

# *Brrrrring It On!*

## Embracing Snow and Rain Outdoors with Young Children

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### Webinar Resources

Please use these helpful resources to extend this topic:

- ***Flourishing in Winter: Guidance for Cold Weather Play, by and for early childhood practitioners***, by Emily K. Johnson and Julie Ernst. Natural Start Alliance, June 2025. Retrieved from [naturalstart.org](http://naturalstart.org) January 2026.
- ***Joys of a Winter Wonderland***, by Sara Reichstadt and Lisa Swan, Exchange Press, January 2020 (Issue 251). Retrieved from [exchangepress.com](http://exchangepress.com) January 2026.
- ***Playing Outside in Winter: Tips to Keep Kids Warm & Safe***. American Academy of Pediatrics, January 2024. Retrieved from [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) January 2026
- ***Rain, Snow, or Shine: The Importance of Outdoor Time for Babies***. New Horizon Academy. Retrieved from [newhorizonacademy.net](http://newhorizonacademy.net) January 2026.
- ***Snow Much to Learn: Teachers' Experiences Embracing Child-Led Snow Play***, by Ann Rossmiller, Rachel Konerman and Mickaela Dean, Exchange Community Voices, January 2026. Retrieved from [exchangepress.com](http://exchangepress.com) January 2026.
- ***Winter Play in China***, by Huajun Li, Exchange Press, January 2020 (Issue 251). Retrieved from [exchangepress.com](http://exchangepress.com) January 2026.
- ***5 Benefits of Outdoor Play in the Winter***, Learning Resources, December 2023. Retrieved from [learningresources.com](http://learningresources.com) January 2026.

### Kirsten's ECI Webinars

[earlychildhoodwebinars.com/presenters/haugen-kirsten](http://earlychildhoodwebinars.com/presenters/haugen-kirsten)

- ***Brrrrring It On! Embracing Cold, Snow and Rain Outdoors with Young Children***
- ***Considering the Climate of Your Outdoor Spaces: How heat and shade impact health and play, and what you can do about it,***
- ***Growing Natural Outdoor Preschool Classrooms to Scale: LA Unified School District's Bold Approach***, with Dean Tagawa and Ranae Amezquita and Kirsten Haugen
- ***Engineering With Nature: Learning and Communicating through Construction Play,*** with Tina Reeble



## Brrring It On!

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Nature Explore  
[natureexplore.org](http://natureexplore.org)

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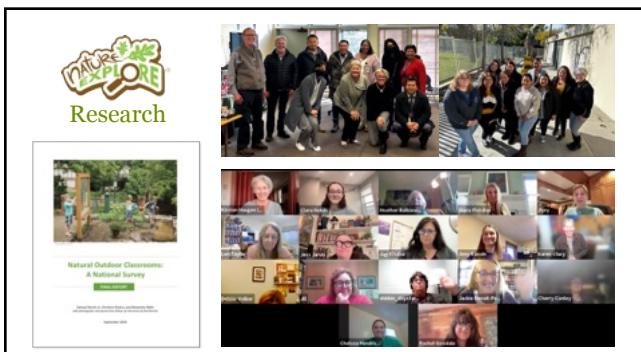
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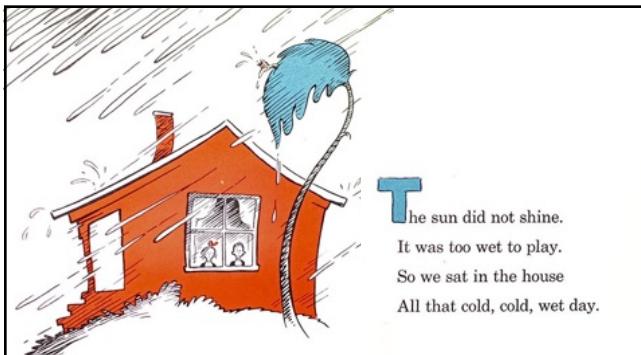
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**T**he sun did not shine.  
It was too wet to play.  
So we sat in the house  
All that cold, cold, wet day.

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### Our Focus

- Benefits & possibilities
- The attitude shift
- Awareness and preparation
- Clothes *are* the curriculum
- Cold weather comforts
- Take care of the adults, too!

