Exploring Nature

Children and nature go hand in hand. They love exploring dirt and bugs and leaves. They want to know what makes a rainbow, and how the pumpkin got so big from such a little seed. Nonfiction, or information books, can play an important part in motivating children to read. There are some great, high-quality nonfiction books available for children of all ages.

Many kids enjoy nonfiction books as much as story books because they want to learn about how their world works. They also enjoy magazines that have nature themes.

Nonfiction books can be a way for parents to share their own interests with their children. Nonfiction books also expose children to special vocabulary and concepts, which helps build language. They can learn that a caterpillar forms a chrysalis, which is where they transform into a butterfly. Knowing new concepts and words builds on children's natural curiosities and strengthens their understanding of the natural world.

Featured Book

Animal Tracks, by Arthur Dorros

This interactive parent-child book introduces the tracks and signs left by various woodland animals. Children will especially like learning how to “trap” nighttime footprints!

What type of tracks might you find where you live?

Other Nature Books...

- Wonderful Worms, by Linda Glaser
- Birds, by Kevin Henkes
- Owl Moon, by Jane Yolen
- All the Water in the World, by George Ella Lyon
- Over and Under the Snow, by Kate Messner
- Bugs A to Z, by Caroline Lawton
- It Looked Like Spilt Milk, by Charles G. Shaw
- Planting a Rainbow, by Lois Ehlert
- Ten Little Caterpillars, by Bill Martin, Jr.
More fun with Animal Tracks...

Out and about... Go on a scavenger hunt around your neighborhood. Can you find the following?

- A sign left by an animal, such as a chewed leaf or animal track
- An animal that is eating
- A creature that is furry
- A creature with feathers
- An animal that is quiet? An animal that is loud?

World Wide Web... Here are some great Internet sites for nature activities. Tip: Your library has free Internet access!

- Be Outside Campaign: www.visitidaho.org/children-in-nature
- National Wildlife Federation: www.nwf.org/outside
- Idaho Public Television Scout videos: http://scout.lili.org

Song to Sing

“A Camping We Will Go”

(sung to Farmer in the Dell)

A camping we will go,
A camping we will go.
Hi ho, we’re off to the woods.
A camping we will go.
Ellie will bring the tent.
Oh, Ellie will bring the tent.
Hi ho, we’re off to the woods
A camping we will go.
Juan will bring the food.
Oh, Juan will bring the food.
Hi ho, we’re off to the woods
A camping we will go.

Continue with more items and children’s names...

What your library can do for you...

Many libraries have a good collection of nature movies. Check out a video or DVD to learn more about the things your child is interested in.

Rhyme

I Saw a Little Bird

I saw a little bird
Go hop, hop, hop.
I told the little bird
To stop, stop, stop.
I went to the window
To say “How do you do?”
But he shook his little tail
And away he flew.