



"The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful"
E.E.Cummings

10 Ways to Find Adventure and Activity In Your Own Backyard

Kari Svenneby June

Anyone who knows me understands that being outdoors with my family is one of my top priorities. When I take my kids to Europe for summer vacation, it's a busy month spent visiting with family and friends in Norway, in addition to enjoying outdoor adventures, as I always try to explore a new destination.

This year we're preparing for our great Northern Norway backpacking adventure by train, boat, and foot, with a stop to trek across a glacier in a Norwegian national park. Providing my kids with unique outdoor adventures from all over the world is one of my core values and I hope it creates a unique worldview for them and establishes an outdoor adventure lifestyle later in life.



However, being outdoor kids is not just about hardcore outdoor adventures. It is also about enjoying simple outdoor fun in your community and being able to create your own fun without parental input. I value unstructured outdoor play as highly as our family's hardcore adventures. Since my kids were babies, I have encouraged free outdoor play beginning in our tiny starter apartment, to now, in our small urban backyard, with these simple strategies.

Here are my 10 ways to encourage independent backyard play for all ages:

1. Add water

The beach and pools are great places to go to on hot days, but never underestimate the old fashioned fun you can have in your backyard with friends in your neighbourhood, and even on a balcony in a high-rise. Fill different sized buckets and containers with water and let the kids play with them for fun.

Water tag: Get the kids and yourself in swimsuits and let the play begin. Soak a sponge in water and decide who is going to be "it". They can even chase and throw the soggy sponge at other players to make them "it"

Kiddie pool: If you have a kiddie pool, it can be a great way to have some water fun in the backyard; splashing and having boats and toys floating in the pool.

Have a rain shower: Put on swimsuits on a warm rainy day and enjoy a rain shower.

2. Add dirt

Make a fairy garden with fairy houses. If you have fairy-lovers in your family, planting a garden complete with flowers and a [fairy house](#) is always a welcome addition to the backyard.

Start a [family garden](#) together. Let the kids be in charge of maintaining it.

Make a mud pie kitchen. One of our most popular "attractions" in our garden is our [mud pie kitchen](#). It can be done very simply with old kitchen utensils and bowls set up in a designated area in your garden.

3. Add sand

Have a spot for sand play in your backyard. Even on a balcony you can add sand in a big container and have a mini balcony sandbox. Simple, easy, and a must-have for outdoor play with toddlers..

4. Add loose parts

Rocks, shells, PVC pipes, pool noodles, and even bringing indoors toys outside add interest and create opportunities for creativity and movement. Rocks and shells are great for imaginary play and to use for fairy houses, mud pies, and sand castles. PVC pipes are excellent for pretend play but also for active play. Trust me, the kids will know how to use them.

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5. Add a hiding spot

You don't have to have a playhouse for a hiding spot. Put up a tent or make a fort out of chairs or a cardboard box. Another cool idea is to [make a tent out of sunflowers](#).

6. Add active elements

Is there room for a swing or a climbing wall? Tie two ropes between trees or sturdy poles and try to balance on the bottom rope while holding onto the upper rope. A store bought slack line may also be used for better support.

7. Add active transportation

Make sure bikes, roller skates, skateboards, and scooters are easily accessible for riding on areas safe from traffic. Let the older kids stretch their wings and get a group of them to ride together around the neighbourhood.

8. Add craft items

Put sidewalk chalk, paint brushes, watercolours, and soap bubbles in an easy to access place so your kids can get them whenever outdoor art inspiration visits.

9. Add backyard toys

Make sure you have on hand a variety of balls, frisbees, a parachute, and hula hoops, and that they are easily accessible for spontaneous play.

10. Add tech

Bring the technology outside if your kids are having trouble embracing the outdoors. Have an outdoor photo hunt, geocache, or encourage them to make an outdoor movie. Host an outdoor movie night in your backyard for your kids' friends.

Adventures don't have to be big to count as memorable for kids, as it starts in your own backyard and neighbourhood parks. Have a simply wonderful magic summer wherever you are.

Active for Life helps parents raise physically literate kids. At activeforlife.com, parents, educators, and coaches will find fun activities, engaging articles, and free resources to get kids active, healthy and happy.

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Live 5210 Playbox

BE ACTIVE and access sports equipment and games with Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes located throughout Surrey. Simply unlock the box, enjoy the gear, return it when finished and have fun!