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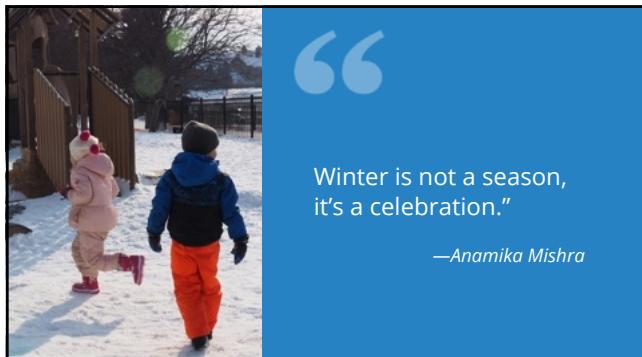
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“

Winter is not a season,  
it's a celebration.”

—Anamika Mishra

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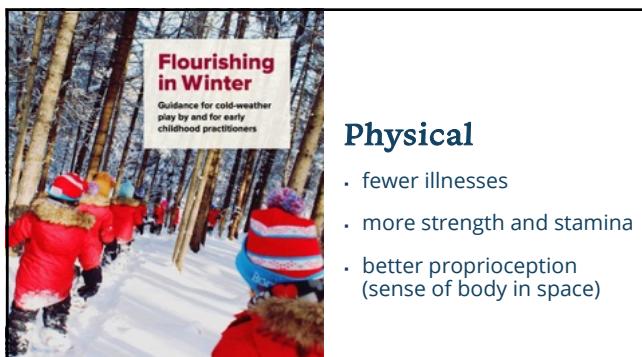
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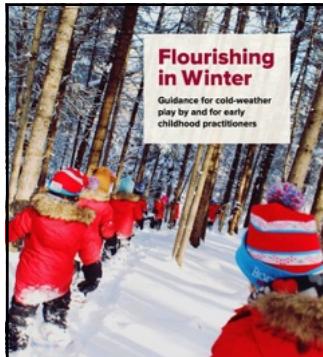
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## Mental & Emotional

- better mood
- calm focus from heavy work
- curiosity
- persistence and confidence
- self-awareness

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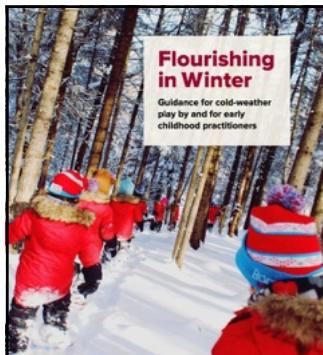
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## Learning

- science concepts including phases of matter
- science processes including prediction, experimentation & problem-solving
- science tools, including thermometers, shovels, sleds and more

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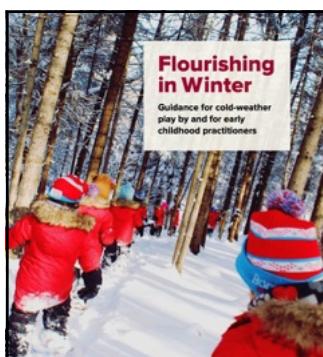
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## Connections with Nature

- awareness of seasonal and daily transformations
- engages the senses
- empathy for living things

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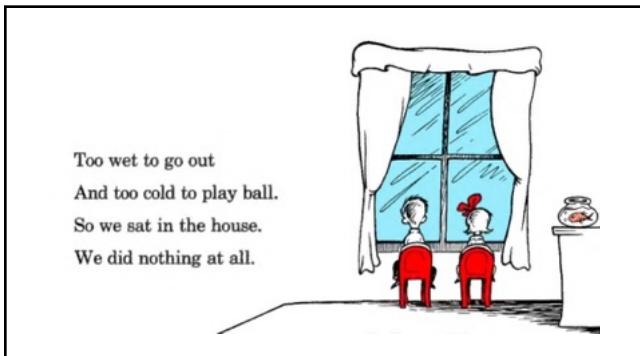
Allowing young children to engage with snow at school honors their natural interests, supports development, and transforms the experience into a meaningful and memorable part of early learning...fostering wonder, resilience, and discovery.”

