

46 Backyard Play Ideas for Children

Children need to get outside and be away from the TV. Especially in the summertime, when they can get loads of fresh air and exercise. It is even more important if you live in areas that have cold winters, since being cooped up in the winter happens often!

Pediatricians have also recently concluded that children do not get enough free play during their day. One great way for them to have free play is by being in their backyards. Setting up play areas and giving them ideas for play is vital to their health, but now and for their future.

There are several ways to make any backyard area more fun for the kids.

1 – Garden

The love of all things in nature can never begin too early. Start that love with your child's very own garden. This garden can be very small or elaborate, depending on their age. A simple garden that is low maintenance contains sunflowers, green bean plants and tomatoes. Annual flowers like marigolds, petunias and zinnias offer bright colors and blossoms all year long. Give your child small chores like watering and weeding (with help). They can also be artistic and make signs to label all of their plants. A scarecrow can keep away the birds. In the fall, have them harvest any fruit or vegetables you planted.

2 – Garden House

The garden house is actually made from a specific garden design. The house is the garden itself. To make the house, you need to plant strategically. Plant giant sunflower seeds to form a large square or rectangle. Leave one gap to act as a door and the rest boxed in for a house effect. On the outside of those sunflowers, plant smaller sunflowers and bushy flowers like cosmos or zinnias. Once the sunflowers grow tall, pull the heads towards each other and band loosely with rope or string. The thicker the row of sunflowers, the more like a "roof" it will seem. The shorter sunflowers and bushes will provide a solid wall.

3 – Swing set

A swing set is the ultimate play machine. Swing sets are made in so many different ways, it's hard to choose what you want. Well, what the kids want. There are metal sets, with the basic swings, slide and a glider. Then there are the deluxe plastic sets with slides, climbers and tunnels. Even more elaborate are the wood designs. They have forts, swings, tunnels, walls, ropes and everything a kid could possibly want. The only limit is your budget. If you can't afford a pre-made set, plans are sold individually and you just buy the materials and construct it yourself.

4 – Sandbox

Every child needs to play in the sand. Sandboxes can be purchased as a plastic shape and ready to fill. There are dinosaurs, ladybugs, trucks and plain shapes available with different sand capacities. Sand for fill is available in five-pound bags, already screened and cleaned at toy stores, home improvement stores and some department store. Sand can also be ordered by the truck full from a landscaper or garden store. Make sure to buy shovels in a variety of sizes and buckets, tractors and other sand toys. If you don't want to buy a sandbox, use 4 pieces of wood, nail at the corners and fill with sand.

5 – Trampoline

A trampoline provides hours of recreation, even for young kids. The jumping helps their coordination and flexibility, and giving them exercise at the same time. Kids can make up games when jumping inside with a group or just jumping alone. Some games could be leapfrog, popcorn or kangaroo. When buying a trampoline, you should also buy the safety net that goes around the outside perimeter. The net will keep all kids inside and prevent serious injuries from happening.