



MESSAGE FROM
DIANE DALEY, CEO

Greetings!

Welcome to 2024, it's a new year and an opportunity for new beginnings. It's that time of year when we bid goodbye to the past year and welcome a fresh with the hope of accomplishing new goals for ourselves and our families.

Along with the New Year we get to enjoy the winter season and an opportunity to create positive outdoor memories. Young children love the outdoors and winter can be a time to create fun memories and rituals. Despite the

drudgery of winter driving, snow removal, and heavy winter coats, many of us enjoy the fun that can be had in the winter season or when we have, heavy snowfall, like playing in the snow, learning how to skate or enjoying trails and walks in our local community. In this edition of FOCUS we hope to inspire you try out some of these ideas that make wintertime fun.

As we enter 2024, let us embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. At Family Day,

we will continue to strive for excellence and innovation in everything we do. We remain committed to supporting and working with families, and most important your children to create positive, fun and experiences. It's our privilege to partner with you!

I wish you a happy and healthy New Year, one that's filled with growth and fulfillment. And the joy that comes from making a meaningful impact together.

2024





Winter is here! Where we live, maybe there's snow, maybe there's not. But there's no problem when it comes to exploring and experiencing the season as a family. This issue is loaded with 37 healthy outdoor activities your whole family can enjoy this season.

Dress everyone for the weather and you'll be able to have fun and develop physical literacy, no matter how cold it gets. There's so much excitement to be had in winter, even on the coldest days!

1 Winter Scavenger Hunt

Preschoolers love outdoor scavenger hunts. They help develop cognitive abilities (like counting and comparing), while also encouraging movement. Older children will enjoy the friendly competition.

Download and print this fun winter scavenger hunt:



<https://activeforlife.com/winter-activities-scavenger-hunt/>

Keep it handy for the next time your family visits a park, nature trail, or big backyard. There are 25 separate outdoor activities on this printable. Your family can do them all in one day or spread them out over a period of time. You could even cut the scavenger hunt into individual squares, place them in a jar, and have your children pick a random activity for each day.

Or, how about a Buried-in-Snow Treasure Hunt?

Unleash your family's inner pirates and send them off to find hidden loot. Hide a number of items in an area of snow and let them know what you've buried (12 toy cars, 15 plastic dinosaurs, etc.). They'll love digging to find the treasure.

2 Make Snow Angels

Movement helps physical literacy at all ages. Making snow angels does just that! To make a perfect snow angel, lay in the snow on your back, move your arms up and down and legs in and out. These are the same motions for doing jumping jacks, minus the jumping. If your family is up for the challenge, see if they can each do five jumping jacks in the snow.

3 Look for Winter Birds

Some birds (like cardinals, blue jays and black-capped chickadees), stay here and brave the wintery weather. Encourage each family member to look for a winter bird. What kind of bird did they spot? There are several helpful bird identification apps to help identify birds. If there are no birds to be seen, can anyone hear a bird chirping or singing?



4 Sledding, Tubing or Tobogganing

This activity never gets old, and it's perfect for kids of all ages. Pack some snacks, helmets, extra dry clothes, a safe, steerable sled and you're all set to make your way to the nearest hill. The slowest down the hill has to pull someone else up!

Wear proper head protection to participate in sledding, snow tubing, or tobogganing. Also, always ensure hills are clear of hazards such as trees, signposts, fences or water (frozen or not).

The best hills are not too steep and there should be enough flat area at the bottom to glide to a stop.

Keep sledding activities to daylight hours so hazards are clearly visible.

As part of your sledding routine, have everyone take two minutes to observe the hill and surroundings, spot hazards, and assess if it's safe. When everyone agrees it's safe, time to take off!

5 Snowy Obstacle Course

Pile and pack snow up high to make walls, tunnels, or ramps. Set up targets along the way to throw snowballs at during the obstacle course. Here are some other ideas for your obstacle course:



- Build a snowman
- Throw snowballs at a target
- Jump over different-sized mounds of snow
- Move three shovels of snow from one side of the course to the other

6 Build a Snow Sculpture

A snowman may be much too simple for your creative family. What about picking a favourite character and creating a winter sculpture of it?



7 Fashion an Epic Snow Fort

Forget tree forts! Work on building your own family snow fort...it could take days to finish!

Bring out empty planter boxes or tubs and pack them with snow to make igloo-like bricks for walls. Want even bigger bricks? Use recycling tubs! To make the walls super-sturdy, pour water on them overnight to freeze them. To make your fort stand out, use food-coloured water in a spray bottle to decorate, or use sticks and leaves to make flags.

Always be careful when creating tunnels or any area with a roof, and play in groups, rather than alone.

8 Extreme Snow Angels!

Bring out the friendly competition in your family by finding a wide-open space, setting a timer, and seeing how many snow angels everyone can run around and make. You might want to join in on the fun, too! Everyone's arms and legs will feel the burn, but rolling around in the snow will be sure to cool everyone down and put smiles on their faces.

