

Yarra Ranges Council

Winter Family Fun Activities

Winter Verse:

Welcoming each season with regular family traditions like reading a seasonal verse at meal time or while out on a nature walk, supports children's connection to the environment and seasons, and provides a sense of belonging and security. Give it a go with your child at a regular time of day.

Winter, Winter cold and ice,
Toasty, bright warm fires are nice,
Winter, Winter long dark night,
Walking by the lantern light.

Winter – Let's Do List

A simple activity to do as a family is to create a seasonal activity list. What fun experiences (big or small) can you come up with to try? Your list can be a handy tool to use to plan family activities on weekends and school holidays. Here are a few ideas:

- Build a safe outdoor fire and toast a marshmallow.
- Make and drink a hot chocolate.
- Bake a special treat that reminds you of Winter (make it a yearly Winter tradition).
- Cut out paper snowflakes or raindrops.
- Make a fairy garden with tiny natural treasures found outside.
- Be the leader on an outdoor hike.
- Play with rocks by the riverside (skip, stack, count and search).
- Rug up and head outside to play flashlight tag as a family.
- Go star gazing on a clear night.



Animal Winter Workout

To help give children energy on a cold wintery day - get their bodies moving using this fun animal winter workout. Set a timer and complete each animal movement for 45 seconds, with a 15 second rest in between. Do as many as you can!

- **Frog Hops:** Squat down, hands between knees and bounce up and down.
- **Bear Walks:** Hands and feet on the floor, hold hips high and shuffle forward.
- **Crab Crawl:** Sit on the floor and place your palms flat on the floor behind your hips. Now lift up off the ground and scurry sideways.
- **Starfish Jumps:** Jump high with your arms and legs outstretched.
- **Cheetah Runs:** Run as fast as you can on the spot.
- **Elephant Stomps:** March in place lifting knees high and stomp your feet.

Build A Nest

As the Winter chill arrives, many animals retreat into burrows, tree hollows or dens to protect themselves from the cold.

Winter is the perfect time to build our own indoor nest or cubby, too. Children can make a teddy bear den; a tea party location; or for older children a snug safe spot to read and relax. With just a few pillows, sheets, or blankets they can create their own Winter nest in a quiet corner of your home.



Yarra Ranges Council is a Child Safe Organisation



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Winter Outdoor Fun

LOOK FOR INSECT LIFE:

Take a walk around your backyard or local park. Gently lift up sticks, rocks, dry leaves or small fallen branches to discover what is underneath. Can you see any insects? (hint - try cool damp places). You might like to photograph, draw or research the things you find.

ANIMAL OBSTACLE COURSE:

Using items that you find in your backyard (logs, toys, hula hoops, rope, branches), create your own obstacle course. Can you climb like a koala, balance like a possum, jump like a kangaroo or crawl like a wombat through your course?

ROCK HIDE AND SEEK:

Collect rocks on nature walks to use in outdoor games. With chalk, draw numbers or letters on the rocks, hide them around your yard, and then hunt to find them. Once found children can try sorting them into order.



Winter Window Nature Studies

WEATHER REPORT:

From your window look outside at the weather. Children can write a daily or weekly diary entry or create a chart of things they observe like: sunshine, cloud, wind, rain, snow, high/low temperatures and predictions. You can reflect together on the changes and patterns observed.

BIRD WATCHING:

From your window look outside.. how many birds do you see? Can you identify the different types? Write down the name and information about each bird (size, colouring, beak shape etc). Are there any birds that you don't know? Can you find out their names or more about them?

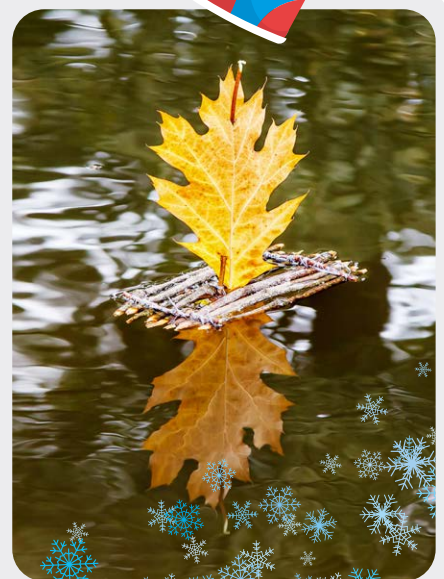
I SPY: Play 'I Spy' with a family member and choose only things from nature that you can see from your window!



Outdoor Winter Challenge: Twig Raft

The Yarra Ranges has many bubbling creeks and rivers to explore, and building and sailing your own tiny twig raft creations is a fun, nature-based activity the whole family can enjoy..

1. Go on a walk and gather natural materials like twigs, sticks, leaves, grass (for string) and bark.
2. Using only these materials, attempt to build a tiny raft that floats.
3. Once the raft is ready put it into your local creek or river and watch what happens. Does it sink like a submarine or speed away like a sailboat?



For more information about activities and events for children and families please follow us on Facebook at [Yarra Ranges Families](https://www.facebook.com/YarraRangesFamilies), visit our website at www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Family or call us on 1300 368 333.