

Navigating Nature in Your Classroom

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What is nature?
Where can we
find nature?



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Why is nature important?

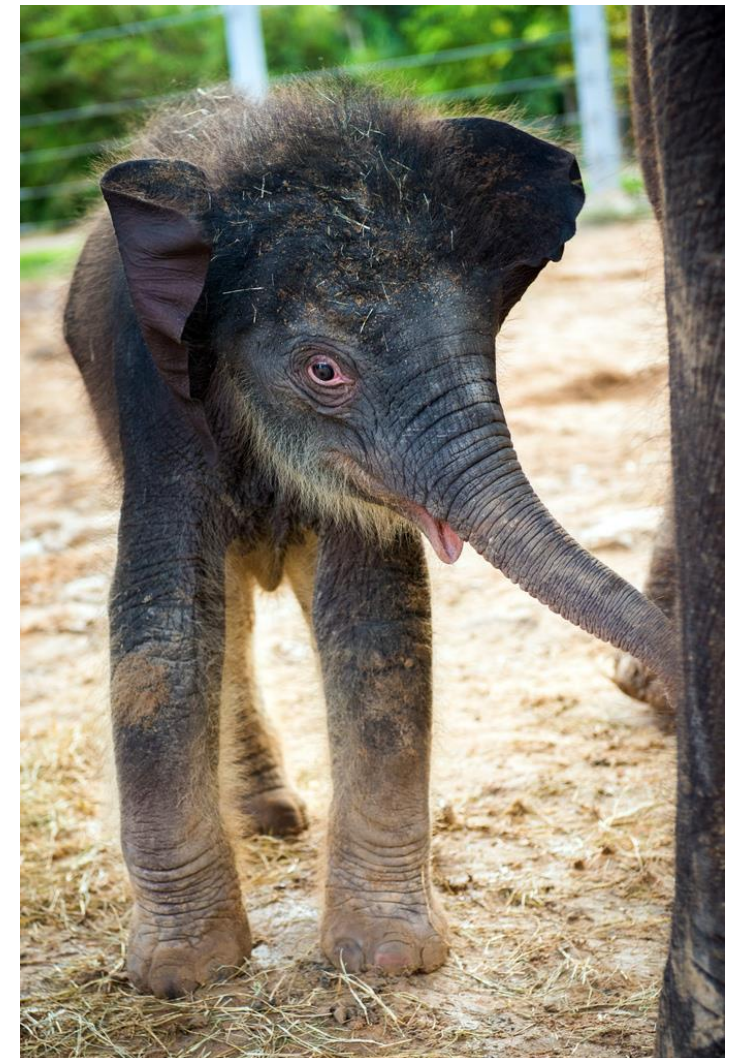


- One study found that the average American boy or girl spends four to seven minutes a day outdoors. Another placed the estimate at about 30 minutes of daily, unstructured, outdoor play.
- If children are to grow into healthy, well-adjusted adults, nature needs to be integral to their everyday lives.
- Forming a deep connection with nature is an ongoing, multiyear process with multiple phases. You'll have to deepen your own level of connection with nature as well.

Studies show that kids who play and learn outside are:



- Healthier physically and mentally
- Do better in school
- Have a higher self-esteem
- Have good self-discipline
- Feel more capable and confident
- Good problem-solvers
- More cooperative with others
- More creative
- Feel connected with nature
- Tomorrow's conservation leaders



Nature Mentors

- What does a nature mentor look like?
- Nature mentors value the natural world and demonstrate it as much through actions as words.
- The three themes to help promote nature connection:
 - Experience – firsthand, multisensory
 - Mentoring – side by side exploration, listen more than talk, unstructured time
 - Understanding – emphasis should not be on accumulation of detailed facts but on understanding a few big ideas
- Mentoring is more about asking questions than providing answers.



Write down all of
the nature you have
noticed today.



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Raising a Wild Child Secrets

1. Abundant experiences in wild or semi-wild places close to home is important.
 - a) Make new nature habits; make the schoolyard a classroom
2. Children will tend to value what you value.
 - a) Start noticing nature; find nature that you're interested in
3. Tailor experiences and questions to kids' specific interests.
 - a) Wander; sit spot; questioning
4. Begin with the big idea that everything is interwoven with everything else.
 - a) Bubble; learning outdoors
5. Everything around us is interconnected, including the flow of relationships through time.
 - a) Nature story time; indigenous tales; create stories
6. Early childhood – get kids outside, get out of the way, and let them play!
 - a) Free play; loose parts; multisensory encounters

Raising a Wild Child Secrets

7. Middle childhood – foster nature experiences with plenty of exploration, autonomy and demonstrations of competence.

a) Hummingbird teacher; art; family nature clubs

8. Teens – regular time in nature where teens can engage in challenging, adventurous activities with one another.

a) Make time for nature; nature the place for adventure; service projects

9. Establish a balance where high-tech and nature-loving become the thriving norm.

a) Photos; geocaching; Citizen Science

10. Help instill a deep longing for nature.

a) Offer a positive vision on the natural world and environment; rewild your own mind; make nature a priority

Build Your Own Bug



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Newspaper Pot



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Other Nature Activities

- Leaf Boat
- Nature Math
- Nature Instrument
- One Square Foot
- Schoolyard Field Guide
- Seed Balls



Discussion

What challenges might you come across when trying to connect your students to nature?

How can you be a nature mentor to your students?

Other questions?





Thanks for joining
me!



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