

Out and About with Preschoolers: The Places You'll Go!



It's a beautiful day to be outdoors with the children. But is there any way to help them meet social science benchmarks while outdoors? Yes, there is! Go ahead—take those young social scientists outside! (See Illinois Early Learning and Development Benchmarks 10.A.ECa, 10.A.ECb, 14.A.ECb, 17.A.ECa, and 17.A.ECb.) Take along compasses, clipboards, paper, pencils, field glasses, measuring tools, cameras, and maps to help children study places and people outdoors. The activities listed here can work on the spur of the moment or be part of in-depth class investigations.



Living in the World: Invite the children to find out “Who lives near our school?”

- Look together for homes of animals and people. Help the children list and describe homes they see—from anthills to apartments.
- Discuss what materials are used to make these homes. Ask the children to guess how people or animals make their homes.
- Arrange for children to measure, photograph, and make field drawings of a home.



Moving Along: Investigate a transportation route.

- Ask children what they see that carries a load. What is its cargo? How does it move?
- Let the children count how many people are in the cars or buses going past. They can take turns using a counter or making tally marks to record how many vehicles pass by in one minute. One child can operate a timer or stopwatch.
- Invite children to measure and make field drawings of vehicles, waterways, roads, and paths. You might help older preschoolers map a transportation route.



Keeping Things Clean: Explore why litter is a problem.

- Ask the children what kinds of litter they can see.
- Give the children bags and protective gloves. (NOTE: Children must not pick up broken glass or other sharp objects.) Challenge them to find out how much dry litter they can pick up in two minutes. Let them take “before” and “after” photographs of the area.
- Invite children to guess (in ounces or grams) how much litter they collect. Weigh the bags together when you return to the classroom and compare the measurements to their guesses.



Going Places: Visit an unfamiliar playground.

- After they play, invite the children to compare play spaces. You might ask, “How is this place different from the school playground? Who comes here? What can you do on this play equipment?” Write down their ideas.
- Encourage them to make observational drawings of the play area.
- Discuss with the children what to include in a model of the playground and how they might make the model.
- Let them build a model in the sandbox or sand table.



For related Web resources, see “Out and About with Preschoolers: The Places You'll Go!” at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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