

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Backyard exploring

Laying down and watching the clouds go by – quiet, slow breathing and listening to the silence helps children practise relaxation, stillness and calmness.

Did you know?

Time spent in areas with grass, trees and plants helps everyone to manage their feelings, behaviour and activity levels (known as self-regulation). It also helps mental health and improves concentration.

Add language

Add some comments or ask occasional questions that include more thinking e.g. "That cloud looks like a horse running", "What do you think that one looks like?", "That bird is collecting sticks. I wonder why it's doing that?" Use some more technical words e.g. "This tree is deciduous – it is losing its leaves for winter." "This tree is an evergreen – it doesn't lose its leaves all at once."

Other development

Helping to care for animals helps children to learn about caring for others. Pets are great, but children can also learn this through keeping a bird bath or pond clean and topped up for wildlife, or looking at and respecting nests in the bushes or trees.

Variations

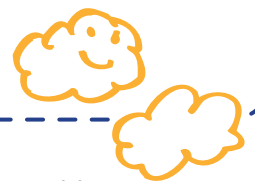
You could make a simple bird bath together with your child and watch the birds come to wash and drink. Backyards are wonderful places for cubby houses or picnics!



Safety

Supervision is required to make sure children are safe outdoors. Check the backyard for any dangers before exploring. Some plants are not safe to touch or taste. KidSafe WA has a fact sheet on toxic plants which you can find on its website.

Always use sun protection when playing outside and supervise around water. Make sure children wash their hands after playing outside.



- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa