



Exploring Our Earth

Helping your child discover the wonders of the Earth will help him learn about how we live.

INFANT:

- Let your child play in a sandbox or at the beach. Let him explore textures of both wet and dry sand.
- During bath time, read *Water, Water Everywhere* by Julie Aigner-Clark (Hyperion Books, 2003) to your baby. She will enjoy this interactive book about water and where it comes from!
- Find a comfortable place to sit with your baby near a pond, stream, lake or ocean. Talk to your baby about the sights and sounds around her.

TODDLER:

- Create mud together. Gather old clothes, some dirt, a plastic bowl or pail, a long handled spoon, and water in a cup or spray bottle (spray bottles control the water.) Invite your child to put some dirt in the bowl and slowly add some water, stirring with the spoon after each addition. Talk with your child about the texture and feel of the mud and how it changes depending on how much water is added. Is the mud stiff? Gooney? When does it start to look like chocolate milk?
- Go on a rock walk. Take a bag with you and ask your child to pick up some rocks. After rinsing them off, put all the rocks on a table and talk about the different colors, shapes, and sizes of the rocks.
- Use the rocks that you have collected to create a "rock garden" with your child. Find a small area in your yard, and allow your child to arrange his collection of rocks. On your next trip outdoors, help your child find more rocks to add to his "rock garden."

PRESCHOOLER:

- Show your child a map of the world. Point to the land and water on the map: the land is colored green; the water is blue. Ask your child if there is more land (green) or more water (blue.) Ask him, "Which covers more space?"
- Take your child on a nature walk. Make a list of all the different things you see (water, trees, and dirt.) Ask your child why it's so important that we have water. Add to your child's list - "We need water to drink and to take a bath." Ask your child why it's important to have trees. Make sure he includes "to help us breathe" or "to make paper." Explain that dirt is important "to grow vegetables to eat."
- Take your child on a Treasure Hunt. Choose a "treasure" that your child would enjoy. Then choose an outside location for the hiding spot. Put the treasure into a small paper bag and make a large X on the outside. Next, make a treasure map that is as simple or detailed as you wish, but your child will need to read it by herself in order to find the treasure. Use lots of pictures. A simple drawing of the area where the treasure can be found is sufficient with an X marking the spot in which to find the "treasure." Once you've marked the bushes, the house, a favorite tree, add a dotted line that shows the path to find the treasure. Your child will have loads of fun using a map for the first time.

Book Suggestions

There's a Map on My Lap!: All About Maps. Tish Rabe. Random House, 2002.

Dirt: The Scoop on Soil. Natalie Rosinsky. Compass Point Books, 2006.

The Piggy in the Puddle. Charlotte Pomerantz and James Marshall. Aladdin, 1989