



People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community, and place

Children develop a sense of place when they connect with their local communities and outdoor environment. Early learning is “of a place” when children and educators engage with local histories with respectful curiosity and a desire to contribute and share. Indigenous peoples have been the knowledge keepers of these places for hundreds of generations.

Indigenous languages are some of the voices of these places.

The Walking Curriculum

The simple act of taking a walk can emphasize the importance of place.

The Motion Walk

Use as many senses as possible to complete this challenge. What is moving around you? What is on the move? Besides seeing movement, how else can you tell something is moving?

The Line Walk

Find a human made line. Follow it. Where does it lead? Find a natural line (a track from an animal perhaps) – where does it lead? Once you return inside, visualize the lines you followed. Try to draw them and make a map of your walk.

The History Walk

What evidence can you find on your walk of something that happened here before this moment? Use words to describe in as much detail what you think happened here. Pretend you are a detective and you are figuring out a situation.

Leading a Walk or a Hike

Students can engage with the natural world by...

Means of Engagement

Noticing
Identifying
Sketching
Labelling

Living Things to Notice, Identify & Describe

Birds
Mammals
Amphibians
Invertebrates
Fish
Trees & Shrubs
Wildflowers

Descriptive Language & Communication

Qualities
Attributes
Describing Words
Questions

Leading a Walk or a Hike: Some Pointers

Getting past the barriers to outdoor learning...

1. Dress Well

2. What to bring

a teacher backpack/bag with crayons, pencils, pencil crayons, erasers, nature journals, blank cards/notebooks, ziploc bags/jars for collecting samples, digital camera or smartphone – and backpacks for kids so they can be hands free

3. Hush mode

at times, you may want total silence to see/hear many kinds of animals; set it up so when you say “we’re now in hush mode” all talking stops and walking is done quietly

Leading a Walk or a Hike: Some Pointers

Getting past the barriers to outdoor learning...

4. Halfway past

if you see something you want to point out, keep walking until about half the group has passed it; then stop and step back to the middle of the group to discuss it, so all can see it

5. Kid containment

if you have a large group, designate a leader and a sweep

6. Getting back together

have a pre-arranged signal like a bell, a whistle, or a special word to bring everyone back to the meeting spot

7. Transitions

give kids a task as you walk – “How many natural noises can you hear between now and our next stop?” or do a scavenger hunt to focus their attention

Some “Back Pocket” Outdoor Activities

Possible activities you can do during an informal walk:

- * stop every once in a while and **closely investigate** a fallen tree trunk, a log, or under a stone; areas where there are different kinds of moss are good; closely investigate leaf veins, flower parts, seeds, tree bark, etc.
- * **collect natural objects** such as rocks, leaves, seeds and bark of different shapes and colours; do a **bark rubbing** or a **sketch**
- * **sit and listen** for several minutes – in complete silence – and then compare notes on what you heard. What were the natural sounds?
- * scan the area for signs of **birds**, including holes in trees, feathers, nests, and droppings
- * do the same for **mammals**, such as tracks, scat, half-eaten cones, fur, bark gnawed off shrubs, or trees felled by beavers
- * follow a bearing – using a **compass**, strike out in one direction, then crouch down every ten paces and find out what is living there