



For children, play is learning. There is no better space for kids to learn in than the outdoors, and there is no better play resource than nature. Whether gardening, taking a walk around your neighborhood, or going to a park – outdoor adventures significantly improve all aspects of child development – physical, cognitive, social, and emotional.

When you teach your children to play outdoors, they benefit from a connection to and appreciation of nature. In the busy and technologically advanced world we live in, the role of outdoor play brings balance to our lives.

Playing outdoors helps children develop resilience, self-confidence, initiative, creativity and more. It encourages the joy of movement; it nurtures wild imaginations, experimentation, friendships, social connections, and behavior.

These Vroom tips can be used when your children are playing outdoors in the garden or yard, on a walk in the neighborhood, or when you visit a park!



Building Healthier
Communities

www.UnitedGeneral.org



Active
Living



Community &
Professional
Education



Engaged
Youth &
Communities



Healthy
Eating



Thriving
Children &
Families



Stewarding
Assets &
Opportunities

<p>Nature Builder: Use outside play as an opportunity to explore how things work. Encourage your child to find natural building blocks like small sticks, rocks, and leaves. Take turns placing the objects on top of each other and talk about what you notice, “The leaf won’t stay on top. What else could we use?”</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: As your child builds, they're thinking like a scientist and testing out ideas to learn more about balance, size, and cause and effect. Asking questions promotes critical thinking skills. They're more likely to remember and use what they learn when they're engaged in hands-on learning.</p>
<p>Nature Sizes: Outside, encourage your child to look for leaves, sticks, and rocks of different sizes. Invite them to arrange them from smallest to biggest. Ask questions about their thinking like, “How did you decide where to put that rock?” Switch up the rules and try sorting by color or type of object next.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Switching between different rules for sorting objects gives your child the opportunity to think flexibly, a skill they will use in problem-solving and coming up with new ideas. Your child is also becoming familiar with math concepts like shape, size, and number in playful ways.</p>
<p>Near and Far: When you're outside, try playing this game with your child. Give them a place to stand and have them estimate how many steps they are from you. When they walk back, count their steps together aloud. Try all different distances!</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Young children can tell there is a difference between large and small quantities! By doing fun, back-and-forth games like this, you’re building on this skill and helping them understand more about what numbers stand for.</p>
<p>Colors of the Rainbow: When you’re outside, go on a scavenger hunt with your child to find all the colors of the rainbow around you. Look for red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Seek and find them as a team.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: As your child figures out which objects are the same or different colors, they're putting information into categories. Sorting information by categories helps them organize their understanding of the world and is a pre-math skill.</p>

<p>Texture Walk: Encourage your child to explore different textures around them. What does a tree trunk feel like? Scratchy? Bumpy? What does the grass feel like on their fingers? Talk together about what you notice, like: “That rock is smooth and this rock is rough.”</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Children learn new words by experiencing what they mean, with you helping to describe what is happening and to build on their ideas. Supporting your child’s exploration encourages their drive to learn, ask questions, and think critically.</p>
<p>Leaf Matching: When out and about, grab a few leaves from the ground and see if your child can match them to the trees they came from. Give them clues: The leaf in your hand is big and yellow—do you see any trees with big yellow leaves on them?</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: This game helps your child make connections—seeing how objects go together or don’t go together—an important skill in understanding categories. Talk with them about what they’re doing as they try to match things together based on shape, size, color, and texture.</p>
<p>Baby Vision: What is your child looking at when you’re in the park? Point to where they’re looking and talk to them about what they might see. “There are sunbeams shining through the tree branches.” If they move their head, talk about the new thing they’re looking at.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Looking for clues as to what interests your child will help you offer them more interesting things to see and do. Give your child time to enjoy what they notice. Talk about it. As you respond to their clues, you’re teaching them about themselves and the world.</p>
<p>Exploring: Find a tree that you and your child would like to explore. Run your fingers up and down the trunk. Kneel down to trace the roots where they enter the soil. Reach high and try and touch the higher branches, standing on tiptoe. What did you learn about this tree today?</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: When you and your child explore, you’re helping them to learn like a scientist—observing and then figuring out what they have learned. Help them ask questions about the tree and find answers as they explore.</p>

