

## Outdoor Activity Ideas

At the Children's School, children typically perk up when they hear that it is time to head outside to the playground, even when the weather conditions are less than perfect. Children need time outdoors perhaps now more than ever!

The CDC currently suggests staying away from crowds, playground equipment, and water fountains. These suggestions may make heading outside of your home seem like a daunting task. However, most of our state and county parks remain mostly empty. With the mild winter ending, and spring on the way, it might be time to head out and explore with the family!

Below is a collection of sites where you can find parks to visit. The sites contain current advice regarding COVID-19 prevention. Please check the site before you journey to a park. At this time, actual facilities in the parks *are closed*, but trails are open for hiking and biking.

PA State Parks: <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/Pages/default.aspx>

Allegheny County Parks: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/parks/index.aspx>

Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy: <https://www.pittsburghparks.org/covid-19>

If you prefer to stay closer to home, there are activities that you can do in your own backyard or sidewalk. Here's a list of simple and fun family walking/strolling activities that you can do anywhere:

-Walk together at different speeds and in different ways (fast, slowly, tip-toe, run, walk on heels, walk with knees touching). Take turns being the leader giving the directions of how to walk.

-Search for outdoor animals together such as squirrels, groundhogs, deer, chipmunks, dogs (out on walks), cats, and birds such as robins, cardinals, blue jays, sparrows and any others you may see. Keep a tally or other record of the animals that you see. Each walk that you go on could have a different animal in which you are searching for or keeping track of. Quietly observe how animals move together. Stimulate observation and discussion by starting conversations with inquiries such as... "Let's watch how the animal moves" or, "I wonder how that animal takes care of its family".

-Practice breathing and stretching together outdoors on yoga mats, sheets, or towels. Add music for even more fun!

-Bring old toys outside such as stacking cups, sorting shapes, blocks, or bath toys. Bringing toys outdoors to the porch, yard, or sidewalk practically makes them seem new again.

-Work with your child to host a "picnic" or other outdoor event for their stuffed animals and figures. Let your child take the lead on whom to bring and what you will eat and make real pretend food.

-Go on a color or rock hunt as you walk with your family members outdoors. Try to keep running number of things that are a certain color or shape with your family.

