



Ten ways to set up kids to play outside

1. **Set boundaries.** Limit screen time to 30 or 60 minutes a day. Don't buy video games for children or watch TV yourself. Don't use electronics to entertain them. Encourage them to use inner resources. IF they're "bored" provide alternative activities: dusting, doing dishes, cooking.
2. **Set an attitude.** When they have unstructured time, allow them to feel boredom and to solve it. If they want their boredom to be your problem, involve them in cleaning the house and yard. It's an instant panacea to cure boredom.
3. **Set the stage.** Suggest they play outside and provide equipment: bikes, roller blades, basketball hoop, skateboards, trampolines, swing set, sandbox, a hose, a wading pool and big wheels. Live near a park or have a nice yard, give them a garden plot to tend, let them get down and dirty outside. Don't complain when they come home dirty. Provide old clothes to use outside and when camping.
4. **Set the example.** Enjoy outdoor activities together as a family. Play football, soccer, baseball, Frisbee, or dodge ball in the yard or park with them. Go to the park/conservation land and walk the dog. Borrow a dog if you don't have one. Go on weekend excursions to hike, bike, camp, canoe, go sledding, ski, swim, explore rope swings over rivers, bird watch, ride waves, swim in a pond, play in creeks, build a bonfire, and hunt.
5. **Set up or join group outdoor activities.** Camping with other families is more fun than camping alone. Many outdoor organizations offer family activities such as nature walks and canoe excursions. Join their mailing lists and go on the excursions.
6. **Set aside the time** to climb a tree, play in a creek, swim in a pond, build snow sculptures, fool around in a rowboat or put them in a kayak tethered to a rope if they're young. Encourage 'tweens and teens to take outdoor excursions with friends. Provide suggestions, equipment, transportation, and other support.
7. **Set an attitude.** Don't complain about bad weather. Revel in it. Get wet, muddy, snowy, cold and hot. It's okay if it rains while camping or hiking.
8. **Set up your home and yard for animals.** Get a dog and expect them to walk it and play outside with it. Raise chickens together. Your children will be more in touch with nature, the weather, animals and food.
9. **Set up play dates** for younger children by connecting with other parents who limit screen time and encourage outdoor activity.
10. **Set up ways to attract wildlife** such as bird feeders and bat houses. Plant a garden designed to attract bees and birds. Plant wildflowers. Allow a tree to rot. Listen. Walk quietly. Revel in nature.