

# Exploring

## infants and toddlers

Capital District Child Care Council

*a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2*

## Outdoor Play

Daily outdoor play opportunities are important to a child's development, learning, and health as well as helping to maintain strong bonds with their caregivers. When children play outdoors they freely explore, practice adult roles, struggle through and master challenges, and work in groups. They also practice decision making and leadership skills while engaging fully and joyfully in childhood imagination and passion. Children are energetic. Getting outdoors allows them to talk and sing a little louder, turns their walk into a skip or a run and helps them relieve any stress they may have from their busy days. Use these tips to get the most out of the outdoors:

- Fill play tubs with seasonal or thematic items like plastic apples or gourds in the Fall.
- Blow bubbles and pop with "bubble boppers."
- Use an appliance box to crawl through or color on.
- Use old bed sheets to drag around, spread out and hide under.
- Have a mini car wash. Set out small bowls of soapy water, small sponges and tiny cars.
- Use blankets, small baskets plates and cups and plastic food for a picnic.
- Lay hula hoops on the ground to jump in and out of.
- Hang a set or two of wind chimes

**Skip, run,  
explore and sing  
a little louder...get  
the most out of your  
outdoor play.**

and a wind sock.

- Hang a clear heavy tarp or an old white bed sheet with clothes pins.
- Have children paint or use spray bottles.
- Play "pop bottle bowling." Children roll a ball and knock down 2 liter bottles.
- Encourage children to pull stuffed animals around in plastic snow sleds.

