



WINTER ADVENTURE CHALLENGE | *Frosty Fun and Good Times Galore*

FOR THIS ADVENTURE, EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS IN THE WINTER

Utah is famous around the world for its snow. However, getting outside during this season requires some creativity and determination. Discover the benefits of outdoor activities in Utah's wintry landscapes.

WHY GO OUTSIDE IN THE WINTER?

Skipping the outdoors during winter deprives your children of major benefits like increased physical activity, immune system boosts, and stress reduction. Since many common winter illnesses spread more easily indoors, getting fresh air is important for health. The American Council of Exercise recommends children get approximately 60 minutes of physical activity each day, which can easily be achieved by breaking up your outdoor play into short intervals (10 to 20 minutes of snow fun!).

ACTIVE SNOW PLAY & GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

<u>Activity</u>	<u>What To Do</u>	<u>Learning and Fitness Goal</u>
Simple Sledding & Hauling	Find a small, safe hill. Have them take turns pulling the sled up the hill (even without a passenger) to get their blood pumping. Then, enjoy the ride down!	Builds endurance, muscle strength (heavy work), and the physics of gravity and motion.
Giant Snowball Rolling	Work together to roll snowballs of different sizes. This requires pushing, lifting, and shifting their body weight to pack the snow.	Develops gross motor coordination and a sense of effort/reward for building a snowman or a snow pile.
Backyard Obstacle Course	You can build a small, snow-packed "mountain" to climb over, or shovel a maze in the snow for them to follow and run through.	This activity encourages motor planning, balancing, and a new way to explore a familiar space.
Snow Angels & Kicks	Lie back and make simple snow angels. Encourage them to practice "karate kicks" to stomp their feet into fresh snow for them to follow and run through.	This activity is fun for full-body movement and a simple way to engage different muscle groups.





SENSORY & SCIENCE WITH SNOW AND ICE

<u>Activity</u>	<u>What To Do</u>	<u>Learning and Fitness Goal</u>
Snow Painting	Fill squeeze bottles or spray bottles with water mixed with food coloring. Let your children spray the snow to create large-scale art.	Engages fine motor skills (squeezing) and introduces color mixing and how water behaves in the cold.
Ice Jewels & Treasure	Freeze water in small containers (muffin tins are great) with colorful pebbles or plastic toys inside. Take them out and let them discover the "ice jewels."	Explores the concepts of freezing/melting and is a great sensory and imaginative play activity.
DIY Bird Feeder	Roll pine cones in peanut butter (or sunbutter) and birdseed. Hang the feeder on a tree branch outside. This is a great hands-on activity!	Teaches compassion for wildlife and engages fine motor skills (spreading and rolling).
Frozen Bubble Fun	On a morning that reaches freezing or slightly below, take a bubble wand outside. See if the bubbles freeze or crystallize as they land on the cold ground.	A magical, short experience that demonstrates the science of cold and crystallization.

ALL-WEATHER EXPLORATIONS (LEARNING & OBSERVATION)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>What To Do</u>	<u>Learning and Fitness Goal</u>
Winter Tree Detective 🌲	Go for a walk and look for two types of trees. Point out the trees that are "sleeping" (bare branches) and the trees that stay "green all winter" (like pine or fir trees). Ask, "How does the sleeping tree look different from the green tree?"	A great lesson in plant adaptation and seasonal change (deciduous vs. evergreen) using simple, observable differences.
Nature Texture Hunt	Instead of colors, have your children search for different textures to touch (with gloved hands, if cold!): something smooth (ice, rock), something rough (bark), something pointy (pine needles or a stick), and something soft (moss or a dusting of snow).	This activity engages the sense of touch (sensory development) and encourages close observation of the environment's details.
Winter Cozy Picnic	Find the sunniest spot in the yard or on a patio. Bring a thermos of warm cider or soup (lukewarm for the kids) and sit down together for a short, outdoor break.	Creates a positive, cozy memory associated with being outside in the cold and provides warmth from the inside out.
Wildlife Watching	Sit quietly at a window or outside. Look for birds, squirrels, or other animals. Put out a simple bird feeder to attract feathered visitors.	This activity fosters patience, quiet observation, and an appreciation for how animals adapt to winter.





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Winter Photography - Experiment with photography during winter, capturing the dramatic effects of frost, snow, lower angles of sunlight, and the prominent colors in the landscape.

