



THE
LEARN TO LOVE NATURE
GUIDE



FOR PARENTS

BE THE CHANGE



"FROM LITTLE
ACORNS DO
MIGHTY OAKS
GROW."

OLD ENGLISH PROVERB

READY?

LET'S GO



WITH SARA ERNST
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THE LEARN TO LOVE NATURE

GUIDE

FOR PARENTS

THE PURPOSE: TO INSPIRE GROWN UPS TO MAKE ROOM IN THEIR LIVES & SOULS FOR NATURE, TO GENTLY GUIDE THEM INTO A RICH CULTURE...A
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURE, PARENT & CHILD.

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LEARN

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DISCOVER



**YOU have the power to change
the way that childhood looks
for your kids!**

WHY? BEING IN NATURE HAS BEEN PROVEN TO LOWER STRESS LEVELS, BRING FOCUS TO THOSE WITH ATTENTION ISSUES, AUTISM, DEPRESSION, AND THOSE WHO JUST NEED PEACE. NATURE IS A BREEDING GROUND FOR LEARNING AND IMAGINATION FOR CHILDREN. IT IS A WORLD OUTSIDE OF ROUTINE THAT EACH CHILD DESPERATELY SEEKS...WHETHER THEY KNOW THEY DO OR NOT. IT IS THE PERFECT GETAWAY FROM SCREENS, TESTS & EXPECTATIONS. IT IS A PLACE OF ENDLESS GAMES, RUNNING FREE, WHERE IT'S OKAY TO BE LOUD, OKAY TO JUST SIT AND THINK. EACH OF US CRAVES WHAT NATURE CAN PROVIDE US...IT OFTEN JUST HASN'T BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE.

HOW? INCORPORATING TRUE NATURE INTO BUSY LIVES CAN BE A CHALLENGE, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. **START SMALL!** CHOOSE ONE WEEKEND DAY (OR TWO) OUT OF THE WHOLE MONTH AND DESIGNATE IT SOLELY FOR A FAMILY NATURE DAY. CHOOSE AN EVENING OR TWO AFTER DINNER TO DRIVE THE FAMILY UP TO THE MOUNTAINS OR TAKE AN EVENING WALK IN THE SUMMER. GO BIKING, GO HIKING, GO TO THE RIVER, HAVE A PICNIC!

WHERE? YOUR OWN BACKYARD! YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH YOU CAN FIND AND DO IN YOUR OWN OUTDOOR SPACE WHEN YOU STEP OUTSIDE OF THE BOX! FIND A NATURE RESERVE, A PARK WITHOUT JUST PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY OFTEN KNOWS OF NATURE SPOTS NEARBY, SEARCH NEARBY RIVERS, HIKING TRAILS, ETC.

DEALING WITH DIFFERENT AGES

WHETHER YOU HAVE ONE CHILD OR MANY, YOU WILL NEED TO DARE TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHO ARE THEY NOW...IN THIS STAGE OF LIFE? WHAT ARE THEIR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES? WHAT ARE THEIR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS? THESE CAN ALL PLAY KEY ROLES IN HOW YOU INCORPORATE NATURE INTO THEIR LIVES.



THE BABY STAGE

THIS IS BOTH AN EASY AND DIFFICULT STAGE BECAUSE YOU CAN SIMPLY WEAR YOUR BABY OR LAY THEM ON A BLANKET OR THE GRASS. THE CHALLENGE IS ONLY THAT BECAUSE THEY AREN'T VERY ACTIVE, YOU MIGHT BE LESS LIKELY TO VENTURE OUT ON YOUR OWN OR STAY OUTSIDE LONG. RELISH THIS TIME! THIS IS AS MUCH A TIME OF EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY FOR YOUR BABY NOW AS IT WILL BE LATER IN LIFE. AT THIS STAGE, THEIR SENSES ARE HEIGHTENED AND SOUNDS, SIGHTS, FEELINGS, AND TEXTURES ARE ABSOLUTELY IMPORTANT! NOT TO MENTION THE HEALTHY VITAMIN D THEY WILL SOAK UP, AND THE FRESH AIR IN THEIR LITTLE LUNGS. SAVOR THESE MOMENTS WITH YOUR BABY BEFORE THEY ARE ON THE GO...SIT, LAY, SNUGGLE, WALK & WEAR!

