

From our April, 2012 Newsletter

Great Local Places for Outdoor Exploration

Good weather makes it so much easier to get children moving, as they can be running, jumping and playing outside. Movement is so important for kids. Even small amounts of aerobic activity have a positive impact on academic performance. Being fit can enhance neurocognition and allow complex thinking in young people, and aid in the ability to coordinate actions and thoughts crisply.

If you're looking for a different setting for outdoor activities, here are a few of our favorite NJ places:

Explore a new playground!



[This site](#) has information, photos and reader comments about choices across the state. Check out a few of our playground favorites: the [Castle \(Shunpike\) Playground](#) in Chatham is a favorite in the Summit/Madison/Short Hills area or the [Community Playground of Montville](#) (only 15 minutes from Livingston).

If you're looking for smaller playgrounds for younger children, try [Farrell Field](#) in South Orange, Milburn's [Taylor Park](#) or the [Littell People's Park](#) just down the block from our office!

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Check out these playgrounds and parks!

One of the crown jewels of [Essex County's Park](#) system, [Verona Park](#) has a central lake complete with paddleboats as well as a playground. Make a great day of it and visit [Van Saun Park](#) (directions and more information at the official Bergen County link for [Van Saun](#)), which has a fabulous playground, and a zoo with train rides and a carousel!

Morris and Union County adventures:

Morris County is filled with great outdoor places to explore, including the [Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center](#), and the 127 acre [Frelinghuysen Arboretum](#).

Union County hosts the [Trailside Nature & Science Center](#)

with interactive environmental exhibits and great family programs: "enter a hollow tree to view live box turtles" "learn about the layers of the forest".

And don't forget Summit's [Reeves-Reed Arboretum](#) with Saturday children's nature activities from 9:00 - 1:00 in the Discovery Center.

Gardens and More: And watch for news about blooming activities at two of the prettiest places in Essex County: the Cherry Blossom Festival at [Branch Brook Park](#) and the [Presby Memorial Iris Gardens](#) in Montclair.