

# Let's Learn Together

- OUTSIDE -

FAMILY LEARNING  
EVENT GUIDE







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## About NCFL ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping adults and children learn together. NCFL creates and deploys innovative programs and strategies that support learning, literacy and family engagement in education. From the classroom to the community to the digital frontier, NCFL collaborates with educators, advocates, and policy-makers to help families construct hotspots for learning wherever they go. For more information on NCFL's 25-year track record, visit [www.familieslearning.org](http://www.familieslearning.org).



## Overview ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

Outside of the instructional environment, family engagement is one of the most important factors impacting student success. The benefits of family engagement in education are even more acute for vulnerable populations including, but not limited to, low income and ethnically diverse families that are disenfranchised by education systems (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). A critical step schools or community organizations can take to maximize the benefits of family learning opportunities is helping to build parent capacity through one of the important components of the NCFL approach known as Parent Time. Parent Time is a forum for parents that is specially focused on building their skills. It is also evident that when families engage in learning through NCFL's innovative Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® approach, academic, attendance, and prosocial behaviors are improved (Levesque, 2013; Jacobs, 2004). PACT Time involves families learning together. It gives parents an opportunity to use specific strategies that they learn during Parent Time. This Guide is designed to help schools and community-based organizations host successful family learning events centered on PACT Time as a critical piece of an effective school or community-based family engagement system.

Effective family learning events provide support that helps parents and children learn together through observation, discussion, reading together, play, and reciprocal teaching. By providing parents with the information and the skills they need for an effective PACT Time, family learning events following the NCFL model bolster parents' confidence in their ability to learn with their children in both online and offline environments. This is particularly true when working with vulnerable families. Parents set clear goals and adopt strategies for reaching those goals. Family learning events should be planned according to the needs and resources of parents, schools, and community-based organizations. Events should be hosted as collaborative efforts designed to boost student achievement through increased parent engagement.

It should be noted that when we use the word parent throughout this document, we are referring to a very broad category encompassing whoever the primary caregiver of a child is.

This Guide is designed to assist schools, libraries and community-based organizations in their efforts to host successful family learning events that link formal classroom learning to out of school time environments. All of the factors that determine success for family learning events are based on the following four core beliefs organizations must have about parents if they truly want to partner with them.





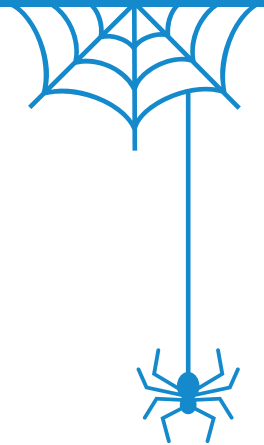
## Core Beliefs

All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.

Parents and school staff should be equal partners.

The responsibility for building partnerships between schools and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.



(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007, pp.28-39)

## The Purpose of Family Learning Events

Family learning events are designed to provide positive PACT Time experiences for parents and families in the school or community setting in order to support children's success in school. They are an effective way to engage families directly in efforts to encourage PACT Time in the home, school, and community. Family learning events contribute to family engagement goals by providing parents and families with an opportunity to participate in hands-on, intergenerational learning experiences that can help transfer learning to the home. In addition to building parents' skills for PACT Time, family learning events are also great forums to share information with families on topics to enhance children's learning and school achievement. These topics may include the following:

- PACT Time process, strategies, and modeling
- Parent skill building for use in the home or community
  - Literacy skills
  - Numeracy skills
  - Use of digital resources
- Wonderopolis®
- Family Time Machine®
- Family goal setting
- Relevant learning for participants
- Children's learning styles
- Curriculum and pedagogy
- The importance of parent involvement in schools
- Behavioral expectations
- Other topics required by Title I and other federal or state laws
  - School improvement
  - Academic standards
  - Parent leadership opportunities

Family learning events increase the engagement of parents and send the message that educational organizations are places for families. Research confirms that parents are more likely to learn together with their children when they know what their children need in everyday life, including school life, and when parents know what is necessary for success in school (Jeynes, 2011). Family learning events are most effective when implemented within an overall family engagement system.

## Increasing Attendance at Family Learning Events ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

There are several important things to consider in addition to the academic needs of students and families when planning family events. In addition to providing families with high quality, relevant PACT Time activities, there are specific practices that have been shown to encourage families to attend family learning events (Hutchins, Greenfeld, & Epstein, 2008).

**Meals.** Since the majority of family learning events are held after parents return from work, the school or community organization should provide dinner or a healthy snack for the families that attend. Businesses or other partners may be willing to donate dinner for well-planned, goal-oriented events. Planning committees must ensure that there is enough food for all participants who register to attend.

**Active Engagement.** Family learning events must actively involve all participants in completing activities, sharing comments, participating in discussions, and celebrating students' successes. More parents will attend if family learning events are informative and enjoyable.

**Publicity.** It is essential to inform families about an upcoming family learning event in ways that can be understood easily. Sending home attractive flyers and adding events to the daily announcements help increase excitement among students. Events also can be promoted through educationally appropriate social media, telephone calls, e-mails, school blogs or websites. The planning committee also should identify groups of parents who may need a personal phone call or translator. When parents receive information and reminders about an event, they are more likely to attend. Invite a parent leader to help advertise the event in the community.

**Incentives.** Prizes or giveaways also encourage participation in family learning events. These can include raffles, door prizes, and free books for students who attend. Incentives, especially those linked to students' success in school, add purpose to the evening and show participants that their attendance is appreciated.

