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Inside: easy outdoor activities for preschoolers to keep 3-5 year olds busy all summer long! And, if you're lucky, give you a bit of peace…here's hoping! Plenty of outdoor activities suitable for a preschool setting too.If you're little, nothing beats good clean fun outside. Actually, what am I saying, the messier the better! But that's the beauty of taking things outdoors – getting messy is totally fine and just about every toddler or preschooler's mission in life (only mine?!)Here are my favorite outdoor activities for preschoolers aged 3-5 years old; they've kept my two (now 3 and 4 years old) busy and happy for several minutes, sometimes hours, at a time.Many will also be suitable for toddlers, but for outdoor activities specifically aimed at 1 and 2 year-olds, watch out for a post coming soon.Most are super simple to set-up or even better, no prep, because, you know, life is busy…But a few of these activities do require a little more time – when I've seen something too cool looking to pass up and am procrastinating other important life stuff (probably my finest skill in life).So I've split these outdoor activities for preschoolers accordingly…This post contains affiliate links. If you click on one and make a purchase, I may receive a commission at no extra cost to you.So what kinds of outdoor activities do preschoolers enjoy (& need)?There are certain things that little kids gravitate towards – preschoolers AND toddlers. What's fascinating is that this love of a certain type of activity (e.g. throwing) is often driven by a skill your child is trying to master. So there's a very real need to give your preschooler the opportunity to practice this skill, in a way that doesn't destroy your house, garden or other stuff in one way or the other.The types of things that both toddlers and preschoolers love to do, inside or outside, is pretty infinite. The list below are some examples.stackingbuildingsortingpouringscoopingthrowingtouchingexploringcuttingpacking (and unpacking)opening (and shutting)get messymove, move, move!*Most of the preschooler activities listed in this post involve one or more of the above. And of course, taking these types of activities outside just opens a world more possibilities, for any activity that involves, water, paint or any other type of mess… So expect a bunch of these types in this list of easy outdoor activities for preschoolers.For simple play ideas that allow little ones to practice these emergent skills inside, try this bumper list of indoor activities for toddlers and preschoolers or these dry messy play ideas. Minimal mess and virtually no prep, they got me through many days of lockdown! These are outdoor activities for 3-5 year oldsThis post is aimed at outdoor activities for preschoolers aged 3 – 5 years old. My two, pictured frequently throughout this post, are 3 and 4 years old, the ideal age. In fact, many of these outdoor activities were aimed at my 4-year-old, who is a typical boy with plenty of energy to burn and who loves to build and get as messy as possible! The types of activities he likes the best, need to be outside.However, we've been doing many of these outdoor activities since the toddler years and my two still haven't tired of them. So there will be a bit of an overlap between this outdoor activity post for preschoolers and the one for toddlers (coming soon).If you have more than one kid to entertain set the difficulty level for the youngest – simple is always best!Importantly – just go with the flow and adapt as you need! And enjoy – it's got to be fun, right?Preschool outdoor activities (for preschoolers in childcare)Not only are these outdoor activities ideal for preschoolers aged 3-5 years old, there are so many that'll work in a preschool setting. Given the lack of schools locally, a few days a week we do "school with Mommy" where I attempt some kind of learning activities with my two, with as many as 4 other little ones. I'm not professionally trained in this capacity but I'm definitely getting in some experience. And loving it too!There's definitely scope to up the ante with several and turn them into preschool outdoor activities with a more specific learning element. For example by adding in a counting or sorting element or even some number recognition. I've noted some ideas throughout.In addition, there are two sections with more focus on STEM and other preschool learning concepts:"Outdoor activities for preschoolers who love to build" – there's lots of STEM in there"Outdoor preschool activities with a specific learning element" with more learning activities and ideasWATER-BASED outdoor activities for preschoolersWater provides an abundance of easy sensory activities and is lots of fun for little ones too. Here are some water-based outdoor activities for preschoolers perfect for the summer. Good for preschool, good for at home in the garden.#1 Bubble snakesActivity supply list: 0.5l plastic water bottle, sock, dishwashing liquid, waterThey require a bit of puff from your preschooler but once they get the idea this is an outdoor activity that can keep them busy for quite some time. It's also fairly tiring – double win when they feel they need a bit of a rest after!Quick how-to:make bubble mixture – 1 part water to 1 part dish liquidcut the end off an old plastic bottle and cover with a tight-fitting sock (clean the mouth-piece of the bottle – a clean sock would probably be preferable too)dip the sock end of the bottle into the bubble mixtureand blow!For a video tutorial, check this one here.#2 Aqua limboActivity supply list: garden hoseGet the hosepipe out and challenge your little ones to limbo under the stream of water without getting wet. Of course, if your little ones are anything like my two, getting wet will only add to the fun; this is a perfect outdoor activity for preschoolers on a hot summer day.