

# YMCA Child Care Resource and Referral SEASONAL RESOURCE SHEET

## Summer 2022

Summer is just around the corner! This time of year is a wonderful opportunity for children to play outdoors and benefit from the wonders of nature.

Think back to your own childhood -- for most of us, nature was a prominent learning feature in our lives. It promoted our creativity and forced us to figure out the world that surrounded us. From using sticks as swords and magic wands or playing hide-and-seek behind trees, the outdoors provided us endless play opportunities.



<https://bit.ly/3HpmkqR>

Not only does research show that spending time outside is necessary, but it is also agreed upon by many researchers that children who spend more time in nature are happier, have higher attention spans and are less likely to develop anxiety.

Connecting children with nature is critical. It helps foster creativity, assist in developing problem-solving skills, and has many physical benefits – including exercise and spatial awareness.

As a caregiver, and an important part of a child's life, think how you might offer children the opportunity for a unique play and learning experiences this summer. How can we use the outdoors to give children the opportunity to succeed, and to develop their confidence and self-esteem?

### Reflecting on The BC Early Learning Framework



"Children develop a sense of place when they connect with their local communities and outdoor environment. Early learning is "of a place" when children and educators engage with local histories with respectful curiosity and a desire to contribute and share. Indigenous peoples have been the knowledge keepers of these places for hundreds of generations. Indigenous languages are some of the voices of these places." (British Columbia Early Learning Framework pg., 21)

BCELF, pg. 57.

Be mindful this summer about how you can incorporate practices that will reinforce children to have deeper connections to the land, nature, and community around them. See the next pages for ideas about how to encourage and foster these connections in the months ahead.

## Summer Inspired Outdoor Activities



<https://bit.ly/3xBI3yW>

### Scavenger Hunt

Go on a Scavenger Hunt! Provide magnifying glasses, plastic tweezers and a container. Invite children to start a nature collection by gathering items that have fallen on the ground. Pinecones, bark, leaves, sticks, and small stones are all great examples of found, loose parts that can be used in nature crafts and play.

There are endless ways children can use natural materials to make art that is colorful, textural, and even environmentally friendly. As an added bonus, it's all free! Such connections with nature give children a break from today's digital lifestyle and helps supports the development of their fine motor skills, critical thinking and creativity.



<https://bit.ly/3zFd6Lp>



<https://bit.ly/3zGRa2G>

### Mindfulness in Nature

There are many ways you can practice mindfulness in nature. Take a few moments with the children in your care and try listening by being fully aware of yourself and the sounds that are around you. A quiet place outdoors to sit would be ideal, and let children be fully present with the sounds of wind, birds, and anything else they notice.

## Summer Themed Song and Movement Ideas

### Bubble, Bubble, Pop!

One little red fish  
Swimming in the water,  
Swimming in the water,  
Swimming in the water.

One little red fish  
Swimming in the water,  
Bubble, bubble, bubble, bubble...POP!

(two little yellow fish,  
three little blue fish,  
four little green fish,  
five little orange fish)



<https://bit.ly/3aRXIB4>

Also try: Going on a Bear Hunt, Slippery Fish, and Down by the Bay. Have fun!

## Summer Inspired Indoor Activities

Further benefits of using natural materials are creativity, sensory exploration, and problem-solving skills. Harness the following ideas in your early learning environments during the summer months ahead!



<https://bit.ly/3OjRetq>

### Sand Play Dough with Loose Parts

For a summer activity rich with texture, add sand to your favorite playdough recipe. Combine with loose parts to bring out the possibilities of molding and creating!



Simple Fun for Kids  
<https://bit.ly/3OjDWqa>



Growing Book by Book for Pre-K Pages

<https://bit.ly/3NYYuec>

### Leaf Painting

Help nature bloom in your early learning environments by using flowers as a provocation to draw and pattern.

## Early Learning Resource Library

We have lots of natural resources in our libraries for you to borrow. Below are just a few of the many that are available. Are you interested in seeing more of the items that you can borrow to help you to plan for the summer ahead? Scan the QR code to the right with your phone's camera to see browse our online Early Learning Library portal!



05154 Tree Blocks



05659 Take a Look



02508 Creepy Crawlers



05182 Microscopic Investigation



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