**Child Care.** When schools expect parents to attend an evening event, it often is necessary to provide child care. The planning committee should arrange for and train adult or teen volunteers to watch and work with toddlers of parents who are attending family learning events with their school-age children. When planning for child care, it is important to have activities outlined for volunteers to use with each age group.



## Assembling a Team

One important way to maximize the impact of a family learning event is to make it a collaborative effort. This process should include ideas from educators, parents, students, and other members of the community. It should be clear from the very beginning who the leader for the group is so that plans are followed and the night is a success. The team should then begin a plan based on the current needs of the students and families. A few things to consider when assembling a team:

### What You Need to Know

- Which staff members are available to help with the planning?
- How will PACT Time and building parents' skills be infused throughout?
- What goals do both parents and the hosting organizations have in mind?
- Which community members/agencies can we reach out to?
- Are there parent volunteers or members of parent groups who can help?
- Are all of the right stakeholders at the table?
- What other resources would be helpful for a successful event?

Start the planning process by reviewing data from family engagement surveys and considering what your organization has already done. If you have hosted family events before, identify which components you would like to replicate (what worked) and which things need to be changed in order to address both parent and program goals (what did not work). Information should be available to answer the following questions:

- What is the most beneficial to children and families?
- What do you want parents to know?
- How will the information be linked to increased school achievement?
- What materials will be needed?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What kind of support is needed (child care, transportation, food, etc.)?
- How will the event support overall education strategies?



## Developing a Plan ✨ ✨ ✨

When developing a plan, think about all of the data that have been gathered and consider best practices. How can you use the information to plan your family event? Make sure that the plan includes the opportunity for families to learn a new skill, discuss the skill, and then practice it within the context of PACT Time. If parents have access to technology, consider asking them to bring their own device (cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) to use during the event as appropriate. Designate time to help families practice using technology to support what they are learning. Time can be set aside for parents to network as well. An implementation checklist, which is also a useful tool for planning, follows.

### Family Event Implementation Plan

#### Logistics

Task	Who	By When	Status	Notes
Room reservation				
Room set up (chairs and tables arranged to encourage conversation, display table)				
Snacks or meals				
Distributing announcements and making follow-up contact with parents				
Child care for siblings arranged if needed				
Transportation set up if needed				
Materials (handouts, welcome signs, prizes, name tags, etc.)				
Preparing for parents with special needs				

#### Family Event Plan

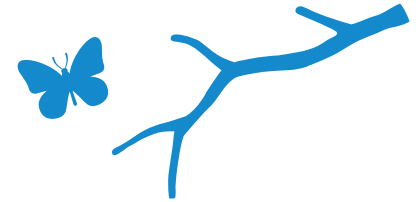
Task	Who	By When	Status	Notes
Outline of event has been distributed so that everyone involved knows what to expect				
All materials are ready for presentation				
Facilitation strategies support adult learning styles				
Evaluation of event is prepared (parent survey, follow-up discussion)				
Parent sign-in sheet is ready				
Event opening/closing planned				
Hosts/Guides know the plan and are ready to greet families				

#### Event Follow-up

Task	Who	By When	Status	Notes
Reflect on what went well and what could be improved				
Thank you notes sent when appropriate				
Post pictures to school website				

## Advertising for Family Events

- Start advertising for the event at least two weeks before it will take place.
  - Ask children to create flyers/invitations to send home to their families.
  - Post the event on your website, calendar, and newsletter.
  - Post the event on social media sites.
  - Use a banner.
  - Make phone calls or send text messages.
  - Mention the event to families at other events.
- Make sure that advertisements are clear, provide enough detail for families, and are translated where needed.



Sample agendas for family events are included in the next few pages in the Guide. They should prove helpful as you plan your family learning event, but remember to think about your families and their needs and goals and adjust the sample agendas to better serve their purposes.

## Family Event Agenda

Family learning events can be planned for the length of time that best fits the needs of the parents and the school/community. Many events last between 1 and 2 hours. When creating an agenda, remember to allow time for parents to arrive and become comfortable with the environment and time for a closing at the end of the event.

## Sample Agenda

### Let's Learn Together Outside

#### Family Arrival (40–45 mins.)

- A staff member should be available to greet families as they come in and escort them to the event. Have a plan for where parents will drop off children for Children's Time and where parents will gather for Parent Time. Also, direct parents to sign in and make them feel comfortable as they wait for the event to begin.

#### Parent Time/Child Time (45 mins.)

- Parents will learn the strategies for the week and prepare for Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® with their children.
- Children will participate in story time and an activity to use in PACT Time with their parents.

#### PACT Time (45 mins.)

- Parents and children will go outside together to participate in the PACT Time activities for the week.
- Families should be given the opportunity to practice the activities/strategies modeled by presenters.

#### Debrief (40 mins.)

- Families are given the opportunity to share the strategies they practiced and how it went for them.
- Discuss any questions or concerns parents have about carrying out the strategy.
- Families share their plan for using the strategy/activity at home.

#### Closing (5 mins.)

- Summarize the event for families.
- Make connections to home.
- Provide materials for families to use at home.
- Incorporate food at this time.



# Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 1: Parent Time ✨ ✨ ✨

## Goals

- To help parents understand responsive parent-child interactions to extend conversations with their children.
- To help parents feel more comfortable spending time outdoors with their children.

## Materials

Storytelling cards

Chart paper or dry erase board and markers

Outdoor Resources Web handout

Responsive Parent-Child Interactions handout

Nature Walk activity card

QR codes to surveys and technology (computers, ipads, tablets) to complete surveys

## Welcome and Introductions (5 mins.)

Welcome parents to the workshop. Explain that this is a three-week workshop series designed to help families make the most of their time together outside. Give parents an outline of the day. If parents have not already completed the presurvey, ask them to complete it at this time.