#3 Water gun target practiceActivity supply list: toy water guns, empty cans, bottles or similarSet up a row of cans or bottles and with a loaded water gun, your preschooler can have fun knocking them down. Simple, outdoor fun!(I absolutely recommend these foam water guns over more sophisticated as your preschooler will easily be able to fill it themselves.)#4 Water transfer with pipettesActivity supply list: plastic containers, food coloring, pipettesThere are many fun ways for little ones to practice fine motor skills. This outdoor activity for preschoolers will help develop the pincer reflex, simply by transferring colored water (water with a few drops of food coloring) from a large container into upturned bottle lids.It does take a bit of coordination just to use the pipette – Learning Resources has some large preschooler friendly pipettes which are slightly easier for younger kids or you could swap out the pipettes for 1/4 and 1/2 teaspoon measuring scoops.The beauty of pipettes is that they don't hold very much water. It's an interesting experiment for a curious preschooler to see how many pipettes one bottle-lid will hold and how quickly he can fill them without spilling!Plenty of opportunities to play with color mixing too – this is an outdoor activity for preschoolers with a ton of learning!#5 Washing trucks, animals or another favorite toyActivity supply list: water table or large tub, baby shampoo or dishwashing liquidIf you have a little boy that loves his trucks and diggers and is constantly in the sand and mud with them, then they probably need a clean…But the toy of choice doesn't even need to be dirty – that can be part of the game. Kids have got such a wonderful imagination at this age they probably won't need much convincing that "Clover really needs a mane and tail wash, don't you think?" – as was the case with my 3-year-old daughter above. She spent a good half an hour giving Clover the spa day from preschooler heaven! Of course, for my 4 year old, this outdoor activity was all about getting his fleet of trucks clean. #6 Scooping, transferring and sorting colored ballsActivity supply list: a few water holding devices, colored play balls, kitchen utensils, colored plastic bowls (optional)The picture above is not the best since it only shows one tub of water (a cooler box – many ways to improvise if you don't have a "water table"). There were actually 3 – another cooler box and a water table.Dump the plastic balls into one of the tubs of water, then grab a number of different kitchen utensils (ladle, tongs, sieve, jug, salad servers etc) to transfer them with and lastly some colored plastic bowls (optional).Then let your preschooler enjoy this outdoor activity whichever way he or she chooses!My son, who's just 4, absolutely loves order and matching things together – so his mission was to sort the different balls into the different colored bowls…. While my daughter who was 2 at the time, just moved balls from one tub of water to the next, trying out all the different utensils.#7 Chalk line eraseActivity supply list: chalk, paintbrush, waterDraw a pattern onto your outside paving or verandah with chalk and hand your preschooler a paintbrush and a pot of water to erase the chalk lines…Easily adapted into a learning game if you draw shapes, letters or numbers and challenge your preschooler to erase the shape, letter or number you call out.#8 Washing something!Activity supply list: dishwashing liquid, water, sponge, spray bottleNot toys this time – if you've got small kids then you're bound to have something outside that actually really needs cleaning. Combine this with a preschooler in a phase of being helpful – only if helping is fun of course, but I'll take it – and who loves using a spray bottle. That's pretty much every preschooler, right? You've got yourself a no-prep outdoor activity for preschoolers that everyone's going to love! This activity really helps strengthen the finger muscles. (I'd also recommed trying this simple twist-top board or this puffy paint spider web which works on similar skills.)More impotantly, it can keep a whole host of 3-5 year old busy for a good half an hour. I speak from experience!It's an ideal preschool outdoor activity too.#9 Water balloon pinataActivity supply list: water balloons, stringAfter the faff and fiddle of filling and tying water balloons, I no longer hand them straight to the kids, because they're on the floor in seconds (the plastic waste for all of 1.5 seconds of fun does not sit well with me either…)Instead, hang them up in a tree high up and let them throw things and poke sticks at them to break them. Ok, so there is a bit more faff to tye them in the tree, but this does keep them entertained for quite a while. The water normally manages to hit them straight in the face, adding to the fun!#10 Sponge water bombsActivity supply list: sponges, waterAgain, this saves on the faff, fiddle and waste of water balloons. Have a bucket of water and a bunch of sponges to throw at, to or with your preschooler.#11 Frozen tiny toy excavationActivity supply list: water, small plastic toys, plastic container, freezer space, scoops, salt, pipettes, toy hammers etcThis outdoor activity does require a bit of prep – collect some small toys (think Playmobil characters, plastic cars and animals, pompoms etc) and dump into a freezer-friendly container with lid.We are all ice-cream lovers in our family and so have an abundance of 2 litre ice-cream cartons, so that was my container of choice.You need to do the freezing part in stages, to ensure a good sprinkling of toys all the way through the ice. So put a few toys in, fill the tub about 1/3 full with water and give it a few hours to freeze. Then put more toys in, more water and so on until it's full of ice and toys.Onto the excavating… Depending on how warm it is outdoors, will determine how quickly the ice will melt… So if it's super hot, cold water and a pipette may be all your preschooler needs to free those toys.Warm water, some kind of child-friendly hammer and some table salt can speed the melting up – see how you can throw in a little bit of science too! A perfect outdoor activity for preschoolers on a hot summers day!