LIVE 5-2-1-0 PLAYBOXES ARE AVAILABLE IN THESE PARKS:

Holly Park
10706 148 Street

Bakerview Park
1845 154 Street

Bridgeview Community Centre
1145 126A Street

T.E.Scott Park
7014 148 Street

Starr Park
19333 66Ave

Maple Green Park
8959 150Street

Panorama Village Park
14899 57Avenue
(for access to this box please
Visit www.YMCAPlaybox.ca)



Call 604-501-5100 or email be_active@surrey.ca to request an access code to unlock the box.

Play with Dough

Cooked Play Dough

- 3 cups flour
- 3 cups water ()
- 6 tps of Cream of Tartar
- 6 tbsps. vegetable Oil (can use baby oil, but playdough will be greasier)

Combine in a pan, cook over medium heat while stirring. Once the mixture starts clumping, stir a bit more, then remove from the pan and knead.

Allow to cool and *play!*

No-Cook Play Dough

- 1.5 cups boiling water
- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tbsps. vegetable oil
- 2 tps. Cream of Tartar

Stir together in a large bowl and knead.

Salt Dough

(for ornaments or handprints)

- 1 cup water
- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 cups salt

Bake in the oven @250F for 2-3 hours to harden, then paint.

Put together a playdough kit that you can have on hand and include items you may have around the house or find in nature such as...

Buttons
Pine cones
Acorns
Cookie cutters
Beads
Rolling pins
Leaves
Potato mashers

Plastic knives
Googly eyes
Shells
Pebbles
Ice cube trays
Pizza cutter
Clothes pegs
Food color

Feathers
Corks
Crystals
Spatulas
Dried flowers
Spools
Muffin Tins
Bowls

Candles
Rocks
Scissors
Lego
Wool strings
Toy animals
Toy people

Plastic forks
Plastic spoons
Garlic press
Popsicle sticks
Dinosaurs
Drinking straws
Scents



Playing with dough is good for developing

- Fine motor Skills
- Creativity
- Science, math and literacy
- Sensory Skills
- Social Skills
- Imaginary Skills



Free Events Celebrating the Outdoors

Surrey Nature Centre - Free nature play drop-in program on Saturday mornings.

Read more at <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/2311.aspx#sthash.uerx6j3D.dpuf>

Park Play Palooza - Free, drop-in summer fun with park play!

For summer schedule read more at <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/1818.aspx>

Neighborhood Tree Parties - Celebrate trees and get your hands dirty. Enjoy tree-themed activities and a free pizza dinner. All ages; no experience necessary.

Read more at <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/22573.aspx?startDate=Mar-20-2017>

Party for the Planet - Celebrate the environment at this free event on April 22 from 10am-6pm.

Read more at <http://www.surrey.ca/partyfortheplanet/>

Surrey International Children's Festival - Free access to everyone with some paid additional activities.

Read more at: <http://www.surrey.ca/childrensfestival/>

Free Services for Parents at Child Care Options

Referrals to Child Care

Referrals to child care facilities in your area that offer the type of child care services you need. You can request a referral in person, by phone or online at www.childcareoptions.ca

Child Care Subsidy

Families may be eligible for a financial subsidy to help with the cost of child care or preschool. Visit our office to pick up forms, receive assistance filling out forms and ask questions about subsidy.

To make an appointment please call 604-572-8032

Car Seat Clinics

Are your child car seats installed correctly? Come to a free car seat safety check. Have your child's seat inspected for:

- Recall
- Proper fit to your child
- Damage
- Proper fit in your vehicle

Inspections conducted by appointment only. Appointments are made between 12 - 2pm on the last Monday of each month. For more information or to book an appointment call 604-572-8032.

Do you provide child care in your home? If yes, you can become registered with us. Some of the benefits of registration are:

- Higher rate of subsidy
- Access to our Early Childhood Resource Library
- Parent referrals
- Support
- Training opportunities
- Drop-in

To become a registered License Not Required Child Care Provider, please contact 604-572-8032 or check our website <http://www.childcareoptions.ca/child-care-providers/come-a-child-care-provider/>

Contact Us



PHONE: 604-572-8032
FAX: 604-583-1056

EMAIL: childcareoptions@options.bc.ca
WEBSITE: www.childcareoptions.ca

Office Hours

Monday 9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Tuesday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Wednesday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Saturday 1st & 3rd of each month
9:00am-3:00 pm excluding
long weekends

Office Closures

May 8 at 5pm for child care
evening
May 22 Victoria Day
July 1 Canada Day
August 7 BC Day
September 4 Labor Day



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Upcoming Sales in the Early Years Learning Store!

April 25% off all puzzles
May 25% off of one item
(excludes flannel stories)
June 25% off craft supplies
(excludes paper & paint)
July 25% off all outdoor toys
August 25% off posters and visit the
clearance table.
(exclusions apply)

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