


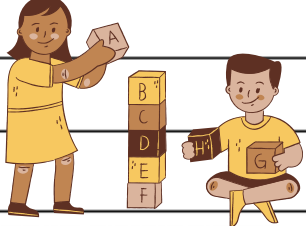


CMNH Play Based

Learning Tip #13

What is work and what is play from a child's perspective? Part 1: Environmental Cues

Grown-ups tend to have a good understanding of what is work or play from our perspective, but children also use environmental and emotional cues to differentiate between work and play. Understanding those cues can help caregivers and educators to determine whether a play based activity feels more like work or more like play for children. Here are some environmental cues that children use to determine whether an activity is work or play:

Child perceives as work	Child perceives as play
	
Environmental:	Environmental:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sitting at a table or desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sitting on the floor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An adult is involved and/or evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of adult involvement - no evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some emphasis on the finished product	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No specific finished product
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is sedentary--they are "stuck" in one spot for a period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ability to be physical---move whenever and wherever they wish

Important to note: an **activity can be play based, and still feel like work for the child.** Finding a balance between activities is key, but providing some time each day that feels like play is important!



Winter Activity Idea: Snow Painting

Snow painting is a fun way to get creative when playing outside in the winter time! For this activity you will need water, food coloring, jars or cups, spray bottles, pipettes, spoons, and/or paint brushes.



Steps:

1: Gather materials ahead of time. Pipettes work well, but spoons, paintbrushes, and spray bottles work well, too!

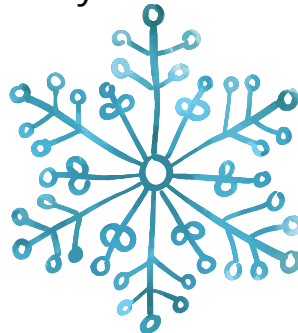
2: Put water and food coloring in jars or cups to take outside. food coloring can stain, but should not stain glass containers. If possible, save some glass jam jars or other recyclables to use

3: Use a tray or work surface to place the materials, and allow children to start snow painting!

4: Use primary colors, red, yellow, and blue, to see if you can create secondary colors in the snow! Does it work? Why or why not?

5: Try building a snow sculpture, then painting it! Try writing words or letters with the pipettes.

This activity works well on a sunny day when there is snow on the ground. It's a fun activity for a snow day!



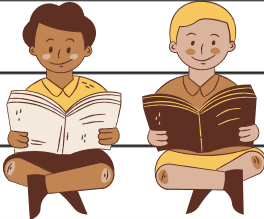
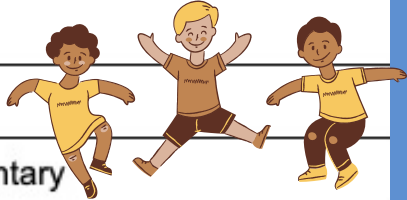



CMNH Play Based

Learning Tip #14

What is work and what is play from a child's perspective? Part 2: Emotional Cues

Children use environmental and emotional cues to determine whether an activity feels like more like work or play. Here are some of the emotional cues that children use:

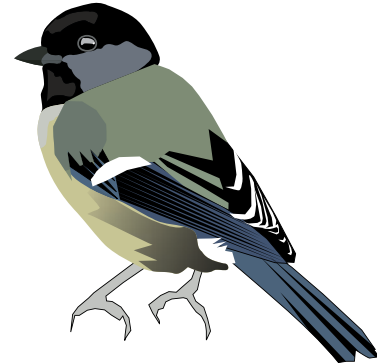
Child perceives as work		Child perceives as play	
Emotional:		Emotional:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity is compulsory		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity is voluntary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult is in control		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child is in control	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity feels hard		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity feels easy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity can feel fun		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity feels fun!	

Important to note: an activity that feels like work to a child may still be fun, and it may still be play based! If an activity is open-ended and child directed ("voluntary" and "child is in control"), then it will most likely feel like play to the child, even if some of the environmental and emotional cues are in the "work" column. The opposite can also be true- an activity can become frustrating and less fun, even if it child led, and would be perceived as play.



Winter Activity Idea: Ice Bird Feeders

Feeding birds in the winter time is nice way for children to learn more about birds and practice making observations. This ice bird feeder project adds a sensory element to the activity, and a way to cover topics like freezing and melting. For this activity you will need water, bird seed, string, and an ice cube tray, old muffin tin, or paper cups.



Steps:

1: Children can help make the ice bird feeders earlier in the day, then hang them later, or hang them the next day if needed

2: Children can put a scoop of bird seed in each muffin tin cup, paper cup, or section of an ice cube tray (old one may work well)

3: Fill the rest of the container up with water- using a measuring cup or pitcher allows children to help with this step. It can be done outside to reduce messes!

4: Cut a length of string, yarn, or twine for each feeder, and tuck into the water so that it is partially covered and will freeze into the ice block

5: Allow to freeze - usually about 3 hours. Once frozen, find places to hang the feeders outside where the birds can reach them.

