

CAMP OUT!

Activity Book



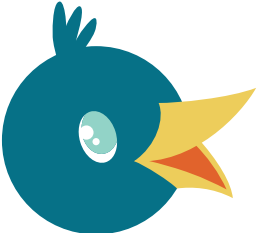
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Let's Camp Out!


Camping—it's one of the all-time favorite outdoor activities. Some people like to rough it; others come fully equipped with everything they could possibly need to feel cozy and comfortable. Whatever your preference, this assemblage of games, crafts, and ideas will provide you with all kinds of ways to pass the time in a natural setting. Your little adventurer can create unexpected works of art and use reasoning and observation skills while exercising creativity.



Whether you're car camping, backpacking, or setting up camp in the backyard (or the living room!), this group of ideas will help keep kids occupied.



We realize you may not be able to make a full-on camping trip happen. But that's no reason not to set up camp. After all, a campsite can be anywhere, from a backyard to a cleared out living room.




Before you set out on your next camping trip, be sure to grab some supplies you might not be used to bringing:



TWINE OR RAFFIA
SCISSORS
MARKERS
GLUE
GOOGLY EYES

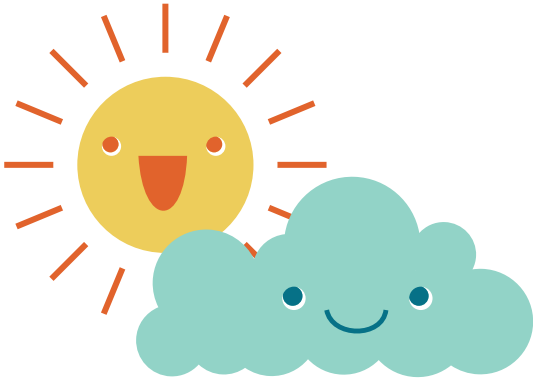
ONE FINAL THOUGHT:



Many of these ideas would make amazing decorations or time occupiers at a kid's party with an outdoor or adventure theme.

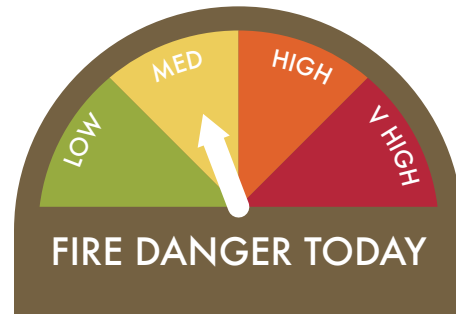
Prep for Your Trip

Each camping trip always takes at least some preparation. Help your child get involved and think ahead by researching or talking together about some common important information.



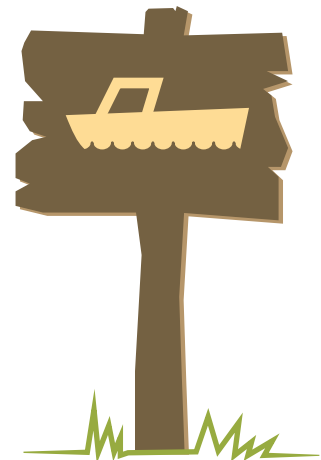
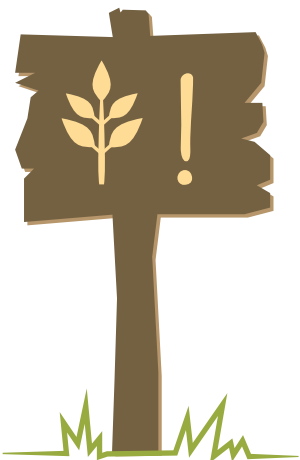
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

What's the weather forecast for the area where you're headed? One way to figure out what to pack for a trip is to know what the weather might be like, as well as what sorts of activities you'll be doing.



THE RULES OF THE CAMPGROUND

Due to weather or other variables, what you are and are not allowed to do at different campgrounds will likely change. Your campground might have fire pits at the campsites but a no-fires-allowed rule due to fire danger.



CAMPGROUND DETAILS AND WARNINGS

Along with general rules, campgrounds often post descriptions of plants to look out for (either because they're fragile or protected, or because they're harmful, like poison oak), as well as animals you may encounter. Other information like what kinds of bathroom facilities are available, if there's potable water, or if pets are allowed can also be important to look up. Last but not least, check out what kinds of recreational activities, such as swimming, hiking, or boating, are popular at your campsite.