#12 Build a "water wall"Activity supply list: plastic pipes, plastic bottles and other empty plastic containers, push pins, wooden fence to attach toSimply pin all your plastic to the fence to make a water version of a giant marble run. Ours did not work out so well but this one from Where Imagination Grows looks a lot more successful.SENSORY & PROCESS ART outdoor activities for preschoolers The beauty of being outdoors is that you have a little more freedom when it comes to the materials you use. You can be messy without the worry of ruining your house or classroom. Or need to spend several hours cleaning up. So most of these activities for preschoolers are strictly for outdoors. Only if you have an art studio or clear garage would it be wise to try them inside!Most also have a sensory element and/or artistic component. However, typically the end result is not important, rather the activity is all about the process. Hence this is termed process art. Hose pipes at the ready – your preschooler is going to love these fun outdoor activities!If you are looking for some art projects where the end result is important (product-based art) then why not try one of these easy arts and crafts ideas, a Christmas ornament or another easy Christmas craft, or something made from toilet rolls.#13 Full-sized portraitsOutdoor activity supply list: a large sheet of cardboard, bigger than your preschooler, sharpie, paints & paintbrushesThe trickiest part of this outdoor activity for preschoolers is finding a sheet of cardboard large enough. If you've just bought a new TV, the box it was delivered in should do the trick.First, have your preschooler lie down on the cardboard and draw around the with the sharpie. Then simply prop the cardboard against a wall and it's time for your preschooler to get painting their self-portrait. It's such a fun and revealing insight into your childs mind, to see how they paint themself!Alternatively, they could paint their self-portrait with the cardboard on the floor. Or you could mix it up, since painting at different angles and in different positions works different muscles.#14 Make mud piesOutdoor activity supply list: mud or sand and water, items from natureWe struggle to grow lawn in our garden – there are sandy bare patches everywhere. Turn the sprinklers on and then there's mud…. perfect for making mud pies! Pat and shape them, decorate them with small stones and leaves. Add sticks as candles and you have a mud pie birthday cake.#15 Bubble foam cupcakesActivity supply list: bubble bath, food coloring, water, electric whisk, muffin tins, pompoms, Bubble foam is a lovely sensory experience for toddlers and preschoolers and playing with it is such an engaging activity. This time, for my two I wanted to change it up a little bit so they made bubble foam cupcakes!I don't know what it is about pretend baking – I can't say I do much "real" baking (whatever my best intentions) – but there's no end to the number of cupcake recipes my two have tried. Playdough, dyed rice, sand, mud, pompoms….So bubble foam cupcakes with a pompom cherry have now been added to this never-ending list.To make the bubble foam, take:equal parts water + bubble bathwhisk with the electric whisk (my preschoolers loved the making part two)I used pink bubble bath, hence the pink cupcakes, but otherwise you can add a drop or two food coloring.#16 Painting toysActivity supply list: washable tempera paint, paintbrush, large plastic toy that's not too special (it may not be quite the same afterIf you have a little girl with a toy horse, paint it pink and turn it into a unicorn! My daughter, aged 3, loved this simple outdoor activity as did my 4 year old, who painted his plane red. Then they can have fun washing the paint off (preschool outdoor activity number 5…)I'm not sure the airplane will ever be the same but Clover, the toy horse, recovered very well!#17 Spray paint artworkActivity supply list: washable tempera paint, water, spray bottles, paper, painters tape This a fun process art that also works those finger muscles.Simply fill some spray bottles with a few dollops of washable paint and top up with water. Then tape some watercolor paper or even newspaper onto a wall of the house and hand over to your preschooler. Just be sure to be clear that the paint is for the paper, not the entire house, otherwise clean-up may be rather lengthy…Once the paint is finished and your budding artists have finished, remove the "masterpieces", refill the bottles with water and get your preschooler to clean up the stray paint…Some great pictures of the finished paintings in this post from Play Ground Park Bench.#18 Giant small town process artActivity supply list: see belowThis outdoor activity is a real winner! So much so, picture above is take two.This is art come imaginary play on a grand scale – an outdoor activity for preschoolers that involves painting the truck wheels and then driving them on paper to make tracks. I can't even say I can take much credit, it was all down to my 4-year old and his amazing imagination.Anyhow, you need:one heck of a large piece of paper – or lots of small ones, as I used above – with a decent weight (I used 60 gsm weight paper)some bits and bobs to make up your town or countryside – we had foil as a river and then some strips of cereal boxes as a bridge, because you can't possibly have a river without building a bridge or two to cross it, right?!painters tape to stick paper to table, river and bridge to paper etcpaint and painting implements to paint the roads, farm tracks, fields, car parks etc. By implements, anything will do really; brushes, rollers, sponges, hands even…. (The latter was my 3 year-olds "implement" of choice, hence the random handprints…)This particular town and country work of art was so popular and provided a ton of play opportunity and stayed taped to the table for several days. If you're looking for an outdoor activity that'll keep your preschooler entertained again and again, this one's an absolute must.