

Youth & Families » Let it Snow!



Lounging in style on the Rampart Ridge Trail near Longmire in Mount Rainier National Park. Photo by Doug Diekema.

Winter is on its way and that means snow will be blanketing the hillsides in no time. Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean you and your family have to stay cooped up inside. Embrace the winter wonderland and get outdoors!

Snow can be a great medium for creative, artistic projects. Or, with a little adaptation, many common games become epic good times in snowy conditions. Snow can also encourage a bit of competition and challenge. The next time you go snowshoeing, sledding or cross-country skiing, take plenty of breaks to try some of these ideas for winter fun.

Be Creative

Build a Snow Cave, Igloo, or Fort

Having a shovel and snow saw makes this easier but isn't required. Find a good snowdrift or build a big mound. Dig in and excavate the inside! If you have a snow saw or box frame, you can make snow blocks and try your hand at constructing an igloo.

Play Snowman Dress-up

Build your best snowperson and accessorize until your heart is content. You can use either natural objects or bring a few items from home out with you.

Make Birdseed or Technicolor Snow Angels

This one is for the artists! Most of us have made snow angels but few have used birdseed or food coloring to decorate our angelic imprints! Bring along several different types of birdseed or spray bottles of food coloring and water. Please remember that food coloring isn't good for birds, so choose one coloring device or the other so that you don't contaminate the seeds with dye.

Play Games

Snowman Destruction Derby

After nurturing your creative side with snowman dress-up, what could be more fun than a little creative destruction? Some people leave their snowmen for others to see and admire, but others leave no trace.



Chris Wall

WTA's Youth Programs Specialist
chrisw@wta.org

Pin the Nose on the Snowman

It's a simple twist to the classic birthday game. Bring along a blindfold and carrots or use sticks. I encourage not only pinning the nose, but the eyes, teeth and eyebrows as well!

Snow Tic-Tac-Toe

Three Xs or three Os in a row either up, down, or diagonal wins! Make the board have as many squares as you want! Strategies and thrown snowball distractions encouraged.

Get Competitive

Snowball-Throwing Contest

Make a big target using spraybottles filled with water and food coloring. Like darts, choose a set number of snowballs and establish a point value for each ring. Winners beware, as this could easily develop into a snowball fight instigated by the losing team.

Snowy Obstacle Course

Use your creative side to build things like trenches, mounds, hurdles, tunnels and ramps to design the most challenging snow obstacle course to date! Fastest time wins!

Snow Tug-Of-War

You brought a rope just in case of a hidden crevasse, right? In this case, it's not only for safety but for fun as well! Imagine the challenge that slippery, wet snow can add to the old game of tug-of-war!

There are plenty of fun ways to spend time outside with kids this winter. Don't let the cold weather keep you inside! Remember to be safe, pack dry clothes and end the day with a steamy cup of cocoa and a roaring fire. Check out our recommended winter hikes, get outside, and have some winter fun! ♦



Try Snow Tug-of-War. Illustration by Kara Chin.

Kid-friendly Winter Hikes

Upper River Run

Okanogan National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District

Distance: 7 miles round trip. Elevation gain: 500 feet. High point: 2,800 feet.

Map: Green Trails Mazama 51

Glacier Vista

Mount Rainier National Park, Nisqually Entrance / Paradise Lodge

Distance: 3 miles round trip. Elevation gain: 700 feet. High point: 6,300 feet.

Map: Green Trails Mount Rainier East 270, Paradise 270S

White Salmon Creek

Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District

Distance: up to 10 miles. Elevation gain: 300 feet. High point: 2,400 feet.

Map: Green Trails Mount Shuksan 14

Big Four Ice Caves

Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Darrington Ranger District

Distance: 2.2 miles round trip. Elevation gain: 200 feet. High point: 1,860 feet.

Map: Green Trails Silverton 110

Looking for more kid-friendly faves? Try WTA's online hiking guide. In the search options, you can select "kid-friendly" and find only hikes good for kids.



Olympic hopeful in the Methow Valley.
Photo by Doug Diekema.