

**WILDSIGHT
INVERMERE**



**OUTDOOR LEARNING IN
WINTER FOR YOUNG
CHILDREN**



WHY?

Outdoor learning in any season is an engaging and super beneficial thing to do with your children. Not only does it increase physical activity and improve mental health, but it also provides connections to nature, reinforcement of observational skills, expansion of imaginative & creative play, awareness of the change of seasons, increasing inquiry-based learning, and development of a sense of wonder.

WHEN?

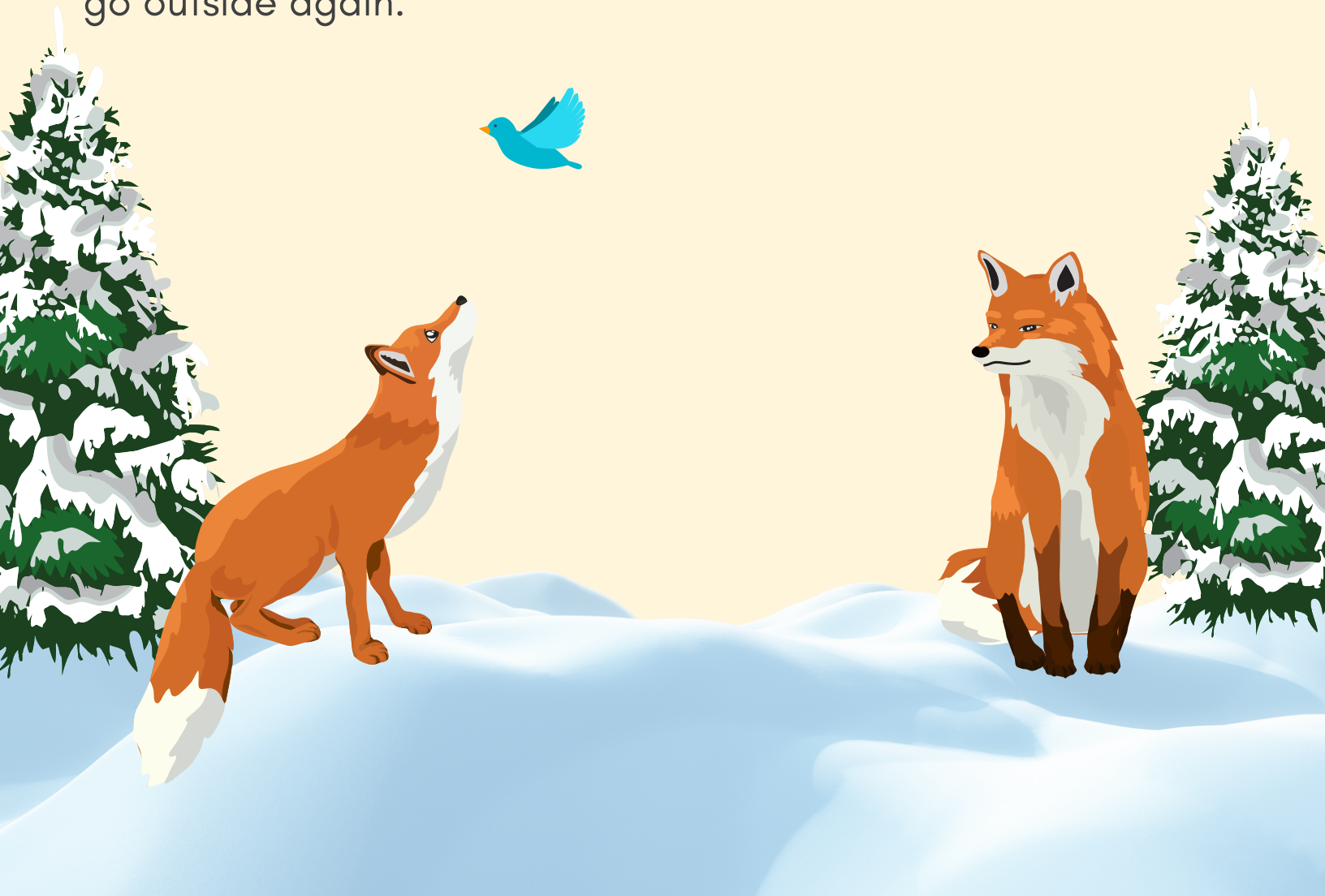
Whenever works for your family to get outdoors is the best time! Try going outside at different times in winter to notice different things like how visible the stars are in the early evening, sparkling crystals in the snow in the morning, or chirping birds in the warmer afternoons. If you're new to outdoor winter fun, start small - 20 minutes could be enough to start with, and then increase the time from there.

WHERE?

ANYWHERE! The smallest, closest outdoor spot can be interesting to young children in any season. Thus your backyard or the edges of your driveway can be as interesting to preschool children as heading to Panorama or down to the Whiteway. Pick what works for you and your child(ren).