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## Embracing an Attitude Shift

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Dirt. Water. Weather...  
Unfortunately, adults attempting to be proactive problem-solvers sometimes inhibit the magic of nature play by purposely avoiding these elements...but nature play in all weather encourages new perspectives and instills an appreciation for everything nature offers."

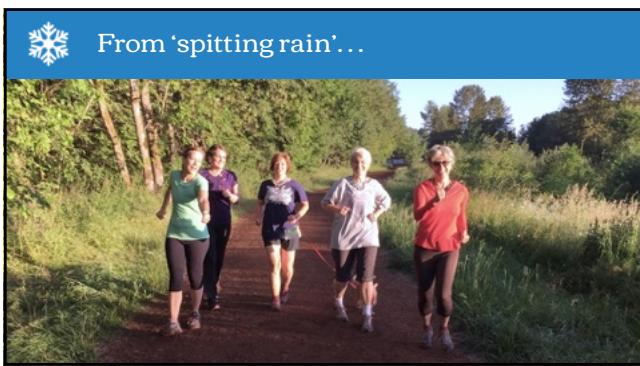
—Peter Dargatz, IPA USA

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"I know it is wet  
And the sun is not sunny.  
But we can have  
Lots of good fun that is funny!"

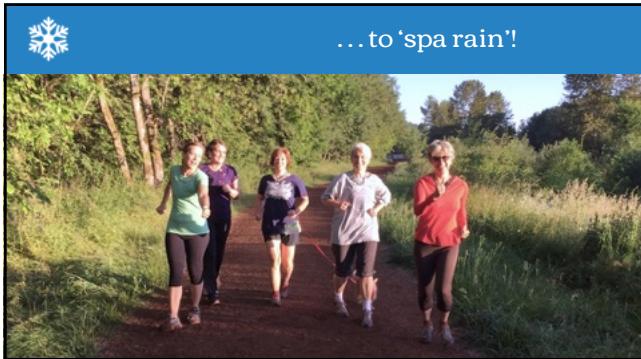
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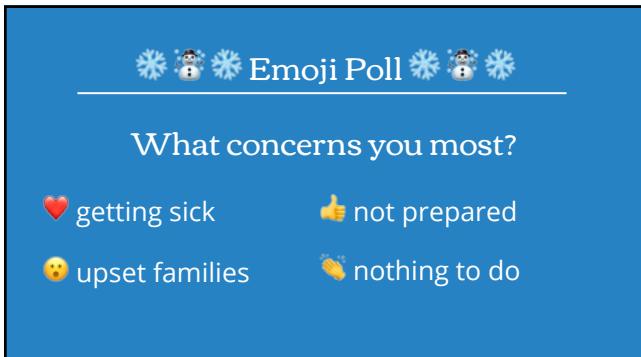
## From 'spitting rain'...



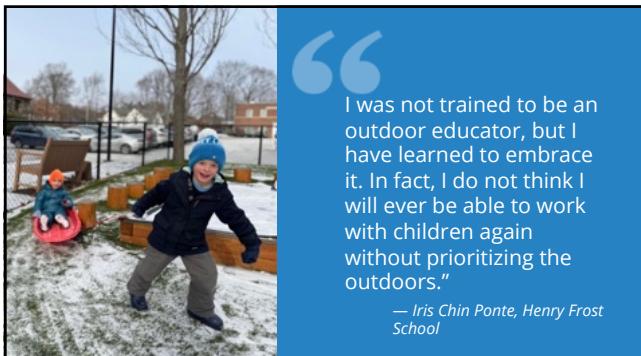
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The children have adapted and adjusted in ways we could never have imagined. They cheer when we have ice rain, and they cannot wait to see how the snow transforms our play spaces.”

*—Iris Chin Ponte*



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## Safety & Comfort

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## Is it Safe to Go Out?

- Know the conditions and risks
- Prolonged time in below zero temps can cause hypothermia or frostbite
- Follow NOAA wind chill guidelines
- Be prepared



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❄️⛄️❄️ **Emoji Poll** ❄️⛄️❄️

How cold is too cold?

