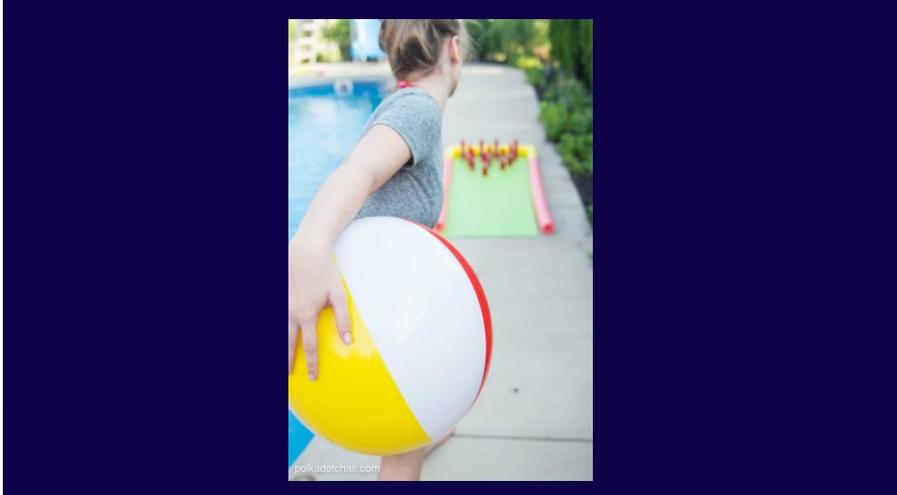
In fact, research proves the benefits of exposure to nature and outdoor light include improved vision, behavior, and all-around health.

I know that when I was sitting by a neighborhood pond the other day, gazing at the water, I felt like all was right with the world. So, whether you're a parent, teacher, or caregiver, I want to encourage you to go outside and to get the children you care for out there with you!



What to do while you're out there?

When I think of outdoor activities that offer lots of benefits – beyond the fun involved – chasing bubbles is always the first thing that comes to mind! As an adult, you might find this game overly simple...but children love it! You can simply blow bubbles and ask the children to chase them, or you can add a little mathematics component by counting each bubble they manage to pop. It's also great for cardiovascular endurance, and if the children are jumping, that's muscular strength and endurance, too!



How about some bottle bowling? Among other things, it's great for improving hand-eye coordination and visual tracking. Just set up large, empty soda or milk bottles in the backyard, hand your child a beach ball or a big playground ball, and let her bowl to her heart's content!

- Set the bottle on the ground and invite the child to stand opposite it, beginning with a very short distance away. (If you have several children playing, line up the bottles side by side, far enough apart so the hoops placed over them don't interfere with each other.)
- Line the children up similarly, each opposite a bottle.)
- The child tries to toss the hoop over the bottle.
- After every unsuccessful try, he simply retrieves the hoop and tries again.
- With each successful try, if he wants, he can take a step further away from the bottle to make it a bit more challenging.



Have a plastic hoop available? You can use it and one of those empty bottles to play a game of ring toss.

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Follow the Leader is a tried-and-true game if there are a few children available to play. If not – if it's just you and a child – change it to the Shadow Game, in which one person leads and the other shadows the leader's movements. Both improve the ability to physically replicate what the eyes see – necessary for both artistic endeavors and learning to write!

Touch It!

- Ask each child to find his own personal space (or “home base”) and to stand there until you give an instruction.
- Call out a command such as “Touch something yellow [green; brown; rough; smooth; round flat]!”
- The children run to touch something matching that description and then return to their home base to await the next instruction.
- Repeat this for as long as they stay interested!

This game is great for color, texture, and shape identification, while also being about cardiovascular endurance!

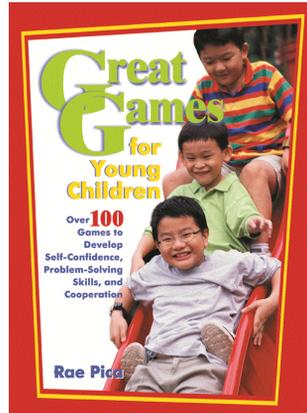
How about “painting” the outside of your building or home? Give your child a bucket of water and a paintbrush and let them at it! This not only teaches lessons in absorption and evaporation; also, it provides some much-needed upper torso exercise!

Of course, there’s no need to stay in the backyard, as long as you’re not mixing with crowds. Many of you know I’m a huge fan of a listening walk. With this activity, as you and the child or children walk, you’re listening for either man-made or natural sounds (whichever you’ve previously designated). In addition to providing valuable exercise, this is a great active-listening activity, placing it under the heading of emergent literacy. When you return to the yard, invite the children to act out some of the things they’ve heard!

Finally, before heading indoors again, why not find creatures in the clouds. This wonderfully old-fashioned activity stimulates the imagination and helps children acquire the ability to relax, which is a learned skill. It was a favorite activity during my childhood, and I’d love to see it become a favorite of today’s children!

ACTIVITIES EXCERPTED FROM...

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