#19 Window paintingActivity supply list: washable tempera paint, paintbrushes, dry erase marker, a window Painting on a vertical surface works the wrist and forearm muscles – quite a different skill to painting on a horizontal surface. If you don't have an easel or even if you do and want to mix it up, window painting is a fun outdoor activity for preschoolers.Another good one if you want to introduce some learning – draw some shapes, letter or number outlines on the inside of the window and let your preschooler paint on the outside. You just need to be clever at drawing the mirror images of letters and numbers…(If you draw them on the outside, your preschooler will inadvertently wipe them off…)#20 Paper mache castleActivity supply list: large sheet of sturdy cardboard, lots of smallish empty boxes and cartons (cereal boxes, toothpaste boxes, other packaging, toilet rolls, tin cans, milk cartons etc), newspaper, flour, water, paint, paintbrushesThis would fit equally well on the list of outdoor activities for preschoolers into building… if your little one is into construction AND into stickiness AND painting this is sure to be a win.You'll probably have to lend a hand in the first stage but after that, there will be several hours of quiet, spread over two days, as your preschoolers will be very busy. I mean, look at that concentration!How-to as follows:position the various boxes, toilet rolls, tin cans etc into a fort structure, ontop ot the large sheet of cardboardstick down and together with painters tapemake up your paper mache mixture (flour and water until it's a rather revolting gloopy consistency)tear newspaper into strips"plaster" the castle by dipping newspaper strips into the flour gloop and sticking onto and all over the castleallow to dry – around 24 hourspaint!#21 Frozen painting activity for outdoorsOutdoor activity supply list: paint, dish soap, water, ice cube trays, popsicle sticksHere's a fun process art activity best taken outdoors that preschoolers are going to love. It'd be fun to include as a party activity for a summer birthday celebration for little ones.. Mix up paint, water and dish (1/4 paint, 1/4 dish soap and 1/2 water) and pour into ice cube trays. Stick a craft or popsicle stick in as a handle and freeze. Not only is this outdoor sensory activity nice and cool, ideal for summer, there are no paint tins to knock over or palettes to accidently lean over…. Bonus!For the full tutorial, check out the post from Taming Little Monsters.#22 Cardboard box paintingActivity supply list: cardboard box (larger the better with as little marketing print as possible), paint, paintbrushesNever waste a cardboard box….you can play in them, smash them, decorate them, paint them. My preschoolers love them too (!)Switch out the paints for crayons and stickers and this makes a wonderful indoor activity too.For more indoor activities, check out: 39 simple & sanity-saving activities for toddlers & preschoolers to do at home (minimal prep, minimal mess)#23 Homemade sidewalk chalk paintActivity supply list: cornstarch, water, food coloring, paintbrushesI was so surprised, firstly, that this paint came out so well and, secondly, it kept a 3 year old, 4 year old, 5 year old, 8 year old and an 11 year old busy for so long! (My two preschoolers, their friend on a playdate and my two neices.)3 ingredients:cornstarchwaterfood coloringSimply mix the ingredients together to a fairly runny consistency and let your preschooler paint your verandah, paving stones, sidewalk etc… Since this paint is taste-safe, it's ideal for young toddlers too who may prefer to paint with their fingers rather than use a brush.This paint does dry very pale and pastley, so you need to go as deep with the color as possible when mixing.For deeper, more vibrant chalk paint, check out this tutorial from Simple Fun For Kids which uses chalk sticks mixed with water.Or if you're short of time you could buy some baby-safe paint, like this washable tempera. #24 Paint an old piece of woodOutdoor activity supply list: random old piece of wood, any type of paint if your preschooler had outgrown the stage of painting his hands, the table etc…Another surprisingly engaging outdoor activity for preschoolers – my 3 and 4 year old still have their random pieces of painted wood proudly displayed in their rooms, for this reason it's one up from painting a cardboard box, which never survives more than a day or two (thank goodness).#25 Water balloon paintingOutdoor activity supply list: water balloons, paints, large sheet of paperHere's another outdoor activity for preschoolers that extends the life of those pesky water balloons. Here, they're used as the vehicle to put paint to paper. You'll need to explain that to your kids before you get started, and they're thrown them and broken them already!Start by squirting blobs of paint onto the paper. Then your preschooler can use the balloons to move the paint around and create their masterpiece.#26 Frozen sand sensory binOutdoor activity supply list: sand, water, small plastic toys, large plastic tub that'll fit in freezer, spoons, bowls, cupsA fun sensory bin and activity that toddlers and preschoolers will love playing with outside, particularly when it's hot. Start by filling the tub with the sand and burying the toys. Then fill with water and freeze.Once frozen, it's time to play! Your preschoolers can pick away at the sand with the spoons, dig out the toys and experience the changing texture of the sand as it melts…For some themed sensory bins and activities, why not check out these Christmas sensory activities or these fake-snow sensory bins.Outdoor activities for preschoolers who love to build (STEM & ideal for preschool)There has to be a whole section of outdoor activities for preschoolers who love to build and create things, particularly machines and vehicles of transport, because, well, my 4-year-old is into building, big time!Some great learning in these ones too with plenty of STEM & STEAM concepts. These ones are ideal outdoor preschool activities. For little ones that love cars, trucks, planes and trains, these fun transportation crafts for preschoolers should be your next port of call.