

Playing to learn

LEARNING TO PLAY

Make the outdoors a fun and educational place for your child.

FOR 0-2 YEARS

GO ON A TREASURE HUNT

Pick up different-shaped leaves, pebbles, shells, twigs and other "treasures". As you sort these out with your child, take the opportunity to talk about their differences and similarities. Talk about colours, textures and shapes. Stick the treasures on a board to make a texture board for your child.

FOR 3-4 YEARS

BUILD SANDCASTLES AT THE BEACH

Bring shovels, containers, trucks and plastic toys to the beach. Make up a story as you build sandcastles with your child. Ask him or her "What are you building?", "Who lives there?" and offer suggestions like "Do you want to make a ramp for your car park?". Sand play allows your child to explore concepts such as measurement, volume and shapes. It is also a great vocabulary builder.



FOR 5-6 YEARS

DISCOVER SHADOW PLAY

Explain what shadows are to your child. You can define a shadow as the outline of something that blocks a path of light. Have your child try to make shadow pictures with his hands and fingers. Go outdoors at different times of the day for your child to experience different types of shadows. Take a photograph to paste in his or her scrapbook.

For more ideas and parenting tips, go to www.growatbeanstalk.sg or download APParent in SG from the App Store and Google Play



LET'S PLAY

Two books to help parents get their kids (and themselves) out and about!

WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT

By Michael Rosen & Helen Oxenbury

"We are not going on a bear hunt again." The closing line of this award-winning picture book promises young readers that the journey, especially when various obstacles need to be overcome, matters more than the destination.

Just as the story's characters (father, mother, three children and their dog) set off in search of a fearsome bear, readers are also encouraged to embark on their own journey through a forest of onomatopoeic words such as "squelch squelch", and over pages of lovingly-drawn illustrations and faraway places.

Contributed by James Tan, Associate Librarian, National Library Board



THE KIDS' OUTDOOR ADVENTURE BOOK: 448 GREAT THINGS TO DO IN NATURE BEFORE YOU GROW UP

By Stacy Tornio, Ken Keffer and Rachel Riordan

The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book is a manual for getting kids — and parents — outdoors to appreciate the subtleties of nature in our media-saturated society. The book is divided into four chapters, one for each season, but many of the activities suggested translate well to our warmer climates. They range from the simple to the whimsical and include trip suggestions, recipes and nostalgic outdoor games. Each activity is also rated on an Adventure Scale, so parents and kids can decide just how intrepid they would like to be.

Contributed by Nurul Huda Hassan, Associate Librarian, National Library Board



Eat A 'HAPPY COW'!

Have fun assembling this cute character bento with your kids.

The next time your child asks what's for dinner, tell him or her 'Happy Cow' is on the menu. Invite your child to help you get this character-bento meal ready for the dining table. Assembling this dish with your junior kitchen helper not only teaches your little one about food (tastes, textures, colours), it's also a hands-on bonding activity. Best of all, you can encourage your child to eat more greens! ♥

WHAT YOU NEED

- 100g -120g cooked Japanese short-grain rice
- 1 seaweed sheet
- 1 little pink Japanese fish roll (kamaboko)
- Lettuce
- Alfalfa sprouts

Sides

- 3 sausages (chicken, beef, or pork)
- Fried meat roll (chicken, beef, or pork)
- Vegetables of choice
- Fresh fruit

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

- Cling wrap
- Scissors
- Seaweed punch*
- Round cookie cutter

*Seaweed punch is available at Daiso

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:



1 Divide the cooked rice into two portions.

2 Divide one of the portions into two parts. Using cling wrap, shape one part into a flat oval for the cow's muzzle. Take one tsp from the other part and shape into two triangular ears. Shape the other part of the rice into an oval for the cow's head.

3 Using cling wrap, shape the second portion of rice to form the body and legs of the cow.



4 Using a seaweed punch, cut two ovals for the eyes, two circles for the patches on the cow, and a curved line for the mouth from seaweed.

5 Cut two small circles for the cow's nostrils from seaweed.

6 Using the cookie cutter, cut two circles for the cow's cheeks from the pink layer of the Japanese fish roll.

7 Using a knife, cut two small triangles for the cow's inner ears from the pink layer of the Japanese fish roll, and a tail from the white layer of the Japanese fish roll.

8 Fill the bento box with lettuce and alfalfa sprouts and assemble the cow. Using a pair of tweezers, place the features on the cow.

9 Complete the bento meal with side dishes such as sausages, fried meat roll, vegetables of choice and fresh fruit.



CHARACTER BENTO

MAKES ONE BENTO SET

VEGGIE MIGHT

Broccoli

The flavonoids present help counter allergies and inflammation; high concentrations of carotenoids are useful for eye health.



This recipe is taken and adapted from *Kawaii Bento* (\$32, excluding GST), published by Marshall Cavendish.

