

Parent tips for raising strong readers and writers

Growing readers!

Brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado and LD OnLine

Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 1

Outdoor Explorations

Stepping outside is a simple way to set foot into nature's laboratory. Backyards and neighborhood walks can lead to interesting conversations that contain new vocabulary words. You'll also be helping your child developing important scientific skills such as observing, predicting, and investigating.

Try these fun outdoor exploration activities to nurture the budding scientist or mathematician in your home!

Notice and describe trees and other outdoor plants and their parts. Vocabulary might include trunks, branches, stems, leaves, and flowers. See how many different types of leaves you can gather. Describe and sort leaves by shape, size, and color.

Observe any birds, squirrels, insects, and worms. Keep track of the different animals and insects you find. If possible, take pictures or draw a sketch of any unusual or unfamiliar ones. Ponds and slow-moving rivers are great spots for bug hunting. Other spots include a wood pile, a garden, or near the bright lights of a parking lot.

Choose two or three different times of the day, for example early morning, noon, and dusk. Take a short walk and listen closely to the different sounds. Try to keep track of the different sounds you hear. Depending on the time of year, you may hear cicadas, crickets, Canada Geese, or songbirds. Discuss why we might hear different animals and insects depending on the time of day or season.

On a rainy day, set up a rain gauge using a clear plastic tumbler or wide-mouth bottle. Have your child predict, or make a good guess, about how much rain will be collected. Mark that level and collect rain. Check the gauge after the rain ends. Is there more or less rainwater in it than your child predicted? How much more or less?

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are services of public television station WETA, Washington, D.C. Reading Rockets is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Colorín Colorado, a web service to help English language learners become better readers, receives major funding from the American Federation of Teachers. Additional funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. LD OnLine is the world's leading website on learning disabilities and ADHD, with major funding from Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes.

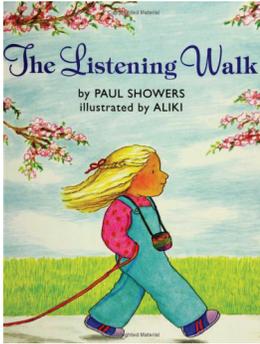


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Literacy in the Sciences: Outdoor Explorations

Recommended children's books

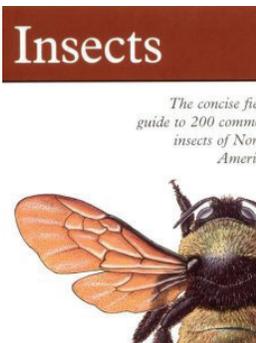
These picture books are a good companion to your outdoor explorations — and are best read together to encourage lots of conversation!



The Listening Walk

By Paul Showers

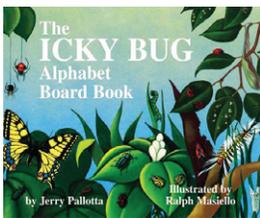
Put on your socks and shoes — and don't forget your ears! Through this book you will go not a listening walk with a father and child. Get ready to fill your ears with a world of wonderful and surprising sounds.



Peterson First Guide to Insects of North America

By Christopher Leahy

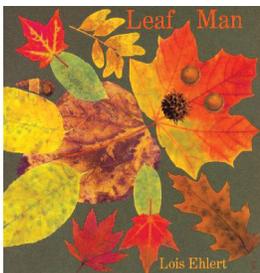
The first books the beginning nature lover; these are simpler versions of the famous Peterson's Field Guides.



The Icky Bug Alphabet Book

By Jerry Pallotta

Written as an alphabet book, each page provides information about a different bug.



Leaf Man

By Lois Ehlert

Ehlert's creations from leaves and nuts will inspire your own nature-created crafts.