

Growing readers!

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

Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 7

Recording Observations: Capturing and Sharing Images

Young kids love technology, gadgets, and nature! While parents may be looking for ways to reduce screen time for their kids, here are a few helpful suggestions for integrating simple technology into your outdoor adventures in a fun and educational way.

Taking pictures, audio, and video

Just about every cell phone has a digital camera built into it. Many phones can also take short bits of video. Begin by helping your child learn how to use the camera correctly by holding it as still as possible and learning how to use the telephoto and wide angle button (if available). Then, encourage your child to think big and small! Encourage pictures of bigger things such as animals and trees, as well as smaller things such as bugs, butterflies, flowers, and spider webs. Older children may enjoy taking “mystery pictures,” which can be close-up or partial pictures of ordinary things in nature. (Note: Ask your child to use a simple field guide to keep track of what each mystery picture actually is!) The diligent nature lover may be able to capture video of an ant carrying food, a butterfly drinking nectar, or a worm digging into the earth. Use the video recorder, or audio recorder, to capture the sounds of nature too. A creek with rushing water and different bird calls are two great nature sounds to capture. (To hear and learn more about bird sounds, visit the amazing Cornell Lab of Ornithology website: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide>)

Exploring your pictures and video

When you get home, spend some time matching the images your child captured with flower and insect guides, or work together to search the Internet for images. See how many insects or flowers your child is able to match up and identify. To create a lasting memory, print out your child’s favorite pictures, label them, and turn the pages into a nature book. Simple video editing tools enable children to write short captions for the video footage they took: butterfly lands, butterfly drinks, butterfly flies away!

Sharing pictures, audio, and video

Nature photos can also be uploaded to share with a wider audience. Together, you and your child can use simple presentation software like PowerPoint or Keynote to create a nature slideshow. Or use an online photo sharing site like Picasa, Flickr, or Snapfish to share photos with friends and family. To create an ongoing nature project, consider using a kid safe blogs or social network site.

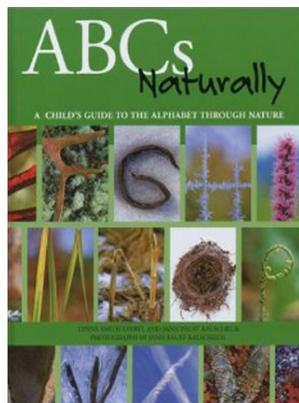
Putting your child in charge of taking, exploring, and sharing nature pictures and videos puts them in charge of all sorts of important scientific tasks. Observing the environment, selecting something to record, recording the event (through picture, audio or video), identifying the subject and sharing with an audience are all important parts of the inquiry process.

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.

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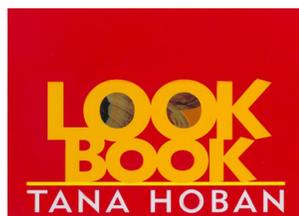
Recommended children's books



ABCs Naturally: A Child's Guide to the Alphabet Through Nature

By Lynne Smith Diebel

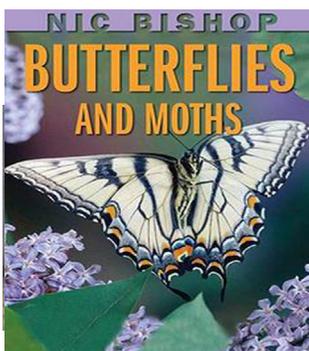
Take an alphabetical journey through the natural world! Each letter features an object photographed in nature accompanied by a fun poem. Show your child how to become an alphabet hunter and by exploring nearby woods, parks, water, or your own backyard. (Ages 4-8)



Look Book

By Tana Hoban

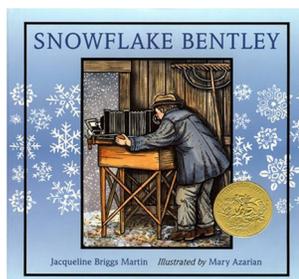
In the latest in her popular series of “peek through the hole” books, Hoban presents color photographs that celebrate the rich detail of everyday things – especially things found in nature like the feathers of a pigeon or the fur of a shaggy dog. This is a fun “what is it?” guessing game for young children as they look through the circle to view a small part of an object on the page beneath. (Ages 4-8)



Butterflies and Moths

By Nic Bishop

Through beautiful full-page images, award-winning author and photographer Nic Bishop introduces young readers to the diversity of these amazing insects. Simple, engaging text presents basic information and quirky facts about the insects' appearance, habits, and life cycle. Other books in the series focus on frogs, spiders, and lizards. (Ages 4-8)



Snowflake Bentley

By Jacqueline Briggs Martin

In this picture book biography, meet Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley, the Vermont farm boy born in 1865, who devoted his life to figuring out how to take beautiful photographs of snowflake crystals. His “microphotography” technique proved that no two snowflakes are alike! (Ages 6-9)