

Topic of the Month April 2021

Your EarlyON facilitator's top 2 Favourite Spring Outdoor Experiences & Why

1. Playing in the mud/dirt/water

Ideas for outdoor beginners - sensory play with mud and water, jumping in puddles, mixing touching using their senses, getting dirty while experiencing the textures of the outside world. Add buckets spoons, toys that are easily cleaned such as animals.

Ideas for the more seasoned outdoor explores - building with mud, exploring different types of dirt, what makes mud? making trenches, and gardening to name a few. Doing so expands the child's knowledge of problem solving, language, math and science. All these skills and more while "playing in mud"

Benefit of Mud Play

Scientists have now confirmed something that children have always instinctively known; playing in mud is a joyful experience. Recent research has shown that dirt contains microscopic bacteria called *Mycobacterium Vaccae* which stimulates the immune system and increases the levels of serotonin in our brains, an endorphin that soothes, calms, and helps us to relax. Scientists say regular exposure to the bacteria may help reduce a child's vulnerability to depression. In short, playing in mud makes you happier!

2. Nature walks /Exploring Nature

Ideas for outdoor beginners- walking in nature, touch and explore what is natural around us ,touching different textures such as rocks, sticks, grass, leafs etc. Pick items up, identify them, carry them around.

Ideas for more seasoned outdoor explores- gather items to create art work. Climb on over and around large items. Talk about living, nonliving items. Go on a scavenger hunt. Just to name a few. Having fun is the most important part.

Benefits of nature walks

- controls **depression**.
- improves athletic performance.
- improves immunity and **memory**.
- reduces anxiety.
- helps battle colds and flu.
- makes you happy.
- speeds recovery time after sickness.



Outdoor play fosters children's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development. By being outside and surrounded by nature, children experience an ever-changing and free-flowing environment that stimulates all the senses.

Sources: <https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/research/>

<https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2016/the-benefits-of-mud-play>

<https://best-start.org/blog/benefits-of-mud-play>