



# Wee Learn

## Wee Explorers (18 months – 3 years): Outdoor Winter Fun for Toddlers



Ask any parent, bundling up a baby or toddler for outdoor play in winter is an adventure. But don't let the layers and the battle with mittens deter you. The change in season provides new opportunities for even the littlest to be active and continue their journey towards physical literacy.

While children under 3 may not be lacing up skates or strapping on skis, there are still many ways for them to join the winter fun. Here are six ideas to engage and guide babies and toddlers in the great outdoors all season long.

**1. Go sledding (and climb back up!).** It's usually all smiles when soaring down a hill, but less so on the return to the top. Encourage kids of all ages — even the crawlers or those new to walking — to head back up on their own. Make it fun by pretending you are bears climbing back up to your den or mountain climbers trying to reach the world's highest peak.

**Skills developed:** This activity helps develop balance and physical coordination and builds strength in the limbs.

**2. Play at the park.** Your local park isn't just a summertime destination. Exploring the playground in all seasons helps toddlers build confidence on multiple terrains. Be careful and cognizant of more slippery surfaces this time of year.

**Skills developed:** Park play helps with agility, balance, and coordination.

**3. Catch snowflakes.** It doesn't have to be snowing to chase the white stuff. For babies, simply sit beside them and gently toss snow in the air, making sure to take turns at "making it snow". If you're playing with older toddlers, clear the area of any obstacles in case they walk or run after snowflakes.

**Skills developed:** This activity helps develop motor control in the hands, as well as the ability to track movement and objects with the eyes. It also helps build spatial awareness.

**4. Create snow art.** Flatten and smooth out a large area in the snow by asking babies or toddlers to pat their hands or stomp their feet. Use your mitten or find a stick to draw shapes in the snow. For little movers, go on a nature scavenger hunt to find branches or stones to decorate your masterpiece.

<http://activeforlife.com/6-winter-activities-for-toddlers>



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