

# Individual Matters

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Newsletter — May 2024 Issue

## Embracing Spring: Fun Outdoor Activities to Boost Whole Child Development

Spring has sprung and is inviting us all outside to play! Playing, learning, and being outside aren't just enjoyable – these activities are also essential to whole-child development. Research shows that kids (and adults) who play outside are happier, have better attention, and are less anxious than those who spend more time inside.

The key to getting the most out of outdoor play is that activities and time in nature are not dominated by adult-based rules or expectations. Children who spend at least some unstructured time playing outside are better able to manage the choices and responsibilities of adulthood. Sadly, however, *the average American child spends only 7-8 minutes per day in outdoor free play!*

Because so few children have experience with unstructured, outdoor play, which is crucial to whole-child development, most will require some initial support and scaffolding from parents and teachers before they are able to manage these activities independently. Once they get into the swing of things, parents can ease off so the fun and freedom can grow.

Here are a few fun ways to scaffold children with a nature adventure:

- Send them out on a bug search with a magnifying glass and a jar.

- Create a scavenger hunt (then have them create their own).
- Set up an outdoor stage/amateur amphitheater, seating area, or cloud/star gazing space. Maybe pitch a tent.
- Co-create a sensory site and crafting area. Working together, gather materials from inside the house and from nature.
- Set up an obstacle course.
- Go sit by a body of water... and do nothing.
- Plan a picnic. Find a spot. Do nothing... and see what unfolds!

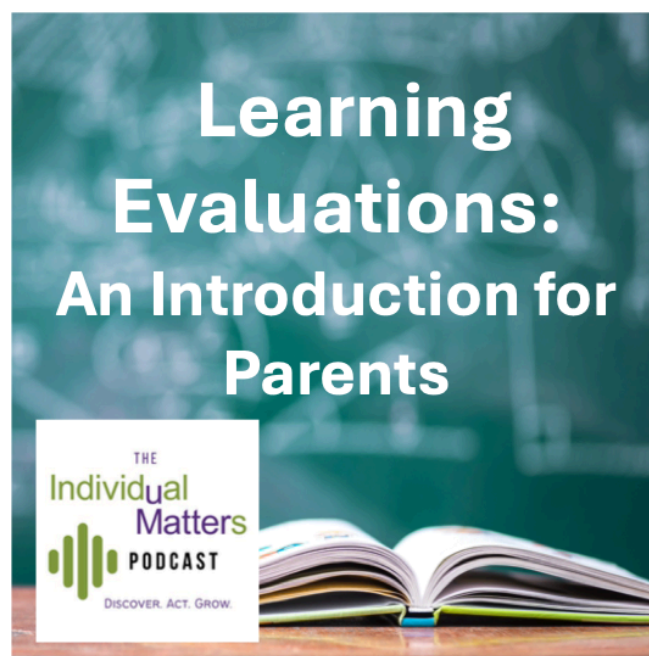
Give these a try, modify as needed, and most of all, have fun!

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## **Learning Evaluations: An Introduction for Parents**

In our latest podcast episode, we discuss a few different types of private learning evaluations, as well as some other factors that you may want to keep in mind when choosing the most appropriate option for your child.

**Listen [here](#).**



Wishing you a wonderful May and Happy Mother's Day!



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