

Nature Kids: Get Outside - Spend Time with Nature

Since you are a Nature Kid, you already know that Nature Kids spend a lot of time – IN NATURE!

This month we have a job for you – to help your parents become Nature Moms and Nature Dads!

Take your mom or dad outside two or three times. You can watch the clouds or scuff your shoes in the dirt. You can collect leaves or smell the flowers. You choose what to do. Or, you can do nothing.

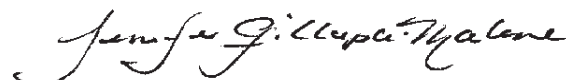
Then you and your mom or dad can fill in the box below with a picture or words about your time outside. Bring it to the Nature Discovery Center and we will post it on our NATURE KIDS wall and give you your own Nature Kid Name Tag!

By: Nature Kid _____ & Parent(s) _____

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Teacher's Corner: Environmental Stewardship and Responsible Consumerism

As concerns about climate change and its potential impact on our planet and our communities grows, I have been reminded of an editorial that Melissa Geis, a former Center Director, wrote in January 1994. While the particular programs mentioned have changed, the mission is still the same. Please take time to read and consider it.



Jennifer Gillespie-Malone, Director

Are We Raising Environmental Stewards or Responsible Consumers?

by Melissa Geis, former NDC Director (January 1994)

There is no question that we are raising a generation of children who care deeply about the future of our planet. But are we planting in these children the seeds that will grow our next generations of environmental stewards, or merely a bumper crop of responsible consumers?

Stewardship of the environment comes from a sense of the intrinsic worth of nature. In short, a good steward loves nature.

In the past few decades we have produced a generation of elementary school children who can explain the destruction of the ozone layer and discuss the relative biodegradability of wax paper vs. Styrofoam, but who have probably never had a favorite tree they sat in when they wanted to read, or think, or feel sad. What was once a natural relationship with nature, that even urban children experienced, has been replaced by TV, video games, and manufactured play spaces.

We have created a barrier between the natural world and the world that our children inhabit. It is sad to think that love of nature, which inspires stewardship of the environment, is an emotion that today only a few children experience. Where will we find the next generation of environmental leaders?

We need to find ways to reconnect kids with nature, to restore the many childhood delights that have all but disappeared, and to give children the know-how that will make them feel at home in the natural world.

As a nature center in an urban environment, we have an opportunity to embrace this challenge and to restore our children's relationship with nature. To this end we are offering such programs as Daddy and Me, Family Nature Rambles, Close Encounters, and EcoExpressions.

The Nature Discovery Center is a welcome place where children, parents and grandparents can come in close contact with the world of forty years ago when one took the time to sit under a tree, or to stop and smell the flowers.

The disappearance of nature is worldwide. In Japan, it is so common that they have given it a name – hiraku – which means the loss of grass, trees, plants and play areas. The Nature Discovery Center is making a conscious effort to be part of the solutions by kindling urban dweller's curiosity and wonder about the interdependent world of nature of which we are a part, and by fostering through education responsibility toward the environment. Come join us in this mission.

You can join us in bringing your children into a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature just by taking a few minutes each week to be outside. You and your child can walk, or sit, sing or dream; you can walk the same trail or stroll in your back yard, watching and listening, smelling and touching as the seasons roll by.

If you need a place to start, check the "Nature Kids" page.

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