

# VILLAGE VOICES

*It takes a village to raise a child*

Healthy Child Coalition – Central Region

May -June 2015

## The Outdoor Edition

*The importance of outdoor play has featured more and more in research findings about early childhood. And what better time to talk about outdoor play than spring, when flowers begin to bloom and summer beckons. We will return to the regular community program feature with our fall newsletter.*

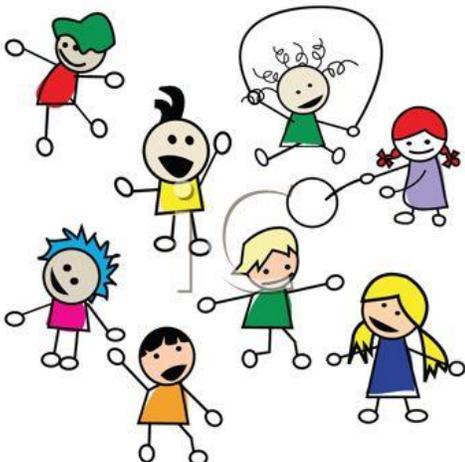
### Tips for getting kids to enjoy the great outdoors

**Add focus** – children love a mission, so try spotting plants and animals on your walk or do a treasure hunt to add some purpose to your walk.

**Don't rush** - take the time to dawdle, jump in puddles and notice the signs of the seasons together and you're guaranteed to build some memories that will last a lifetime.

**Camp out** – if you have a back garden, or a friend with one, why not camp out with your children? Or, if they're older, let them do it alone!

**Enjoy simple pleasures** – many of the greatest pleasures are very simple, such as skimming stones, making daisy chains or blowing a grass whistle.



**Be nature detectives** – a nature scavenger hunt is a great way to explore your back garden, neighbourhood or any green space. A bug hunt can work well too.

**Get crafty** – children are natural collectors, so encourage them to collect everything from pine cones to leaves for a home craft project.



Healthy Child Coalition  
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**Next issue will be out**

**September 2015**

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“Living in the Village”

<http://hcccentralregion.wordpress.com/>

Want something  
included in this  
newsletter?

Contact Sharron  
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## UNDER THE SKY

Under the sky  
Is a star.  
Under the star  
Is a tree.  
Under the tree  
Is a blanket.  
Under the blanket  
Is ME!!

## The Little Cricket

(Point to one finger at a time.)  
The first little cricket played a violin.  
The second little cricket joined right in.  
The third little cricket made a crackly song.  
The fourth little cricket helped him along.  
The fifth little cricket cried, "Crick-crick-cree.  
The orchestra is over and it's time for tea?

## Flutter, flutter, Butterfly

Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Flutter, flutter, butterfly.  
Floating in the summer sky.  
Floating by for all to see,  
Floating by so merrily.  
Flutter, flutter, butterfly,  
Floating in the summer sky.

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## Ant Hill

Once I saw an ant hill with no ants about. (fingers curled under, concealed)  
So I said, "Dear little ants, won't you come out?"  
Then, as if the little ants had heard my call,  
One, two, three, four, five come out? (as numbers are called, fingers are extended)  
And that was all!

# Want to go for a walk???

Tell young children you're going on a walk and you'll probably get a point-blank refusal. Tell them you're going out to play a game and they won't be able to get their shoes on fast enough!

Here's how to make walking fun...

### 1. Play catch the colour

Think of a colour, shout it out and watch as everyone sets off to find an object in that shade. Start with easy-to-find colours like green and yellow before you move on to the much rarer blues and reds. The person who gets there first and 'catches the colour' gets to choose the next one.

### 2. Go on a mini-beast hunt

Forget about paying a fortune at the zoo - there's amazing wildlife out there for free once you know where to look! As you're walking along, stop every now and then and turn over stones, logs or pieces of bark to see what's lurking underneath. In no time at all, you'll find earwigs, spiders, worms and woodlice galore - nice. Take a magnifying glass with you so everyone can have a really good look. You could even take a few close-up photos on your phone in case you need to do further research or drawing at home later on.

### 3. Make a grass whistle

Every kid should be able to do this, so you might as well start 'em young. Take some time to find a nice long shiny bit of grass. Press it between the sides of both your thumbs so that it's stretched tight. Blow gently through the space left in the centre, enjoying the high-pitched squeal it makes. It's a useful skill to have, especially if you want a secret way to attract someone's attention.

### 4. Play shadow tag

This is a brilliant game to play at the beginning or end of the day when the shadows are longest. Basically it's tag but with a twist! Decide who's going to be 'it' and then start running around. When the person who's 'it' steps on someone else's shadow, they become 'it' and the whole game starts again.

## 5. Go leaf catching

Played in autumn. Get everyone to stand around a small tree, then start shaking it for 10-20 seconds. The object of the game is for everyone to catch as many leaves as they can. Only leaves stuffed into pockets or held in the hand count and the child with the biggest stash is the winner. The biggest shiniest leaf you can find makes an ideal prize.



## 6. Play fox and chickens

This game brings a little farmyard mayhem to any country walk. Just find a patch of grass between two trees or large bushes. You're the fox and everyone else is a chicken. You stand in the middle and try to catch all the juicy little chicks as they run between the two trees. You don't actually eat the chickens once you catch them – instead, they have to help you catch the others. The last chicken to be caught gets to be the fox in the next round.

