



Get Outside! Ideas for Intergenerational Outdoor Events

Remember what your parents used to say: “It’s too nice to stay inside!” Being outdoors – no matter the weather – is a great way to learn new skills and interact with someone from another generation. Read on for some easy ideas to get everyone moving and enjoying the great outdoors – together!

Before You Start...

For step-by-step planning, consult our [Recipes for Intergenerational Success – One Time Events](#) .

1. Convene a leadership team to plan your event with members from at least two different organizations or departments.
2. Begin your activity with some type of ice breaker. You can find a wealth of suggestions for ice breakers [right here](#).
3. Consider serving food at the event! Perhaps the sponsoring organization provides main courses and guests bring their families’ favorite summer dishes.

Possible Activities Include:

An Old-Fashioned Field Day.

Games and contests: Three-legged race, sack race, bean bag toss, carrying a raw egg on a spoon, wheelbarrow, tug of war, hula hoop contest, jumping rope, relay race and pie-eating contest.

An obstacle course with intergenerational teams: Walk across a 2x4 beam that is laid on the ground, leap frog, jump over bales of hay, throw a water balloon, move 10 yards with a balloon between one’s legs, dress up in a costume, build a tower out of foam blocks, dribble a basketball or soccer ball, do the limbo, run through tires or hula hoops placed on the ground.

Bicycle festival: Invite people to bring their favorite bikes from tricycles to dirt bikes, tandem bikes to motorcycles. Does anyone have a unicycle? Have a relay race around a track using different bikes. Have a bike-decorating contest. Give out prizes for the day.

Family/Friend Olympics: Use summer Olympics games as the theme for this event. Be sure to plan activities for people of all abilities and to create teams that are age-integrated. At each event, teams score points and fun prizes/certificates can be given at the end. Consider making the prize categories fun and light-hearted: funniest team, clumsiest team, highest-scoring team, lowest-scoring team. Adapted games include:

- Basketball shots where the toss can be taken by a child on an adult’s shoulders
- A “swimming” relay race where people pretend to swim
- Soccer where the ball has to be passed to three people on the team before anyone shoots

- Mini golf
- Archery – where the littlest ones can hold the arrow or each team decorates their own target
- Volleyball where the ball has to be volleyed among people from two different generations before it can go over the net
- Tennis

Plant a garden with favorite family plants: For example, snapdragons for my Aunt Stephie and hostas for my Nonna.

Plant trees: Sometimes the perfect discussion and learning tool is right out your door. Here are some things to talk about to help frame this activity:

- Trees can live for hundreds of years and carry signs of the times with them.
- They give us clean air and oxygen as well as provide shade.
- They add beauty to our neighborhoods and provide a place for animals to live.
- Trees play a symbolic role in many cultures: Sycamore trees can be seen in Egyptian hieroglyphics. Ancient Roman myths talk about fig trees. Greek myths talk about oak trees. In the United States, Arbor Day is a holiday. Iceland has a Student's Afforestation Day. India celebrates a National Festival of Tree Planting.

Scavenger Hunt/Nature Walk: Divide people into groups of three or four. Give people guidelines on where they may or may not go. Also, make sure that someone in each group is a timekeeper and that all groups are aware of the return time. Items to find can include a pine cone, leaf, etc.

Alternatively, give each group a paper bag. Ask them to collect 10 unique items in the bag. As people walk, ask them to use their five senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell) to think about the environment in this season. Encourage them to ponder what the environment would be like in a different season. When they return from the walk, switch bags between groups. Ask for someone in each group to put her or his hand in the bag, choose an item, feel the item and then identify it.

Play a team sport at a field: How about kickball, soccer, softball or flag football. Make sure that everyone can participate – for example, if someone is on crutches or uses a walker, perhaps they can be a referee.

Clean-up! Choose a part of your community to clean up and beautify. Consider decorating and placing a bench or plaque. Plant some perennials or annuals.

On the River: Plan a kayak or canoe trip with intergenerational pairs in the boats down to a central location for a picnic.



***This Recipe for Intergenerational Success is
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