



Caring for Kids

Summertime Child Care: *Turn Lemons into Lemonade*

With warmer weather on the way, it's time to shift your thinking as you plan your child care program. In many cases, older school-age children will be joining the ranks along with your usual number of preschoolers. Having a mixed age group of children has its rewards and challenges. Focus on the rewards and greet the challenges by easing into summertime care.

Learn from the old saying, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." First of all, don't feel that you have to know exactly what you are going to do every day. Take a week or so to get to know the children and discover their interests. Arm yourself with plenty of basic art and science materials, books and games, and everyday household items and head outdoors.

The following play areas are easy to set up outside:

PRETEND PLAY — make a playhouse using an old blanket placed over a table or large cardboard box. Bring sturdy, washable toys outdoors, such as plastic pots, pans, and spoons. Add new ideas to pretend play by putting together prop boxes. (See "Prop Boxes — What Are They?")

QUIET TIME PLACES — Place a soft blanket and pillows under a tree or in a shaded area to make a quiet place for children to calm down and relax. Bring out a basket of books to look at and read together.

ART AREA — The great thing about doing art activities outside is that you can let the children do messy things. Bring an easel outside, hang paper on a fence (use clothespins or tape), use the porch or deck and let the children

use chalk or wide brushes and tempera paint. Cleanup is easy: Hose it down or wait for a good downpour.

BUILDING ZONE — Add a building zone to your outdoor space by bringing blocks outside. Ask the children to keep their buildings low to the ground to prevent injuries from falling blocks.

NATURE AREA — Study the great outdoors. Add magnifying glasses, binoculars, a bird and insect book, and curious minds. A set of wind chimes, a windsock, a rain gauge, and plastic outdoor thermometer provide interesting materials for weather exploration. Have art materials near so children can record their findings and draw what they see.

BALL PLAYING AREA — Set up an area where children can roll or throw a ball at a target, toss a ball into a basket or hoop, or hit a

ball with large plastic bats or rackets. Be sure to have several balls in this area so many children can play at the same time.

Prop Boxes — What Are They?

A prop box is a box, like a shoe or boot box, clearly labeled with a play theme, containing small toys or household items that can be used to enrich or suggest a kind of dramatic play.

For example, if children decide they want to "go camping" — set up a tent outdoors and let the children pretend to camp. They will have hours of fun and learning as their imaginations take them on adventures, journeys, and safaris. Add different materials depending on where the children are pretending to be. Snacks, stories, and songs take on a whole new meaning outside around a make-believe campfire. Don't forget the marshmallows!

GO CAMPING PROP BOX

- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Camping clothes (hat, boots, sunglasses)
- Backpacks
- Pretend logs (roll up sheets of newspaper into long and short tubes or use different lengths of cardboard tubes)
- Picnic supplies
- Pots and pans
- Compass
- Flashlight

S N A C K S

Let the children help you turn "lemons into lemonade." These recipes will deliver yummy lemon flavor, one from fresh lemons, the other from frozen lemonade.

OLD FASHIONED LEMONADE

What you need:

6 lemons cut in half
1 cup sugar
6 cups cold water
Juicer if available

What you do:

All cooks need to wash their hands. Have all ingredients ready to go and a large pitcher for serving. To make it easier to juice the lemons, firmly roll the lemons between your hand and counter top before cutting in half. Provide small bowls for collecting the juice if the children are using their hands to squeeze the lemons. If you have a plastic or metal hand juicer, place it on a fitted bowl and let children take turns juicing the lemons.

Pour juice, sugar, and water into the pitcher, take turns stirring, and chill until ready to serve. Enjoy on a warm day.

LEMONADE MUFFINS

What you need:

Dry ingredients:

1½ cups flour
¼ cup sugar
2½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt

Wet ingredients:

1 beaten egg
6 oz. can frozen lemonade
(4oz. or ½ cup) for muffins and
(2oz. or ¼ cup) for glaze
¼ cup milk
⅓ cup cooking oil

What you do:

All cooks need to wash their hands. Preheat oven to 375° F. Use paper muffin cups or oiled muffin pan. Let children help measure all the dry ingredients. They can spoon the flour and sugar into a measuring cup and use a measuring teaspoon for the baking powder and salt and mix together in a large bowl. Combine wet ingredients. Show the children how to break an egg and beat with a fork or wire whisk. Let them measure only ½ cup of lemonade along with the milk and cooking oil. Take turns stirring everything together until the "dry ingredients are all gone." Spoon into muffin cups. Bake for 15–20 minutes or until done.

(Explain to the children that putting things in or taking things out of the oven is for adults only. Remind children that the oven and pan are very hot and could burn them if they touch it.)

Let the lemonade muffins cool for a few minutes. While they are still warm, brush with remaining lemonade. Makes a dozen medium-sized muffins.



Sand and Water to the Rescue

Nothing gets rid of boredom quite like sand and water, and you don't need to have a special water table or sand box. Sand and water are two of the best activities for young children, and moving them outside makes it easy on caregivers. Plastic dishpans work well. They are easy to carry and keep clean. The way to keep sand and water play interesting is to frequently change the toys you offer for playing. The best toys are recycled containers. Punch holes in them to allow sand and water to flow. Cut them into interesting shapes for shoveling and scooping and let the fun and learning begin.

Caution: Never leave children alone while they are playing in or with water. Always drain water from all containers when play is over each day.

