

Fun Ways for Kids to Connect with Nature this Summer

1. Visit a park or garden and collect photos, drawings, words and other reminders of your visit and put them in a nature journal.
2. Take a nature hike and learn the six parts of most plants and their functions. Start a plant book and, after your hike, learn more about the plants you studied on the Internet.
3. Start a "learning garden" in your backyard or in a neighborhood plot and keep a photographic diary of how it grows.
4. Walk around your neighborhood using your senses of sight, hearing, smell and touch and record what you find in a nature journal. Include those sounds you can't hear such as a spider weaving its web or dew on the grass.
5. Plant a tree in your backyard and monitor its growth through pictures. Have someone take your picture every birthday next to the tree to dramatize how you and the tree grow.

Other possible examples:

- ✚ Build and cultivate an outdoor compost pile with dead plants, food leftovers, grass clippings and the like and then record how the pile eventually produces rich soil complete with earthworms.
- ✚ Create a habitat for a type of wildlife such as a butterfly or hummingbird found in your area and determine what you will need to entice it to take up residence and stay in your habitat.
- ✚ Collect leaves from various kinds of trees. Create stamps by painting the back of the leaf and then make crafts by stamping the leaves on smooth surfaces such as notebooks, stationary, garden pots or t-shirts.