



PLAYING IN ALL WEATHERS... FUN WITH THE WINTER ELEMENTS!

Winter is here and it's getting colder and darker – but it's still a great time for getting children of all ages outdoors. We just need to EMBRACE the weather!

Have a playful and positive attitude towards the winter season; show your children that winter can be fun. Try to model ways to be playful stamp your feet on ice patches or in puddles, have a snowball fight, play in the rain, make snow angels or snowmen! Take a breath of that cold winter air and remember that whatever you do outdoors you are supporting your children's health, wellbeing and happiness.

Think positive!

What we say...

Aw no it's raining! We're not going outside today.

What a dreary, miserable day.

It's freezing out there!

It's too windy today!

This weather is ruining our plans!

What we could say...

Let's get our raincoats on, looks like it's a muddy puddle day today!

Seems like the sun needed a holiday today, let's go and look at the clouds.

Let's put an extra layer on today and perhaps a hat too!

Oh let's see how that wind is blowing today.

Let's think of something that would be fun to do today in that weather.

"There is no such things as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing."

Ranulph Fiennes

During the warm spring and summer months, it seems natural to allow children to play outside. However, when winter comes along, parents and adults are often more hesitant to let children outside to play. There are plenty of ways to encourage children to play outdoors, and there are several health benefits that accompany winter playtime:

Seeing the outdoors from a new perspective **BREATHING FRESH AIR AND AVOIDING GERMS** **vitamin D exposure** **INCREASES EXERCISE** **new experiences** **NEW CHALLENGES** **playful fun!**

Wrap up warm and embrace the play opportunities that winter brings. Creating and engaging in winter play activities is fun for both you and your child, and very easy to do!

Spray Paint Art

Fill squeeze bottles with water & food coloring and draw pictures in the snow. Or use old paintbrushes and buckets to paint the snow.

Build a snowman

A childhood must! Add some props like hats and scarves, pebbles, twigs and sticks and maybe a carrot for a nose.

Frozen Bubbles

Blow bubbles outside in the cold icy air. They will be much harder to pop and last much longer. Catch frozen snowflakes or hailstones on your tongue.

Windy Walk

Go for a walk in the wind and see how the wind blows the leaves and the trees. Remember the joy of crunching fallen leaves underfoot?

Nest Hunt

Go on a nest hunt – with all the leaves off the trees nests are much easier for children to spot! Make it a game and see who can spot the biggest.

Jumping Puddles

Put on raincoats, water boots and splash or jump in puddles, another childhood must!

Rainy Walk

Don't let the rain put you off. Take umbrellas and head off for a walk in the rain. There is something about umbrellas that toddlers and children love...using them as a walking stick, twirling them around above their heads or use them as broomsticks to fly through puddles.

Mud, Mud, Mud

Rainy weather creates mud...children are often drawn to muddy puddles and dirt as a part of their play. Make mud pies, paint with mud or jump in muddy puddles.

Being outside with your child offers all sorts of play opportunities.

Recreate some of your childhood play memories and make some time to play each day.

For more information on Play Matters contact Angela Stallard or Pamela Baxter at 028 91 279208 playmatters@education-ni.gov.uk