#27 Build a giant-sized marble runActivity supply list: cardboard tubes (inner tube from cling wrap, paper towel, baking paper etc, empty Pringles tubes, toilet rolls etc, wood glue or hot glue gun, wall/fence you can stick toThis proved a lot more taxing than I first thought – we lost a lot of marbles in the process but it was a fun project to do with my preschoolers who played with it for days…#28 Paper serviette parachutesOutdoor activity supply list: paper serviettes, string, painters tape, small toyTape string to each corner of a paper serviette, knot the string together and then tape to a toy – this is "Ken" from my daughters Playmobil camper van.They are a little bit fragile, no surprise there, but fly really well!#29 Paper airplanesActivity supply list: paper, patience!These do work well indoors, but to get them flying higher and further, heading outdoors is the way to go.Here's a video tutorial for an easy paper airplane if you're a novice like me. That was about the only tutorial I could follow with an impatient 4 year old breathing down my neck! Trust me, don't look at any other tutorials that say they're "easy" unless you're on your own or an origami expert!#30 Tinfoil and egg box carton boatsActivity supply list: half dozen egg carton box, tin foil, wooden skewers, paperHere's another preschool outdoor activity with lots of fun and learning. After the classic "sink or float" experiment we made these boats simply by wrapping the bottom half of the egg box with aluminum foil. Short wooden skewers became masts and rectangles of paper attached with tape, the sails. (Totally the wrong positioning for all those in the know about boats – my father would be most unimpressed!)How strong are our boats? Let's see how many stones we can load into them without letting any water in, which makes the egg carton very soft and eventually causes the boat to collapse…How can we make them sail quickly? My two instantly went to blow the boat, rather than the sail…#31 Build (and knock down) tin can towersOutdoor activity supply list: tin cansEmpty cans if you don't want squashed toes! You can suggest building tall towers or build a triangular wall of cans and have fun throwing or kicking balls at them to knock them down.#32 Giant ball runActivity supply list: balls, old drain pipes + anything else balls can run along or through, chairs and stools as support structuresOf the whole list, this is probably THE absolute favorite outdoor activity for my preschooler. We have made soooo many different versions (it does help that my husband is a builder so we always have things lying around at home perfect for the job!)An outdoor play activity perfect for your budding engineer and a creative activity for children of so many different ages. It's definitely not limited to 3-5 year olds.#33 Mud bricksActivity supply list: ice cube trays, mudUsing an ice cube tray your preschooler can make mini "bricks" with some dampish mud. Allow them to dry and "bake" in the sun and then build.Some good pictures in this post from Play Teach Repeat.#34 Build a fortActivity supply list: garden or backyard with a little space, some good hidey holes in and amongst bushes, sticks and branchesI remember building forts in my grandparents garden with my brother when I was little, making tent-like structures with all sorts of random sticks, logs, dead leaves or leaf-covered fallen branches. Our garden isn't quite as ideal for fort building but we've had a good go – another fun outdoor activity for a preschooler who loves building!NATURE-INSPIRED outdoor activities for preschoolersA few of these may be best avoided if you have a really smart garden since. There's a fair amount of foraging for plants and leaves – several are well suited to Fall and appear among this list of Fall activities.Of course, I've long since given up on our garden, what with two preschoolers, two puppies and very little time!If you have a decent back yard and play area at preschool or your childcare setting, most of these will work really well to engage several 3-5 year olds. #35 Make faces out of natureOutdoor activity supply list: area fit for foraging, something to collect things inOk, so this outdoor activity started out as an attempt to make a face out of bits and pieces collected from the garden. The above didn't look much like a face to me, but then my 4 year old told me he'd made a tree instead. It makes a much better tree! And who am I to argue if he's happy?This one would make a fu#36 Paint with natureOutdoor activity supply list: toddler-friendly scissors, a garden you don't mind being trimmed!Use leaves, petals and sticks as paintbrushes. A simple outdoor activity for preschoolers that'll encourage experimentation and creativity and may even produce a little piece of art. #37 Make a nature collageActivity supply list: contact adhesive, painters tape, bits and bobs from the gardenMakes a cute keepsake or gift for a loved one too.With the painters tape, secure the contact adhesive to the table, sticky side up. Then have your preschooler decorate it with bits and bobs from the garden. My two decided theirs were birds nests, so i cut out a paper bird for them to stick on too. Then cover the top with another sheet of contact paper.Not only is this a fun outdoor activity, but a rather lovely craft for the Fall season.