

Open-ended iPad Apps and the Outdoors

Tips for Families



Principles for using iPad apps outdoors (Ballentine, n.d.)

Select apps that...

1. **Tell stories** [video, photography, documentation opportunities]
2. **Put the real world first** [the app/activity enriches the experience rather than obscures/detracts from it]
3. **Require movement** [ensure that movement is part of the experience]

When using digital technology outside, support your child in identifying and evaluating how the app can add to and enrich their outdoor time (rather than lessen or obscure the experience by requiring their attention to be primarily focused on the app/technology)

A few questions you and your child can ask yourselves:

- **Does the work tell a story?** [documentation of an experience, people or objects]
 - **Does the work connect to what is going on around me?** [am I aware of/engaged with others/the outdoor environment]
 - **Am I moving?**
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Some considerations before you get started:

- Ensure you have a **child-friendly case** that will provide adequate protection without hindering use of the iPad's functions, such as the camera.
- **Set guidelines** that are appropriate for your family and situation (eg. what types of weather are suitable for outdoor iPad use, what are the precautions for taking the iPads on climbing structures or near water/sand/soil)
- While sitting or remaining still for short periods may be necessary to take photos or draw a picture, encourage children to be mindful of overall activity levels during outdoor use
- Allow room for flexibility, if something really interesting/exciting is being documented there may be value in periodically extending the time frame



While using the app:

- Encourage your child to experiment with different forms of documentation using the iPad app (photography, drawing, audio recordings, video)
- Try not to be too worried about the quality of the images, they will still hold meaning to your child(ren)
- Taking the iPad on family outings, neighbourhood walks and trips to the grocery store may provide interesting opportunities for documentation
- Encourage siblings/friends to take turns and document each other's activity
- Have children share their work with family and friends, either in person or electronically (work can be shared with your child's educators through the HiMama app, see Technical Guide for instructions)



Activity Suggestions for Children:

Observe and Document and Reflect On...

- Weather changes
- Gardening
- Snow building
- Puddle jumping
- Outside chores - raking leaves, shovelling snow
- Animals
- Insects
- Birds
- Record sounds that are heard outside



Insert your ideas here!

Home Project Ideas for You and Your Child:

- Take a photo from the same spot, at the same time, over an extended period to observe changes in lighting, weather etc
- Document changes in the environment/community eg. nearby construction, leaves falling off the trees

- Interview a known neighbour or friend
- Document family trips and neighbourhood walks or the walk to school
- Observe shadows at different times of the day
- Document weekly garbage pick-up, note different times or vehicles involved
- Mail service - mail delivery and collecting from your mailbox or a trip to post a letter
- Put out bird feeders and document results - which birds come and when etc
- Visit a nearby park or conservation area and make a short video or take photos
- Sketch or photograph plant-life, observe growth and changes over a period of time
- Help to document your child's activities to illustrate changes in growth over time in their physical play experiences eg. jumping, running, digging, skipping, riding, climbing, throwing, catching, spinning etc.
- Document different types of transportation seen from your home or on a walk

Insert your ideas here!



Ballentine, K. (n.d.). Balancing technology with nature [Webinar]. Retrieved from <https://naturekidsinstitute.com/webinar-registration9053964>

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