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7 Family fun ideas in the great outdoors

May 01, 2012 6:07 AM by [Mary Fetzer](#)

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GO OUTDOORS WITH YOUR CHILDREN

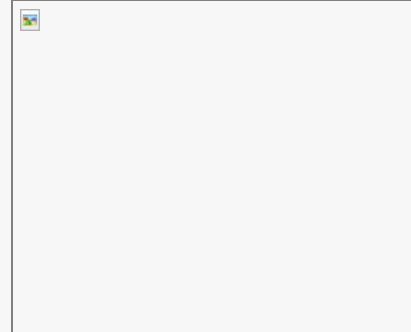
In an age of computers, video games and cell phones, it's easy to lose sight of all that nature has to offer. Grab your kids, put away the family's techie gadgets and go explore the great outdoors!



Gardening


Gardening is an excellent family activity that helps children learn responsibility and creativity. Burpee Home Gardens has developed the "I Can Grow" Guide for Families. It includes interactive activities for starting and maintaining a family garden – and it's free! Simply visit [Burpee Home Gardens](#) and download the guide.

Gardening instills an interest in healthy foods and cooking that will complement your efforts to establish a positive, eco-friendly lifestyle. Text-savvy families will enjoy [Burpee's Mobile Garden Coach](#) for planting instructions, harvesting tips and fresh veggie recipes – all based on your gardening location!




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Bicycling

Who cares about rising gas prices when you're traveling by bicycle? Cycling is good for the environment, good for your body and a great way to see the sights. Bike around your hometown or transport your bicycles to parts unknown.

You can find the perfect trail for your family by visiting [Backroads.com](#), [Easy Rider Tours](#) or [Great Freedom Adventures](#).

[A beginner's guide to cycling >>](#)

Stargazing

Jump online to find family-friendly stargazing opportunities around the country, or invest in a high-quality telescope for your own backyard. At the [Four Seasons](#) in Grand Teton National Park, for example, families can enjoy a lovely dinner in a prime star-viewing location while gazing at galaxies, comets, nebulas, double stars, planets, the moon and more!

[At-home stargazing and other family fun ideas >>](#)

Camping

Camping has always been an affordable way for families to enjoy the great outdoors, and state parks cater to campers. To encourage more families to consider camping, Georgia State Parks have launched a [First-Time Camper](#) program.

For just \$45, park guests spend two nights in a modern campground, trying out REI gear such as tents, sleeping pads, chairs and camp stoves. Park staffers help campers set up their tent and make a campfire and even give a Camping 101 lesson.

At the end of their stay, campers return the equipment and receive coupons for future visits! Check out your state parks for similar camping orientation programs.

[Top camping destinations for families >>](#)

Volunteering

Volunteering as a family is a beautiful way to grow closer while making the world better for others. There are **countless ways to help** – you just have to find them. Connection sites, such as [GoVolountouring.com](#), can match your family with suitable volunteer projects all over the world while ensuring that the experience is safe and healthy for you and your children.

Imagine exposing your children to a conservation project, such as cleaning oil off penguins, or helping them do their share to build a house for a homeless family.

[Volunteer vacations that help wildlife >>](#)

Fishing

Norman Rockwell beautifully captured the expressions of joy fishing brings to children. And the [International Game Fish Association](#) (IGFA) has been issuing recreational fishing licenses to kids and their parents for more than 70 years.

Fishing is a fantastic way to enjoy the water and get excited about the great outdoors. Get your child involved with the help of IGFA's [Junior Angler](#) website. The site is dedicated to getting kids interested in fishing and encouraging families to fish together.



QUICK TIP

Check out [Outdoor Parents](#), [Outdoor Kids](#) by Eugene Buchanan

Learning

Do your children know how to pay attention to nature? [What Color is the Wind? A Feel Guide to the Out-of-doors for Parents with Young Children](#) is an interactive children's book by New York naturalist Ed Bieber. The book features more than 25 simple summer-themed activities that challenge families to use their **five senses to explore the great outdoors** – right in their own backyard.

Activities include "Firefly nights," "Fairy houses" and "Nature's crayons." Everyone will learn a lot as you introduce your children to the beauty and fantasy of time spent in the fresh air.

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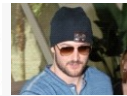
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