This activity works well if you are able to hang the feeders up during outdoor play time, so that children can observe and check in on them, or if the feeders are easily visible from a window.





CMNH Play Based Learning Tip #15 Outdoor Play and Learning

Children can benefit greatly from outdoor play during every season of the year! The CDC recommends that children have one hour of outdoor play time each day that includes some physical activity. Other sources suggest more than one hour per day.

So what are the potential benefits of outdoor play?

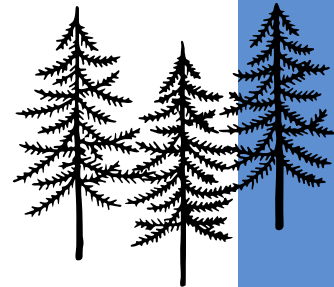
Source: <https://blog.nwf.org/2010/11/how-much-outdoor-play-time-does-your-child-need-what-the-experts-say>

Benefits of outdoor play:

- opportunities to learn about science- children are curious about what they find!
- promotes physical health as well as mental health -such as improved mood
- gives children opportunities to take appropriate risks
- promotes better sleep at night! (Deziel, 2017)
- can lead to better learning outcomes in the classroom when children have a chance to play outside during the school day
- Children can also learn many STEAM based lessons when playing outside!

References including links to studies and outcomes cited:

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/outdoor-play-is-essential>





Winter Activity Idea: Ice Luminaries

For a special evening time activity, try making ice luminaries and going for an evening nature walk! Listen for animals, and explore outside after dark, which is easy to do when the sun sets early! This activity goes along well with the book Owl Moon by Jane Yolen. A night walk is a good way to talk about nocturnal animals, hibernation, and migration.

Steps:

1: Make your luminary ahead of time- at least a few hours before your night walk.

2: Fill several balloons with water, and place them in the freezer, or leave them outside overnight as long as it is below freezing

3: We suggest using electric tea lights to light the luminaries, but you can also use real tea light candles. Be cautious if children are helping to set up the luminaries, and you are using candles.

4: Remove the ice from the balloon so that you have a ball of ice. Place plastic tea lights on the snow, and place the ice bowl over top (as pictured in the top photo from One Little Project). line a path or make shapes in the snow with your luminaries.

5: You can also opt to add food coloring to your balloons, and make them colorful as pictured in the bottom photo from EEK! The link below also suggests a way to make a luminary that is more like a candle holder using a bucket.





CMNH Play Based Learning Tip #16

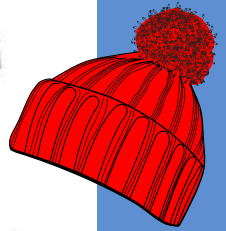
Tips for Staying Warm During Winter Outdoor Play

It can be hard to stay motivated to play outside when the weather gets cold! One way to motivate kids and grown ups is to set a goal and track your outdoor time. There are trackers you can print on the 1000 Hours Outside website that children can color in to track time spent outside. Here are a few tips for staying warm and organized for winter outdoor play:



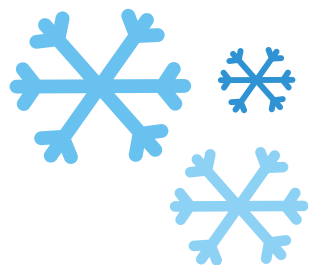
Playing Outside When It's COLD ❄️

- wear layers: be sure everyone has a base layer or two, coat, snow pants, hat, mittens, and warm socks. This includes any grown-ups who will be outside, too!
- take warm up breaks inside during play time
- pack a warm water bottle to warm up cold hands, or make tea to take sips from on the trail
- pocket hand warmers (you can even make your own!)- these are good for longer hikes
- stay moving and active: sledding, pulling a sled, running, walking, building in the snow
- grown ups need to move to stay warm, too!
- store mittens and outdoor gear in a bin children can reach so they can get themselves ready (as age appropriate), and have a drying space to place them once back inside



Find trackers at www.1000hoursoutside.com

Winter Activity Idea: Make a Snow Volcano!



This is an easy science experiment to try in the snow, and can lead to fun free play and experimenting afterwards, too! You will need two cups for each volcano, baking soda, vinegar, and food coloring. Optional: digging tools or spoons for play afterward.

Steps:

1: Bring the materials outside in a bin or on a tray. It may be easier to portion out baking soda into each cup before heading outside.

2: Ask children to build a volcano in the snow- this can look any way they would like! There are different types of volcanoes- this may be fun to look up when you head back inside after the experiment

3. Ask children to dig a hole in the center of the volcano- help them do so if needed, and place the cup with baking soda inside.

4. Add food coloring and vinegar to the other cup, and let children pour it into their volcano (into the cup with baking soda)

5. The volcano will "erupt" because baking soda and vinegar create a fizzy chemical reaction! A solid and a liquid combine and release a gas.

Have fun adding extra food coloring to the snow or water, and make magic potions, do some snow painting, or make another volcano!

