
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Outdoor Activity Ideas for Families



- ❖ **INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES** is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Written by Judy McDaniel, communications consultant.

Summer is a great time to take part in outdoor learning activities with your children.

- ❖ **Hikes** – Taking a hike is a great way to get outdoors and get some exercise. State and local parks offer trails to hike and many acres to explore. Activities such as scavenger hunts can add a little more structure to the hike. Talk with your children about what you see around you. If you are hiking in a new area, discuss the different plants and animals that you see.
- ❖ **Gardening** – Gardening is a wonderful family activity. Not only can the whole family get involved, but everyone can benefit from the harvest. You might start with a family plan for the garden. What will be in it? Try to include flowers, vegetables, and herbs everyone likes. How big should it be?

Assign responsibilities to each family member. Who weeds? Who waters? What's the daily or weekly schedule? The garden can be a cooperative effort through which parents can emphasize teamwork and accountability.
- ❖ **Berry/apple picking** – These are great seasonal outdoor activities with immediate payoffs. Children get to see how fruit grows and everyone gets to enjoy the fruits of their labor.
- ❖ **Astronomy** – View the stars from your own backyard. Local newspapers often publish a regional “sky watch” that you can use as your guide. Start with something easily identifiable, like the “Big Dipper.” Consider going to a local planetarium or observatory to learn about the night sky. Some colleges and universities have observatories that are open to the public.
- ❖ **Go to a Nature Center** – State Audubon societies have many sanctuaries and there are usually smaller nature centers that offer family activities. Naturalists may be on hand to answer kids' questions so parents don't need to worry about teaching the subject matter themselves.
- ❖ **Clean-ups** – Participating in nature clean-ups or volunteering to do trail maintenance are activities that teach kids that they have the ability to do something positive for the environment and community. When parents get involved, they model responsible environmental behavior that will help instill those values in their children.
- ❖ **Other outdoor family ideas** – Depending on the weather, consider biking, fishing, swimming, picnicking or bird watching. Even a walk around your neighborhood or town can be informative and fun.

For other great ideas, check out <http://www.familyeducation.com>