



Play is the occupation of children, it is how they develop every skill needed for daily life. The best environment for play is outdoors.

This content forms part of a larger booklet entitled "Why Outdoor Play Matters for Children: A practical guide for parents and caregivers". To see the full booklet, and references, please go to recreationns.ns.ca.

MUD KITCHENS: BRING ON THE DIRT AND JOY!

A **mud kitchen** is just an **outdoor play kitchen** where children can make dirt and water creations. It can be as simple as a plank of wood, a bowl, some spoons and containers and a supply of water (tap, puddle or old milk jug). Some families build a mud kitchen from a bowl or pallets along with unused kitchen items or recycled containers.

Children will find “ingredients” like sand, leaves, flower petals or stones. If you don’t have access to a yard, you can collect these things on a walk and then use on your balcony or small outdoor space. You could also bring a few supplies to a local park. You just need to provide permission, uninterrupted time, space and materials (spoons, sieves, bowls, muffin tin etc.) for children to create and explore themselves.



THE BENEFITS OF MUD KITCHEN PLAY

Mud kitchens encourage sensory, exploratory and unstructured play. Outdoor kitchens contribute to language skills, cooperative play, understanding of roles and responsibilities, math and numbers and words and letters. They also help with fine motor and physical skill development and creativity.

This content forms part of a larger booklet entitled “Why Outdoor Play Matters for Children: A practical guide for parents and caregivers”. To see the full booklet, and references, please go to recreationns.ns.ca.