👍 55° F      😮 10° F

❤️ 32° F      😂 -15° F

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**More than Temperature**

- Clouds and wind
- Deep ice and snow that limit movement
- Humidity and wet clothing

...all increase the impact of cold weather

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**What to do?**

- Dress in layers
- Have backup gear
- Encourage active play
- Move to the sun
- Move out of the wind
- Adjust your schedule
- Check in with children



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I used to think 30 degrees was cold. Not anymore. Our school has opened in 17 degrees, multiple times. We have learned to layer, eat warm foods in Thermoses, and keep moving."

— Iris Chin Ponte,  
Henry Frost School

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# Cold Weather Comforts

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To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold."

—Aristotle

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## Winter Gear Plans

**chilly**

- 1-2 base layers
- Quick-drying material near skin
- Waterproof outer layer
- Warm, waterproof shoes

**cold**

- Warm hat
- Quick-drying material near skin
- Waterproof gloves
- Waterproof shoes

**extreme cold**

- Breathable cotton, long enough to cover ears
- 3+ layers, including 1 insulating layer
- Waterproof outer layer
- Waterproof gloves
- Waterproof shoes
- Warm hat
- Warm face covering
- 1 insulating layer
- 2+ layers

Dayton Children's Hospital

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## Dressing Routines

- Snow Pants:** on first to avoid starting over.
- Boots:** Easier before adding bulk.
- Jacket:** Try the flip-over-the-head method.
- Hat:** Last before gloves so it isn't forgotten.
- Gloves:** Always last to allow for zipping and tucking.

Let's get ready to play in the snow!

1	2	3	4	5
snow pants	boots	coat	hat	gloves

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## Extra Tips

- Snow pants over the jacket makes toileting trips easier
- On shorter breaks, leave some gear on
- Swap out wet gear

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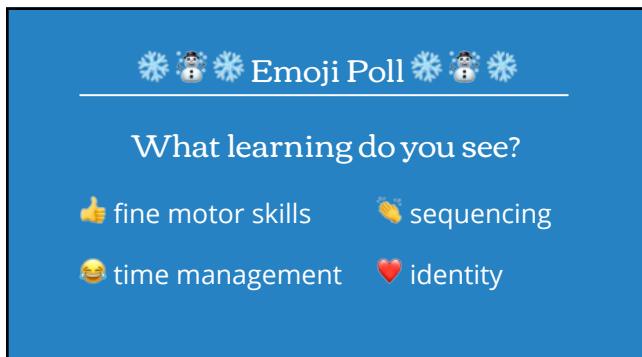
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## **Brrring It On!!!**

June 2025



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Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things but just look what they can do when they stick together."

—Vesta M. Kelly

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 Children in natural outdoor settings are...

“...more relaxed, happier, less impulsive, more focused, more creative and better able to self-regulate.”

– Dr. Sam Dennis et al,  
2014 Post-occupancy Study of  
Nature-based Outdoor Classrooms



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When we grow healthy children, we're building their resilience and their adaptability to changes that they will inevitably see."

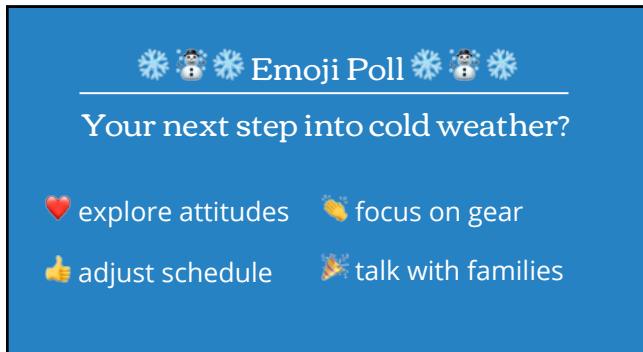
—Joan Lombardi  
The Road to COP:  
Elevating Early Childhood  
Development

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What is  
your next  
step into  
cold  
weather?

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✉ Email Bell

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Your next step into cold weather?

♥ explore attitudes    🤑 focus on gear

adjust schedule talk with families

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Don't be afraid to turn old attitudes on their head!



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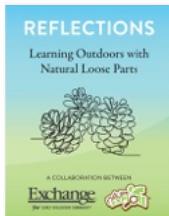
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- Receive a gift to support your reflective practice
- Ask about services and support

[natureexplore.org/eci](http://natureexplore.org/eci)



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