



# Tiny Tot Preschool & Kindergarten Newsletter

## Outdoor Day Play

There are many reasons why your child is spending less time outdoors than you did. There are fewer green spaces and natural environments. More homes and child care programs have air conditioning. Television and computers take up more time. Your child is probably involved in several organized activities. The media is constantly telling you that things like the ticks, mosquitoes, polluted water, and strangers make the outside a dangerous place. Your child care provider may have limited outdoor space for outdoor play.

### Outdoor Time Is Important

We are learning that it is important for children to spend time outdoors without a planned agenda. Children who regularly spend unstructured time outdoors are more likely to:

- Become fitter and leaner
- Develop stronger immune systems
- Experience fewer symptoms of ADD and ADHD
- Play more creatively and have more active imaginations
- Learn how to handle challenges and solve problems
- Experience how things grow, mature, and die
- Develop a sense of wonder and research
- Apply science and math principles to real world situations; and
- Have greater respect for themselves, for others, and for the environment.

### Encourage Your Child's Outdoor Play

From your child's infancy on, plan time every day for unstructured outside play. Keep it simple and fun. Start in your backyard and then move to your neighborhood and beyond. Encourage your child to explore with all the senses: hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. After your child is successful with simpler activities, add new and more complex challenges.

### Explore in your back yard:

- Look for bugs, birds, trees, and wildflowers.
- Make mud pies. Peek under rocks. Splash through puddles. Climb trees. Build snow men. Rake leaves and jump in them. Watch the stars and find constellations. Find quiet places to read and reflect.
- Plant easy-to-grow vegetables and flowers in a small garden or wooden planter box. Experience seed planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting.
- Hang a bird feeder. Get a bird guide and record which birds visit the feeder.
- Start a collection of stones, shells, leaves, or bugs.

- Mark off a small square of ground. Have your child draw or write about what is in the square. Periodically have your child record what is new or different.

### Investigate your neighborhood:

- Help your child pack an explorer's kit. Include items such as a magnifying glass, binoculars, plastic bags and containers for collecting, field guides, notebook and pencil, camera, water bottle, snack, sunscreen, bug repellent, band-aids, blanket/tarp for sitting on the ground or building forts, and a cell phone.
- Go for a walk. Visit the park. Allow time to run and explore.
- Play by the creek. Go sledding. Build sand castles.
- Shop at a farmers' market.
- Visit a nature center.
- Visit local farms and orchards.

### Bring nature inside your home

- Get nature guides. Learn to identify trees, leaves, birds, wild flowers, and shells.
- Sing songs and choose stories for your child that feature plants and animals.
- Help your child see how food goes from the garden to the table.

### Volunteer

- Support more natural settings such as grass and rocks at your local playground.
- Work with groups that beautify neighborhoods and protect natural settings.
- Join hiking, birding, or gardening clubs.
- Help your child care provider create naturalistic outdoor environments. Encourage your provider to allow unstructured outdoor play time.

### Keep Your Child Safe Outdoors

There are several things you can do to keep your child safe outdoors.

#### Dress suitably.

- In warm weather, clothing should be light colored, lightweight, and absorbent.
- In cold weather, clothing should be layered and dry. Check fingers, toes, and ears for normal color and warmth at least every 15 minutes.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants tucked into socks for visits to the woods.
- Wear boots for playing in water/creeks.

**Protect your child and yourself from the sun.**

- Play in the shade.
- Wear hats and protective clothing when playing outdoors between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM.
- Use sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA ray protection of SPF-15 or higher. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before exposure to the sun and every two hours while in the sun. Talk to your doctor before using sunscreen on an infant less than 6 months old.

**Drink plenty of water** to avoid dehydration.

**Stay inside during unhealthy weather.**

- Check with your local weather station about air quality index levels.
- Play indoors if the wind chill is at or below 15 degrees °F or the heat index is at or above 90 degrees °F.

**Wash exposed skin when you and your child come inside.**

**Prevent or treat bug bites.**

- Wear long sleeve shirts when you are in the woods or in weeds. Tuck pants into socks. Wear sturdy shoes.
- Use Insect repellent to repel biting pests such as mosquitoes and ticks. Apply it primarily to clothes and use it sparingly on exposed skin. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has information about use of the insect repellent DEET online at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

**Recipes**

**Apple Puff Pancake - Servings: 6 to 8**

**Ingredients**

- 2 tbsp (30 mL) butter
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla
- 2/3 cup (175 mL) all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) cinnamon
- 2 medium apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- icing sugar for dusting
- maple syrup, as an accompaniment, if desired

**Cooking Instructions**

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).
2. Place the butter in a 10-inch (25 cm) deep dish pie plate or a 9-inch (23 cm) square baking dish.
3. In a medium sized mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, milk and vanilla with an electric mixer until well mixed and foamy. In a small bowl, stir together the flour, sugar and cinnamon. Add to the egg mixture and beat just until smooth. Set aside for a moment.
4. Place the pie plate or baking dish into the oven and let heat until the butter is melted and hot. Remove from the oven and holding the dish carefully with oven mitts, swirl gently to coat the entire surface with butter. Quickly arrange the apple slices evenly on the bottom of the dish and pour in the batter.
5. Place in the oven and bake 30 to 35 minutes or until puffed and lightly browned. Dust with icing sugar before cutting into wedges or squares. Serve with a drizzle of maple syrup if you like.

**This Month's Highlights**

**5-10-09**

Mother's Day

**5-05-09**

Cinco De Mayo

**5-16-09**

Armed Forces Day

**5-25-09**

Memorial Day

**May is:**

Better hearing and speech month  
National Asparagus Month  
National Barbeque Month  
National Strawberry Month

**Reading Recommendations**

**Tell Me a Story, Mama** by Angela Johnson, David Soman (Illustrator), David Soman (Illustrator)  
ISBN-13: 9780531057940

**Mommies are for Counting Stars (Lift-the-Flap, Puffin) (Paperback)**  
by Harriet Ziefert (Author), Cynthia Jabar (Illustrator)

**Emily (Hardcover)**  
by Michael Bedard (Author), Barbara Cooney (Illustrator)

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For updates and other important information please visit our web page at: [www.tinytotpreschool.com](http://www.tinytotpreschool.com)

Monthly lunch menus are posted on the web page.

School closures are posted on our web page.

For questions and inquiries, please contact us at (805) 526 1959.