

Children's Activities in Nature

If you have children at home, you may be finding it hard to manage how much of their lives they are living on screens these days. I know I am. Here are a few ideas to get kids outdoors, engaging with their surroundings, and learning focus and paying attention. We connect to nature through our senses, and learning to pay attention can help children read God's 'book of creation.' Maybe these activities can lead to a conversation about what creation teaches us about our Creator.

- **Create a Sound Map** - take a piece of paper and something to write or draw with. Find a place to sit, either in your yard or in a park or forest. Close your eyes, and focus on your sense of hearing. Can you hear better when you aren't also looking around? Single out different sounds you hear. Are they close or far? Are they in front of you, behind you, to one side or the other, or all around you? What is making the sound? Try to make a map with either words or pictures of what you are hearing and where it is in relationship to you.
- **June is the month for fireflies** - do some research on these amazing bugs and spend time outside after dark looking for them. I have been surprised the past few years to even find them in our urban back yard. It helps to have natural areas in your yard (not a fully manicured lawn!) and not a lot of artificial lights that interfere with fireflies' ability to see each other.
- **Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center** has an impressive list of activities to try at home. Check out their [YouTube channel](#), where new content will be posted several times a week.

Outdoor activities for children: from Wendy Janzen, Burning Bush Forest Church