<p>Mini-World: Connect with nature. Make a mini-world using a long string, placed like a circle. Look at the mini-world inside. What do each of you see? Talk about the textures, colors, shapes, and living creatures. Look up and count the clouds, watch for birds, butterflies and insects fluttering by.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: One of the most important learning skills is focus—paying attention to what is happening around you and noticing details. By talking with your child about what you see in the mini-world, you’re helping develop that skill as well as their appreciation for nature.</p>
<p>Junior Scientist: Do you see any animals, birds, or bugs when you're out and about? Take a moment to observe what it's doing. If it is a bug, where does it seem to be going? What does your child think the bug is doing on its travels? Are other bugs doing the same thing?</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: You’re encouraging your child’s curiosity about the world as well as developing scientific skills. They have to focus, make careful observations, and use their existing knowledge to draw conclusions about how animals get food and find safe places to live.</p>
<p>Sky Watchers: What do you see and hear in the sky? Say, “I see a cloud. Do you see a cloud? I hear an airplane. Where is it?” As your child grows, they will start pointing to things in the sky too. Children love the game of I Spy, no matter how you play it.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: When you help your child learn to look carefully at what is all around them, you’re helping them be a better observer, like a scientist. Noting what is going on is a key to learning now and in the future.</p>
<p>Color Walk: Going for a walk? Grab a paint brush, put a little water in an empty container, and take a color walk outdoors! Paint the flowers, leaves, or other colorful things as you go. Talk with your child about what they see. Enjoy the textures, colors, and shapes in your world and share your own joy and wonder.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: A color walk helps your child focus on the world around them. They are building their brain by observing and describing their world. It also a wonderful way for you to slowdown and enjoy a walk together.</p>

<p>Outside Adventures: Going out? Grab a container and see what you and your child find that's safe to pick up. Do you see some rocks to bring home and decorate? Do you see some leaves to glue into a collage? Do you see a bug to watch before you let it go? Continue watching and talking about what you see.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: "Outside Adventures" helps your child build many learning skills—focusing, communicating about what they're seeing and doing, and thinking critically about what they're finding.</p>
<p>Get Up and Grow: No matter where your family lives, things are growing all around you! Take turns with your child pointing out trees, grass, or flowers. You might say: "I see tall green grass. What do you see that grows?" Talk about what you both notice and what these things need to grow.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Asking your child questions about what they see encourages them to pay attention and motivates them to be curious about the world around them. When you take turns talking together, you help build your child's vocabulary and communication skills too.</p>
<p>Water Play! Give your child a plastic bottle filled with water. Invite them to water plants or grass or show them how the water makes marks on the sidewalk or in the dirt. Talk with them about what they're doing, "You help those plants grow by giving them water." Have fun!</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Fun experiences in nature build your child's interest in the outdoors and help to build basic scientific ideas, like understanding what happens when dirt and water mix. When you talk with them about these experiences, you give them words that help them make sense of what they're learning.</p>
<p>Our Weather Wrap-Up: When you come in from outside, have a chat with your child about the weather. Were you hot or cold? Make sure you use simple sentences, but add bigger words, too.</p>	<p>What Your Child is Learning: Talking with your child about their world helps to build their brain. Remember to ask questions: "Did your coat keep you warm?" And build on what they say: "The wind made me shiver just like you!"</p>

If you enjoy these printed tips, you can find more tips and download the free easy to use Daily Vroom app at www.JoinVroom.org

You have what it takes to be a brain-builder!

Download the Vroom app to add learning to mealtime, bathtime, bedtime, and anytime with Vroom Tips™.

See for yourself how Vroom Tips are fast and fun!

vroom.org



© 2019 Vroom, a program of the Bezos Family Foundation

vroom™



También disponible en español

Over 1,000+ easy activities designed to help your child's brain grow strong

Life gets busy, Vroom Tips stay simple. With fun activities, backed by science, you can turn everyday moments into Brain Building Moments™!

Tips inspire fun and learning whenever you have time.



Pick tips by category or setting to find tips that work for you.

Tips are personalized for children 0-5.



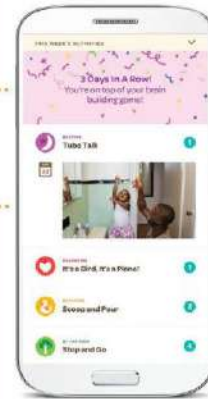
Choose your tip delivery time or set a reminder.

Every day, we deliver a fun Vroom Tip for you right to your phone.



Learn the science behind how each activity builds your child's brain.

Celebrate your progress and keep track of your favorite tips.



Add photos to make a scrapbook of all your Brain Building Moments.