MAKE IT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

Number one tip: layering clothing! There's a saying that there are no bad weather days, just inappropriate clothing, and this can be applied to any season! Make sure your child has warm socks (multiple pairs and/or feet warmers) and layers under their snowsuit. The experience will also be more positive if you, the adult, are also dressed comfortably. Running games will get everyone laughing and warm up cold fingers & toes. Lastly, one of the best parts of outdoor play in winter is returning inside where it's warm and cozy - being responsive to your child's desire to return inside when cold will help them want to go outside again.



WHAT & HOW?

Loose Parts Play

Megan Zeni, an outdoor teacher at Room to Play in BC states that "*Loose parts*" are found and/or natural objects that have no specific instructions for play and are highly valued for imaginative and creative affordances for play.

- *Winter loose parts* could include: pinecones, sticks, snowballs, ice cubes, containers, rocks, etc. that children can use to build any number of things outside.
- Megan recommends the following books to introduce the idea of loose parts play: "Mattland" by Hazel Hutchins & Gail Herbert; "Westlandia" by Paul Fleishman; or "Not a Stick" by Antoinette Portis.

Winter Nature Scavenger Hunt

Either on your own or with your child(ren) create a list of objects to find outside & then strap on your real or imaginary backpacks and head off on your adventure. You could check off items on a written or picture list of the items, you could bring an empty egg carton to put the objects in, or you could take pictures of the objects, the sky's the limit. Objects could include winter-related objects such as:

- animal tracks & pinecones,
- textures (fuzzy, rough ect.)

- colours (paper paint swatches from the hardware store are fun to use),
- scents (what smells sweet outside in winter?)
- sounds (can you hear/see the bird that says “Chick-a-dee-dee-dee”?)

Science Experiments

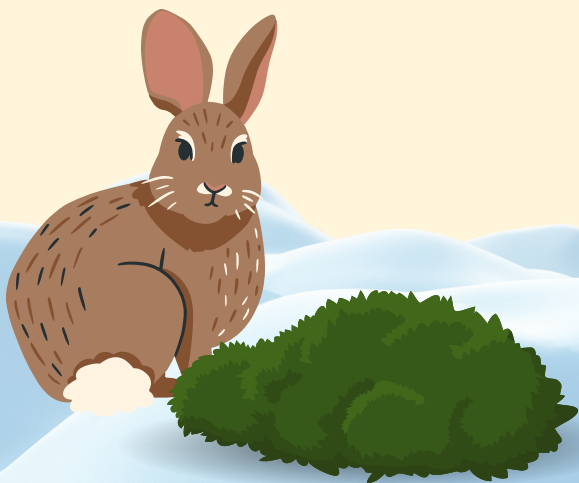
Winter offers many opportunities to experiment with water, ice and snow. Simply asking questions about the following scenarios and then trying them initiates a world of discovery, inquiry, and fun:

- What would happen if a yoghurt container filled with water was left outside overnight when it's below zero (with or without a lid on)?
- What might happen to a container packed full of snow (or ice) if it was left inside overnight?
- What happens when snow is dropped into a container of water outside?
- What does ice do in water (float, sink, melt, freeze)?
- What beautiful art-in-the-snow piece can you make with coloured ice cubes and will anything happen to the ice cubes or their colours if left in the snow outside for a long time? **Tip:** To make coloured ice cubes, try adding a little bit of paint (liquid tempera or finger paint) or food colouring in the water in ice cube trays, then freezing. Note: food colouring may rub off & stain clothing.

Other

All the typical winter activities continue to be fun & interesting - especially so if a “story” is attached to them. For example, you could be mountain climbing pirates digging a tunnel to try to find buried treasure.

- Tobogganing
- Digging tunnels in snow banks or just in snow
- Snow angels
- Making piles of snow & sliding off of them
- Cracking ice



INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE



- Check out First Voices - Explore Languages to learn words in our local Ktunaxa and Secwepemc languages. For Michif (Metis) check out Metis museum Michif dictionary. There are also audio files for many words so you can hear the pronunciation!
- A few common animal words are below. Try pointing out these animals to your child(ren) using these other languages. A rough pronunciation guide is below each word in ("word"), but listening to the audio files at the websites mentioned above is best.

English	Ktunaxa	Secwepemc	Michif
Deer	Çupqa ("soup-ka")	Tśi7 ("_ts-ee")	Shoovreu ("show-vruh")
Bear	Nupqu ("noop-ko")	Skleqs ("sklawks")	aen noor ("an - nor")
Crow	Xa·xa· ("ha-ha")	S7ége7cen ("s-aw-hin")	enn kornay ("en-corn-eh")
Snow	?a·kʦu (uh-chlo")	Swucwt ("swoohkt")	la niizh ("la kneegh")

