

TAKE IT OUTSIDE! WEEK



Did you Know?

9% of the population or 7.6 million children between ages 1 and 21 is deficient in Vitamin D.

Increasing children's time outdoors can also increase their levels of Vitamin D.

10 TIPS TO ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT

1. **Build a Sunflower House-** Plant sunflowers in a square, circle, or any other shape you'd like, to create a living playhouse for hiding and hanging out.

2. **Willow Dome-** Create a permanent 'living' room for children to play in outdoors. Plant it in the winter so when spring comes the willow will start sprouting new roots and leaves.

3. **Mow a Meadow Maze-** Let your lawn grow. You can create a fun, natural play space for your children to play. Carve out a maze or zigzag path with your lawnmower.

4. **Plant Some Bulbs-** This is a strange and mysterious experience for children. Plant the bulbs in strategic, fun ways that act as colorful accents to your play space features and pathways.

5. **Boom Drums-** Use plastic barrels and trim them to whatever size you want. Bolt them to the ground or not and encourage kids to bang on them.

* Instructions for all of these enhancements can be found in Rusty Keeler's book, *Natural Playscapes*. A 26 page excerpt, including the above Do-It-Yourself Playscape Projects can be found at: www.earthplay.net.

6. **Pumpkins-** Place small pumpkins outside for children to touch, carry, and explore. Encourage children to take turns carrying and pushing them in a wheel barrel.

7. **Loose Parts-** Use blocks, boards, "tree cookies" (log slices), and milk crates for outdoor construction play. Give children chalk, fabric, paintbrushes, or water for enhanced imaginative play.

8. **Build a Vine Teepee-** Add a hideaway to children's play space and naturalize their outdoor environment. Do-It-Yourself instructions can be found at: www.naturalearning.org.

9. **Color-** Brighten and create a welcoming environment by adding painted rocks, mosaic stepping stones, windsocks or pinwheels to your play space.

10. **Recycled Materials-** Use your imagination. Add some cardboard boxes or pipes for construction play. Add tins, buckets, or bottles for children to bang on to create music and movement opportunities.