THE TODDLER STAGE

THIS IS A VITAL STAGE (AS ALL ARE IN THEIR OWN WAY) FOR NATURE. THEIR SENSES ARE STILL AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH AND NEED TO BE CATERED TO. CURIOSITY, TOUCH, AND INDEPENDENCE ARE EVERYTHING TO THEM IN THIS STAGE AND NATURE IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR THEM! THIS IS THE TIME TO LET THEM ROAM AT SAFE DISTANCES, EXPLORE TEXTURE, FEEL THE FLOW OF A CREEK, BEGIN USING A BUG VIEWER, CREATE WITH STICKS AND STONES, USE NATURE FOR ART, BEGIN SMALL SCAVENGER HUNTS, AND HAVE LOTS OF PICNICS! THIS IS A HUGE DEVELOPING STAGE FOR THEM EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. NATURE IS MORE THAN JUST USEFUL IN THIS STAGE...IT IS TRULY IMPERATIVE.

THE ELEMENTARY STAGE

THIS IS A FANTASTIC STAGE! THE POSSIBILITIES AND FUN ARE ENDLESS! BY THIS TIME, THEY WILL BE READING ON THEIR OWN AT SOME LEVEL AND THEIR CAPABILITIES ARE FAR GREATER THAN THEY WERE AT THE TODDLER STAGE. THEY ARE NOW LEARNING ON A TOTALLY NEW LEVEL. THEIR IMAGINATIONS ARE IN FULL SWING AND EVERYTHING CAN BE A NEW WORLD OR NEW STORY! ADVENTURES IN NATURE CAN NOW TAKE ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN AND VERY LITTLE (IF ANY) DIRECTION FROM A PARENT IS NECESSARY AT THIS POINT ON DOING SOMETHING IN NATURE. AT THIS STAGE, THEY NEED TO SIMPLY BE RELEASED WITH DEFINED BOUNDARIES. THIS STAGE IS ALREADY CREATIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE, AND ABLE...THIS IS WHERE YOU LET THEM BE! JUST MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PLENTY OF FOOD AND DRINK ON HAND FOR THIS EVER-GROWING STAGE!



TWEENS & TEENS

PLAY TO THEIR STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS IN THIS STAGE! THESE ARE THE YEARS TO LET THEM PURSUE INTERESTS AND PASSIONS, WHILE INTRODUCING NEW WAYS OF ENJOYING NATURE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU HAVE AN ARTIST, LET THEM PAINT OR SKETCH. HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHER? LET THEM CREATE A WALL IN YOUR HOME WITH THEIR NATURE PHOTOS. A WRITER? GIVE THEM A NATURE JOURNAL. DON'T PUSH THEM, GUIDE THEM. THIS IS THE STAGE THAT NEEDS SPACE AND A CHANCE TO BE THEMSELVES. PLAYING TO STRENGTHS WILL BE YOUR ALLY!



THE BAG

DESIGNATING A SPECIFIC BAG OR BACKPACK FOR NATURE ONLY, WILL NOT JUST HELP YOU KEEP EVERYTHING YOU NEED TOGETHER, BUT IT WILL ALREADY BE SET FOR YOUR NEXT OUTING! HERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT I FEEL ARE ABSOLUTE MUSTS TO KEEP IN ANY NATURE BAG:

~ A FIRST AID KIT

ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN & YOU WANT TO BE READY FOR THEM AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE...BANDAIDS, PEROXIDE WIPES, . ALSO CONSIDER THINGS LIKE NON-LATEX GLOVES, AN EMERGEN-C PACKET & A BOTTLED WATER IN CASE OF DEHYDRATION...THAT HAPPENS FASTER THAN YOU THINK.

~ BE READY FOR BUGS

BUGS AND NATURE GO TOGETHER...IT'S THEIR HOME. BE READY FOR THEM WITH A GOOD BUG SPRAY (ONE ESPECIALLY FOR TICKS & MOSQUITOS), BENEDRYL (OR A HOMEOPATHIC LIKE APIS) FOR ALLERGIC REACTIONS ARE A NO-BRAINER, CLAY OR A CHARCOAL SALVE ARE EXTRA GOOD AS THEY IMMEDIATELY DRAW OUT TOXINS FROM A BITE AND CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE!

~ NECESSITIES

KEEP A LARGE PLASTIC BAG (LIKE A TRASH BAG) IN IT AND ONE SMALL ONE WITH TOILET PAPER...YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'LL NEED TO THROW SOME WET CLOTHES IN ONE, OR WHEN NATURE WILL "CALL" AT AN INCONVENIENT TIME.

