

TIPS FOR TEACHING YOUR CHILD OUTSIDE



Create an Outdoor Sit Spot

Create an outdoor space for your student to observe nature, read, or even work on a school packet. Create a sit-upon from a reusable shopping bag and a cardboard clipboard with a binder clip or clothespin. This mobile classroom can be set up in any sunny spot on a porch, steps, or lawn.

Pack an Explorer Bag

The right tools can turn a simple walk around the block into a learning experience.

- Empty plastic containers- are great tools for observing insects and other creepy crawlies.
- Plastic spoons scoop up bugs, seeds, and more.
- Paint brushes help children gently interact with critters.
- Yarn circles can be placed around a found object to make observations from a distance.
- Empty egg cartons are great for collecting small items.
- Plastic bags hold any trash you make or find.
- Magnifying glasses and binoculars are great additions if you own them. Or create toilet paper tube binoculars.



Be a Guide: Ask Questions

You do not have to be an expert to help your student! Asking the right questions can help encourage exploration and learning.

- What do you notice?
- What do you wonder?
- What does it remind you of?
- How might you explain this?
- What evidence do you have?

Looking for more? Check out this list of questions compiled by BEETLES.

Take the Tech Out!

Outdoor learning time can offer a much-needed break from online learning, but the two are not exclusive. Your children can collect important scientific data to share with researchers around the world.

- e-Bird: Record and submit the birds you see! Use the website or the app. Your student can even take the online training course.
- Globe Observer: Record data on clouds, land cover, and trees to share with NASA.
- iNaturalist: Identify the plants and animals around you and create research quality data.



Schedule Outdoor Time

Set aside some time each day for outdoor learning. Whenever possible, brave the weather- even for a quick walk around the block in the rain. If it is not possible to go outside, have your student find a window that looks out at a tree, flower, or even a patch of grass. Even a 40-second "nature break" has been shown to boost concentration!

Remember Why

When your child returns wet and muddy, you may have to remind yourself why the outdoor learning experience was worth the mess. The Children and Nature Network has compiled the benefits to outdoor learning and play, including:

- Better academic performance
- Enhanced focus and attention
- Increased engagement and enthusiasm
- Improved behavior

