Outdoor Play Every Day!
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Hi Friends!
My name is Blue, the Caring Cub, and these are my friends; Dart, Glide, Leap, and Swing.
It's a beautiful day. Blue and his friends want to go outside and play!
Blue asks his friends if they would like to go explore the neighborhood.
Outside they have the space to **run** in the grass, **jump** over fallen branches and **climb** tall trees.

This gives them strong bodies and healthy minds.
The friends like to use their imaginations and create new ways to play.

What do you think Blue and his friends should do?
The friends use their imagination to pretend to plant some healthy foods in their “garden.” What healthy foods do you see?
Swing discovers his favorite healthy fruit in the “garden.”

Blueberries!
As Blue and his friends continue exploring, they find a bunch of big sticks.

How many sticks did they find?

What would you do with the sticks?

1 2 3
Glide thinks the friends could use the sticks to build something.

What do you think they will build?
They decide to build a teepee.
Blue, Dart and Leap lift the big sticks into place.
Are you strong enough to lift heavy sticks?
How would you do it?
They did it! They worked together and built a teepee!
Leap wants to gather leaves to use as the floor of the teepee.

Do you gather leaves at home?
What should they do with the extra leaves? Play with them!
The friends **throw** the leaves in the air, then **roll** on them when they are on the ground. They enjoy hearing the sounds of the leaves under their bodies.
Blue and his friends are having fun playing outside. What could they do next?
The friends *walk* and find a field with beautiful red flowers.

They stop to smell the flowers.

How many flowers do you see?
As they play, they feel the warm sunshine. It helps their skin make Vitamin D, which gives the friends energy.
The sunlight gives our eyes a workout too.

Our eyes have to adjust to different lights and colors.

This helps to keep our eyes healthy and strong.
Soon, clouds cover the sun, and it starts to rain. The friends are ready to play in the rain — except Glide — she hides!

Can you find Glide?
Blue and his friends see the rain drops making puddles.

What will the rain do to the mountain of dirt?
Leap, Dart, Swing, and Blue love to jump and splash in the puddles.

Blue wants you to pretend to jump in puddles.
The rain turned the dirt into mud.
The friends enjoy playing in the mud.
Do you like to play in the mud?
Dirt and mud are full of tiny microbes that keep us all healthy.

“Microbes are even smaller than I am. So small you can’t see them”, said Glide.
When the friends are finished playing in the mud, they splash in the puddles to get clean.
The sun comes out and makes everything brighter.
The friends love playing outside. They know they must take care of nature so that they can keep enjoying it!
Blue and his friends all agree they love playing outside.

They feel so free and calm.
We know that playing outside is important to feel good and stay healthy!
Tips

• While reading talk about nature and the importance of outdoor play

• Take the story outside to read and participate in activities taking place in the story

• Practice learning objectives while reading the story; numbers, patterns, letters, science concepts or letter sounds

• Send tips, recipes, and activities from the book home for parents and children to work on
Creating Bamboo or Vine Teepee

Materials:
Sticks, twine (rope or vine), shovel, compost, tarp or sheets, and decorations (optional)

Directions:
1. Gather long sticks
2. Create main support by placing sticks in an upright position and using twine to secure together at the top
3. Plan where the entrance will be
4. Add sticks to act as cross-bridges for support
5. Wrap teepee with tarp, scrap material or vine.

( Inspired by Domestic Engineer, 2009)

For step-by-step instructions visit the Natural Learning Initiative!
### Snack Recipes

#### Blueberry Yogurt Bites

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 T honey
- 1 cup fresh blueberries

**Directions:**
- Mix the honey and the yogurt together.
- Then roll the blueberries in the mixture and freeze.

#### Play Mix

**Ingredients:**
- Granola pieces
- Freeze dried blueberries
- Sunflower seeds
- Peanuts

**Directions:**
- Mix ingredients in a large bowl and separate into small portions.
Fort Building

Materials:
- boxes
- ropes
- sheets
- tarps
- long sticks

Instructions:
Provide the children with the materials and encourage them to work together to create some sort of structure or shelter. The possibilities are endless.

Jump the River/Creek

Materials:
- longs sticks or tape if you are inside

Instructions:
Using the materials create an inverted “V.” Then have the group attempt to jump the “river” where it is very narrow. Continue to challenge the children to jump the “river” where it is wider. They can **jump**, **hop**, or **leap** the “river.”

- **jump** - leaving the ground and landing with two feet
- **hop** - leaving the ground and landing with one foot
- **leap** - leaving the ground on one foot and landing on the other
Additional Resources:

- NC Children and Nature Coalition

- Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, North Carolina State University
  [https://naturalearning.org/](https://naturalearning.org/)

- North Carolina Zoo
  [https://www.nczoo.org/](https://www.nczoo.org/)

- Playful Pedagogy
  [https://www.nczoo.org/education/adult-education/playful-pedagogy](https://www.nczoo.org/education/adult-education/playful-pedagogy)

- Children and Nature Network

- 1000 Hours Outside
  [https://1000hoursoutside.com/index.html/](https://1000hoursoutside.com/index.html/)
Be Active Kids is an award-winning program. This innovative, interactive health program for children ages birth to five is available to adults working in child care centers, child care homes, and schools across North Carolina. Its evidence-based and evidence-informed messages are carried out through five cuddly and adventurous characters including Blue the caring cub, Glide the bird, Swing the monkey, Leap the rabbit and Dart the dog. Using these characters as their guides, children can engage in playful experiences, interact with a story, explore their natural surroundings, and much more.

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