Painted Sticks

When you're on unfamiliar terrain, as often happens on camping trips, it can be easy to get lost. Not this time though! In the days before going on a trek, have your kid paint various patterns on found sticks. As she makes her way along a path she can plant sticks in the ground to help her remember the way back to camp. On the return leg of her journey, the colorful painted stick markers will let her know if she's on the right track.

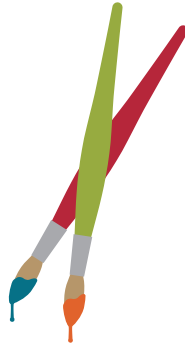
WHAT YOU NEED:

Found sticks (at least 10)

Paint

Paintbrushes

Sack, pillowcase, or burlap bag



WHAT YOU DO:

- Find** Have your child walk around the yard, the neighborhood, or a local park to search for some sticks. The sticks should be large enough so that once they're painted they can be seen from a distance of about 50 feet. Alternatively, you can head to a hobby store to pick up big craft sticks.
- Paint** Encourage her to paint a variety of designs on each stick, creating a different pattern on each one.
- Go** Place the sticks in a sack. Have her count how many she has.
- Plant** At the campground, ask her to plant a stick along the entrance of your campsite, or wherever the path leads towards the bathrooms. This way she'll know which way to go and where to come back to! If the ground is too hard to put the sticks in the ground, or you worry they could become a walking hazard at night, she can lay the sticks out flat on the ground instead.
- Clean-up** On the way home, ask her to remove the sticks and place them back in the sack. Have her count the sticks up to make sure she has them all!



Add glow-in-the-dark paint to make the sticks stand out in low lighting.

Stone Critters

Here's a craft you can do either before you go or while you're on the trip. A mascot makes a new place a little more cozy. It can be difficult for kids to be away from home, as going on a camping trip sometimes means leaving your pets and friends behind. Once the critter is created your kid will have a goofy little custom-made companion that will keep her company and guard the tent. These critters have lots of personality and, as an added benefit, they're incredibly low-maintenance.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Leaves

Rocks

Glue

Googly eyes



WHAT YOU DO:

1. Encourage your kid to scavenge around the backyard (or the campsite) to find a handful of leaves and a few rocks.
2. Have her pick out her favorite rock and arrange several leaves over it to create the body of her critter. Ask if her critter has antennae, a tail, or any special features that she might accentuate as she arranges the leaves.
3. Help her glue the leaves in place to create the body of her creature.
4. Have her glue the googly eyes onto her creature to give it personality.
5. Ask your child about her critter. Does it have a name? A gender? A backstory?
6. Encourage her to make stone critters for her fellow campers so everybody has a special companion!



Camping Scavenger Hunt



1. Divide a sheet of paper into four sections.
2. Help your child come up with a list of items she would expect to see around a campsite. Write down the list in the first section. Here are a few ideas of what to include: rock, bark, berry, clover, acorn, leaf.
3. Ask your child to come up with a list of colors she thinks could be seen around the campsite. If your kid is on the younger side, the basics are okay. But if your kid is a little bit older, challenge her to come up with more obscure and unusual colors she might see.
4. Have her write the color names in the second section.
5. Create a list of shapes in the third section. Ask her to list names for the shapes as you write them down.
6. In the fourth section, ask her to list out textures she may encounter while on her camping trip.
7. Bring the list with you on your next campout and she can see how many items she finds. Jump to the back of the book for scavenger hunt ideas using the list she made.

Make a Sundial

How do you tell time without a watch? Use the sun! The sun can be an accurate time-telling device as long as you have the right tools to help you. Many ancient peoples used sundials to keep track of time. The earliest sundials we know of are the shadow clocks (circa 1500 BC) that were used in Egyptian and Babylonian astronomy. Show your child how people were able to tell time long before analog, and then digital clocks, appeared on the scene.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Straight stick about 2 feet long

About 35 pebbles or small sea shells

Watch or cellphone

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Find a sunny spot of your campsite and push the stick straight into the ground.
2. Start in the morning when the sun is up. At 7:00am, have your child use a pebble to mark where the shadow of the stick falls. Come back at 8:00am, 9:00am, 10:00am, and so on until the sun sets to mark the various shadows.
3. By the end of the day your kid will have made enough markings to estimate where the rest of the hour markers should be placed to complete the sundial. The next time your kid asks what time it is (and the sun is out), point him in the direction of the sundial.



