

## SPRUCE UP YOU DAY WITH BACKYARD PLAY

1. **Go for a walk.** Set a timer to see how far you can walk in five minutes, 10, 20, or 30. Note whether you're going to make a loop or take an out-and-back route so you can plan accordingly.
2. **Ride Bikes**
3. Blow **bubbles** using a DIY mix.
4. Play classic **outdoor games** such as Red Rover, Red Light Green Light, or Steal the Bacon.
5. **Nature scavenger hunt.** Look for pine cones, acorns, rocks, and other common outdoor items and tally who found the most
6. **Hula hoop**
7. **Inline blading**
8. **Follow the Leader** through your yard or neighborhood
9. Draw a **hopscotch** board with chalk on your driveway or road (No cars at the moment)
10. Make **homemade playdough** and bring it outside.
11. Set up a **canvas** in your backyard and let your little one's **paint or draw**. Find a shady tree and read.
12. Have a **picnic in your own backyard.**
13. Do **things you'd normally do inside,** like **play board games** or have a **pillow fight.**
14. Make **s'mores**
15. **Plant** a small container **garden.**
16. **Film** a **home movie.**
17. Make and eat **homemade popsicles**
18. Make a **tennis racket out of paper towel roll and tape a plate to it.** Blow up a balloon and **play tennis**
19. Go for a **family jog.**
20. Play **kickball** in your backyard.
21. Take turns **playing photographer** with your phone or cam
22. Create a **mud kitchen** in your backyard.
23. **Sing** as **loud** as you can.
24. Is it getting dark outside? Play **hide and seek with flashlights.**
25. **Water the plants.** Give your preschooler some basic experiments to consider: Does the hose make water come out faster than the watering can? Which is easier to control?
26. Build **paper airplanes.** Who can make theirs fly the farthest?
27. Search for **bugs.**
28. Run through the **sprinkler** once it is warm enough.
29. Make **homemade bird feeders** out of pine cones, peanut butter, and birdseed.
30. Look for things like pine cones, sticks, shells, and rocks to make a **mobile.**
31. Find **shapes** in the **clouds.**
32. Go "**fishing.**" Set up a wading pool with objects and let your little one try to catch them.
33. **Color eggs** outside
34. Pitch a **tent.**
35. **Paint rocks**
36. Turn the music up and have a **dance party.**
37. Learn to do **cartwheels** and other gymnastic moves in the backward
38. Build a **fort** using **lawn furniture.**
39. Ride a **scooter**
40. **Walk barefoot** in the grass
41. Hide plastic **Easter eggs** for an **egg hunt**





