



## Outdoor Adventure Program

The Adventure Program is designed for children entering kindergarten through fifth grade in a positive and safe environment. Students will explore a window of colorful adventures and enrichment activities through a weekly theme while given the opportunity to learn about and through nature. Each topic contains various activities such as Hiking, Bird Watching, Wilderness Adventure, Observational Drawing, Plant Life in Central Park, Landscape Drawing, Gardening, and Sports. Our program addresses all aspects of language: listening, speaking, vocabulary building, and a lifelong interest in nature and experiencing the outdoors. All of our outdoor classes will be held in Central Park, given it is the closest and largest park to our school, therefore helping us reinforce social distancing rules.

### **CURRICULUM:**

Our outdoor curriculum is based on the nature core routines, coyote mentoring guidelines, North American Associations for Environmental Education

### CORE ROUTINES OF NATURE CONNECTIONS

We used the core connections to connecting kids in nature. The "Core Routines" are part of a nature connection movement and cultural model called the "Coyote Mentoring."

Arts and Athletics' outdoor team models the following core routines and guides the students every day to make the core routines a habit. The central park is a natural beauty and is a wonderful place for observing plant and animal life at close range.

From: Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature.

The Core Routines of Nature Connection are things people do to learn nature's ways. **They aren't lessons. They aren't knowledge. They are learning habits.** Luckily for us as nature guides, shifting our mental habits into these Core Routines of Nature Connection comes as second nature to all human beings. If we can inspire the practice of these Core Routines, remembering our original instructions will happen on its own."

### CORE ROUTINES OF NATURE CONNECTIONS DETAILS:

- Sit spot

The idea is simple: guide people to find a special place in nature and then become comfortable with just being there, still and quiet. In this place, the lessons of nature will seep in. Sit Spot will become personal because it feels private and intimate; the place where children meet their curiosity; feel wonder; get eye-to-eye with a diversity of life-forms and weather-patterns; the place where they face their fears of bugs, of being alone, of the dark and grow through them; and the place where they meet nature as their home. We will explore and find a sit spot special for each child at the central parks where children can relax and concentrate on their daily



journal documentation, reading, or study hall activities. The sit spot also provides a sense of indecency, ownership, and a place to relax.

- Expanding Sensory Awareness

For nature connection, we use only one golden rule: notice everything. Get down in the dirt and feel it. Open your eyes and detect peripheral movement. Hear the far-off cry of the hawk and the wind in the trees. Smell the scent carried in the warm breeze. Feel the direction of the sun. Taste the safe wild edibles. At every opportunity, we expand sensory awareness until doing so becomes routine, a practice, a habit, a discipline, and finally, a brain pattern.

Sensory awareness is central to our development as people because it is the primary tool for influencing the cycle of our brain patterning. Disengagement of stuck patterns of thought, behavior, and perception and renewal of the clients' ability to engage, integrate, and interact with their world requires constant cultivation of their sensory perception of landscape and relationships to it. One's senses become the very foundation of how one defines oneself within the world. (p 65. Nature connection and Gestalt)

- Questioning and Tracking

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Like peering through a window into wildlife, tracking animals can be endlessly fascinating. By capturing imagination and empathy, it demands whole-brain intelligence and concentration. Getting down on all fours and staring at the footprints of animals offers a particular abundance of opportunity for imprinting search images. Like reading, studying the sign, and following the trails of animals develops powers of pattern recognition that stay with you for the rest of your life.

- Animal Forms

Observe animals see how the animals walk, run, eat, dance, and then in games model those animal forms. This potent routine might seem a bit different from the others, more akin to dance than mental gymnastics. What we call Animal Forms simply imitates the physical and mental actions of animals, birds, and to some extent, even grass, wind, and water. This kind of practice can be found in cultures across the globe. For instance, think of the many martial arts from Asia based on the imitation of animals, such as crane, tiger, or turtle. Also, many indigenous cultures conducted imitative dances and dramas.

- Wandering

Wander through the landscape without time, destination, agenda, or future purpose; be present in the moment; and go off-trail wherever curiosity leads. Unstructured time, wander, walk-about – during this timeless, unstructured play, anything is possible and self-guided experience leads to wonder, curiosity, and learning. There is nothing to accomplish, nowhere to go. By just being present in the moment, curiosity gently leads us wherever we go.



- Mapping

Orient to the compass directions, and perceive the landscape from a bird's eye view. Draw maps to locate features of the landscape or tell stories that map your explorations. A natural routine familiar to anyone who's ever driven in a big city, mapping orients us and shows us the gaps in what we notice. It creates a need for people to know what bird that was by the swamp, or where that creek goes. It also brings the landscape to life as the diversity of natural signposts emerges through the connections between birds and berry bushes, between coyote scat and vole-filled meadows, between bodies of water and the daily movements of animals.

- Exploring Field Guides

Field Guides facilitate further learning and inquiry. A field guide is a book designed to help the reader identify wildlife (plants or animals) or other objects in the natural world. It is generally designed to be brought into the 'field' or local area where such objects exist to help distinguish between similar objects. Field guides typically include a description of the objects covered, together with paintings or photographs and an index. Using them expands knowledge of the natural world.

- Journaling

Stories can be told to a journal. This might be done through drawing or art, or writing, depending on the skill and interest of the author/artist. Journals are a great way to record experiences with sit spot, create personal field guides, or keep seasonal records.