#38 Make a simple bird feeder and watch the birdsOutdoor activity supply list: pine cone or empty toilet roll, peanut butter, bird seedYou can make a bird feeder by covering a pine cone or empty toilet roll in peanut butter and rolling it in bird seed. Then hang it in the garden and wait and see who comes along. Here's a more detailed tutorial from Two Pink Peonies.If you have a bird book to hand you can try to identify them in the book. A good outdoor activity for preschoolers with a considerable element of learning as they compare and contrast the different colors and markings of different birds.You may also be able to show them that males and females of the same species can look very different. Small details that can fascinate a nature-loving preschooler.#39 Leaf matching scavenger huntActivity supply list: different leaves from the gardenThis one is a great outdoor activity for getting some wiggles out while practicing observation and matching, double win!Forage for a few different leaves in the garden, out of sight of the little ones if possible. Collect 5 or 6 types of leaf, 2 of each if you're doing this for 2 kids, 3 of each for 3 kids etc.Give each preschooler the first leaf type and send them off looking for a leaf to match. I was amazed how many plants have quite subtle different leaves (I'm not much of a gardener). Talking about how the leaf your child found is the same or different to the one you gave them is great communication practice.#40 Make plant soupActivity supply list: bowls, pots, pans and other old kitchen implements to "cook" with, preschooler scissors, a garden you're not too precious about!First, collect your ingredients – this is best done under supervision unless your preschooler is very trustworthy with scissors and/or there are some plants that are a definite no-no for trimming.So scissors and bowl (our rule is scissors in the bowl when walking from plant to plant) and allow your preschooler to snip different leaves to cook with. You can also gather a few flowers and seed pods or other things that interests.Take back to your "kitchen" – like for our mud kitchen activity, we use a small white plastic table and old pots, pans and implements.Cook and enjoy being served up delicious plant soup. Loads of fun for everyone!#41 Playdough nature printingActivity supply list: playdough, things from the garden (flowers, dried leaves, seeds, sticks, small stones)If your preschooler loves playdough (which don't?) then this is yet another outdoor activity they're going to enjoy. Forage around the garden for some interesting objects – seed pods, pebbles, sticks etc. Then let your preschooler experiment with the shapes and textures they print onto playdough.You could also try this with salt dough and create some nature-inspired ornaments for Christmas. #42 Make a nature braceletActivity supply list: duck tape, preschooler friendly scissors and more items from your not-too-precious gardenFirstly, more snipping and gathering of leaves and petals from the garden.Then, cut a short strip of tape and fasten it around your preschoolers' wrist, sticky side out. Then, like those nature collages, your little one can make their bracelets with the petals and other things they've foraged.Simple and so cute!#43 Make a maze out of sticks and rocksOutdoor activity supply list: rocks, pebbles and sticksWe've yet to try this one, but my 4-year-old loved making a maze inside on the carpet out of craft sticks. It took up a significant proportion of the lounge and no one was allowed to pack it away for days… (You'll see it in the toddler indoor activity post) So I know this outdoor version of the activity will be a winner for any maze-building preschooler.Start by collecting rocks and sticks, then arrange them to create a maze with an entrance and plenty of dead ends. #44 Mowing the lawnActivity supply list: preschooler-friendly scissorsMore scissor skill practice and a good few minutes of peace… A simple and very effective outdoor activity for preschoolers that love to snip, snip, snip… #45 Hunt for bugsActivity supply list: bug viewer or large magnifying glassAll kids are fascinated by creepy crawlies! So this is a great outdoor activity for preschoolers allowing them to explore all sorts of creatures up close and personal. They may be a bit reluctant to touch them and pick them up, this is where you can lend a hand.All the other extreme: they're rough and want to squash and flatten them. Get in there quick and try to save the bug! Once they've got the hang of it, this is one your preschooler should be pretty happy to do independently…Outdoor play activities for preschoolers that love to PRETENDPretend play is such a valuable way young children develop social skills, practice everyday tasks they see others accomplish as well as work through emotions. There's no end to the number of pretend play scenarios you can think of.You'll likely see your preschooler coming up with their own pretend play games without any prompting. But here are some outdoor play activities for preschoolers that definitely need a bigger space, would make too much mess inside or just work better outside.#46 Make fairy housesOutdoor activity supply list: leaves, acorns, seeds, small sticks and pebbles, pine cones, moss and anything from the garden The idea that fairies live outside in little houses made from natural items and move around as and when they please is really quite fascinating for little ones. Your preschoolers are sure to love making miniature houses for any visiting fairies . This is even more so the case when their teeth start to fall out!Making fairy houses makes for a fun outdoor activity and can keep a preschooler or two busy for an age. They can make pretend fairies too or put their favorite toy characters in. But remember, leave the house empty at night for a real fairy to enjoy! #47 Setting up campActivity supply list: the garden/backyard, your preschoolers' wonderful imaginationDuring lockdown our Saturday night family fun was camping in the garden, setting up camp, cooking on the fire, warm bucket bath for the kids and then all sleeping in our 2 man tent (well not quite "all" of us – I normally crept back into the house at the earliest opportunity…)Now out of lockdown, this has come to an end, but the kids love re-living every part of the camping experience. A pile of stones becomes the fire, a stick to stir the pots, imaginary plates and food, an imaginery tent… You get the picture?!