## Opening Activity (5–8 mins.)

Parents will practice telling stories with other parents to see how even simple topics can lead to opportunities to use descriptive language and build children's oral language. Parents will practice storytelling in rotating pairs.

1. Explain to parents that, while some storytelling involves long stories with many details, some stories are also very brief. Even with short stories, parents should try to use descriptive words.
2. Remind parents that when they tell a story it does not have to sound like the stories they read from a book – they are telling a narrative of an event that happened or was made up.
3. Explain to parents how the activity works. Ensure that everyone understands the directions before they begin.

You may need to model telling a story and/or how the game works as you explain the directions.

- a. Distribute one storytelling card to each parent.
  - b. Ask parents to raise one hand in the air. (Parents raise their hand on the first turn and when they finish telling their story.)
  - c. Have parents find another person whose hand is raised. (On the first turn, everyone's hand will be raised, but as the game goes on, people will finish at different times.)
  - d. Partners take turns reading their cards and telling a story about the topic.
  - e. After both partners tell a story, they trade cards and raise their hands.
  - f. Parents find another partner and repeat the process until the facilitator says to stop.
4. Distribute 1 storytelling card to each parent and ask all parents to raise their hands and begin the game.
  5. Allow about 5 minutes for parents to tell stories. Then call for parents to stop and return to their seats.
  6. Facilitate discussion among parents:
    - How did they feel about telling stories about their lives?
    - How did they use descriptive words in their stories?
    - How could they tell stories more effectively to their children?



### Central Ideas and Practice – Why Outside (15 minutes)

1. Discuss with parents the importance of spending time outside with their children:
  - Children learn many skills – fine and gross motor, risk-taking, exploring, inquiry – through outdoor play.
  - Playing outside is a great way to get physical exercise.
  - Spending time outside helps children learn about the world around them.
  - Fresh air helps keep children healthy.
2. Distribute the Outdoor Resources Web handout.
3. Ask parents to complete the handout with the names of places they go when they want to spend time outdoors.
4. Ask parents to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the outdoor resources they have access to.
5. Ask parents to think together of other places they could add to their list.
6. Guide parents to discuss how they could find out about new outdoor opportunities/resources to access in the community.
7. Ask parents to bring the Outdoor Resources Web handout to each workshop. They can store them in their clipboards.

### Central Ideas and Practice – Parent–Child Interactions (15 minutes)

1. Distribute the Responsive Parent–Child Interactions handout. Discuss the types of parent–child interactions on the handout. Give examples of each. Explain that frequent, meaningful, and interesting conversations with parents are important ways to help children learn language.
2. Explain that these are important things to remember when families are spending time outside with their children.
3. Refer to the list of outdoor experiences from the previous activity. Ask the parents to name a place that they spend time outdoors with their children. Write the location on the board or on chart paper.
4. Ask parents to look at the interactions on the handout. Discuss how they will use this information to plan for an outdoor experience at that location. List responses on the chart paper.

### Prepare for PACT Time (5 minutes)

1. Tell parents that they will soon be joining their children for a fun outdoor activity. Give each parent a clipboard with the Nature Walk activity page attached and a dry-erase marker.
2. Review instructions for the scavenger hunt.
3. Remind parents to make sure that they are using the strategies from the Responsive Parent–Child Interactions handout while they are outside with their children.

## Let's Learn Together Outside – Week 1: Child Time

### Materials

- Book about nature or outdoor play
- Outdoor materials that have been collected ahead of time (sticks, leaves, stones, etc.) to use in making a collage
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Glue

### Welcome/Introductions (5 minutes)

Welcome children to the workshop. Explain that they are going to learn about nature and spending time outside and then go outside with their parents for an activity.





### Storytime (20 minutes)

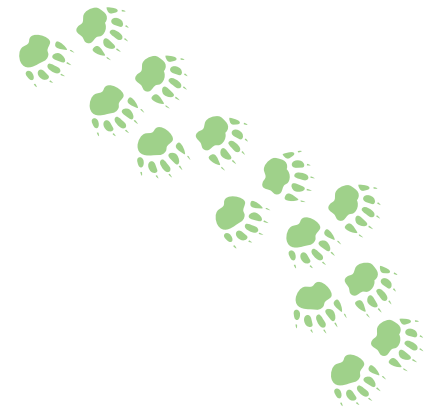
1. Read a story to the children using interactive shared reading strategies.
2. Incorporate songs and other activities when possible.

### Activity (15 minutes)

1. Introduce materials to the children. Talk about each item.
2. Give children time to play with the materials
3. Explain that they will be making a collage with the materials
4. Assist children as they create their collages.

### Wrap Up/PACT Time explanation (5 minutes)

1. Give children a few minutes to clean up their materials.
2. Explain that they will be joining their parents to do a Nature Walk outside.
3. Show children the Nature Walk activity sheet.
4. Explain that they will be going outside to find some of the materials that they had used in their collages.



## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 1: PACT Time ↵ ↵ ↵ ↵

### Materials

- Clipboards (1 per family)
- Nature Walk handout
- Dry erase marker

### PACT Time (45 minutes)

1. Before going outside, explain the Nature Walk activity and the amount of time they have.
2. Let parents know what activities are available if they finish early.
3. Let families know where to meet when PACT Time is finished.

## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 1: Debrief/Wrap Up ↵ ↵ ↵ ↵

### Reflection

1. Ask families to share their experience with the Nature Walk.
2. Answer any questions families may have.
3. Provide suggestions for ways families can use the activity at home.
4. Talk about ways to extend the activity.
5. Thank families for attending and give a preview of the next workshop.

## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 2: Parent Time ↵ ↵ ↵ ↵

### Goal

- To help parents understand the importance of having meaningful conversations with their children.

### Materials

- Nature Photos
- Chart paper or dry erase board and markers
- Conversations handout
- Examples of greenhouses (made ahead of time)
- Plant Scavenger Hunt





### Welcome and Introductions (5 mins.)

- Welcome parents to the workshop.
- Review previous Parent Time session – What did you learn? What was helpful? Do you need more information about this topic?
- Give parents an outline of the day.

### Opening Activity Ideas (5–8 mins.)

This activity will help parents think about ways to use a variety of descriptive words with their children.

Parents will practice playing with words to encourage their children to use more descriptive words when they talk.

1. Explain that children begin to add descriptive words to their vocabulary when parents add those words to their child's comments. For example, the child says, "Pretty flower," and the parent adds appropriate descriptive words to say, "The pretty pink flower smells sweet."
2. Choose one of the nature photos collected for the activity and model the activity with the whole group. For example, hold up picture of a tree and name ways to describe the tree, such as tall, green and brown, rough bark, soft leaves, etc.).
3. Distribute one picture for every two parents. Challenge participants to work with a partner to develop a list of at least 10 descriptive words for their picture.
4. Discuss as a group:
  - Was it easy or difficult to think of descriptive words? Why?
  - How, when, and where could you use this activity with your child?

### Central Ideas and Practice – Importance of Conversations (15 minutes)

1. Discuss with parents why having meaningful conversations with their children is important. Some key reasons include:
  - When children participate in conversations, they learn when and how to listen and speak.
  - Children's vocabulary grows when they have opportunities to use language in conversations with other people.
  - Children learn the structure of language when they have conversations with more experienced talkers.
2. Distribute the Conversations Anytime, Anywhere page. Discuss with parents how planning in advance for vocabulary they might encounter in a location or activity can lead to more meaningful conversations with their children.
3. Ask parents to work in pairs or small groups and use the Conversation sheet to list words that they might use when they are outside with their child.
4. Guide parents to discuss how they would introduce these new words to their children in the different locations and activities.

### Central Ideas and Practice – Plants (10 minutes)

1. Ask parents about their experience with plants:
  - a. What do they know about gardening?
  - b. Do they have plants growing at home?
  - c. What experiences did they have with plants and gardens growing up?
2. Discuss with parents the benefits of gardening with children:
  - a. Children who grow their fruits and vegetables are more likely to eat healthy.
  - b. Learning about plants helps children understand and care for the environment.
  - c. Playing in the dirt is fun; it helps children with sensory development and helps them develop a love of nature.

3. Explain to parents that they will be creating greenhouses with their children as a part of today's PACT Time.
4. Show examples of greenhouses created from recycled materials.
5. Explain the materials that will be available for PACT Time.

#### Prepare for PACT Time (5 minutes)

1. Tell parents that they will soon be joining their children for a fun outdoor activity. Give each parent a clipboard with the Plant Scavenger Hunt activity page attached and a dry-erase marker.
2. Review instructions for using the Plant Scavenger Hunt.
3. Explain that after they finish looking for plants with their child, they will build a greenhouse using the supplies provided.
4. Remind parents to make sure that they are using the strategies from the Conversations handout while they are outside with their children.

## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 2: Child Time ↵ ↵ ↵ ↵

#### Materials

- Book about plants
- Leaves
- Copy paper
- Crayons (with paper removed)

#### Welcome/Introductions (5 minutes)

Welcome children to the workshop. Explain that they are going to learn about nature and spending time outside and then go outside with their parents for an activity.

#### Storytime (20 minutes)

1. Read a story to the children using interactive shared reading strategies.
2. Incorporate songs and other activities when possible.

#### Activity (45 minutes)

1. Introduce materials to the children. Talk about each item.
2. Give children time to play with the materials
3. Explain that they will be making a leaf rubbing.
4. Demonstrate how to place a piece of paper on top of a leaf and rub the side of the crayon over it to create a leaf rubbing.
5. Provide opportunities for children to experiment with several different leaves.

#### Wrap Up/PACT Time explanation (5 minutes)

1. Give children a few minutes to clean up their materials.
2. Explain that they will be joining their parents to look for plants outside and making a greenhouse to take home.
3. Show examples of greenhouses.
4. Show children the Plant Scavenger Hunt.



## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 2: PACT Time

### Materials

- Plant Scavenger Hunt
- Clipboards
- Dirt/potting soil
- Empty containers (plastic bottles, containers, egg cartons, plastic bags) or plastic cups
- Tape
- Small plants

### PACT Time (45 minutes)

1. Before going outside, explain the Plant Scavenger Hunt and the amount of time they have.
2. Let parents know where to go to create their greenhouse once they are finished with the Plant Scavenger Hunt.
3. Let families know where to meet when PACT Time is finished.

## Let's Learn Together Outside—Week 2—Debrief/Wrap Up

### Reflection

1. Ask families to share their experience with the Plant Scavenger Hunt and greenhouse.
2. Answer any questions families may have.
3. Provide suggestions for families to use the activity at home.
4. Talk about ways to extend the activity.
5. Thank families for attending and give a preview of the next workshop.

## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 3: Parent Time

### Goal

- To help parents understand the importance of using open-ended questions with children.