- Survival Living

Nothing gives us more meaningful relationships with nature than really putting ourselves out in the elements and living off the land. It creates the ultimate need to learn. Survival living teaches us how to interact with the natural world around us as if our entire subsistence depends on it, including all the basic human needs: shelter, water, fire, food, tools, and clothing.

- Mind's Eye Imagining

Use and strengthen your imagination as much as possible, imprinting images in your mind to gather from the experience of all five senses. This routine develops our creativity and our ability to re-experience events with our eyes closed. To teach "nature literacy," then see with the Mind's Eye, we must go one step beyond plain reading into reading with the intent to "learn by heart." Not only visual images, but also smells, flavors, sounds, and textures imprint in great detail in people's brain patterns when they rely on their nature literacy for survival. Routinely imagining with our Mind's Eye allows our sensory experiences to sink in. This skill provides us with the dynamic memory required for field biology and bird watching and is the evidence of a well-developed "naturalist intelligence."



- Thanksgiving

How is "Thanksgiving" a routine for nature awareness? If we all find in yourself a grateful heart and express gratitude for any and all aspects of nature and life, if we begin every episode with thanksgiving and give nods of thanks as you go about your day, then we will redevelop the connections that our ancestors had to have to survive. We reinforce the interdependence of all living things and their ground of being and reminds us of our kinship with nature.

When we say "Thanksgiving," we mean remembering and expressing gratitude for the things around us that support our lives that make it possible for us to be alive, every day. It is a general sharing of appreciation for characteristics common to all humans, as well as those specific to each of our lives.

- Story of the day

Storytelling knits society together. Our grandmothers and children might harvest berries, root vegetables, or bark to make thread and cloth. Around the fire, at night, they would gather and report the stories of their days. This exchange of stories is essential to humans. Children will learn and explore storytelling through nature and documentation. We will encourage children to use their environment to think and learn about what is meaningful for them and their environment

- Listening for Bird Language

Be still and listen. Quiet down and crane your ears and eyes to notice the vocal signals and body language of birds and other animals, including humans. What message do you hear in their voice?

Note: it is crucial that these "core routines" be creatively and artfully inserted into our work as nature connection mentors – in many cases, those we work with should not feel they are practicing "core routines." The magic of the coyote is often working in the background, so these routines are present but invisible to the outside eye.

Nine values of biophilia as described by Kellert and Wilson in The Biophilia Hypothesis:

1. Utilitarian	Practical use of material nature	Sustaining physical life and security
2. Naturalistic	The pleasure from contact with nature	Development of mental, physical and outdoor skills and development
3. Ecologist-scientific	The scientific study of the interconnectedness of life and natural systems	Observing nature, increasing knowledge and understanding
4. Aesthetic	The appeal of nature's physical beauty	Feelings of security, inspiration, and contentedness



5. Symbolic	Expressing ideas through nature-based language and metaphors	Developing mentally, communicating with others/nature
6. Humanistic	Emotional bond with, and love for nature	Companionship, bonding, and cooperation
7. Moralistic	Ethical concern/judgments and revering nature	Moral reasoning, the meaning of life, affiliation
8. Dominionists	Control and dominance of nature	Technological/mechanical skill, physicality, control
9. Negativistic	Aversion, removal, and fear of nature	Security and physical protection

\*Biophilia is the inborn affinity human beings have for other forms of life in nature.

### CLASSES AND DAILY ACTIVITIES

Classes are designed to explore and experience nature. We will teach and guide children to wonder and respect nature. Children will be encouraged to play with dirt, mud, paint, and get messy; children will climb, run, and test their skills in a safe and challenging approach.

The following are classes that focus on activities with little to no physical contact between children, therefore, helping us keep a stable group of children while ensuring your child's academic growth and social-emotional well-being.

- **Bird Watching:** Central Park is home to over 200 bird species, from the Ramble's colorful warblers to the reservoir's various waterfowl. With binoculars in hand, students will explore the park, identify and draw these many birds, and experience the multitude of wildlife living right here in the city.
- **Wilderness Survival:** A comprehensive course on essential outdoor skills. The staff devises fun, kid-friendly lessons to teach first aid, basic orienteering, various knots, strategies to build campfires and shelters, and much more. By the end of the cycle, students will feel comfortable and in control, no matter the nature setting.
- **Gardening:** This class offers students hands-on gardening experience coupled with the joy of bringing home the vegetables, herbs, and flowers they grow. Kids will roll up their sleeves every afternoon to prepare the soil, plant seeds, and tend to a lush garden, as well as learned skills in food preservation and composting.
- **Hiking/Orienteering:** Students will learn to find their way in nature by using maps and compasses, and by picking up useful orienteering tips from the staff. Activities include



short hikes, making their maps, and even leading teachers to and from specified points within the park's 800 acres.

- **Landscape/Observational Drawing:** Students will capture the stunning views of Central Park while learning basics in perspective, color theory, and composition. We will document and create a journal of their experiences.
- **Art and Masterpieces Exploration:** Children will learn and explore different masterpieces inspired by nature and imagination. We will also explore other mediums and techniques.
- **Plant Life in Central Park:** Students will learn to identify hundreds of tree and plant species in Central Park, as well as draw and label them in a notebook that will be kept throughout the course.
- **Sports:** Students will practice a range of sports, including yoga, martial arts, running, and games, while keeping their social distance and staying healthy and active.