

Outdoor Art - A Guide for Parents

Creating art outside has many benefits*:

- **Fresh Perspective** Being outside allows children to see things from a different angle, which can inspire new ideas and creativity.
- **Connection to Nature** Creating art in nature, children can develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world and its role in their lives. They are better able to understand the importance of preserving their environment.
- **Physical Activity** Many outdoor art projects involve movement, which can help children stay active.
- **Sense of Community** Working on art projects outside can foster community and collaboration for children.
- **Mental Health** Spending time in nature reduces stress and anxiety.
- **Problem-Solving** Doing artwork outside presents a new set of challenges for children to problem-solve, such as weather, light source, location, and adapting to a new environment.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork** Working outside encourages children to communicate and collaborate. This helps develop social skills and team building.

**Hower, Rebecca. Theartofeducation.edu. The Art of Education University, April 3, 2023, <https://theartofeducation.edu/2023/04/apr-13-art-ideas-that-are-perfect-to-take-outdoors/>.*

Getting Started!

Create a Bag of Art Supplies:

- An ample supply of watercolor and/or sturdy paper – white and colored, if possible
- 6 bottles (or more) of a variety of colors of tempera paint
- Paintbrushes (optional, depending on my focus)
- Wax paper (for transporting the art back home)
- A cloth bag, for toting the supplies
- 3 large grocery store plastic bags for transporting the finished artwork and paint plates covered in paint and any trash
- A Sharpie pen or two
- Plastic flat plates for putting paint on
- Plastic tarp for painting on(?)
- Old rags and/or paper towels for clean up
- Wet wipes

Prepare your child(ren) for the art adventure:

- Get their input as to where to go for the art adventure. This is a way to empower your child and give them a sense of participation and ownership in the process.
- Before you set up your art space, go for a hike with your child. This is an opportunity to explore nature – look for birds, other animals, plants, sticks – and to collect items from the ground that might make good paintbrushes – like sticks, leaves, rocks, flowers, etc.
- Pick a place that has plenty of space to spread out that allows room for creating and making messes. I like a grassy spot.
- Set out the paper and pour paint on the plates. If you are concerned about leaving a mess on the ground, spread out a tarp first.

Time to make art!

- You can say you forgot paintbrushes and want to see if you can create art without them.
- Have them grab a piece of paper,
- You may suggest they paint something they saw from their hike or just explore the experience of painting outdoors with sticks and leaves,
- Use the sharpie to write any description they want you to write about their artwork.
- Take pictures.

Clean-up:

- Separate the art with wax paper or plastic wrap so you can transport it home without it sticking together.
- Put the finished art in one plastic bag, the paint plates and used paper towels in another.
- Use wet wipes, paper towels and/or old rags to clean off messy fingers and clothes.