This activity needs a sunny spot.

DID YOU KNOW?

The length of the shadows will change throughout the year. In the summer, the shadows will be shorter, and in the winter, the shadows will be longer.

The term A.M. stands for “ante meridiem,” which means before noon. The term P.M. stands for “post meridiem,” or after noon.

On a cloudy day, you’ll be happy to have analog and digital time to fall back on, but a clock won’t necessarily give you any clues about the seasons. Both time-telling devices are useful in their own right.

Temporary Art

It might be tempting to think of a piece of art as something fixed and unchanging, but that's not always the case! Help hone your kid's creative side as he practices a kind of art form that uses only natural materials to celebrate the beauty and potential of the great outdoors. A camping trip is the perfect opportunity to create some lovely, natural temporary art. Items that your kid might never have considered using in a work of art before will suddenly become essential elements in his masterpiece.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Building spot

Natural art supplies: rocks, sticks, pine cones, flower petals, seeds, nuts, grass, leaves, driftwood, seaweed, etc.

Camera

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Have your child wander around the area near where you've set up camp until he's found his ideal spot.
2. Encourage him to start hunting for his art supplies. Remember: there are no rules for the art piece (but you may want to avoid unfamiliar plants). Anything from a dead tree branch to a shaped rock will work perfectly.
3. Have your child arrange his natural art supplies on the ground. Let him spend some time appreciating the location he picked and considering how he can use his supplies there. Ask him what he likes best about the spot he's chosen.
4. Help him brainstorm ideas for his piece of art. Does he want to make his materials into something abstract or would he rather build a statuesque structure that looks like a family pet or friend?
5. Let your child start making his work of art. Don't forget to remind him that he can go hunt for more materials as needed.
6. Take a photo of your child's work. Because it's only temporary art, a photo is the perfect way to preserve what he's created.



Stick Messages

Your child can create her own ephemeral messages using nothing but sticks! Sticks can be positioned to form letters, giving your kid the ability to write stick messages. The sticks will blend in with the surroundings just enough to give your friends and family members a good surprise when they stumble upon the secret messages your kid has sneakily crafted.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Sticks in a variety of sizes

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Encourage your child to gather sticks of different shapes and sizes from around the campsite.
2. Inquire if she thinks any of the sticks resemble letters, or parts of letters on their own.
3. Ask her to come up with an idea of a message to write. Perhaps she starts out simple with her name, or nickname. As she gets the hang of it, she can create longer sentences using sticks.
4. Have her assemble her messages in the walking paths so her family and friends will see them as they go out on hiking adventures.
5. At the end of the day, she can use her sticks as kindling for the campfire.



All out of sticks? Not every location is going to be flush with sticks. But the same idea can be applied to clustering pebbles, small rocks, mounds of pine needles, or even dirt and sand into letters, symbols, and messages.

Twig and String Spider Webs

Spiders tend to evoke strong emotions. Some people find them terrifying, while others are completely fascinated. Your child may see spiders while you're camping, and regardless of whether he wants to run in the opposite direction or he's completely captivated, it's important that he knows not to disturb their habitats. Instead, have your kid create his own version of a spider web by weaving twig together with string. After he's done, hang his new spider web up and observe how nature interacts with his creation.

WHAT YOU NEED:

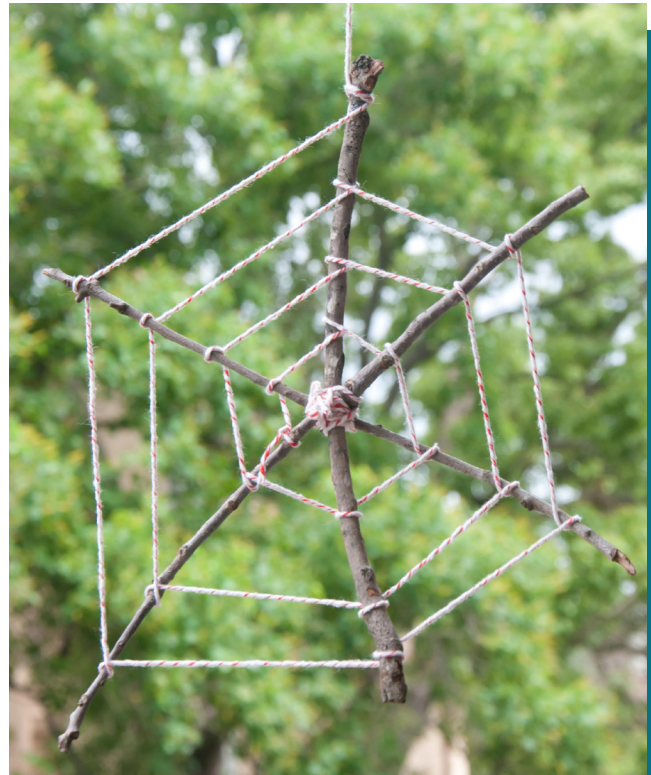
Thin twigs with similar circumferences and lengths

