



Every day should be Earth Day!

How can we expect the next generation to care for our environment if they don't get outdoors?

The following activities are for all ages and highlight nature-related fun to get youth motivated to protect our planet.





Observation

The following activities can help youth build a strong connection to their environment.

Take a closer look. Setting aside dedicated time to observe nature in a local natural space, on school campus, or your backyard may not sound like a high impact activity, but it is. We live in a world where manmade products are constantly screaming for our attention. Plan time for your children to explore the world around them in an intentional way where the focus is on simple observations.

Record observations. Take observations a step further and use a different part of your children's brains by employing a tool to record their observations. There are many different ways to do this — write in a journal, draw in a sketch book, take photos, record video — choose the method that builds the most excitement for your child.

How to Create a Children's Nature Photo Flip Book
Duration: 30 minute photography session; plus print and assembly time (1 hour)
Age: 5+
Cost: Less than \$5

1. Use a point and shoot camera, iPad, or cell phone that you do not mind your child using that takes good, quality pictures.
2. Decide what your child wants to take pictures of - this may mean focusing on something in particular such as flowers or plants, insects, trees, or nature in general. We decided for our nature photo flip book that we wanted to take pictures of flowers for this time since so many were in bloom!
3. Visit a trail, your school campus, or your own backyard to start taking pictures. Let your child do their own thing when it comes to taking pictures; many children get some neat perspectives of whatever they are taking pictures of because they get right down on the object. ***Tip: If your child gets close to objects to take pictures, change the setting to "macro."
4. Spend at least 30 minutes in nature and allow your child to take as many pictures as they desire. This allows them to be creative! You can filter out the bad ones when you return home or to school.
5. Choose as many pictures as you want in your child's flip book. They can even help with the decision process!

Look in the Teachers' Corner section to learn how to Create Your Own Children's Nature Photo Flip Book:

<https://www.danriver.org/programs/environmental-education/for-educators>

Share observations and collect data. Extend your observations even further by finding a way to share your findings. This could be as simple as offering to create an informational display for a public space like a school or library. There are also a number of citizen science projects that love your help collecting specific data.

Here are a few interesting websites to check out:

- Creek Critters App: <https://anshome.org/creek-critters/>
- Litterati App: <https://www.litterati.org/>
- CleanSwell App: <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/cleanswell/>
- Monarch Watch: <https://www.monarchwatch.org/>
- The Lost Ladybug Project: <http://www.lostladybug.org/>
- Journey North (monitors a variety of migratory animals): <https://journeynorth.org/>

Did you know?

Outdoor play reduces obesity by building active, healthy bodies and spending time outside raises Vitamin D levels.

Children's stress levels fall within minutes of exposure to natural settings.

Play in nature helps enhance social interaction among children and build close relationships.

Children can maintain a healthy vision by spending 3 hours a day outside.





Creek Critters Habitat!

For more ideas and tips about engaging youth in connecting to their environment through observation, check out these additional activity resources on DRBA's [For Educators page](#):

- Monarch Caterpillar Video
- How to Make a Creek Critters Habitat!
- Schoolyard Assessment Tool
- Riparian Buffer Assessment DRBA Outdoor Learning
- Conserve Your Resources – Earth Day Challenge



Stewardship

Celebrate **Earth Day** by getting youth involved in a stewardship project!

This is the only Earth we have, so love it and protect it!



Solve a problem. There is nothing more empowering for youth than being involved in a project that helps improve their community.

- Host a Trash Clean Up: <https://www.danriver.org/programs/stewardship/clean-ups>
- Become a Water Protector – **Limited time offer: FREE to students!** <https://www.danriver.org/support-drba/take-action/water-protector-certificate>
- Mark a storm drain in your neighborhood or on school campus: <https://www.danriver.org/programs/stewardship/storm-drain-project>

Education



Environmental education programs help raise scores on standardized tests such as math, science, and writing. Nature-based education programs can also improve critical thinking skills.

- Check out our Lunch with DRBA webinar library to learn about topics ranging from rain barrels, aquatic insects, snakes, pollinators, and birds!
<https://www.danriver.org/programs/environmental-education/webinars>
- Visit our DRBA at Home page to learn about other activities and resources available:
<https://www.danriver.org/programs/environmental-education/drba-at-home>
- Check out our [DRBA Environmental Education Catalog](#) to learn about all the programs we offer and how you can get them at your school.

Recreation

Taking time to be outside in nature can be a rejuvenating experience. All youth need time to be free to play and reconnect to nature.



- Go on a nature hike at a trail in the Dan River basin:
<https://www.danriver.org/interactive-map>
- Participate in Basin BINGO, learn more at:
<https://www.danriver.org/programs/recreation/visit-the-drb>
- Join us on a First Saturday Outing:
<https://www.danriver.org/programs/recreation/first-saturday-outings>



For questions about DRBA's Environmental Education Programs, contact Krista Hodges, Education Manager at khodges@danriver.org.

To donate to DRBA's Environmental Education Programs, visit <https://www.danriver.org/form/donate> and earmark it for environmental education.

DRBA is a nonprofit organization; support provided by sponsors and donors is critical to our ability to provide resources for parents and educators.