

## NATURE GAMES & ACTIVITIES FOR AT-HOME PLAY

We've assembled some of our favorite ideas to help inspire your playtime with kids 5 and up at home! Engage with us online for more from Garfield Park Conservatory on Instagram & Twitter: @gpconservatory or on Facebook at facebook.com/garfieldparkconservatory

### Animal Relay Races

Compete in a series of races where each round requires the players to move like a different animal. For example, hop like a frog, walk like a crab, crawl like a bear. Who can move the fastest? Who does the best animal movements? Who can make the best animal sounds while they race?



Trying to walk like this crab is a great way to get exercise and have fun—all at the same time! Photo by Summer Li



Does your dream garden have flowers? A pond? Is it at your school or by your home? Photo by Adrianna Calvo

### Remember It

Gather a collection of approximately 10 natural items. Have everyone study all of the objects for a minute or two. While their eyes are closed remove one object. Have them open their eyes and guess what is missing. As children get better at the game you can remove two objects at a time or add more objects to make it more difficult.

### Dream Garden

What would you plant in your dream garden? Where would your dream garden be? At your school or near your home? In this activity you can create your own by cutting out pictures from old magazines of flowers, vegetables, trees, fountains or anything you would want to add to your garden if you could create anything you wanted. Glue the pictures some paper in the arrangement that you would like and then share with others the story of how you planned your garden.



Objects like these make great subjects for a memory game. Photo by Evie Shaffer

## I-Spy Out Your Window

This works great if you have a pair of binoculars but works even if you don't. Look for signs of spring, animals, or anything else. You might be surprised what you see out your window! Another game that you can play by looking out your window is "What's Lovely Today?" Every day (even on bad weather days), challenge each person to find something that they find lovely out your window. The rest of the group guesses what that person found lovely by asking yes and no questions.



What can you see from your window? Photo by Juan Pablo Serrano Arenas

## Indoor Camping

This pretend play activity can be led by wherever your imagination takes you. You can build an indoor tent with chairs and blankets, make some trail mix, and create a starry sky by making your own constellations out of paper and taping them to the ceiling. This is a great way to celebrate the outdoors even when traveling or being in them isn't feasible. We love singing campfire songs and using the microwave to make some s'mores to complete our camping adventure!



Where would you pretend to camp: in a forest or in a desert? What about being the first people to camp on another planet? Photo by Süleyman Seykan

## Cloud-Watching story time

Take time to relax and look up into the sky and find a cloud. What do you think it looks like? What does it remind you of? Begin to tell a story by just looking at the clouds and letting your imagination go. As the clouds change, it can even inspire changes to your story!



Clouds come in amazing shapes and colors; let them inspire your imagination! Photo by Brett Sayles





Pretend you're a precious plant like this orchid! Photo by Katarzyna Modrzejewska

## Precious Plant

This game requires at least two people. Lay a hula hoop on the ground and have one person stand inside it. The person inside the hoop should strike any pose they would like. After they have settled on their pose let them know that they are a precious plant and the hula hoop is a glass case that will protect the plant. The other player must remove the glass case (hula hoop) by lifting it over the plant without touching it and damaging the precious plant.



This work is supported in part by a grant from PNC Foundation for education with young children.

## Rock Stacking Championship

On your next adventure outside, look for good rocks and pebbles. Bring home your collection and start a rock stacking championship! This is a great way to teach children to treat items carefully and with respect as well. Decide what the goal of your game is. Is it who can stack their rocks the tallest or use the most rocks?



Stacking rocks is a great activity to develop hand-eye coordination for younger learners. Photo by Marina Marigo

## SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!

Post about your adventures and tag us at @gpconservatory or use the hashtag "#GPCatHome"!