Another idea: Use props, food dye or whatever you have on hand to make the most creative-looking snow angel! This can be a fun way to start or finish off a family snow day.

9 Yukigassen: Japanese Snowball Fight

This snowball fight/sport has taken off in Japan, where tournaments are held all over the country, particularly in Japan's coldest region, Hokkaido. It's even catching on here in Canada! The words "yuki" and "gassen" literally translate to "snow" and "battle."

There are two teams involved: players throw snowballs at their opponents and try to capture the other team's flag. It's a combination of Dodgeball and Capture the Flag...winter style!

Helmets and gloves are needed for each player; maybe pull out the snow goggles too!

Keep it friendly and apply rules such as no aiming/hitting above the waist.

Also, make sure you have the right kind of snow: not too icy, free of stones, sticks and rocks. Set a time limit per game (three or five minutes).

10 Winter Hopscotch

Paint hopscotch onto the snow to practice hopping, jumping, and picking up objects.

11 Go Skating (or learn how)



- 12 Go for a Family Cross-country or Downhill Ski
- 13 Take a Winter Family Hike
- 14 Throw or kick a ball around with your family pet at a dog park you've never visited before.
- 15 Have a Snow Picnic (run around between bites to keep warm).
- 16 Go for an after dinner neighbourhood stroll in the dark to look at holiday lights and decorations.
- 17 Explore a favourite summer park in the winter and find the differences and similarities.
- 18 Have a Winter Campfire—book a permit at a local park.
- 19 Catch snowflakes on your tongues.
- 20 Have an outdoor family dance party.
- 21 Hang homemade bird treats from tree branches.
- 22 Shovel the neighbours' sidewalks.
- 23 Try winter camping.
- 24 Build a Snow Maze at your local park.
- 25 Snow baking

A family fun crowd pleaser among any age group. Pack hard snow onto a cookie sheet and use different shaped cookie cutters to create snow cookies. Decorate with bits of twigs, berries, or any other items near the 'baking' area.

26 Winter Bubble Blowing

On a really, really cold day, take regular old “bubble juice” and wands outside to see the beauty that icy bubbles make. Kids will oooh and aaah when they see the cool shapes float in the air or land on surfaces in icy globes. See if you can catch the bubbles in your hands before they burst. Use a variety of wands for an even bigger variety of icy bubbles.

27 Snowball Targets

To avoid throwing snowballs at each other, set up a variety of bulls-eyes to redirect the fun. Make targets by drawing chalk squares on a wall or see how high kids can throw their snowballs at a tree trunk. Or make targets on the ground with hula hoops, a circle of rocks, or drawing a big circle, using coloured water in a spray bottle.

28 Snow Raceway

Bring out all the toy cars and use shovels and mittened hands to build an Indy-inspired track. Be sure to include twists, turns and ramps for cars to slide down.



29 Snow Golf

Bury a bowl or empty can in the snow with the opening facing up. Use the bottom of a shovel to even out the snow around the buried open can into a smooth “putting green” around the opening.

30 Snow Volcano

Make a small mountain of snow and bury a small bowl or empty water bottle at the top. Pack snow around the container and make sure the top isn't blocked by snow. Fill the container with vinegar and a few drops of food colouring. Give children a heaping tablespoon each of baking soda, have them dump it in one at a time, and stand back while the “lava” flows. As the bubbling starts to slow, add more baking soda to get the volcano erupting again.

31 Hoop Rolling

Hula hoops aren't just for summer! How far can you roll a hoop along, or down, a snowy surface?



32 Snow Creature

Instead of a snowman, build a snow dog, snow bunny, snow turtle, or snow caterpillar.



33 Snowball Knockdown

Roll a number of snowballs together and stack them into a tower. Give everyone balls or beanbags and have them knock the tower down. How many tries will it take? (And how tall can you build a tower of snowballs without it falling down?)

34 Animal Track Hunt

Take a walk or hike to see what animals have been ambling around your yard, local park, schoolyard, or hiking trails after a fresh snowfall. Can you tell if raccoons, squirrels, cats, dogs, deer, skunks, foxes, otters, or birds have been bouncing, galloping, or walking in the snow? Take a sketchbook along to draw the tracks for further fun.

35 Follow the Leader

Choose the leader and have everyone line up behind them. The leader walks in the snow with the others walking in the leader's footprints. The leader can take giant steps, zigzag, or make tiny tracks. As often as the leader decides, others must stop in place and make a movement such as a jump, a crazy dance, or a jumping jack. The others must then copy the movement before moving on.



36 Upside Down Snowman

Turn a traditional winter activity on its head! The tricky part is having the smaller snowball on the bottom but there's so much fun to be had balancing the larger snowballs above it.

37 Snow Paint

Fill spray bottles with water and food colouring. There's no limit to the fun!

If your family exhausts this list of activities, we're sure there is always a neighbourhood car to clear off or a walkway that needs shoveling.

So, bundle up and enjoy the great outdoors this season. Once inside, one of the most perfect ways to warm up are steaming mugs of hot chocolate—and don't forget the marshmallows!



Sources: <https://activeforlife.com>



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