~ DANGER

BE SMART. BEARS AND WILD ANIMALS ALSO EXIST IN NATURE, AND WHILE IT ISN'T LIKELY THAT YOU WILL MEET ONE FACE TO FACE, IT IS WISE TO BE PREPARED. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO INVEST IN A BEAR SPRAY, AT LEAST INVEST IN A PEPPER SPRAY THAT YOU CAN KEEP ON YOUR PERSON. A GOOD WHISTLE IS ALSO A WISE IDEA TO HAVE FOR EACH MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY. NO ONE EXPECTS TO GET LOST...THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED GETTING LOST. A WHISTLE IS A CHEAP AND EASY WAY OF ENSURING THAT EACH CHILD HAS A WAY TO CALL FOR HELP. A SPACE BLANKET. THESE ARE TINY TO PACK, TAKING UP HARDLY ANY SPACE. IN THE EVENT THAT YOU ARE CAUGHT IN A RAINSTORM OR LOST IN THE COLD, THIS IS A SMART, LITTLE THING TO ALWAYS HAVE IN YOUR BAG.

~ THE FUN THINGS

A NATURE JOURNAL! ALONG WITH A HANDFUL OF COLORED PENCILS, THIS IS SOMETHING EASY TO HAVE ON HAND TO DO WITH YOUR CHILDREN. A BUG VIEWER IS SOMETHING THAT I CONSIDER AN ABSOLUTE MUST! WITH A BUG VIEWER, CHILDREN (AND THEIR PARENTS) HAVE A CHANCE TO OBSERVE AND LEARN MORE ABOUT INSECTS SAFELY...FORMING A GREATER RESPECT FOR RELEASING THEM BACK INTO THE WILD AFTER DOING SO. A GUIDE TO ANIMAL TRACKS. ONE OF THE MOST FUN THINGS IS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ANIMALS THAT LIVE AROUND US. TRACKING THEM AND MATCHING THE TRACKS IS A GREAT WAY FOR BOTH YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN TO BECOME MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT YOUR SURROUNDINGS. FIND THESE ON AMAZON!



CLOTHING

UNLESS THE WEATHER IS ACTUALLY DANGEROUS (LIKE LIGHTNING), THE WEATHER SHOULDN'T KEEP YOU FROM GOING OUTSIDE...EVEN IF ONLY FOR SHORT PERIODS OF TIME. WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, TIME KNEW NO END WHEN IT SNOWED, DID IT? AND YET, IF IT'S NOT SNOWING, BUT COLD...WE TEND TO BE LESS LIKELY TO BRAVE THE FRIGID WEATHER AS ADULTS. WHEN IT'S DARK AND RAINY, IT FEELS LIKE IT MAKES MORE SENSE TO MAKE IT AN INDOOR DAY, DOESN'T IT? SIMPLY DRESS FOR IT. INVEST IN RAIN BOOTS FOR EVERYONE AND AT THE LEAST, A PONCHO FOR EACH PERSON. DRESS FOR SNOW WHEN IT'S REALLY COLD...EVEN IF IT ISN'T SNOWING. MAKING A THERMOS FULL OF HOT COCOA OR TEA, DOESN'T HURT EITHER!

*THE BRAND, DRY KIDS MAKES A GREAT (AND AFFORDABLE) RAINSUIT FOR KIDS THAT IS EASY ON/EASY OFF! YOU CAN FIND IT ON AMAZON!

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER, JUST UNSUITABLE CLOTHING." - ALFRED WAINWRIGHT

GOOD READS

THERE IS A WIDE ARRAY OF BOOKS THAT INVOLVE A GREAT LOVE OF NATURE THAT YOU CAN READ ALOUD TO YOUR CHILDREN OR THEY CAN READ ON THEIR OWN. YOU, AS A MAMA OR EDUCATOR NEED THESE TOO! HERE ARE SOME THAT

OR PAPA... → I RECOMMEND FOR YOU AND YOUR KIDDOS:

FOR YOU:

VITAMIN N BY RICHARD LOUV

PLAY THE FOREST SCHOOL WAY BY JANE WOROLL

THE CALL OF THE WILD AND FREE BY AINSLEY ARMENT (ESPECIALLY FOR HOMESCHOOLERS)



FOR READ ALOUDS & READ WITHS:

NATURE ANATOMY BY JULIA ROTHMAN

BACKPACK EXPLORER: ON THE NATURE TRAIL...BY STOREY PUBLISHING

OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW: A FIRST BOOK OF NATURE BY NICOLA DAVIES

THE BIG BOOK OF BUGS BY YUVAL ZOMMER

SMITHSONIAN KIDS: A WALK IN THE FOREST BOARD BOOK: BY JAYE GARNETT

BEE'S A HONEYED HISTORY BY PIOTR SOCHA

THE HERB FAIRIES SERIES BY THE LEARNING HERBS COMPANY

MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN BY JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE

POCKET GUIDE TO THE OUTDOORS BY JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE

ONE DAY IN THE FOREST BY JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE

THE SECRET GARDEN BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

CHARLOTTE'S WEB BY E.B. WHITE

MANDY BY JULIE ANDREWS EDWARDS

IN THE GARDEN WITH DR. CARVER BY SUSAN GRIGSBY



ALSO CONSIDER BOOKS FOR KIDS ABOUT FOSSILS, ROCKS, AND ARCHEOLOGY!