#48 Coffee shop funActivity supply list:old teapot or coffeepot, old whisk, dishwashing liquid, ladle/spoon, sand/mud from the garden, waterSimilar to mud kitchen, but this outdoor activity where your preschooler gets to play at being a coffee shop barista! Mud/sand and water is the coffee, then they whisk up the frothy milk (water and dish liquid) and serve up their lucky clients a delicious coffee.#49 Go on a bear huntActivity supply list: the garden/backyard, toys to hide, homemade binoculars (optional)Or a dinosaur hunt or toy car hunt…. hide whatever type of toy you have a few of (plastic dinosaurs or stuffed teddies in our case) and get your preschooler to hunt for them around the garden. If you're kids are a fan of "We're going on a bear hunt" then they're sure to love re-enacting the story. A perfect preschool outdoor activity.#50 Dinosaur world with volcanoesActivity supply list: sand, plastic dinosaurs or other toy animals, tea light holder or similar, bicarbonate of soda, white vinegarThis is the classic bicarbonate of soda and vinegar experiment with a little twist – pretending it's a volcano in dinosaur world…Setting up the dinosaur world totally adds to the fun of this only-to-be-done outdoors, activity; damp sand to make a muddy mountain, leaves, grass and plant trimmings as vegetation and finally the dinosaurs and some random over-sized insects.For the volcano, place your tea light holder in the top of the sand mound. Then heap a generous scoop of bicarb inside and pour vinegar on top – you do need to be generous on both to get a decent-sized eruption where the lava makes it all the way down the side of the mountain, as in the picture above.For more fun ideas for dino-lovers, try this list of fun dinosaur activities for preschoolers. #51 Have a teddy's bear picnicActivity supply list: teddies and soft toys, pretend cups and sauces and toy good, blanketYou can have a teddy's bear picnic indoors, but it's so much fun to turn this into an outdoor activity for your preschoolers and let them set everything up in the garden. They can spend a lot of time packing all the supplies needed, transporting them all and then setting the picnic up. A classic game that never tires.Outdoor MOVEMENT activities for preschoolers Not only do preschoolers have bucket loads of energy they need to burn, but they need change to develop their gross motor skills. Hence these movement activities ideal for outside.Lots need very little explanation. This list of outdoor games and physical activities to get your preschooler moving is fairly short and sweet…For a giant list of movement games for inside, check out these indoor gross motor activities. You can never have enough ideas to get the endless wiggles out!#52 Paper plate ring tossOutdoor activity supply list: paper plates, tin cansGrab out those empty tin cans and arrange them outside on the floor in a triangle shape (like you'd set up bowling pins). Alternatively, you could use paper cups but a breeze could knock them down.Next, you'll need to cut out the middle of some paper plates, to turn them into hoops. Then it's a case of throwing the paper plate ring onto a tin can. It's such a fun outdoor activity for preschoolers.You could easily extend this activity and add in a different learning element. For example by placing a fridge magnet letter in each. Then throw the hoop on the can and sounds the letter inside. #53 Junior version of "Egg and spoon"Activity supply list: water ballons, salad serverAnother one which uses water balloons but preserves them for quite a long time… great to set up as a relay up and down the garden if you have a few kids to entertain. This is an ideal outdoor activity for preschool.#54 Water cup racingActivity supply list: plastic cups, water, plastic bowl/bucket/containerRun with a cup of water to a bucket without spilling it, pour in the bucket and run back again refill and so on…You can see how much my 3-year-old loved this one; she's definitely got a competitive streek.#55 Sack raceActivity supply list: old pillowcasesDon't save the sack race for birthday party games. It's a classic outdoor activity for preschoolers that will never lose its appeal! #56 Visual treasure hunt Activity supply list: camera or smartphone, toysTake photos of different areas of the garden or the outdoor area your utilizing. Then place a toy at each location. Then the challenge for your preschooler is to figure out where the photo was taken and retrieve the toy. This outdoor activity is easy to adapt for preschoolers of different ages. For older kids, you can make it trickier by zooming in more and taking pictures that are harder to decipher. For little ones, you can be a lot more obvious!This would be good to do at home but would also make a good outdoor preschool activity. #57 Balance beam & obstacle courseActivity supply list: plank of wood, something sturdy to lean it on (we used a car ramp in the picture above), alternatively your balance beam doesn't even need to leave the ground, just lay the plank on the groundWe combined our balance beam activity with color sorting balls – doubling the concentration needed to balance on the beam while holding the ball.As for more lengthy obstacle courses, it's all about getting creative:hop from one stepping stone to the next (alternatively use hula hoops lying on the ground)use pool noodles to jump over or limbo underpeg a cargo net to the ground to crawl underturn a large cardboard box into a tunnel by cutting holes in each sidePlenty more ideas in this post from Happy Toddler Playtime.