

The background of the page is a photograph of two children blowing bubbles. The child on the left is wearing a bright yellow raincoat and blue patterned boots. The child on the right is wearing a colorful floral shirt and pink boots. They are standing in a grassy area with a wooden fence in front of them. The sun is shining through the trees in the background, creating a warm, golden glow and many bubbles floating in the air.

Springtime **FUN** with Your Family

by Michelle "Shelly" Vicari

Spring is finally here, and the warmer weather offers plenty of opportunities for us to get back outside. Here are some fun activities that will help your family enjoy the best of the season!

Enjoy the Signs of Spring

The signs of spring are happening all around us. Buds and leaves are appearing on trees and plants are popping through the soil. There are snails, worms and frogs everywhere. You may spot the first butterflies of the season. Watch for bunnies and squirrels playing in the trees. Listen for birds returning from their winter vacation homes. Head out for a walk and see which signs of spring you can spot. Take photos! Encourage a family member in a different part of the country to do the same. Compare and discuss the similarities and differences between them. Taking in the nature around you and exploring it with your family is always a great activity, but especially during the spring months.



Start a Garden

There is something magical about watching a tiny seed grow into a plant. Springtime is the perfect time to plant a vegetable garden or create a garden that attracts butterflies. No space for a garden? Use a container to plant herbs or make Eggheads.

How to Make an Egghead:

Take some eggshells and try cracking off just the top so you have plenty of fillable space. Wash out the eggshells and sit them back in the egg box. Draw fun faces on them and add some googly eyes! Then, place a damp cotton ball inside each eggshell and sprinkle seeds inside (chia, cress, radish, alfalfa and grasses all sprout quickly). Be sure to cover the cotton ball to get a full "head of hair" when they begin to grow.

Feed The Birds

In the spring, birds returning from long migrations are busy building nests and laying eggs. Their singing and twittering signal that spring has truly arrived. Set up a bird feeder in your backyard, on your patio or on your balcony, then document which feathered friends visit most frequently. How many birds did you spot this week? How many new species visited? It's fun to keep track. You can learn more about birds at birds.cornell.edu and peek at live feeder cams around the country.



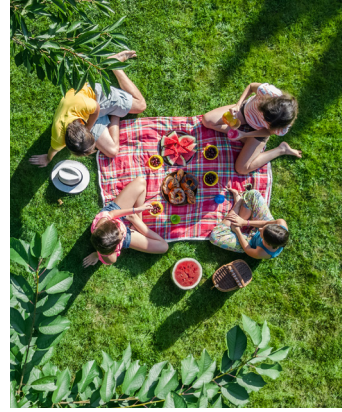
Go On a Hike

Spring is a great time to go on a hike. There's no better way to cure the cabin fever we get from being cooped up all winter than to get out and explore nature. Be sure to plan a hike that is friendly to everyone in the group's skill level. A great website to find trails in your area is AllTrails.com,

which allows you to filter by skill level, distance and accessibility. Always stay on marked trails. Depending on the age of your children, it's probably best to plan a morning hike when energy levels are higher. Bring some snacks and plenty of water.

Play in the Rain

The weather is still unpredictable, but don't let spring showers stop you from enjoying the outdoors. Put on your rain gear and play in puddles! See who can make the biggest or silliest splash. Dance in the rain. Collect rain in different containers and listen to the sounds of raindrops as they hit a metal, plastic or glass container. Yes, everyone will get a little wet and a little dirty, but you'll make great memories.



Have a Picnic

There has to be no better spring outdoor activity than going on a picnic. Grab a blanket, pack a lunch or some snacks, head to a park and enjoy the sunshine. Have fun on the playground, then toss down your blanket, lay on your backs and watch the clouds go

by. Take turns describing what you see. Can you find any animal shapes? What else do the clouds look like?

No clouds in the sky? Read one of these books about springtime:

- Flower Garden - Eve Bunting
- Planting a Rainbow - Lois Ehlert
- Frog and Toad Are Friends - Arnold Lobel
- Little Cloud - Eric Carle
- Make Way for Ducklings - Robert McCloskey

Fun With the Whole Family

I hope you will consider trying a few of these activities with your family to welcome and celebrate spring! With each changing season, it's always important to find activities that are suitable and joyful for the whole family.

About the Author:

Michelle "Shelly" Vicari, Past OAC Chair, majored in Child Development and Family Studies as well as Political Science at San Diego State University. She was the former Curriculum Director of the largest National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited Child Care Centers in Southern California. She has authored many curriculum guides for teachers working with young children and was lucky enough to once meet Mr. Fred Rogers!



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



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The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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