AND DON'T FORGET ABOUT AUDIOBOOKS! AUDIOBOOKS ARE A WONDERFUL WAY TO ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING IN THE CAR READY TO START ON YOUR NEXT OUTING! THERE IS A WONDERFUL ONE FOR "MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN"!

GAMES

GAMES ARE A FANTASTIC WAY TO NOT ONLY BRING THE FAMILY TOGETHER, BUT TO GET AWAY FROM SCREENS...AND LEARN ABOUT NATURE! HERE ARE SOME I RECOMMEND THAT CAN BE FOUND ON AMAZON:

WILDCRAFT
INTO THE FOREST
MATCH A LEAF
MATCH A TRACK
FLOWER FAMILIES
GO FIND IT (SCAVENGER HUNT)
NATURE FLUXX
CAMP



STUDIES

UTILIZE YOUR TIME OUTSIDE BY TRULY LEARNING MORE ABOUT NATURE. LEARNING CAN, AND SHOULD BE FUN. HERE ARE SOME AREAS YOU CAN FOCUS ON AND EASILY FIND IDEAS ON PINTERST FOR:

ROCK DWELLERS
POND STUDY
HABITATS
HOLE DWELLERS
CREEK FRIENDS
TREE DWELLERS
FOSSILS
GEOLOGY



TECHNOLOGY

LEARNING MORE ABOUT NATURE DOESN'T MEAN THAT TECHNOLOGY IS THE ENEMY. IT CAN BE QUITE HELPFUL DURING THOSE VERY STORMY, INDOOR DAYS! HERE ARE A FEW APPS I CAN RECOMMEND:



MONTESSORI NATURE AUTUMN CRAFTS
APP BY ANISCIENCE
APPS BY TINY BOP

ACTIVITIES

SCAVENGER HUNTS, MAP MAKING, BUG VIEWING, MAKE BUG TIPIS, SHELTER BUILDING, NATURE JOURNALING, GO ON A PICNIC, READ ALOUD, TAKE PHOTOS FOR A SPECIAL NATURE WALL, FIND "NATURE TREASURES" TO COLLECT, FLOWER PRESSING, MAKE FACES AND CRITTERS FROM NATURE ITEMS, START A STORY FOR THE KIDS AND THEN LET THEM TAKE OFF WITH THE REST, PLAY THE "WHO MIGHT LIVE THERE?" GAME AS YOU EXPLORE HABITATS, DO MATH WITH STICKS AND ROCKS, PRETEND YOU'RE CAMPING, GO CAMPING FOR REAL, TAKE INSTRUMENTS OUTSIDE, MAKE INSTRUMENTS FROM NATURE, CREATE FAIRY, GNOME, OR TINY ANIMAL HOMES NEAR TREES, LOOK FOR FOSSILS, COLLECT THINGS TO LOOK AT UNDER A MICROSCOPE, GO ON A MINDFUL WALK (WHERE YOU LOOK, LISTEN & FEEL ONLY).

YOU'RE READY!

AT THIS POINT YOU SHOULD FEEL MORE EQUIPPED, MORE INSPIRED, AND READY TO TAKE ON A NEW ADVENTURE...NO MATTER HOW SMALL THE START! YOU'VE GOT THIS! YOU'RE A PARENT...YOU'RE ALREADY A GUIDE AND A TEACHER TO YOUR CHILDREN! NO ONE KNOWS EVERYTHING AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO EITHER. BE WILLING TO LEARN ALONGSIDE YOUR CHILDREN AND THAT IS WHERE YOU WILL FIND TRUE JOY...DOING IT TOGETHER...THE CONNECTION.

I'M SO PROUD OF YOU FOR WANTING TO TAKE THAT NEXT STEP WITH YOUR KIDS. YOU ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON LITTLE THINGS THAT WILL CHANGE BOTH OF YOUR LIVES, THE WAY YOU SEE NATURE, AND CREATE A BOND THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD FORM TOGETHER. LOOK AT THIS AS A TRUE ADVENTURE! I BELIEVE IN YOU COMPLETELY AND YOUR CHILDREN DON'T NEED A PERFECT PARENT...THEY JUST NEED A WILLING ONE! THAT'S YOU!

