



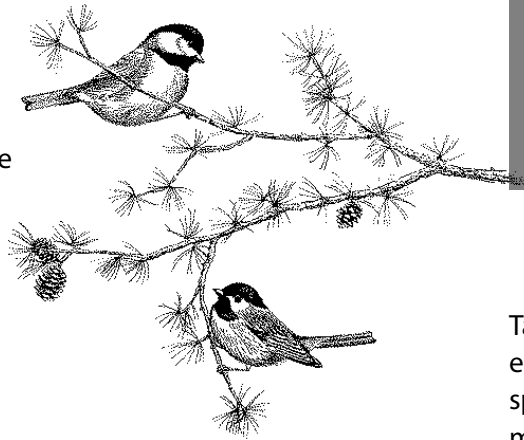
Let's Take a Walk

Taking children on a walk is such an easy activity, especially when the weather is warm. If you stop and think about it, a lot of great learning can take place on a simple walk around the block or in the back yard.

Children learn best through their senses: things they can see, smell, hear, feel, and taste. It's often the little things that adults take for granted that make great learning times for young children — hearing the wind blow, smelling flowers, feeling raindrops, catching a snowflake, running through a pile of fall leaves. Make plans for your next walk with the children. They will be thrilled to learn lots of new things as they enjoy the outdoors.

TAKE A BIRD WALK

As you get children ready, tell them to watch and listen for birds as they go on their walk. You may want to take along a piece of paper to count the number of birds you see. Point out big birds and little birds, flying birds and sitting birds, birds high in the air and down on the ground. Look and compare the colors of the birds you see. Listen to birds singing. Does one bird sound like another? Ask the children to try to make the same sounds they hear from the birds. Can you find bird nests in the trees or on the ground?



Depending on the time of year, you may find eggs on the ground that have dropped out of nests.

If the children really enjoyed their bird walk, they may like to learn more about birds when they get back to your home.

- Set out paper, markers, and crayons for them to draw birds.
- Put on music for them to spread their wings and fly to the music.
- Pick out books about birds and read them to the children.
- Make bird feeders by cutting the top off a milk or juice carton and filling the bottom with birdseed. Hang your feeders outside near a window where the children can watch the birds coming to eat.
- In spring, help the children find scraps of yarn or string, dry grass, and lint from the clothes dryer to set outside in the yard for birds to take to build their nests.

Walks are great times for learning.

SIGNS OF SPRING WALK

Take the children for a walk at the end of winter to look for signs of spring. Have the children look for melting snow, birds making nests, leaf buds on trees, and plants poking up through the ground. What other changes do the children see? Listen for birds singing. You may get lucky and hear some geese honking as they return to their homes in the north. Can the children feel the air is getting warmer from the sun?

If the children really enjoyed looking for signs of spring, they may like to do more activities for spring when they get back to your home.

- Have the children draw pictures of things they saw on their walk. In a few days, you may like to go on the same walk to see if anything has changed.
- Go on a walk again and take along a ruler, pencil, and paper. Measure the size of some of the little plants you see coming up out of the ground. Write down where you found them and how tall the plants are. Go back in a week to measure the plants again

Think about what children can see, smell, hear, feel, and taste on a walk.

to see if they are taller.

- Read books about spring and changes in nature.
- Have the children plant some seeds in pots so they can watch them grow.

GREAT FINDS WALK

This is a walk to have the children see what “treasures” they can find. Give each child a paper bag and tell him to look for things that have fallen to the ground, like pine cones, leaves, seeds, nuts, stones, sticks, etc. The children can bring their treasures back to child care. Tell the children not to pull leaves off trees or to pick blooming flowers out of people’s yards.

When you return from your walk, give each child a spot where they can dump out their bags to show everyone the “treasures” they found. If you have a magnifying glass, show children how to use it to look closely at the things they found.

- They may like to use their “treasures” to make art projects, such as gluing leaves on paper.
- Nuts, sticks, pinecones, and stones are fun to play with. Put some out for pretend play or to fill trucks and dump out.

- Have children sort nuts, leaves, pinecones, stones, etc. into piles. Put all the leaves that look alike into one pile. Find all the acorns with caps. Sort the sticks by size, smallest to biggest.

CREATURE WALK

Tell the children you’re going to look for living creatures as you go on your walk. These could be pets, birds, insects, and wild animals such as rabbits or squirrels. Look for signs of animals, such as dog houses, holes in trees, birds’ nests, ant hills, etc. Look for footprints and tracks in the mud or snow. Look for big creatures and little creatures. Watch how they move and how they eat. Do they make any sounds? Listen for rustling bushes, pecking on wood, and flapping wings.

When you return from your walk, have the children try to name all the creatures they saw.

- They may want to draw pictures of their favorite creatures.
- Find books about pets, wild animals, birds, and insects to read to the children.
- Let children talk about their pets and how they take care of them.
- Go through old magazines to find pictures of creatures. Let the children cut them out and paste them on paper to make a creature collage.



HOUSE WALK

Take a walk to look at different houses in your neighborhood. Look at the colors of houses, the windows, and roofs. Does the house have a porch? Garage? Chimney?

Talk about whether the house looks like anything special to the children, such as a castle, a barn, a house in a story. Can you tell anything about the people who live in the house? Do you think children live there? Pets? Count things on houses. How many windows do you see? How many doors or trees around the house?

When you return from your walk, the children may like to think about houses some more.

- Give them paper to draw their own house or a house they would like to live in.
- They may like to build houses with the blocks. Add some little people, small cars, etc. to go with their block houses.
- Read stories about houses.
- Look for stories about houses in other countries to read to the children. Make sure they have pictures!
- Give children shoeboxes and old magazines. Have them cut out pictures of furniture for different rooms in a house. They may like to glue all the bedroom furniture in one box, all the kitchen things in another, etc.
- If a new house is being built in your neighborhood, the children may like to take a walk to see it.



Pennsylvania Pathways

Professional Development
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