



Baby It's Cold Outside: Outdoor Play During Winter

As the colder weather settles in sometimes we as adults find it hard to take children outside and play. We worry the children will be too cold, that they may get sick, and to be honest, we don't want to go out because we may not want to be cold ourselves. When we keep children inside simply because it is cold children can start to believe that some weather is yucky and grow to use it as an excuse to not get outside and get physical activity. This can cause children to be more sedentary during the colder months, having an adverse affect on their physical health. Children will often take their cue from adults. If they hear an adult say it is yucky or too cold then they will begin to believe that certain weather is yucky or too cold. At Green Garden we take the children outside during the winter and enjoy playing in the snow because we believe there are so many benefits to playing outside, even in colder weather.



Benefits of playing outside in winter:

- boosting Vitamin D levels-days are shorter in the winter so there is less opportunity to get the Vitamin D our body needs, especially if we stay inside. Vitamin D helps regulate emotional moods. There's a reason many people feel more depressed during the winter months, the lack of sunshine and Vitamin D exposure.
- promotes problem-solving- children figure out how to walk on slippery surfaces due to frost or ice and learn how to adapt their play to make it safe in new conditions
- cognitive development-provides a chance to learn about changes in the seasons and the environment through first-hand experience rather than through indoor lessons
- burning energy-instead of staying inside where it is easy to not stay active, going outside in the winter provides opportunities for children to burn energy and get some physical exercise. Children will also use a different set of muscles while playing outside while navigating snow, frost, and ice.
- building the immune system-when children stay inside they are more likely to get sick due to germs being circulated



Activities for playing in the snow:

- build a snowman
- have a snowball fight or hang a target to
- throw snowballs at
- build a fort
- make snow angels
- go sledding
- look at the different tracks our boots make in the snow
- look for and identify animal tracks
- paint on the snow with spray bottles filled with water and paint or food coloring
- blow bubbles, they are harder to pop and last longer
- let snowflakes fall on a black piece of paper then use magnifying glasses to examine the different shapes of the snowflakes

Books for winter play:

- The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
- No Two Alike by Keith Baker
- Snow by Cynthia Rylant
- Snow by Uri Shulevitz
- Kipper's Snowy Day by Mick Inkpen
- Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter by Kenard Pak
- Animals in Winter by Henrietta Bancroft
- The Mitten by Jan Brett
- Ten Sparkly Snowflakes by Tiger Tales
- Sleep Tight Farm: A Farm Prepares for Winter by Eugenie Doyle
- Snowmen at Night by Caralyn Buehner
- Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner
- Little Critter: Just a Snowman by Mercer Mayer