## 7. Cloud watching



When they start to get really tired and asking to be carried, try this instead - get everyone to lie down and look up at the clouds. Pick an interestingly shaped one and ask everyone to say what they think it looks like – an elephant, a lollipop and so on. The person who comes up with the most popular answer gets to choose the next cloud.

## 8. Follow the leader

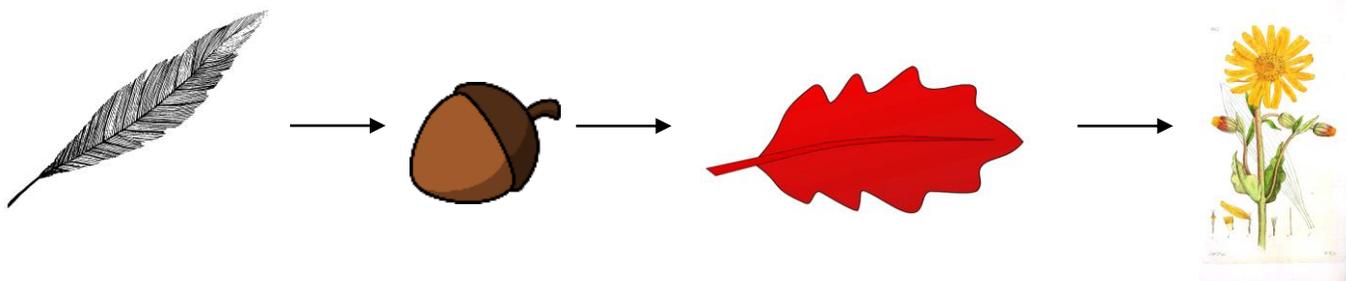
You start as the leader, getting everyone else to line up behind you and follow you wherever you go. Everyone else has to copy exactly what you do as you all walk along. If you hop on one leg, everyone hops on one leg; if you walk like a monkey, everyone walks like a monkey. Feel free to make it as embarrassing as you can, especially if you have another adult with you who doesn't like making an exhibition of themselves in public. Try howling like a wolf or cocking your leg by a tree as though you're a dog having a wee. Keep changing what they have to do until you get a bit bored - and then it's someone else's turn to be leader.

## 9. Go on a scavenger hunt

Before you set off, scribble down a list of objects you think you might find on the way. You could include the following: a wild flower, a feather, an acorn, a smooth stone, a red leaf, a cone. Feel free to add to the list during the walk if you think they're finding everything too quickly – you're in charge, after all! Award a small treat for anyone who's gathered everything by the end of the walk.

## 10. Make a human chain

Two people hold hands at the start of this game - everyone else is on their own! The couple holding hands starts to chase the others and anyone they catch has to join their chain. Just carry on playing until everyone is caught. This can take some time because the longer the chain, the harder it is to catch new links!



## RISK = HAZARD X EXPOSURE

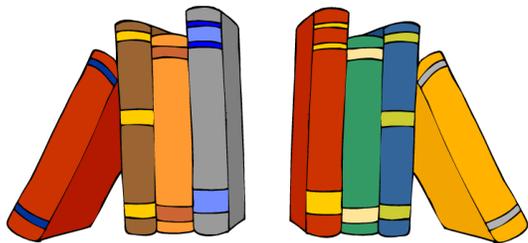
Yes, there are risks associated with the great outdoors. Too much sun can be harmful. Insects can bite. Animals can attack. But none of these need stop us from spending time outside. We just need to assess potential risks and take the appropriate measures.

Take poison ivy, for example. There are people who have a life-threatening allergy to this plant. If you were taking a walk along a sandy beach for example, or playing outside on your front lawn, the opportunity for exposure to poison ivy would be slim. Therefore, the risk associated with these activities is negligible, even though the hazard is potentially lethal. But if a person with a life-threatening allergy to poison ivy were to accompany his parent on a saskatoon-picking trip, however, the risk would increase.

Luckily for most people, poison ivy is an unpleasant but not lethal hazard. And if the risk is increased by being in an area where the plant could easily be found, then measures can be taken to reduce exposure. Simply being able to identify the plant is a start. Leaves of three, let it be. Cover your arms and legs when walking through bushy areas. Immediately wash your skin with soap and water after possible exposure.

By effectively managing the risks, you can enjoy the outdoors without fear of its hazards.

***Have a healthy,  
happy and safe  
spring and summer,  
and enjoy the  
benefits of the  
great outdoors!***



**Does your centre or program have any favourite books?** Are there any books you would love to have in your centre library? Are those books already in the list of suggested books included in the Kit & Kaboodle manual? If not, send the name or names of these books to Sharron Arksey. The titles will be added to the manual list. And for every book title you suggest, you program will get one entry in a draw for a tub of new children's books. Draw will be made at the AGM in September.

## THOUGHT FOR THE SEASON

Along with milk and vegetables, kids need a steady diet of rocks and worms



Rocks need skipping.  
Holes need digging.  
Water needs splashing.  
Bugs and frogs and slimy stuff need finding"