Large ball of string

Scissors

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Ask your child to describe what a spider web looks like. You can discuss what the word "concentric" means to describe the basic shape of webs and how they repeat and get larger from the center outward.
2. Have your child arrange two overlapping twigs in the center. Help him wind string around the intersection until the twigs no longer move. Tie it off and cut the string.
3. Center a third stick over the other two sticks and tie it in place so it doesn't move. Make sure all three sticks are tied together tightly.
4. Tie a new piece of string to the center of the twigs.
5. Starting in the center, have him weave the new string around the twigs to replicate the concentric pattern of a real spiral orb spider web. As he weaves, have him alternate over loops and under loops.
6. To finish the web, have him tie off the string on the last twig when the outside orb of the web has been completed. Before cutting the string, section out a piece that's long enough so the web can be hung from a branch.
7. Ask him to observe how nature interacts with his spider web during your camping trip. Are there any animals or insects on it? Are any insects storing food or adding to his web to create their own unique habitats?



Wind Chime

Expand upon the twig and string spider web craft and create a wind chime that uses the crafted web as its base. Once the wind chime is complete, your child can liven up your surroundings by hanging it up in the tent or nearby. When the wind picks up, the peaceful sound of clinking sticks will echo throughout the campsite. The chime will also make for a lovely souvenir of the camping trip once you return home.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Twigs, similar in circumference and length

Large ball of string

Scissors

Feathers

Leaves

Small items that can be tied with string

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Have your child construct another twig and string spider web or simply use the one you already created.
2. Cut a piece of string that will be used to hang the chime and tie it in the center of the web where the sticks intersect.
3. Ask him to cut various lengths of string and tie knots attaching individual branches, leaves, and feathers to them.
4. Hang the items from the strings of the web at various lengths. He'll want to check the balance of the chime by lifting it from the hanging string. If it's lopsided, he'll need to add objects to even out the weight.
5. Once the wind chime is level, hang it up on a tree to decorate the campsite!



Food for the Fireside!

CAMPING CLASSICS:

S'mores: jumbo marshmallows roasted and sandwiched between chocolate bars and graham crackers

Shish Kabobs: assortment of meats and veggies threaded on a skewer and roasted

Franks and Beans: canned beans, chopped up pieces of hot dog, brown sugar, and a little barbecue sauce combined and heated over the fire

THROW THEM RIGHT ON THE FIRE!

Peppers

Chilies

Corn on the Cob (unhusked)

Foil Meals: Any kind of food you please, chopped up and wrapped in aluminum foil



INTO THE POT!

Boil water for:

Hot chocolate

Tea

Oatmeal

Eggs in a Bag: crack eggs into a sealable baggie. Seal, shake it up, and place the bag in the hot water to cook. Then voilà! Scrambled eggs from a bag.



EASY, HEALTHY SNACKS:

Nuts

Jerky

Kale Chips

Dried Fruit

Apple Sauce

Granola



Food for the Fireside!

WRAP THEM IN FOIL!

Pigs in a Blanket: mini hot dogs wrapped in crescent rolls, skewered, wrapped, and roasted

Banana Boats: bananas still in the peel cut in half lengthwise and stuffed with sweet treats, wrapped, and roasted

Doughboys: biscuit dough wrapped around a buttered dowel, roasted for a few minutes, removed carefully (they'll be hot!) and stuffed with sweet or savory ingredients

Pancake Oranges: Cut off the top of an orange and hollow it out by eating the orange with a spoon. Fill the orange shell halfway with pancake batter, pop the top back on, and let it cook near the coals of a fire.



TIPS AND TRICKS FOR COOKING OVER AN OPEN FIRE:

If possible, cook your food over embers, or coals that look white and dusty after burning a while. Trying to cook over a roaring fire leads to unevenly cooked, and oftentimes burnt, food.