### Materials

Word Cards

Chart paper or dry erase board and markers

Open-Ended Questions and Expansion handout

Examples of bug jars (made ahead of time)

Outdoor Resources Web

Animal Scavenger Hunt

### Welcome and Introductions (5 mins.)

- Welcome parents to the workshop.
- Review previous Parent Time session – What did you learn? What was helpful? Do you need more information about this topic?
- Give parents an outline of the day.

### Opening Activity Ideas (10 mins.)

This activity will help parents think about the importance of using open-ended questions with their children.

1. Divide parents into pairs.
2. Explain that you are going to give them a card, but they may not look at the card.
3. Explain that parents are going to pick their card up, hold it against their forehead, and ask their partner questions to try to figure out what the word is. For the first few minutes, they can only ask “yes or no” questions.

4. Give each parent a word card (face down).
5. Tell parents to hold the card against their forehead.
6. Explain that they have one minute to ask their partner yes or no questions to try to guess the word on their card.
7. Start the timer.
8. After one minute, signal for everyone to stop, but they should not remove the card from their foreheads. Ask if anyone guessed their card correctly.
9. Tell parents that they can now ask any questions to help them figure out their card.
10. Let parents continue until all cards have been guessed.
11. Discuss as a group:
  - Was it easy or difficult to guess?
  - How, when, and where could you use this activity with your child?

### Central Ideas and Practice – Importance of Conversations (15 minutes)

1. Tell parents that asking questions is a great way to extend the conversations they have with their children.
2. Ask parents to think about conversations they have had recently with their children.
3. Ask a few parents to share with the group.
4. Choose one conversation and ask the group what types of questions they might ask a child during that conversation.
 

For example, if they were having a conversation about school, the parent might ask :

  - How was your day?
  - Did you do anything fun?
  - Do you have any homework?
  - What did you like most about school today?
5. Record the questions on the chart or dry erase board.
6. Ask parents to look at the questions that the group came up with and decide which questions they think would get the most information from their child.
7. Explain to parents that open-ended questions, such as “What did you like most about school today?” will elicit the best response from children because they require more than a one- or two-word answer.
8. Distribute the Open-Ended Questions and Expansion handout. Review the examples.
9. Discuss ways that parents can use questions to extend conversations when they are outside with their children.

### Central Ideas and Practice – Outdoor Resources (10 min)

1. Ask parents to revisit their outdoor resources list.
  - a. Have they used the resources on the list since they started the workshop series?
  - b. Do they have anything to add to the list?
2. Discuss the resources with families.

### Prepare for PACT Time (5 minutes)

1. Tell parents that they will soon be joining their children for a fun outdoor activity. Give each parent a clipboard with the Animal Scavenger Hunt activity page attached and a dry-erase marker.
2. Review instructions for using the guide.
3. Explain that after they finish looking for plants with their child, they will try to catch bugs using the bug catchers children created.
4. Remind parents to make sure that they are using the strategies from the Open-ended Questions and Expansion handout while they are outside with their children.

## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 3: Child Time

### Materials

- Book about bugs
- Empty Jars with lids (poke holes in lids in advance), or plastic cups with rubber bands and plastic wrap.
- Materials to decorate jars
- Examples of bugs in jars

### Welcome/Introductions (5 minutes)

Welcome children to the workshop. Explain that they are going to learn about nature and spending time outside and then go outside with their parents for an activity.

### Storytime (20 minutes)

1. Read a story to the children using interactive shared reading strategies.
2. Incorporate songs and other activities when possible.

### Activity (45 minutes)

1. Show children examples of bug jars
2. Introduce materials to the children. Talk about each item.
3. Explain that they will be making a bug jar.
4. Demonstrate how to create the jar
5. Give children materials to use to decorate their jar

### Wrap Up/PACT Time explanation (5 minutes)

1. Give children a few minutes to clean up their materials.
2. Explain that they will be joining their parents to look for insects outside.
3. Talk about where they might find insects.
4. Show children the Animal Scavenger Hunt.

## Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 3: PACT Time

### Materials

- Animal Scavenger Hunt handout
- Clipboards
- Bug jars that were created in Child Time

### PACT Time (45 minutes)

1. Before going outside, explain the Animal Scavenger Hunt and the amount of time they have.
2. Let parents know that they can use their jars to catch bugs once they have finished the Bug Guide activity.
3. Let families know where to meet when PACT Time is finished.



# Let's Learn Together Outside — Week 3: Debrief/Wrap Up ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨

## Reflection

1. Ask families to share their experience with the Animal Scavenger Hunt and jars.
2. Answer any questions families may have.
3. Provide suggestions for families to use the activity at home.
4. Talk about ways to extend the activity.
5. Thank families for attending.
6. Ask families to complete post surveys.

## Conclusion ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨

This Guide should serve as an outline for hosting family learning events that build parenting skills and provide Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® strategies within the context of an overall family engagement strategy. Consider your organization's families and their needs when determining the content and structure of your event within this framework. The best practices covered in this Guide paired with content driven by your organization's unique needs will provide a strong foundation for family events.

Take some time and look through the section that follows. It provides valuable information on PACT Time and building relationships with parents. Both are essential in creating successful family learning events.



