

## SUN, SAND AND THE SEA

*“Play in the sand; splash in the water; get dirty; get wet. The beach is the only place my mom doesn’t get mad about me doing that stuff. Of course I love the beach!” Dixie Dykens (age 5)*

A favourite destination for the winter holiday is the beach and a chance to swop the winter woollies for shorts, T shirts and flip flops. Holidays are usually a time to forget school books and learning for a week or two but all smart parents know the process of learning never stops.

Here are some fun learning things to do on a beach holiday:

Be a detective and explore your surroundings by finding out more about the history of the town and the people living there by visiting the museum, the aquarium, the local library and talking to the people who live there all year round. How do they earn their living when the tourists go home, do the houses and buildings have names that link to the ocean? Have there been any shipwrecks nearby?

What kinds of fish do the fishermen catch? Can you spot any dolphin or whales? Those ships out at sea –what cargo do you think they may be carrying?

Here are some clues to get started about the tides. How high is high tide, how low is low tide, how often does this happen each day, is it the same every day, how do tides work?

At low tide the tidal pools on the rocky shores are wonderful places to go on a mini safari to find creatures camouflaged in the rock pools. Wear non-slip shoes and take along a booklet that will help you identify and tell you more about the creatures there. Do not turn your back on the ocean as you never know when a sneaky wave might come and catch you by surprise. Please do not remove any of the creatures from their rock pool homes.

Beachcombing is a favourite pastime on the beach as you never know what treasures will you find in the debris on the drift line? Are they natural or manmade? Where did they come from? Stories and poems can be written or imagined about the many things found here. Interesting mobiles could be made from driftwood, glass that has been smoothed by the waves and the sand, shells, sponges, seeds and seaweed. When collecting shells make sure they are empty as there could be tiny hermit crabs living in them.

Of course swim where it is safe. Walk or jog along the beach and watch your footprints disappear in the waves behind you. Have fun on the sand – build beach castles, play beach tennis and volley ball. Fly a kite. What birds can you spot? At night look at the stars from the beach. Eat plenty of food from the sea – just make sure it is on the SASSI list. Explore an estuary and maybe even some mangroves.

Take lots of photos to remember the fun and learning.

LEARNING THOROUGH NATURE will be having fun on the farm for children this winter.

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