FIRST AID FOR SAND IN CHILDREN'S EYES

A child who gets a handful of sand in the face and some in the eye is usually frantic. Start by gently wiping the sand from the child's face and hands and quickly take her to a place with running water. Reassure the child that you can help. Once you reach the sink, pour water using your hand or a cup repeatedly over the eyes. Don't discourage the child from crying. Tears are the best way for the eye to clean itself. Encourage her to blink repeatedly. Tears and blinking will usually move the sand to the corner of the eye, where it can be gently dabbed out. Tell the child not to rub her eye. Usually the eye flushes out the sand in two to three minutes. Watch the child afterwards to make sure there is no continuing redness, irritation, or discomfort. If these are present, the child will need to see a doctor.



LISTEN TO MUSIC

IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Play music as children paint and draw outdoors, relax under a tree, ride around on tricycles, or work on special projects. On the grass, children have a large space to spread out for dancing, playing games to music, or simply moving in a creative way. Have a parade! Make instruments to play in a band or homemade flags to wave along with the music.

Times to Teach

Help! What do I do if a child throws sand?

Like all activities, sand play must be supervised. If a child does throw sand say, "*Sand stays in the sandbox. It is not safe to throw sand. Sand in the eyes can hurt. Let's go find something that is safe to throw.*"

Have an activity available such as balls or beanbags that children can throw into a laundry basket or box. Children who are eager to throw need to learn what can be thrown safely and what is not safe for throwing.

CHECK IT OUT!

Find a shady spot and enjoy story time outside. Look for books that will stretch the children's imaginations as they go about the day playing and learning.

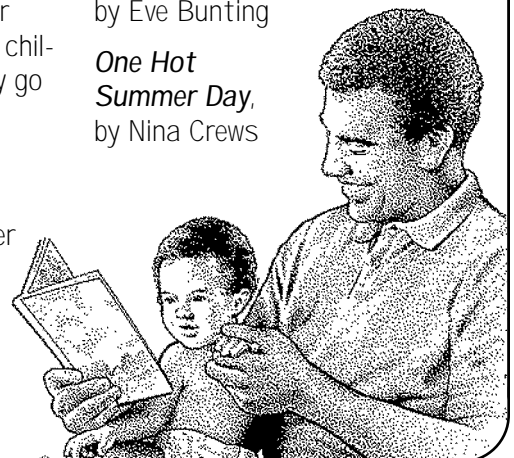
Picnic Farm, by Christine Morton and Sarah Barringer

Those Summers, by Alike

Henry and Mudge in the Green Time, by Cynthia Rylant

Sunflower House, by Eve Bunting

One Hot Summer Day, by Nina Crews



Gardening with Children

If you have gardening space, share a small area with the children. Children are interested in growing plants that have large leaves or flowers. Try sunflowers or large varieties of marigolds and zinnias. If your outside space is limited, try gardening with children using large containers. Children can choose flower or vegetable seeds to plant. Seeds that sprout quickly (radish, marigold, beans) are most



interesting to young children. Label the seeds that you plant. Keep a chart and write down when the seeds come up. How many days did it take? Do some plants grow faster than others? Did all the seeds sprout? Encourage drawing or painting pictures about the gardening project from start to finish and teach children how to care for the seeds and plants every day.

Warning: Treated seeds are dyed a bright pink color to show they are coated with a poisonous pesticide. When gardening with young children, be sure to use seeds that are labeled "untreated."

SUMMER SAFETY COUNTDOWN

10. Instead of wading pools, use sprinklers and individual water play containers. Whenever infants and toddlers are in or around water, an adult should be no more than an arm's length away, close enough to provide touch supervision.

9. Children should wear safety helmets when rollerblading or skateboarding and when riding bicycles, tricycles, and scooters.

8. Keep children out of the sun between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. — that's when the sun's rays are the strongest. Babies under six months should not be in direct sun.

7. Carefully maintain all play equipment. Make sure children stay clear of moving swings and moving parts that might pinch or trap any body part. Make sure metal slides are shaded to

prevent overheating.

6. Find out where stinging and biting bugs live and nest in your outside play area. Teach children to stay away from these areas.

5. Always have drinking water available for the children and encourage them to drink often (every 30 minutes).

4. Food spoils quickly in the summer heat. Practice food safety. *Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.*

3. Restock first aid supplies and review basic first aid procedures.

2. Know the plants in your yard and teach children not to pick or eat them.

1. Show children that you follow the rules to be safe. Be a good role model!

Visit the Better Kid Care Web site, www.betterkidcare.psu.edu for these resources:

- The E-Newsletter (read and sign up)
- Family Time-Work Time (read and copy for parents)
- Snack and activity ideas
- A live satellite workshop in your own home on your own computer
- Web-based workshops and learn-at-home videos offering training credits that will count toward requirements in PA

TAKE A LOOK!

Caregivers have this to say about our online credit workshops:

"Thank you for providing the opportunity for these online assignments. I really like doing the classes this way."

"I find these units very helpful and would recommend them to others."

REMEMBER...

the Better Kid Care Telephone Helpline for child care providers is as close as your telephone. Call toll free 1-800-859-8340.

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Project Director
Supported by funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania Child Care/Early Childhood Development Training System, Developed by the Better Kid Care Program. 253 Easterly Parkway, State College, PA; Phone: 1-800-452-9108. Website: betterkidcare.psu.edu.

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Building Blocks Newspaper, June 1998—Volume 21 Issue 10
Better Kid Care Learn-at-Home Video Unit, Summertime Care LV-25

Better Kid Care Web-Based Unit, Super Sand WEB-09

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