## Resource Information ✨ ✨ ✨

### The Importance of Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time®

NCFL defined Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® early in the organization's life and has subsequently tested its implementation among diverse parents and children—from preschool through elementary school—across the United States for more than 25 years. Throughout this journey, PACT Time has been consistently affirmed as an essential strategy to maximize the benefits of families learning together. Whether in the context of a comprehensive family literacy program, a family engagement program, or as stand-alone activities designed to model family learning in the home, school, and community, fidelity to the PACT Time model can deepen the impact of family learning events. Support for structured and purposeful dual- and multi-generational learning approaches rests firmly on an expansive research base drawing from the domains of parent engagement, parent self-efficacy, dual- and multi-generational approaches to learning, and family literacy. NCFL defines PACT Time as a deliberate attempt to structure family learning using the five components of an effective PACT Time experience: Planning, Preparation, Experience, Debriefing, and Transfer to home, community, and school. Activities can include families coming together to work, play, read, learn, engage in interactive media experiences, and volunteer.

“Even when young children spend most of their waking hours in child care, parents remain the most influential adults in their lives.”

(Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000, p. 226)



### Bringing It All Together for a Successful Family Learning Event

Family learning events are an effective way to engage families directly in efforts to encourage PACT Time in the home, school, and community. Family learning events contribute to family engagement goals by providing parents and families with an opportunity to participate in hands-on, intergenerational learning experiences that can help transfer learning to the home.

## Connecting With Families ✨ ✨ ✨

### Establishing Relationships with Families

There are several considerations to make when establishing relationships with families. First, it is essential for educators and community partners to understand that all parents and families care about their children's education and have goals for them to succeed. Considerations for establishing relationships should include the level of complexity and style of communication with families, whether or not translation is provided in the home language when necessary, and the cultural appropriateness of different types of communication. With more and more diverse families gaining access to technology, concerted efforts should be made to use technology as a way to build relationships with families and to foster relationships between families.



Next, several different types of communication methods should be utilized when building relationships with families – these may include sending home weekly newsletters, posting on available websites, parent-educator communication notebooks, e-mails, phone calls, text messages, social media, parent focus groups, letters home, and in-person meetings. Information should be clear and concise, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and include pictures or graphics for visual appeal. Once effective relationships with vulnerable families are established, educators should ask families to express what their goals are for themselves and their children. This can be accomplished in several ways including, but not limited to, parent surveys, small group meetings, home visits, parent events, community events, educationally appropriate social media, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences.

During these interactions, educators should listen to the needs of the parents and facilitate their setting of goals. Educators will then have the opportunity to support families by having ongoing conversations about their children through follow-up visits, meetings, social media, or other consistent communication.

Once parents have set goals for their children, educators can help support the attainment of those goals. During this process of helping parents achieve goals that are important to them, the strength of the parent-educator relationship grows and paves the way for building effective parent skills that lead to more effective family learning opportunities. Family learning events are an effective forum for demonstrating PACT Time strategies for use in the home and community.

Although the responsibility of establishing connections with families lies with the education staff, the relationship between the school or organization and families should be a truly equal partnership. When parents feel like the relationship is equal, they are more likely to trust the educator and implement the PACT Time strategies shared at a family learning event.

The following self-assessment tool can be useful when evaluating current family and community engagement practices.





## Family and Community Engagement Self–Assessment

Questions	Current Practices
How are we involving families as partners in the learning process of their children?	
How are we presenting information to families and community members?	
How are the diverse experiences, interests, and abilities of families considered when planning programs and school activities?	
What current practices have had a positive impact on family and community relationships?	
How are we identifying and supporting families at risk of not engaging with the school?	
What opportunities, resources, and materials are made available to families and the community to enable them to participate in discussions and activities related to student learning?	
What connections have been made with the community? How have those connections been used for developing programs that support student and family learning?	
How are parents' voices included in the planning of family events?	

### Scheduling

One of the most important factors to consider when engaging vulnerable families in events is scheduling. Families are busy with work, school, and/or parenting issues that make scheduling a challenge. Consider offering events and conferences at a variety of times to allow parents who are not available during the normal school day to stay involved. If times that work for families include meal times, then hosting programs should highly consider providing a nutritious meal. Parents should be surveyed periodically to determine which times work best for them, and schedules for family learning events should be created accordingly.

### Partnerships

Family, school, and community factors all impact a child's learning and development and should be coordinated to provide high-quality experiences for each child. There are many ways to engage families through partnerships, several of which are outlined in the six types of parent involvement framework below. For each type of parent involvement listed, there are suggested best practices, each one with different expected results

## Six Types of Parent Involvement ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨

The **Six Types of Partnerships Framework** provides a common thread of understanding for schools, families, and community partners. The common categories of partnerships are:

**Parenting:** Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Provide suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.

**Communicating:** Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

Create opportunities for parents to receive report cards with their children, including conferences on improving or maintaining grades.

**Volunteering:** Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Survey families annually to identify available talents, resources, and times convenient for volunteers.

**Learning at Home:** Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-based activities, decisions, and planning.

Provide parents with calendars outlining activities for families to do at home or in the community. A sample calendar can be found at <http://30days.familieslearning.org>.

**Decision Making:** Include parents in school decisions, developing parents as leaders and representatives.

Create networks that link all families with parent representatives.

**Collaborating with the Community:** Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Provide information on community activities and resources that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

(Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Van Voorhis. 2002)

Family learning events are an effective way to engage families directly in efforts to encourage PACT Time in the home, school, and community. Family learning events contribute to family engagement goals by providing parents and families with an opportunity to participate in hands-on, intergenerational learning experiences that can help transfer learning to the home.



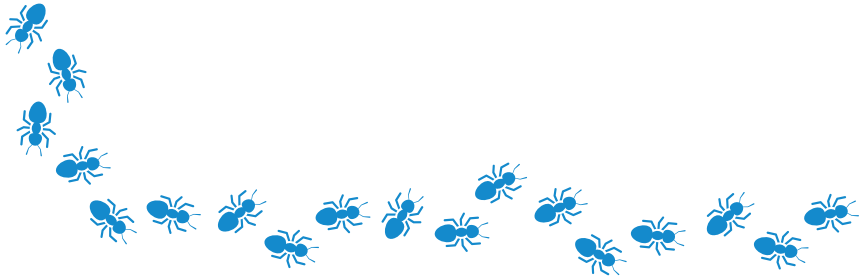
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What was your favorite thing to do outside when you were a child?



