

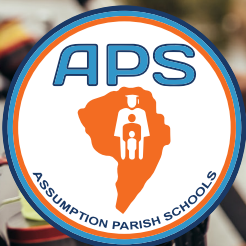


EXPLORE

Together Every Day!

Exploratory play is one of the best ways that children can learn about their world. As children explore their environment through play and discovery, they are developing critical cognitive skills.

Exploratory play helps to foster creativity, imagination, and discovery. Children can enhance their vocabularies and fundamental literacy skills, as well as improve their fine motor skills, improving brain processing support for reading, math, and science learning in school.



Make a Difference for Your Child Today!

www.assumptionreadystart.com

Assumption Parish Ready Start Program is here to provide families with valuable resources on how to explore with their children through fun, playful activities.

There are countless ways you can encourage creativity through exploration at home. Here are some easy ways you can support exploratory play:

Coloring/ Drawing	Encourage your child to draw pictures and explore colors. Ask, “What colors do you like?” Be sure to display your child’s work!
Cutting	Assist your child with cutting small pieces of different types of paper or even old magazine pages. Encourage your child to create a design or collage with the pieces.
Painting	Use paint brushes, sponges, or cotton balls to mix colors and observe how they change. Ask, “What happens when you mix red and blue?”
Modeling– Making	Use blocks, playdough, or any other safe objects from around the house to plan and design something else. Help your child think through what they want to make.
Cooking	Cooking introduces measuring and provides an easy way to introduce how materials change (solid to liquid). Children will be able to taste, smell, and see the end results of their exploration.
Move to Music	Playing instruments, even those you make with materials around the house such as a spoon and pan, along with singing, helps children learn about patterns, rhythm, and sound. Make up fun ways to dance and move to the music.
Role-Playing	Use household objects to act out real-life experiences such as shopping at a store, eating in a restaurant, or working on a job.
Dress-Up	Hunt for clothing and other items your child can use to play dress-up. Ask, “Who or what would you like to be today?”

It is often said that spending time outside and in nature is good for your body and mind.

The outdoors serves as an optimal space for unstructured exploratory play. Read on to discover ways to make outdoor exploration fun for the family:

OUTDOOR CRAFTING

- **Leaf Rubbings:** Collect various leaves. Simply lay the leaves between two pieces of paper and run over the top paper with a crayon or colored pencil. The leaf details will magically appear!
- **Painting With Nature:** Use things found in nature, like twigs, flowers, leaves, and pinecones to paint a unique art piece.
- **Create A Nature Collage:** Have the kids collect things on their nature walk and then glue them to a piece of paper, creating a one-of-a-kind collage. Be sure these are items they can take out of nature!
- **Paint Rocks:** Gather smooth, flat rocks, and paint them! For children who know how to print their names, have them write a letter on each rock and then use the stones to spell out their names in the garden.
- **Sidewalk Chalk Ideas:** Children love sidewalk chalk! Chalk art ideas might include creating patterns, designs, or murals on the sidewalk, driveway, or fence. Sidewalk chalk can also be used to create games such as hopscotch, mazes, and obstacle courses.

EXPLORE WITH TOOLS

Children can make bug catchers out of jars and treasure boxes out of old shoe boxes to explore things they have collected in nature. Use a magnifying glass to examine the items up close. Any type of shovels, buckets, or old containers serve as great exploration tools.

TAKE A NATURE WALK OR HIKE

Go on a nature walk or hike with your child. Consider taking a nature book from home or the library to help identify items found along the way. For example, children may identify plants and animals that are native to the area. Consider taking pictures of what was found so that children can make their own nature book.

SCAVENGER HUNT

Work with your children to create a scavenger hunt list of things to collect in nature. Build lists around different categories such as color (yellow things in nature), texture (hard things in nature), or shapes (round things in nature). Next, head out on a walk to see how many items your child can find. Be sure to bring a bag along to collect the treasures. Items in the bag can be used for comparison, to create art, or for sorting. If limited on time, simply play "I Spy" using shapes, colors or textures. For example, you might say, "I spy a round, brown object," and have your child go find it.

IN THE DAY OR NIGHT SKY

Weather is always fascinating to children. Whether looking at puffy clouds or feeling the sun's heat, children can use their observations to predict and report on the weather. Magical memories and cosmic curiosity can be experienced by heading outside on a clear night. You can use a star chart to identify constellations together.



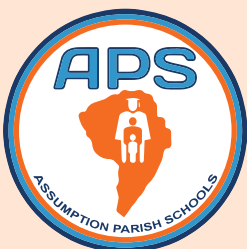
Together Every Day!

Playing with your child is a key ingredient to their overall development.

Below are five practical ways to encourage and motivate your child to explore their local surroundings:

1. Let your child's interests be your guide. If your child likes cooking, find a garden to pick fresh vegetables. If they like to draw, use chalk to create a picture on the sidewalk. If your child likes exploring with others, invite friends to play.
2. Make it a family routine. Designate a time of day or a few days of the week for "family outdoor adventure time." Ask each family member to decide on an activity or destination for the adventure.
3. Move indoor activities outdoors, or likewise, move the outdoors inside. For example, plan an outdoor picnic instead of eating at the table. Instead of exploring with crafts, do so with objects in nature. To do the reverse, consider creating an indoor garden that sits on the windowsill or paint a mural that you can hang on the wall that depicts a park.
4. Make an Outdoor Activity Jar. If your child is challenged with making decisions or needs initial guidance with play, fill a jar with pieces of paper with each listing an activity to do outside. Family members can brainstorm these ideas together based upon their interests. When it is time to head outside, select a paper from the jar to determine the adventure.
5. Hide the technology (remotes and game controllers). Sometimes, "out of sight, out of mind" works! If you set boundaries with your children regarding technology use, you may not have

to do this. When children know being a happy and healthy child includes spending time outdoors and with other people, and you encourage and support it, they will follow your lead.



Make a Difference for Your Child Today!

www.assumptionreadystart.com