

Exploring with a treasure hunt

Rationale:

Looking for something and then finding it is a very satisfying experience for children of all ages. This outdoor game involves looking for 'treasure'. It encourages your child to be active and to explore.

Age range information

3-6 years

What you need

You can do a treasure hunt anywhere, but an outdoor space with lots of interesting features and places to hide things – like trees, landscaping and play equipment – is more fun to explore. Here's what you'll need:

- Paper and pencils to prepare the clues in advance.
- A treasure to hide.
- Someone to supervise your child while you hide the treasure and clues – for example, to take your child for a short walk or play with him in another area of the park.

Your 'treasure' does not have to be something special – a household item like a colourful ball or a plastic bottle will work.

How to do it

You set up a treasure hunt by hiding clues and the treasure. The clues can be simple drawings that your child has to find. Each clue provides information on where the next clue can be found. The final clue leads to the treasure. Here's how to do it:

1. Plan the hunt first. Decide where to hide the treasure and work backwards. For example, you might plan to hide the treasure beneath the slide. The clue to the slide might be at the water fountain. The clue to the water fountain might be at the park bench and so on.
2. Draw pictures for each of the clues. For example, draw a picture of the slide, a picture of the water fountain, a picture of the park bench and so on.
3. Hide the treasure and the clues while your child is occupied and supervised somewhere else.
4. When you are ready, tell your child it is time for the treasure hunt. Give him the first clue and encourage him to look for the others until he has found the treasure.

5. Talk with your child about the treasure hunt – for example, ‘Was it hard?’ or ‘Was it fun?’ Praise his perseverance and treasure-hunting skill.

Adapting for children of different ages

Your younger child might find hunting for clues a bit challenging. A simpler treasure hunt involves your child looking for everyday items in the park. Here’s how:

- Make a list of items for your child to collect – for example, a round pebble, a pointy leaf, a red flower or a seed.
- Give him a basket or bag to put the objects he finds in.
- Talk with your child about the shapes, colours and textures of the objects he found. Try comparing them – for example, ‘Which is bigger – the leaf or the flower?’

Another way to hunt for treasure is to draw a very simple map of the park, showing landmarks like the slide, the water fountain and the park bench. Use an ‘X’ to mark the spot that you have hidden the treasure.

Your older child who is learning to read might be able to read written clues with your help. Treasure at the end is certainly a good incentive for him to try!



Recommended Reads

- [Treasure hunt](#)
- [The great treasure hunt: a lift-the-flap book](#)
- [Rumble in the Jungle](#)