

Nature Games for Families

There are a few things we have learned and that research has taught us: we learn best when we use our whole bodies and children need to move. Here are a few active games to teach nature concepts to children. All we need are some willing movers, some space and a few simple props.

Animal Dice – create a dice with animal pictures on each side. Roll the dice and everyone has to move or make the sounds of the animal.

Creating a Memory Bracelet Materials: craft sticks and colored beads.

Each child gets a craft stick for a bracelet. When the group finds something notable, each child gets a bead to mark it on their bracelet. At the end of the hike everyone recalls what each bead represents. A red bead was for the beaver dam, blue bead was for the waterfall, etc

Know Your Rock

Each child finds a small rock (fist size or smaller) . Give them a few minutes to get to know their rocks by touch. Collect the rocks in a small bag or pouch and challenge each child to find their rock without looking.

Find the shape/color

Give each child a card with a different shape on it. Give them some time to find something in nature that matches the shape:



The same game can be played with different colors.

SOLO sit

In a small area (where you have visual contact with each) have everyone sit apart and quietly observe for 5-10 minutes. Gather to share what they saw, heard, felt, thought.

Missing Child Game

This is a great game for showing why the buddy system is important when out in nature. The idea of this game is that all children close their eyes. This is the tricky bit!! Then tap one child on the shoulder. That child is going to go and hide somewhere where the others cannot see them. Then tell the children to open their eyes. Who has gone missing? Do it a few times without setting a buddy, and time how long it takes to figure out. Then, buddy your children up and see if it takes less time to figure out who is missing.

3-6-9 Clap Description: Quick overview of the rules: For the 3-6-9 Clap Game, you cannot say 3, 6, or 9 or any number containing a 3, 6, or 9. For example, you can not say 6, 13, 29, etc. Instead of saying a number with 3, 6, or 9 in it, you clap when it is your turn. To play, make a circle with the campers. The first camper begins by saying “One” and the next camper says “Two” but the 3rd camper claps because it is a 3. In this example, if a camper say “Three” they are out. If they clap , they remain in the game and the next person says “Four.” If they take to long to speak or clap, they are out (although you can use your discretion).

Example= 1, 2, Clap, 4, 5, Clap, 7, 8, Clap,10, 11,1 2, Clap....

Just making sure you are listening

Description: Have everyone stand. When you say “right” everyone takes a step to the right. When you say “left” everyone takes a step to the left. Read the story.

This is a story about Mr. and Mrs WRIGHT.

One evening they were baking cookies. Mrs. WRIGHT called from the kitchen, "Oh, no, there is no flour LEFT! You will need to go RIGHT out to the store."

"I can't believe you forgot to check the pantry," grumbled MR. WRIGHT. "You never get anything RIGHT!"

"Don't be difficult, dear," replied Mrs. WRIGHT. "It will only take twenty minutes if you come RIGHT back. Go to Fifty-first and Peoria, and turn LEFT at the stop sign. Then go to Sixty-first Street and turn RIGHT, and there it will be on your LEFT," declared Mrs. WRIGHT as her husband LEFT the house.

Mr. WRIGHT found the store and asked the clerk where he could find the flour. The clerk pointed and said, "Go to Aisle four and turn LEFT. The flour and sugar will be on your LEFT."

Mr. WRIGHT made his purchase and walked RIGHT out the door. He turned LEFT, but he couldn't remember where he had LEFT his car. Suddenly he remembered that he had driven Mrs. WRIGHT'S car and that his car was in the driveway at home RIGHT where he had LEFT it. He finally found the RIGHT car and put his purchase RIGHT inside.

Eventually, a weary Mr. WRIGHT found his way home. Mrs. WRIGHT had been waiting impatiently. "I thought you would be RIGHT back," she said. "I LEFT all the cookie ingredients on the kitchen counter, and the cats got into the milk. You'll just have to go RIGHT out again."

Mr. WRIGHT sighed. He had no energy LEFT. "I am going RIGHT to bed," he said. "Anyway, I need to go on a diet, so I might as well start RIGHT now. Isn't that RIGHT, dear?"

Nature Journaling

When you return from an outing, take some time to draw about your adventure or create a mural. Lay out some brown paper, markers, or if you are feeling creative collect some items to glue down for texture. For example: cotton balls for clouds, small pebbles for rocks on the trail, yarn for definition of trails or scenery.

"To keep alive their inborn sense of wonder, children need the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with them the joy, mystery, and excitement of the world we live in."

Rachel Carson