

Child Learning While Out and About

Everyday community activities provide young children many different kinds of learning opportunities. You can encourage your child's participation and learning during community activities by using his or her interests to choose activities and by responding to the things he or she does while involved in the activities.

See a video of this Learning Guide

Learning Guide: Everyday Community Learning Opportunities

- Watch your child in everyday community activities to find out which objects, activities, people, and actions that hold your child's attention, make your child smile and laugh, are your child's favorites, and are especially exciting to him or her. By paying close attention, you can spot your child's special interests.
- Think about all the different activities your family does in your community. Does your family do outdoor or recreation activities like hiking, taking a neighborhood walk, or swimming? Do you go on outings to shop for groceries, eat in a restaurant, or visit family or friends? Do you take your child to pick out books at the library or play at a playground or park? Do you visit attractions like children's museums, petting zoos, or science centers, or go to listen to storytellers or children's musicians? Do you participate in community celebrations like festivals and parades?
- Of all the community activities your family does, choose the activities that best match your child's interests or that your child would find most interesting. Choose activities that can happen often and can give your child chances to do lots of different things that interest him or her. Going on a nature walk, for example, might give your child chances to look for a bird in the trees, find different sizes of sticks, climb over rocks, feel moss on a tree, watch a butterfly, hear the sounds of leaves crunching under feet, and so forth.
- During a community activity, pay attention to what your child is doing. Respond positively when you see your child doing something or trying to do something while in the activity. Make a positive comment, describe what your child is doing, join in the activity with your child, take turns, and praise your child. This will encourage your child to stay involved in the activity.
- Encourage your child to try new things in the activity. Respond to your child by showing him or her how to do something a little bit differently, praising his or her attempts to do new things, or arranging materials so your child does something different.

A Quick Peek

Zophia was excited to walk with her Aunt Ida to the post office to mail a birthday card to her grandfather. When they reached the post office, they noticed a gardening center across the street. Zophia ran a stick along the gardening center fence and listened to the "music" she made. She waved to the customers, watched the sprinklers, and named the colors of the flowers. As they reached the mailboxes, Zophia said, "I want to mail it!" and raised her arms up to Ida. Ida said, "Of course you do," and lifted Zophia in her arms. Ida supported the card so Zophia could drop it in the mail slot. "You mailed it! There it goes," said Ida. Zophia waved and said, "Bye-bye card. Happy birthday, Pop Pop!"



You'll know the practice is working if ...

- Your child stays involved in the community activities for longer periods of time
- Your child really likes participating in the community activities
- Your child tries new things during the community activities

Learn more about helping your child experience natural learning opportunities as part of everyday activities in your community:

- [Learning on the Go](#)
- [Windows of Opportunity idea page](#)

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