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42. Make **10 sensory buckets** and cover them and have children place their hands in to guess what they think it is. For older children, you could use blindfolds if you did not want to cover the buckets
43. Make an **outdoor activity jar** – have your children brainstorm with you
44. **Puddle jumping** after it rains
45. **Read a book** in the backyard – then have the children act it out
46. Have children **make a garden** – a **fairy** garden, a **rock** garden, **sand** garden, **mud** garden, etc.
47. **Rainbow in a Jar** – corn syrup, honey, dish soap, olive oil, rubbing alcohol, food coloring and eyedropper. Place in a jar to teach children the concept of density: Different liquids have different weights, so the heaviest (with more molecules) will sink to the bottom while the lightest (with fewer molecules) will float to the top – resulting in colorful layers.
48. **Soda Geyser** – Big bottle of coke – mentos candy and you will have a geyser.
49. **Leak-Proof Bag** - Fill a Ziploc bag about two-thirds full of water and then carefully poke a sharp pencil all the way through it. For dramatic effect, hold the bag over your child's head and watch him squirm. Don't worry – not a drop will spill. Plastics are made of long chains of molecules called polymers. Piercing the bag, forces them apart, but they quickly press back as much as possible, sealing the hold you've made. When you are done, pull the pencils out over the sink to prove this was actual science, not a mere trick.
50. **Naked Egg** – Using a spoon, gently place a raw egg (in its shell) in a cup or jar filled with white vinegar. This acid will slowly break down the shell, which is made of calcium, a base. It takes 15 minutes for the egg to start bubbling, but after about eight hours it will start to spin and dances as the gases are released from the shell. The egg will absorb the liquid and swells due to the process of osmosis. In roughly three days, you'll have a "naked" egg with a soft permeable membrane that's irresistibly squishy.
51. **Rain Cloud in a Jar** – Start by putting a large dollop of shaving cream on top of a jar of water. Talk to the children about how the water droplets rise in the air and condense on dust particles. A huge group of them together is a cloud (hence the shaving cream).
52. **Fizzy Rainbow Easter Eggs** – Set up a tray with an egg carton (plastic or Styrofoam will work the best) and set up your eggs. Add several drops of food coloring to each egg. Go ahead and fill each egg with a spoonful of baking soda and if you want you can add a little glitter to each one. Set out a bowl of vinegar for eye droppers or meat basters or you could use a squeeze a bottle of vinegar.
53. **Cleaning plastic eggs** – set out a tub of water with soap and let them clean the plastic eggs from the fizzy rainbow experiment.
54. **Cleaning Dolls & Dinosaurs** - set out a tub of water and let them clean their dolls & dinosaurs
55. **Lego City** – Build a Lego city out on your deck
56. **Colour Scavenger Hunt** – Have the children look for coloured items
57. **Marshmallow creations** – Mini marshmallows and toothpicks – just create
58. **Paper Chain** – cuts 1 inch strips of construction paper and have the children make a chain with it.
59. **Egg Relay** – Place one basket of plastic eggs on one side of yard with spoons and have children place them in the other basket.
60. **Bowl In The Dark** - Fill 10 water bottles with water and a **glow stick** for the perfect glow-in-the-dark bowling set up.
61. **Dance to the Music** - Turn on the music and turn out the lights. With glow sticks around your head, waist and ankles for dancing excitement.



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62. **Play Some Putt Putt** - Putt-putt (or miniature golf) courses are excellent ways to test your children's skill and agility — and your own. Make your own in the backyard.
63. **Red Light, Green Light** - Use pieces of construction paper when calling out “Red Light” or “Green Light” to help with right-brained kid level up with the left-brained one.
64. **String Ornaments** - **Take** three twigs and tie them at the top so that they form a triangle. Then, use colorful yarn to wrap around the triangle. Find things in the back yard to add as ornaments.
65. **Weave With Nature** - Start with a twig frame (you can make it as **small** or as **large** as you want.) Then wrap the loom frame with yarn in one direction. Once the yarn is secure, children can weave any natural materials they want...grass, flowers, leaves, and more.
66. **Walk and Seek** - Go on a nature walk and collect a few items in a bucket. Leaves, flowers, bark, rocks...then bring them home and pull out some construction paper and glue and begin to create.
67. **Photo the Alphabet** - **Using** leaves, trees, or other object of nature, can you and your children take a picture of every letter in the alphabet? Or maybe just the ones necessary to create his name in a photo frame? 
68. **Battle with Shaving Cream** - Start with a can of **shaving cream** per child. Follow that up with some goggles and a swim suit. You know what happens next.
69. **Chase Bubbles** - Blow bubbles and let them chase them.
70. **Make Rain Art** - Grab some **watercolor paints** (the dried ones you find in the craft aisle at the grocery store.) Crush them in a plastic bag, then sprinkle them on watercolor paper that you've placed outside. You'll see a beautiful image emerge. You can also use pastels, if you have not watercolor paints.
71. **Create Music in the Rain** - **While** the rain is falling, put out a variety objects to “hear” the different sounds they make it the rain. What's your favorite sound? Can you make high-pitches and low-pitches?
72. **Swing to the Drops** - Don't let a little rain stop you from swinging...can you catch the drops with your toes? 
73. **Float Your Boat** - **Build** paper boats with construction paper. Fill a small pool with water or in the rain let the boats float downstream.
74. **Build an Obstacle Course** - **Run** around the tree, balance across the balance beam, 10 jumps over the jump rope, etc.
75. **Use a Compass** - Teach your children how to use a **compass**. Creating an outside treasure hunt is a great way to test their new skills.
76. **Learn About Knots** - Go to [www.animatedknots.com](http://www.animatedknots.com)
77. **Giant Lawn Matching Game** – create big matching squares and then place them upside down on the lawn and match.
78. **Water Blasters** - Pool noodles are perfect as water blasters. Create a sprinkler system with PVC piping and add on the colorful pool noodles for extra soaking.
79. **Stone Soup** – Container = Add water, dirt, and rocks. Served with mud pies.

