

# Family Fun with Nature

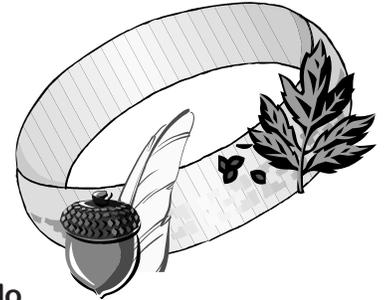


Whether it's in the wilderness, on the beach, or just down to the local park, nature walks are a healthy and inexpensive way for families to spend time together and enjoy the outdoors. Here are some fun nature walk activities that also provide ways for your children to build literacy skills.

## Nature Bracelet

With the sticky side out, loop a strip of masking tape around each family member's wrist to make a bracelet. As you hike, collect small seeds, flowers, leaves, shells, sand, etc. and stick them on the bracelet. This won't last long, but long enough for each family member to talk about what you've seen and compare treasures when you get back.

- Use describing words as much as possible. "I found this small, brown nut under a big oak tree. It's called an acorn. It looks like it's wearing a little hat!"
- Ask questions such as, "Where did you find that feather? What do you suppose the bird looked like that lost that feather?"



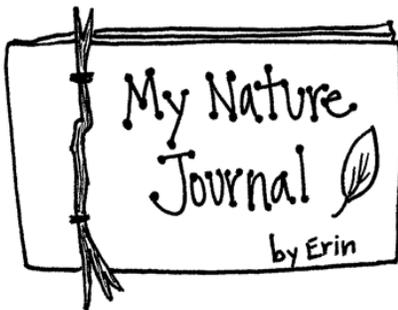
By using lots of describing words, you are helping your child build vocabulary and narrative skills, which help them become better readers.

## Nature Journal

This activity will help your young child become familiar with print and its meaning, or give your older child more practice with writing skills.

### *What you need:*

- paper lunch sacks (five per child)
- hole punch
- small stick approximately the width of the bag
- crayons or markers
- rubber band



### *What you do:*

1. Punch two holes in the bottom of one of the paper sacks. The holes should be about 1 1/2" away from each side and about 3/4" from the bottom. Use the first sack as a pattern and punch holes in the remaining four sacks in identical places.
2. Stack the bags on top of each other making sure the holes are aligned.
3. Poke the loop of a rubber band through one hole and the other end through the second hole.
4. Thread the stick through the rubber band loops. This will keep the journal together.

5. Let your child decorate the journal with nature objects. He can draw his own or cut them out of magazines and glue them to the cover.
6. Help your child write her name and a title on the cover.
7. Fill the bags with items you find together on a nature walk. If you want to keep the treasures from falling out, fold the openings over once then tape shut.
8. Help your child label each page of the journal with the contents of each bag, as well as a description of where and when you found it.

*(- from Collaborative Summer Library Programs (CSLP) theme, "Discover New Trails @ your library," 2004)*

### **Song: What Should I Put in My Hiking Bag?**

Gather the things you'll need for your hike, as well as a small backpack. Sing the song, to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" then put the items in one at a time and talk about why you need each one. Singing songs with your young children helps them become better readers, because they learn to break words into smaller sounds.

What should I put in my hiking bag, hiking bag, hiking bag.  
What should I put in my hiking bag to go on a hike?

- map
- whistle
- bug spray
- sunscreen
- ChapStick
- compass
- snack
- field guide
- empty bag to collect treasures (or trash!)
- camera



### **Some Jokes for the Trail...**

- How does an elephant get up an oak tree? *She just sits on an acorn and waits.*
- What does a tree do when he is ready to go home? *He just leaves.*
- What's the best way to catch a squirrel? *Climb a tree and act like a nut.*
- How are elephants and trees alike? *They both have trunks.*
- What animal is part tree and part pig? *A porky-pine.*
- Knock. Knock. *Who's there? Tree. Tree who? Tree little pigs.*



**Idaho Family Reading Week  
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