Winter Art - Snow is an excellent art medium. You can use water mixed with food dye as paint and, using a spray bottle, create your artwork on the snow.

Snow Sculptures - Get creative with snow and other natural materials as you sculpt snow into fantastic shapes.

Build a Snow Fort - This article by [Childhood by Nature](#) provides helpful inspiration and information about snow forts and structures.

Winter Night Hike - There is something magical about a quiet, bright, winter night. Bundle up and take a walk outside. See how many plants you can identify, animal tracks you can spot, and constellations you recognize.

Cross-country/Nordic Skiing - A great way to get exercise in the snow, cross-country skiing offers a full-body workout while letting you explore peaceful, scenic winter trails.

Ice Fishing - Drill a hole in the ice and spend the day on the frozen lake, patiently waiting for a bite. Ice fishing is a relaxing way to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature during winter.

Sledding, Tubing, or Ice-blocking - Classic winter fun! Kids can slide down hills on sleds or tubes or try ice-blocking in southern Utah, where large ice blocks are used instead of traditional sleds.

Build a Snowball Catapult - Construct a catapult for the ultimate snowball fight.

Cross-country/Nordic Skiing - A great way to get exercise in the snow, cross-country skiing offers a full-body workout while letting you explore peaceful, scenic winter trails.

DIY Bird Feeder - Make a bird feeder to support local wildlife through the winter and enjoy watching birds in your backyard. An easy option is to roll pine cones in peanut butter and birdseed to create simple, natural bird feeders. Learn how here.

TAKE IT UP A NOTCH!

Snowmobiling - Speed through Utah's snowy backcountry and explore scenic areas that are typically inaccessible by foot. With supervision, snowmobiling can be an exhilarating winter activity for older youth.

Winter Survival Skills - Organize a winter survival activity where kids learn practical outdoor skills like building an emergency shelter or starting a fire in the snow (under supervision).

Winter Wildlife Tracking - Track animal prints in the snow and learn more about local wildlife in the winter months!





Experiment with Salt and Ice - Explore the effects of salt on ice in different conditions.

Fat Tire Bike Riding - Ride specially equipped bikes with wide tires that can handle snowy trails, making for a thrilling winter biking experience through Utah's winter landscapes.

Frozen Bubble Art - On cold days (around 14°F or lower), try blowing bubbles and watching them freeze, creating intricate patterns and shapes that can be captured on camera.

Hockey - Whether on a rink or a frozen pond, hockey is an exciting and competitive way for youth to stay active and develop teamwork and coordination.

Ice Climbing - For the adventurous, ice climbing provides the chance to scale frozen waterfalls and ice-covered rock faces, often with the guidance of a professional instructor.

Ice Skating - Glide across frozen ponds or outdoor rinks and enjoy the crisp winter air while learning basic skating skills.

Polar Bear Plunge - For those brave enough, the Polar Bear Plunge involves diving into icy waters. It is a fun and challenging way to test your limits while participating in community events.

Snowshoeing - Explore winter landscapes by strapping on snowshoes and trekking through the snow, whether on groomed trails or off the beaten path.

Winter Stargazing - With clear skies and shorter days, winter nights can be ideal for stargazing. Youth can learn about constellations, the winter sky, or even try winter constellations like Orion.

Other Winter Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematic (STEM) Activities - Share any other outdoor winter STEM experiments you've done!

(Note: Indoor experiments will not count.)

Winter Camping - Take your camping skills to the next level by camping in the snow. Winter camping will challenge you to be resourceful and teach valuable outdoor survival skills.

Winter Disc Golf - Disc golf courses remain open year-round, but playing in the winter adds a fun twist with snow-covered baskets and the challenge of navigating frosty, sometimes slippery terrain.

Winter Geocaching - Use a GPS device or smartphone app for a winter geocaching adventure. Many caches are hidden in winter-friendly areas, and it can be a fun way to explore while getting outside.

Winter Hike - Bundle up and hike on snow-covered trails or the try hiking trails Southern Utah desert, where the quiet beauty of winter offers a serene and peaceful way to enjoy the outdoors.

Winter Photography - Experiment with photography during winter, capturing the dramatic effects of frost, snow, lower angles of sunlight, and the prominent colors in the landscape.

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