Getting Outside, Teachers Tips to Enjoy Teaching Outdoors

1. Find a quiet corner of the school grounds under trees or adjacent to trees for all to sit and listen – what do you hear? What do you smell? What do you see?
2. Explore a nearby nature area- a forest, beach, lake, old field, etc., and look for a relevant focus species.
3. See what you can find together in a nearby park, can be a surprise.
4. Take drawing materials outside and choose a nature theme for that day.
5. Students take nature photos for an art project or science discussion.
6. Create a story telling opportunity about what in nature you see, hear and touch together, can be imaginative and taking turns to add to the story. Follow up with each student writing a story or poem.
7. After visiting a wetland, pond or river, collect some water for a microscope invertebrate study, can develop this theme to look for fish, frogs, eggs, other species such as mussels or crayfish and keep data on the species.
8. Go birdwatching, some local naturalists’ clubs have binoculars for students to use, ask them to loan to your class, better yet, ask them to take your class out to learn how to use binoculars and go for a bird watching walk. Notate birds seen, students can collect sightings and do a survey on a regular basis.
9. Go birdwatching but when sighting a bird, focus on the habitat and what the birds are doing there – feeding, preening, resting, hunting, etc.
10. Visit an area with native plants, possibly collect bark or berries and do a project referring to First Nation use of that plant.
11. Remove invasive plants and see if it is a good plant to mash up, sieve and dry for paper making.
12. Plan a planting project for native plant species and do it together.
13. Clean up a shoreline or forest trail and talk about litter, our garbage dumps and plastics in the ocean.
14. Put up a nest box in the schoolyard or nearby natural area; students make observations.
15. Put up an outdoor bird feeder, better yet, build their own for the classroom window, students maintain and keep daily record of bird species at feeder. Students could become responsible for one species and be an ‘expert’.

Join Project Feeder Watch, [www.birdscanada.org/volunteers/pfw](http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteers/pfw)

16. Encourage students to check out local naturalists’ clubs events such as beach cleanups, plantings and invasive removals to participate, even better with their families.

Suggested subjects to get outdoors:
- Local birds that students will likely see in their neighbourhood,
- Bats and their habitat especially if a forest nearby,
- Search for Insects – Bees, Dragonflies, Butterflies, Pollinators, Spiders, etc.,
- Freshwater / wetland discovery (water samples, microscope, invertebrate ID etc),
- Other invertebrates such as snails, slugs etc., in the forest,
- Amphibians and/or reptiles if a pond and/or forest nearby
- Marine intertidal discovery,
- Native plants found locally and their historical use,
- Mammals found locally, find tracks or trails and discuss habitat,

**Suggestions of resources a teacher can use:**

- Field guides of relevant species,
- Species checklists,
- If birding, bird calls of local birds,
- Hands on, touch and feel samples,
- Prepare a resource kit of information, samples, field guides, stories, etc., local naturalists clubs can help.
- Local naturalist clubs can provide speakers and field trip leaders

**Check out website resources for:**

- Cornell, [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu)
- Project Wild,
- Nature Kids (Young Naturalists) guides,
- Chickadee Magazine, and Chirp Magazine,
- Wild B.C. Materials,
- Sierra Club, Outdoor Classroom Day programs and resources app has over 100 activities; [www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education](http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education)
- Junior Sea Doctors. [www.juniorseadoctors.com](http://www.juniorseadoctors.com)
- BC Green Games Galleries,
- Habitat Conservation Trust Materials,
- government brochures and booklets,
- Stewards of the Future, Educator Tool Kit draft materials.
- Canadian Parks Council, Nature Playbook

**Suggestions of resource books:**

1. Outdoor Play: written by Ellen Moshein; illustrated by Kelly McMahon; photography by Anthony Nex

2. The big book of nature activities: a year-round guide to outdoor learning: written by Jacob Rodenburg and Drew Monkman

4. Moving the classroom outdoors: schoolyard-enhanced learning in action: written by Herbert W. Broda

5. I love dirt! 52 activities to help you and your kids discover the wonders of nature: written by Jennifer Ward; foreword by Richard Louv; illustrations by Susie Ghahremani


8. Place Based Education; David Sobel
9. Last Child in the Woods and The Nature Principle; Richard Louv
10. Outside Our Window: Liz McCaw


Suggestions for Stories

1. For the Birds, Atwood, Margaret, Earth care Books, Douglas & MacIntyre, Toronto, Vancouver, 1990


