

## Newborn to toddler

**Even the youngest infant** can experience nature. Try finding a spot under a tree where they can experience the wind, light, and shadows while taking in the sounds of birds, animals and insects. Sit them in the grass so that



they can begin to experience feeling comfortable in nature. Take your infant hiking with you.



**As part of a bedtime routine** say goodnight to the moon, the stars, or their favorite tree.

**Take frequent walks in your yard** when you can be leisurely, allowing them to follow their interests. Encourage them to explore - all the bushes, flowers, trees, etc.



**Lie down** and look up at the night sky. Gently encourage conversation about the wonder and awe of so many stars. Listen for the sounds of owls, whip-poor-wills, peepers and other nocturnal creatures.

**Sit comfortably** together and watch raindrops on the window. Trace the patterns the raindrops make with your fingers. Take your child out into the rain and let them feel the drops on their faces and the wind in their hair.

**When choosing books** to read out loud to your child, choose nature related ones.

## Pre-school

**Take leisurely walks** around the block, in the garden or a local park, allowing them to explore. Bring a "treasure bag" and encourage them to pick up cones, sticks and rocks that pique their interest, while instilling a sense of respect for the earth. Have a special shelf at home for your child to store these treasures.



**Remember...It's okay to get dirty!!!!**

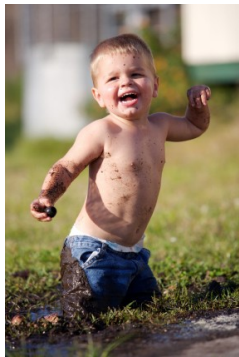


Photo: Fabian Bromann

**Plant fast growing seeds together** (beans, radishes, marigolds etc.) and watch them grow.

**Find a place where you have a clear view** of the sun rising. Arrive just before sunrise and build anticipation for the first glimpse of the sun, then cheer when the sun is fully visible. Eat a picnic breakfast to celebrate.



**Observe the moon** in its different phases. This may inspire conversation and evoke a sense of wonder.

**Invite children** to befriend a tree. Help them to notice changes in the tree at each season and encourage them to take photographs or create drawings of the tree as the seasons change. Save them and bring them out as the seasons pass.



**Camp in the woods** or take a moonlit walk by a lake. This can inspire awe and spark curiosity. Talk to them about night creatures such as bats, owls, raccoons, etc and let them know how important they are to the ecosystem.

**Take a walk** in the rain and jump in the puddles. For fun!

**Create** a Things I Love About the Earth Bulletin Board. Change the theme seasonally to reflect the weather or whatever else inspires you! Invite children to put their drawings, thoughts, poetry on the bulletin board.

## Elementary school-age

**Go outside** each morning with your child and check the sky to see what kind of day it will be.



**Create a daily routine** of going outside for an hour. This helps to establish the familiarity of the outdoors.



Charlie Archambault

**Tell stories** from your own childhood about what you did outside in nature. Find creative ways for your children to have similar experiences.



**Take a Voyage of Discovery Walk** around the block with a magnifying glass.

**Place a hoop** on the ground or use a string laid down in a circle about 36 inches in diameter. Look very carefully to see all the different life forms within the circle!

**Create a "My Nature Stories" scrapbook** for stories and pictures. Set a special time to share it with the family.

**Take your child on longer nature walks.** Look for organized family friendly outings and activities hosted by various nature organizations. Purchase binoculars as well as field guides that your child can begin to study.

**Encourage your child to begin a nature journal.** Bring a small notebook into the woods to record observations.



**Supplement their reading collection with natural history books.** Reading is another activity that children are losing touch with. Combine two vital components to their development, nature and reading, by encouraging them to read books

about wildlife and nature.

**Take your child out in all sorts of weather,** as long as it does not pose a safety risk. Remember, there is no bad weather, just bad clothing! Dress appropriately, and have fun!





## Tweens & Teens

**Share** your concerns for the Earth. Talk to them about conservation. Explain to them how they can help. Encourage them to sign petitions and write letters to elected officials. Let them know that their actions can make a difference.



**Encourage them to join a club or organization** so that they can meet other like-minded people who will help foster their love of the outdoors.



**Encourage them** to form a team with friends and choose a project to help the environment in their local community.

**Bring them with you when you volunteer for conservation.** Take them to beach clean ups and invasive species pulls. Explain to them why their efforts are important and let them know that they matter!

**When they turn 18, encourage them to use the power of their vote for conservation!**



Children who play outside have **enhanced brain development, better self-esteem, are more creative, curious and possess a sense of connectedness to the environment, as well as their communities.** In addition, children who are not glued to electronic devices every spare minute of the day are **better communicators, more poised and can relate to others on a much more compassionate level.** The bottom line is that exposure to the outdoors is vital in the development of a healthy, smart and well rounded child.

Young people who grow up spending time in nature are also more likely to be strong advocates for the environment when they reach adulthood. This is important to ensure that the land, water and wildlife legacy we have worked to conserve continues to benefit future generations.

**Try one or try all of these ideas. The most important thing? Get your child outdoors and have fun!**

*Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon works to protect birds and other wildlife, and the habitats upon which they depend through education, public advocacy and conservation action.*



Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon  
PO Box 735  
Huntington, NY 11743

[www.hobaudubon.org](http://www.hobaudubon.org)



## Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon



**connecting your child to nature**