COMMUNITY

CONSIDER A SMALL NATURE GROUP. SOUND DAUNTING? IT ISN'T. A NATURE GROUP CAN SIMPLY BE YOU, ONE OTHER FRIEND, AND YOUR CHILDREN...DOING NATURE TOGETHER! START IT WITH FOLKS YOU KNOW FROM SCHOOL, CHURCH, A CO-OP, NEIGHBORS, FAMILY! YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A LEADER WITH OBLIGATIONS TO BEGIN A SMALL GROUP! JUST HAVE FUN IN NATURE TOGETHER! HAVE A PICNIC, A HIKE, A DAY AT THE CREEK, A NATURE RESERVE, A NATURE BOOK CLUB!

ONLINE RESOURCES

EACH PERSON WILL HAVE DIFFERENT THINGS THAT WILL HELP THEM... THAT THEY WILL DRAW INSPIRATION FROM. HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES I RECOMMEND LOOKING INTO:

WRITINGSFROMTHEWILD.COM

WILDEXPLORERSCLUB.COM

ROOTSANDSHOOTS.ORG

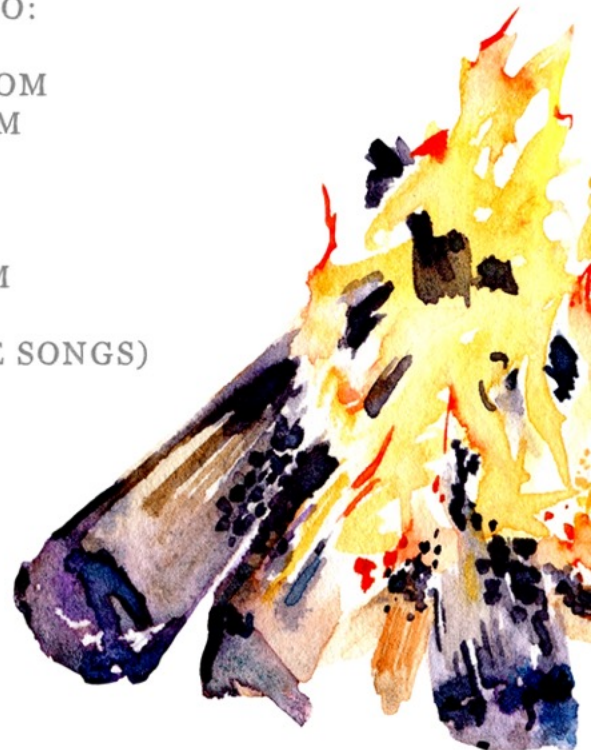
BEWILDANDFREE.ORG

WILDLIFETRUSTS.ORG

HOMEEDPRINTABLES.COM

NWF.ORG

WILDPICKLEPRESS.COM (NATURE SONGS)



INSPIRATION

“WE NEED THE TONIC OF WILDNESS.” ~ HENRY DAVID THOREAU

“IF A CHILD IS TO KEEP ALIVE HIS INBORN SENSE OF WONDER...HE (OR SHE) NEEDS THE COMPANIONSHIP OF AT LEAST ONE ADULT WHO CAN SHARE IT, REDISCOVERING THE JOY, EXCITEMENT, AND MYSTERY OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.” ~ RACHEL CARSON

“LIFE ISN'T ABOUT WAITING FOR THE STORM TO PASS...IT'S ABOUT LEARNING TO DANCE IN THE RAIN.” ~ VIVIAN GREENE

“THE BEST STEP PARENTS CAN MAKE IS THAT FIRST STEP OFF THE DOORSTEP. IT'S NOT KIDS WHO NEED ENCOURAGEMENT, IT'S PARENTS.” ~ CONOR O'GORMAN

“IF NATURE WERE A MEDICATION, WE WOULD BE PRESCRIBING IT TO EVERYBODY.” ~ HOWARD FRUMPKIN

“PASSION IS LIFTED FROM THE EARTH ITSELF BY THE MUDDY HANDS OF THE YOUNG; IT TRAVELS ALONG GRASS-STAINED SLEEVES TO THE HEART. IF WE ARE GOING TO SAVE ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT, WE MUST ALSO SAVE AN ENDANGERED INDICATOR SPECIES: THE CHILD IN NATURE.”
~ RICHARD LOUV

