



The Basics of Caring for Children In Your Home

Outdoor Play On Winter Days

Children need to play outside every day, even in winter. Going outside to run, jump, yell, and wiggle gives children the chance to use their large muscles and work off extra energy. Moving out into the fresh air is healthier for children than keeping them inside a closed building where germs can easily spread.

Watch temperature and wind chill.

When the temperature goes below 40° F or if the wind chill dips low, you may want to limit outdoor play time to 15 to 25 minutes at a time. But you can still go outside if the children have the right clothes.

Dress for the weather

Tell parents that you will be taking their children out-



Ice Blocks

You'll need:

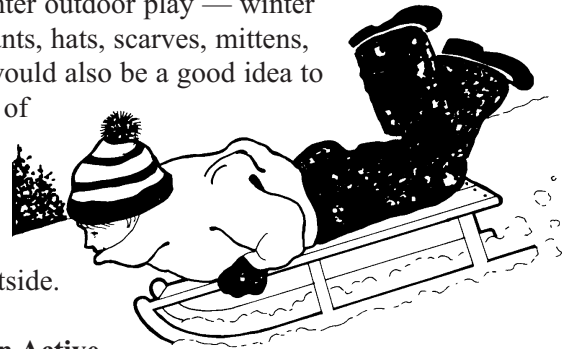
clean milk cartons, plastic containers like those from margarine, cottage cheese, etc. (ask parents to help you save containers)

What to do:

The children can help you fill the containers with water and set them outside to freeze. When they are frozen solid, peel away the cartons or dip the containers in a bucket of hot water to remove the ice block. Make sure all the children wear mittens or gloves. Let them stack and build with the ice blocks. They may want to build an ice house!

side to play every day. They need to bring the proper clothes for winter outdoor play — winter coats, snow pants, hats, scarves, mittens, and boots. It would also be a good idea to have a change of

clothes in case anything gets wet while the children are playing outside.



Keep Children Active

The body stays warmer if you're active than if you're standing still. Plan some fun activities for outdoor play on winter days.

Snow Pile Olympics

What to do:

Try some of these ideas for making your own snow pile olympics:

- Long Jump — Draw a starting line in the snow. Let children stand at the starting line and jump as far as they can. Compare footprints to see who jumped the farthest.
- Snowball Throw — Have children stand at a starting line to see how far they can throw snow balls.
- Snow pile hurdles — The children can help you make piles of snow. They can run through the yard, jumping over the piles as they come to them.
- Snow obstacle course — Use the same piles of snow that you made for the hurdle. Set up a course where they jump over one, hop around the next, etc.

Let's Find It

What to do:

With the children's help, make a list of five things to look for on a walk. The list can be things like a red door, a mailbox, a dog house, etc. or you can base your list on a theme, such as signs of winter.

Look for things on your list as you take the children on a walk. The first person to find all five things gets to make up a new list of five things to find.

Snowball Target Throw

What to do:

Give the children some real targets for snowball throwing.

Targets can be as simple as making a circle in the snow for children to aim their snowballs into the circle. You could do the same thing by laying a hula hoop in the snow.

Children may also enjoy throwing snowballs into containers. Collect clean containers, such as those from cottage cheese, ice cream tubs, sand buckets, etc. Mark a throwing line in the snow. Set the containers at different distances from the starting line. You can set the containers in the snow, bury them up to their rims, or push them into a snowbank at an angle. Have the children make some snowballs and start tossing!

Snow Maze

What to do:

Walk through the snow to make a pattern for the children to follow. You may want to make the maze very straight or add lots of twists and turns. Have the children walk through the maze to see if they can find the quickest way from start to finish.

The children may want to pretend they are cars going down the road as they walk through the maze. You may have to draw a line down the middle of the "road" to make the maze a two-lane highway.

Snow Pies

You'll need:

sandbox toys
clean aluminum pie pans or frisbees
natural materials

What to do:

Bring out the sand toys to let budding chefs create their own snow pies. Give each child a clean aluminum pie pan or a frisbee to be the "pie plate." They'll love making their own pies with pebble or dirt toppings, layer cakes with leaves, etc.

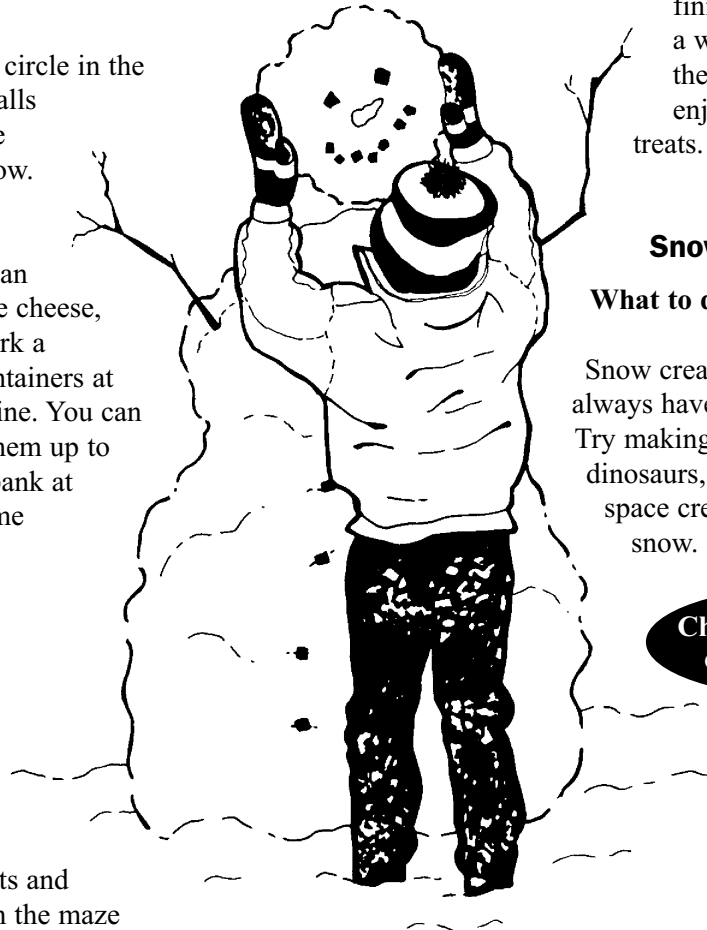
You may want to bring out some bird seed or stale bread crumbs to top some pies. Set the finished pies near a window to watch the birds come to enjoy the pie treats.

Snow Creatures

What to do:

Snow creations don't always have to be people. Try making animals, dinosaurs, birds, fish, or space creatures in the snow.

Children need to play outside every day



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