

Parents and Young Children in Nature: Benefits, Strategies, and Organizing

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Direct activity in nature helps build creativity, curiosity, and confidence in young children. Made a regular part of a child and parent's routine, the benefits just multiply! Participants will learn ideas for adventures, activities, and motivating parents to do more outdoors with their children. If setting and conditions permit, we will go outdoors!

Before Starting/ as participants enter... :

Please look at things set out...

Please make items as suggested...

Please pick a quote from those on the wall

Starting Out- Our relationship with natural places, and about ourselves:

Introductions and overview.

BENEFITS, RESEARCH

Researched benefits of outdoor experience in nature for children.
And personal examples.

Hands-On make-it to get ready

Examples of some favorites. For older and younger kids.

- Binoculars (paper tubes, tape, yarn, punch, stickers)
- Frame looker
- Nature explorer kit
- Nature collecting bag
- Walking sticks
- Trail mix

Preparing for outdoor time:

Leader—Proper Prior Planning and Prep

Setup on site

Guidelines for fun and safety

Typical sequence

Whys and How's and Principles:

- **Experiential learning** - let experience move the learning.
- **Eco-psychology** - the relationship with nature is the healing thing.
- **Benefits of time in nature-** stem from direct relationship with it.

STRATEGIES - In the field:

Organizer/ leader- do just enough motivation to foster curiosity, then

- Step back. Let kids choose route, take lead, etc.
- Guide from side, steer from rear.
- Perhaps give tips to participants
 - Perhaps offer a game or activity.
 - Remind- Use all your senses
 - Look up, down, around
 - Suggest/ offer a tool/ looker
 - Use a strategy
 - Be amazed

Sharing/ "Processing"

Follow-up to encourage reflection, foster awareness of and build on initial experience.

We ask: "What did we do, what have we seen? What do you think?"

Children of different ages: Infants and Toddlers

Activities adapted for children with different abilities

WE GO OUTSIDE

Our own excursion/ expedition/ field experience

Back Indoors- Follow-up activities Materials:

Quiet moment...

Sharing/ processing our own experiences

Follow-up to build on initial experience. Motivation, curiosity for next time

Favorite Follow-up activities

- Look at books - Field Guides, other books.
- Museums, displays, terrariums, feely box, etc.
- Songs and fingerplays
- Journals and stories
- Collages and art and crafts
- Favorites such as bubbles, sky watching, etc.

Living In/ With Nature

Our place, our home, nature over time.

Beginning your own Nature Moves

- Favorite trails and places in your area?
- Who are your allies and helpers?

More about resources

Technology- Nature apps, iNaturalist, others

Websites, references

Organizations near and far

Handouts (digital app) include much more

- Outdoor activities.
- Research and references handouts
- Lists of organizations and sources of information

ORGANIZING GROUPS TO GET OUTDOORS

Getting outdoors with individual families

Organizing and supporting parent 'clubs' for outdoor activities in nature

Just do it. See KOO brochure.

Parents with kids

Participants help choose sites, etc.

Keep it simple

Free of charge

Simple communication and promotion

Occasional bigger event; ours is winter fun day

Collaborate with others but keep it simple, natural, participant-guided

Wrap-up – Treats and Prizes!

For more information contact

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See the Kids Outdoors Otsego Facebook 'group' page.

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Happy Hiking!