Cut up everything into same-sized pieces depending on cooking time. The longer a food item takes to cook, the smaller the pieces you're cooking should be. For example, potatoes take a long time to cook, so the potato pieces should be small. Carrots cook quickly so you'll want to chop them up in big chunks.

Make a Scary Story Campfire

You don't have to miss out on that campfire glow. This campfire can be "lit" at any time, in any place, and it'll last for however long your kid would like. While the fire is blazing encourage your kid to come up with a scary story. Help him map out the story by having him identify the beginning, middle, and end. Encourage him to make his story as creepy as possible to scare all of his friends and family!

WHAT YOU NEED:

Small rocks

Small twigs

Tissue paper (red, yellow, orange)

Glue (optional)

Paper

Pencil

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Ask your child to scout out a handful of small rocks and twigs.
2. Create a circle of rocks on the ground. Fill the circle with the twigs, arranging them as if he were building an authentic campfire.
3. Encourage him to ball and twist each square of tissue paper into a flame. Glue the flames onto the twigs to create a fire. Wrap the paper around rocks to weight it down and keep the "fire" from blowing away.
4. Have him write down some ideas for his story on a sheet of paper. Ask him what he thinks makes a story scary. Review the words "intrigue" and "suspense" with him.
5. Remind him that his story needs to contain a beginning, middle, and end.
6. Gather friends and family around for his campfire ghost story!



Camping Scavenger Hunt

After your kid has grown familiar with her natural surroundings, help her to really get in touch with her senses with this challenging scavenger hunt. It's a surefire way to enrich your camping adventure and keep your young camper engaged as she observes the nature all around her.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Sack or pillowcase

Paper

Pencil

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Have your kid grab the list she made earlier of objects, colors, shapes, and textures she might find around the campsite, or have her make one on the spot.

2. Walk around the campsite with her and cross off the items as she locates them and puts them into her sack. Once she has collected all of the items on the list, dump out the objects and ask her to name and describe each one by saying what it is, and identifying its color, shape, and texture.



For a more sensory experience, have her write down what she can smell, and then go around identifying (but not touching or collecting!) the sources of each scent.



Storytelling Expedition

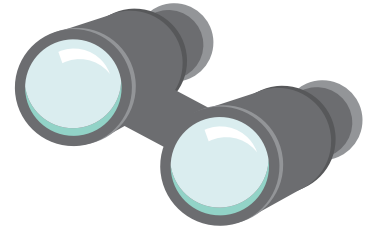
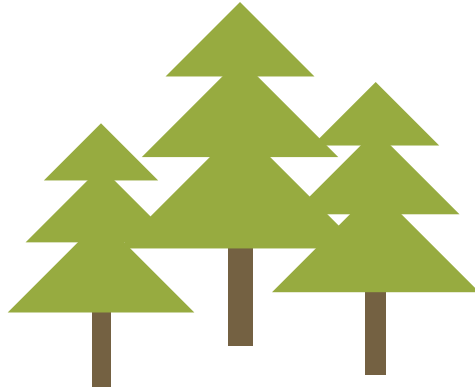
If your kid enjoyed the camping scavenger hunt, take the seeking and finding to the next level and have him go on a nature scavenger hunt storytelling expedition! This adventurous hunt for objects will work out your kid's observational skills and exercise his creative side as well. Although this activity works best with a group, if you're shorthanded it can be done with just two people.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Pencil

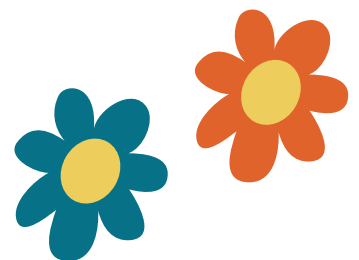
Paper

Sack or pillowcase



WHAT YOU DO:

1. Ask your child and his friends to take a walk around the campground or neighborhood and keep track of things that they see. They have 10 minutes to observe 8 items that can be picked up and put into a bag.
2. Distribute the paper and have each participant write down 8 items they spotted that can be picked up and put into a bag. They can be specific (e.g. three-leaf clover, leaf with a pointy end, green acorn) or more general.
3. Collect the lists and mix them up.
4. Have each player pick a list without looking. If a player gets his own list, he'll need to put it back into the pile and pick another one.
5. Players will then split up. Inform them that they have 15 minutes to find everything on their lists and return to the meeting spot.
6. Taking turns, have the players dump out the items they found and invent a story on the spot about the items they collected. The story should be fictional and needs to feature at least two main characters.



