

environmental EDUCATION



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Outside Winter Fun

Even during the cold days of winter there are endless opportunities to go outside with your children and grandchildren and experience the season. You will need to adapt, like the animals do, and put on layers to keep warm and dry, but what you will discover together will amaze you.

Here are a few ideas to get you going!

1) Make potpourri! Go on a nature walk and collect pine cones, dried leaves and pine needles. When you return home, combine all of the collected materials in a jar with a few drops of fragrant oils.

2) Scavenger hunt! An outdoor scavenger hunt in the winter months is another great way to teach a child about nature. Make a list of “clues” that need to be solved. For example: Gather a leaf from an “evergreen” or find a baby tree in its earliest stage (nuts and seeds).

3) Build a snowman! Of course, this requires snow, but hey, it will probably happen at some point during the winter. To prepare, put together a “snowman kit” with all the ingredients needed to dress your snowman and read *Stranger in the Woods* written by Patricia Gable.

4) Feed the animals! Decorate a tree for the animals in the woods or around your home. Spread peanut butter or shortening on pinecones and roll them in birdseed mixed with nuts and fruits. Hang them with a natural fiber string so that the animals will have food to eat while it is cold. You can also string dried fruit, cheerios, and popcorn to make a garland to hang from branches.

5) Winter picnic! Dress for the weather and pack some food – HOT if you have an insulated bag - and take a warm drink in a thermos. Head out to Pondview or another local park for some winter fun!

6) Search for tracks! One treat that comes with winter weather is the visibility of animal tracks in the snow. Animals ranging from rabbits and squirrels to deer leave tracks that can be easily spotted and followed. Take pictures for later identification and create an animal track journal!

7) Build a fort! Build a fort out of snow or buy a snow block maker and build an igloo (baby wipe containers work if you take the top off).

8) Make snow paint! Simply add food coloring to water and put in a spray bottle, then go out and paint a message in the snow!

9) Take the bus! Be green and plan an outing using the bus system as your mode of transportation. Head down to the library and pick up some books to read as a family.

10) Make an ICICLE! Puncture a VERY small hole into a hanging container and fill it with water. Let it hang outside (slowly dripping) overnight. The next day you should have your own icicle. Add food coloring and see what happens!



Land Lab Program

The Land Lab Program provides environmental education opportunities and is available to all Kettering school-age youth. The program provides a resource for teachers to take their students into the field for “hands-on” science. The program, in its eighth year, is a cooperative effort between the Kettering City School District and the City of Kettering Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department. The many habitats of Pondview Park and Southdale Park provide opportunities for students to participate in curriculum-based nature activities such as dipping for tadpoles and identifying birds on the prairie. Teachers can coordinate Land Lab visits through the Environmental Education Coordinator. For more information or to volunteer, call 296-2486.

Get WILD —

Be a Kettering Parks Volunteer

Do you love nature? Do you want to make a difference? Explore Kettering Park volunteer opportunities at our 21 parks. Call the Kettering Volunteer Resource Manager at 296-2433 to find out more information about becoming a WILD Volunteer.

Volunteer Opportunities Exist for Individuals or Groups

- Land Lab assistant/environmental education – work with students
- School liaison (work with Kettering school teachers and principals to promote Land Lab and other environmental education programs)
- Reforestation/invasive species removal
- Park vandalism reduction – Promote Eagle Eye Neighborhood Park Watch Program
- Habitat Environmental Center host (starting after completion of new Nature Center)
- Lead a nature class
- Nature walks (interpreters)
- Woodland cleanup – organize seasonal clean-ups
- Special events – organize and/or participate

Become a WILD Park Volunteer and Make A Difference!

For more information, call 937.296.2587.

www.ketteringoh.org