



Launching young readers!

Reading Rockets

Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 1
Outdoor Explorations
By: Reading Rockets

Stepping outside is a simple way to set foot into nature's laboratory. Backyards and neighborhood walks can lead to interesting conversations, new vocabulary words, observations, predictions, and investigations. Try these fun outdoor exploration activities to nurture the budding scientist or mathematician in your home!

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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?

Recommended children's books

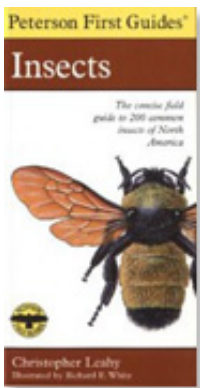


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The Listening Walk
By Paul Showers

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.

- [Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0064433226/readingrocket-20)



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Peterson First Guide to Insects of North America
By Christopher Leahy

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

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The Icky Bug Alphabet Book

By Jerry Pallotta

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

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Leaf Man

By Lois Ehlert

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

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Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project that offers a wealth of research-based reading strategies, lessons, and activities designed to help young children learn how to read and read better. Our reading resources assist parents, teachers, and other educators in helping struggling readers build fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

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"You may have tangible wealth untold. Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be — I had a mother who read to me." — Strickland Gillilan