Landscape Photography

Once you've set up camp, have your kid survey the scenery and take some time to soak up the splendor of her surroundings. Now bust out the camera and challenge her to capture the beauty of the landscape in a photograph, just like the famed American photographer Ansel Adams. Although the digital camera or camera app your kid might be using is a lot different from the cameras used by Adams, there is still a certain art to taking a great picture, and a natural setting is a great place to practice!

WHAT YOU NEED:

Camera
Internet access
Notebook
Pencil
Photography paper
Printer



DID YOU KNOW:

Ansel Adams was a pianist before becoming a photographer and made the decision to pick up the camera after a visit to Yosemite National Park in 1916. He also helped establish the San Francisco Art Institute in California.

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Before leaving on your trip, invite your child to do some research on the Internet and take a closer look at examples of Ansel Adams' photography. Encourage her to take notes in a notebook about his style as well as how he focuses on the nature around him in his photographs. Explain that Adams most often took photos of landscapes. A landscape is a picture of nature that includes a foreground, middle ground, and background.
2. Discuss with your child how taking a picture in black and white created contrasts and textures different from color photography. While looking at Adams' photographs, ask her to imagine if they would have the same impact if taken in color.



Landscape Photography

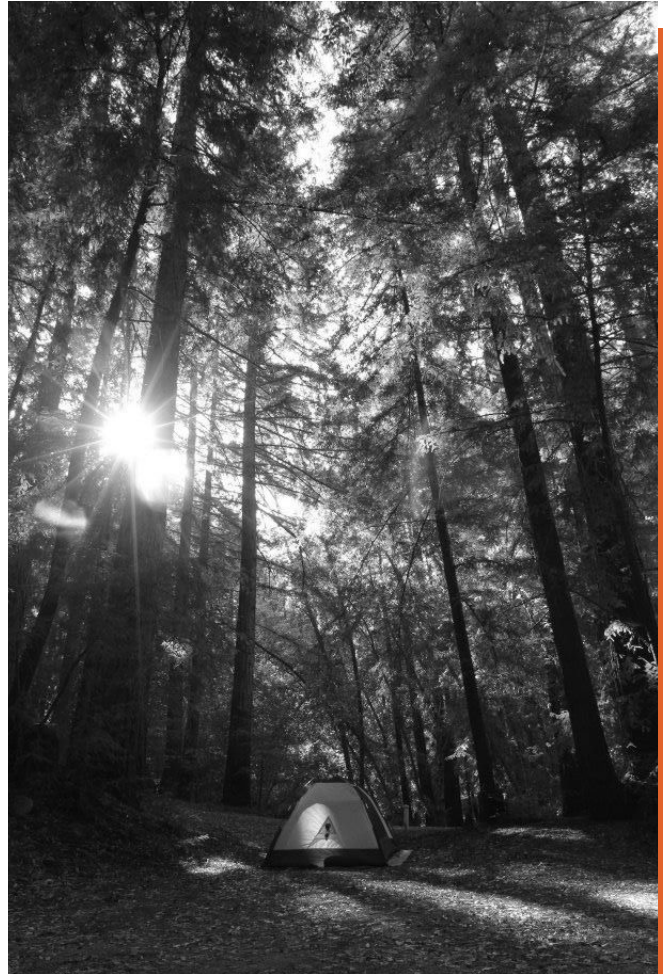
3. Sometime during your camping trip, encourage your child to explore the campsite or go on a nature hike and scout locations for her photography shoot. Be sure to mark the locations well so your child can easily return to her favorite spots.

4. When she's ready, invite your child to set up for her photography shoot by positioning herself in a comfortable stance and bracketing when taking her pictures, meaning she should take several pictures of the same scenes with slight adjustments. She can change the point of focus on the digital camera or take a step forward or backward to capture the scene in a slightly different way.

5. If your child's camera has the option, invite her to take several additional pictures in black and white. Encourage her to remember to include the foreground, middle ground, and background, just like Ansel Adams did.

6. Once you return from your trip, download the photos. If your camera didn't have a black and white option, create black and white versions using photo editing software or photo filters.

7. Have your kid take a closer look at how they turned out. Then help her find the perfect spot for displaying her favorite finished print.



Ansel Adams often used a bellows camera much like this one, but your child can explore photography using any camera, even a smartphone camera!