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### **80. Tea Party**



### **81. Balance Beam** - Set up in backyard

### **82. Water Balloon Fight**

**83. Balloon Volleyball** - Set up your court by using a jump rope (or any rope) to divide your yard in two. Use a balloon for the ball and have players alternate serves. The first to 21 is the winner!

**84. Blanket Relay** - Grab some blankets (preferably old ones) and pull your partner across the lawn as fast as you can. Team members switch places to give their partner a ride to the finish line.

**85. Frisbee Tic Tac Toe** - You will need a cheap shower curtain, colored tape and nine frisbees. Tape the shower curtain to the ground, making a Tic-Tac-Toe grid with the tape. Stand behind a given line to throw a Frisbee on a square. Allow the players multiple tries to land in a square.

**86. Driveway Toy Car Race** - Grab any type of toy car and a couple sticks of sidewalk chalk. Draw your start and finish lines and the lane markers in the driveway, and let the races begin.

**87. Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest** - Liven up an afternoon with some friendly competition. Challenge your kids to see who can aim the best or spit the farthest.

**88. Sun Melted Crayons** - Gather up all those broken crayons along with aluminum foil, cookie cutters and a paper plate. Place foil on a paper plate then top with the cookie cutters. Add broken crayons and place in a sunny spot. Once melted, pop the newly formed crayons out of the cookie cutters. Then put your new crayons to use.



**89. Bug Hunt** - Grab a clipboard, a piece of paper and a marker then head outdoors. A magnifying glass and a plastic jar could be fun too. Encourage your children to list or draw every bug they see. For an added twist, count all the ants they find.

**90. Aqua Limbo** - Use the stream from a water hose as the stick for a game of limbo

**91. Balloon Babies** - Fill up a water balloon and draw a face on it. Wrap up in a towel and give to your child as her new baby. See how long she can take care of it before the balloon breaks.

**92. Ice Block Building** - Fill up various containers with a mixture of water and food coloring. Once frozen, take them outside. Pop out the molds and let the kids build towers, trains and buildings before they all melt.

**93. Sponge Bull's Eye** - Draw a bull's eye on the driveway and assign a points value to each circle of the target. Kids stand at the starting line and throw a wet sponge at the target.

**94. Water Balloon Piñata** - Fill balloons with water, tie them up and string between two trees or along a clothesline. Let kids take turns striking the balloons with a stick.

**95. Unfreeze Your Prize** - Place small toys like plastic bugs, cars or dolls into an ice cube tray. Add water and freeze. Pass out one cube to each child. Have them melt while holding in their hands until prizes emerge.

**96. Squirt Gun Painting** - Instead of loading water into a squirt gun, add paint. Kids can squirt paint onto a sheet of paper to create art in a very fun way.

**97. Ice Painting** - Paint with colorful ice. Simply freeze ice cube trays with washable tempera paint.

**98. Water Balloon Swimming** - Place water balloons in a small pool – cools children and once the break they cool off.

**100. Star Watching** - Go outside and check out the pattern in the stars with your child