Tell about a time when you discovered something new in nature.



Tell a story about when you planted something.

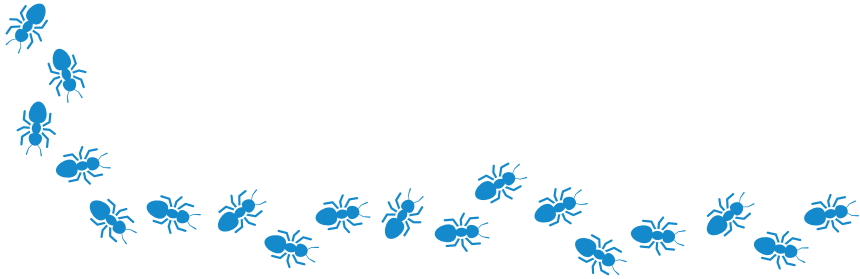


Share a story about a time you explored someplace new outdoors.





What is your favorite thing to do outside as an adult?



Tell something you have always wondered about in nature.



Share a story about a time you went to a botanical garden, zoo, or nature center.

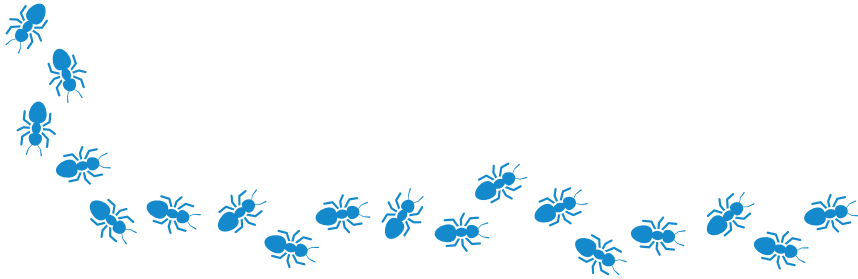


What do your children like to do outside?





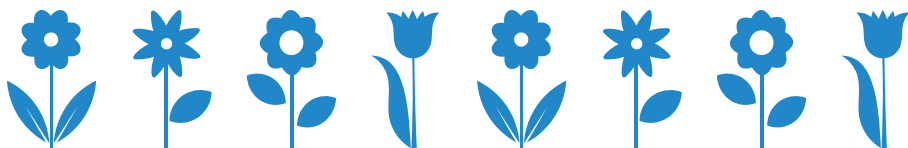
¿Cuál era su cosa favorita que hacer afuera cuando usted era un niño?



Cuente acerca de una vez cuando usted descubrió algo nuevo en la naturaleza.



Cuente una historia sobre una vez cuando usted plantó algo.

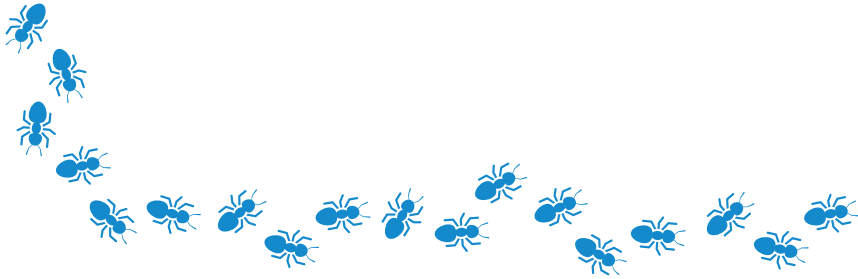


Comparta una historia sobre una vez cuando usted exploró un lugar nuevo afuera.





¿Cuál es su cosa favorita que hacer afuera como adulto?



Diga algo de qué usted siempre se ha preguntado sobre la naturaleza.



Comparta una historia sobre una vez cuando usted fue a un jardín botánico, zoológico, o centro de naturaleza.



¿Qué les gusta a sus niños hacer afuera?

