

# Quiet Ears

*A 15-minute outdoor nature session anyone can lead.*

| FOR               | TIME             | YOU NEED       | WHERE                                                            |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Children ages 2–5 | About 15 minutes | Nothing at all | A yard, a fence line, one tree — even a weed in a sidewalk crack |

## Read me first — you can do this.

You do **not** need to be a nature expert to lead this. You only need to slow down and notice the outside world along with the children. Young children today spend most of their day indoors and on screens; simply stepping outside helps their bodies settle and their minds wake up. If you can sit down, breathe, and be a little quiet, you already have everything this takes.

## STEP 1 · Find our spots (2 min)

**Say:** *“Let’s each find a spot and sit down like a little seed. Feet still, hands quiet. Now three big balloon breaths together — breathe in... and let it gooo.”*

Calm cue: Three balloon breaths

**Little ones (2–3):** Hold them on your lap or sit knee-to-knee beside you.

**Bigger ones (4–5):** Let them spread out about an arm’s length apart.

## STEP 2 · Quiet ears (4 min)

**Say:** *“Now we put on our quiet ears. Cup your hands behind your ears, like this. Let’s be so quiet we can hear the whole world.” Wait quietly. Then, softly: “Tell me one thing you heard.”*

Calm cue: Whisper voices only

**Little ones (2–3):** Name sounds for them: “I hear a bird! Do you hear it?”

**Bigger ones (4–5):** Ask them to count how many different sounds they can catch.

### STEP 3 · Wiggle it out (3 min)

**Say:** *“Our bodies have wiggles in them — let’s let them out! If you heard the wind, sway like a tall tree, big... then small. If you heard a bird, flap your wings and land softly.” Finish still: “Now freeze like a statue and find your breath again.”*

Calm cue: Big movement, then a slow stop

**Little ones (2–3):** Do the motions with them; keep it slow and silly.

**Bigger ones (4–5):** Let one child pick the next animal or weather to act out.

### STEP 4 · Look at one thing (3 min)

**Say:** *“Let’s all look at just ONE thing out here together — this leaf, this little bug, this crack in the ground, that cloud. Look with slow eyes. Tell me one thing you notice.”*

Calm cue: Slow eyes, slow hands

**Little ones (2–3):** Point and name it together.

**Bigger ones (4–5):** Ask, “What does it remind you of?”

### STEP 5 · Say thank you (3 min)

**Say:** *“One more balloon breath together. Now let’s say, ‘Thank you, outside.’ We’ll come back tomorrow.” Walk back in slowly, with quiet bodies.*

Calm cue: One breath to finish

#### If it goes sideways

If everyone gets the wiggles, don’t fight it — stand up and do **Step 3** again, then try the quiet step once more. If one child won’t settle, that’s okay; let them sit close to you and just watch. Nothing is ruined. Coming back to calm *together* is the whole lesson.

**Do it again tomorrow.** This works every day. Next time, trade this one for *Quiet Eyes (look)* or *Busy Hands (touch)*. Same five steps. The more children practice settling outside, the easier every day gets.