#58 Wheelbarrow racesPreschoolers are not too little to try wheelbarrow races – expect about 2 or 3 steps in the beginning but once their arms get used to it and grow a little strength, expect lots of giggles and some tired preschoolers!#59 Hide and seekYou can have fun with this one indoors from the toddler years. It's one of many fun and simple activites for 18 month olds that the twis have started to enjoy. But the appeal of this old classic lasts way beyond the preschooler years so why not take it outside. It never fails to keep kids of all sizes and ages occupied.#60 Blow bubblesActivity supply list: bubble solution and wandI keep wondering when my two will grow out of this fascination for bubbles! Not anytime soon it would seem…#61 Tin can stiltsActivity supply list: empty tin cans, string, drill, paper, crayons, tape and stickers to decorate (optional)Another classic that my 3 and 4-year-old just about managed but I had to help them a lot to get going – this was a lot harder for them than I thought it would be. Definitely, one to try again in a few months time.#62 Race around the houseActivity supply list: access all the way around the house, preschoolers with too much energy!This one never fails to amuse – it's a regular outdoor activity when I'm hosting playdates at ours. "Let's go – I'm going to catch you, quick around the house… 10 times" that's all it takes. Keeps me fit too.#63 Learn some gymnasticsActivity supply list: internet & TV to research and a large outdoor space to practiceI'm not a gymnastics expert, but this video from Coach Meggin has some basic moves that even I could manage and my kids love it!#64 Bean bag balance raceActivity supply list: bean bagsThe simple act of balancing a bean bag on your head is pretty challenging. Even more so for a 3-5 year old! Great for posture and balance. If you're doing this outdoor activity with preschoolers in childcare, then this is easily turned into a relay race. Race up and back and pass the bean bag to the next team member.Simplify this one for younger preschoolers or if you want to make it more energetic and have them run carrying the bean bag. Pass it to the next team member or throw it into a bucket. Oh, the versatility of a simple beanbag! A definite must for entertaining and keeping toddlers and preschoolers moving.#65 Chalk obstacle courseOutdoor activity supply list: chalk, large verandah or similarRather than lugging chairs, poles and other things outside to make an obstacle course, draw one on the ground in chalk. You can make different shapes mean different movements are required. Here are some ideas:Draw a line of squares – your preschooler must hop on their right leg from each one to the nextDraw a line of circles – your preschooler must hop on their left leg from each one to the nextFor numbers – clap your hands as many times as the number (when you get to a 1, clap once etc)A great outdoor activity for preschoolers in childcare as there's plenty of opportunity to practice shape and number recognition, whilst getting those wiggles out!Outdoor preschool activities with a specific LEARNING element To reiterate, kids love to play and it's through playing that they learn. So all these outdoor play activities for preschoolers will invite so much learning. But here are some with a specific learning element or focus. These are educational activities for outdoors that are perfect for 3-5 year olds in childcare as well as those at home.#66 Nature sorting and graphingOutdoor activity supply list: garden/outside for foraging, small wheelbarrow, sack or large bagSorting is an important pre-maths skill. Start by foraging for various items from outside, like leaves, seeds, sticks, stones, feathers etc and then sorting them into groups. Then you can choose something to create a visual graph. You could do lots of different leaves or pebbles of different sizes. Group them into different types and then line them up to create a visual bar chart. #67 Listening walkOutdoor activity supply list: a listening preschooler (ha ha, I hear you say…)So far there's been so much emphasis on keeping hands and bodies busy. Now it's time to use those ears! This is fun to turn into a listening walk scavenger hunt activity.Start by discussing all the sounds you might hearWrite a listGo outside, listen and see how many you can tick offTry this activity another day at a different time and listen for different soundsPlenty to discuss and a great outdoor activity for preschoolers in a childcare setting.#68 Beginning sound nature huntOutdoor activity supply list: garden or backyardWhether you do preschool activities at home or in a childcare setting, there's normally a letter of the week. This emphasizes letter recognition and the sounds that letter makes. A good way to do this is to hunt for items with that beginning sound.This is a great outdoor activity for preschoolers. What can you find outside that has the sounds "b" at the beginning. And so on.#69 Colors in nature tic-tac-toeOutdoor activity supply list: paint chips in various colors, scissors, tapeThis is another scavenger hunt around the garden, backyard or park. This time it's all about hunting for colors that match the paint chips. Cut holes in each color to create a little window to view flowers, leaves and other items outside. When your preschooler has got a match they can tick it off. Find 3 in a row to complete the tic-tac-toe.For more details check out the tutorial from Homan At Home.#70 Make a windsockOutdoor activity supply list: construction paper or card, stapler and crepe paper With a roll of construction paper and some crepe paper streamers you can make a very simple windsock. Hang it outside and you can start to explain to your child simple weather concepts. A fun craft come outdoor activity to do at preschool or home.Sadly I'm unable to find our windsock pictures but I Heart Crafty Things has some good ones.#71 Plant runner beans and measure them as they