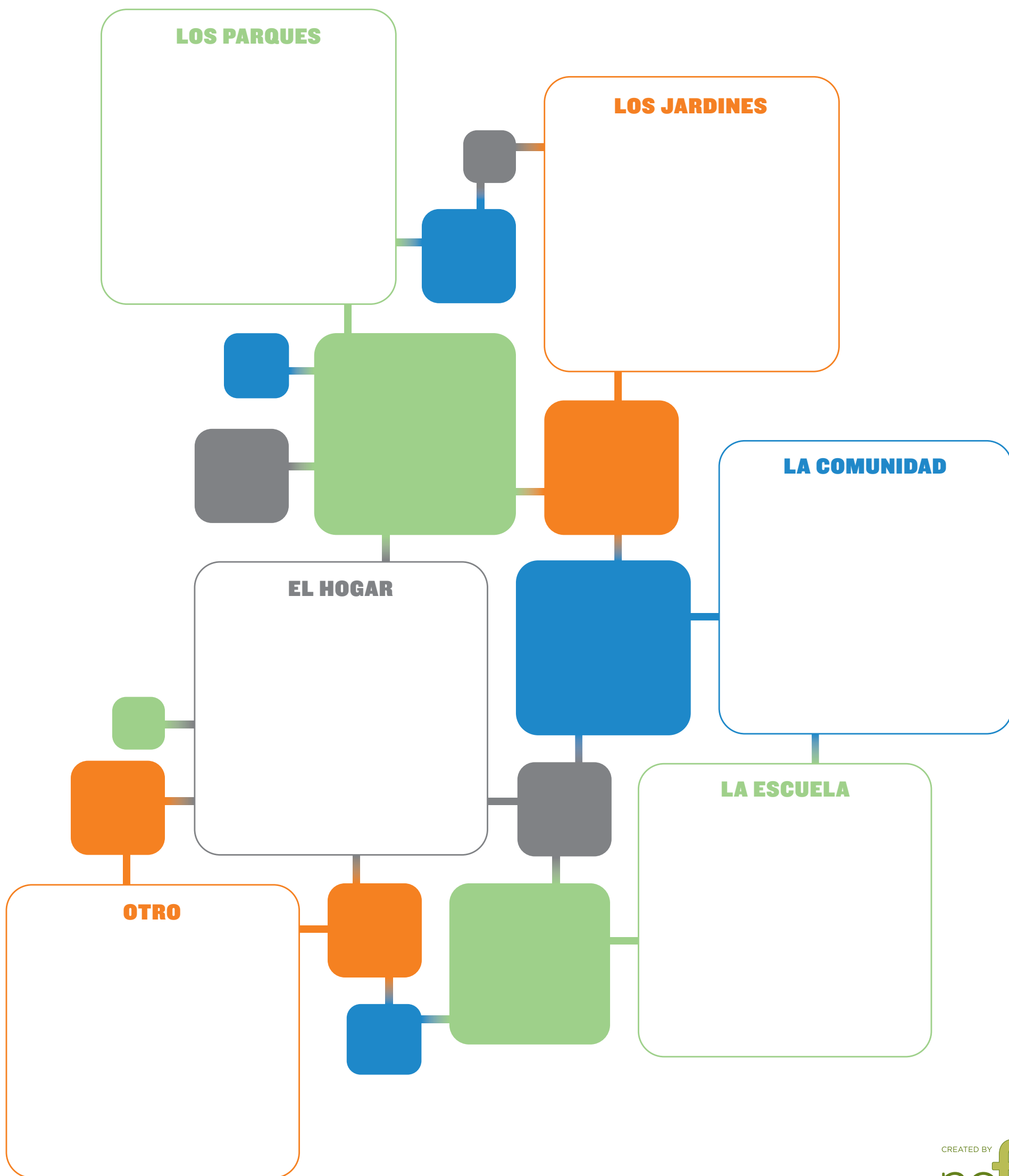






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Cuando descubre nuevos recursos, escríbalos en los recuadros.



# Let's Learn Together

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# RESPONSIVE PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS



The language that you use in many experiences and conversations can be full of learning for your child. The way you respond to your child encourages her to have conversations with you. Frequent, meaningful, and interesting conversations with you are important ways to provide your child with rich language learning. Here are ways you can respond to interest your child in conversation and help her grow and learn.

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Get on your child's level—sit, stoop, or kneel. This keeps your child from feeling uncomfortable with an adult standing over him.

Respond when your child starts a conversation. Use responses that invite her to talk with you more. "You're right, the telephone is ringing. Who do you think it might be?" "Yes, the truck is red. Do you see anything else that is red?"

During conversations, take time to speak and listen. This is a good time to help your child become a successful listener. Show him how to make eye contact so the other person knows he is listening. Show you are listening by responding with a question or by using your child's words—"Wow, that must have made you happy," or, "How did you feel when your friend shared her toy?"

Repeat what your child says, using the same words she uses. This helps her know that her words are important. It allows her to hear her own words spoken again. "You're right, it's a bird."

Talk about what you are doing or thinking. Do this while you are eating, cooking, or doing housework. Describing what you are doing gives your child words to use to describe what he is seeing. "I'm pouring the apple juice in the green cup." "I'm washing the dishes. I'll wash the silverware first and then the plates."

Build on your child's thinking and language. For example, your child might say "shoes." You might respond with, "Yes, those are your blue shoes!"

Describe what your child is doing. This helps her learn new words. This is important because you use words to help her understand how to talk about what she is doing or seeing. "You're playing with the blue truck." "Wow, look at all those blocks you have stacked. I wonder how many more you can add?"

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# INTERACCIÓN RECEPTIVA ENTRE PADRES E HIJOS



El lenguaje que usted utilice en muchas experiencias y conversaciones puede estar lleno de aprendizaje para su hijo. La manera en que responde a su hijo lo alienta a conversar con usted. Las conversaciones frecuentes, significativas e interesantes con usted son formas importantes de proporcionar un aprendizaje rico del idioma a su hijo. Aquí hay formas para responder para interesar a su hijo en conversación y ayudarlo a crecer y aprender.

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Póngase al nivel de su hijo: siéntese, agáchese o póngase de rodillas. Eso evita que el niño se sienta incómodo teniendo a un adulto de pie frente a él.

Responda cuando su hijo comience una conversación. Utilice respuestas que lo inviten a seguir hablando con usted. "Tienes razón, el teléfono está sonando. ¿Quién crees que podría ser?" "Sí, el camión es de color rojo. ¿Ves alguna otra cosa que sea de color rojo?"

Durante las conversaciones, tómese el tiempo para hablar y escuchar. Este es un buen momento para ayudar a su hijo a ser un buen oyente. Muéstrole cómo hacer contacto visual para que la otra persona sepa que la está escuchando. Muéstrole que lo escucha por responder con una pregunta o usando palabras que usa su hijo—"Vaya, eso debe haberte puesto feliz" o "¿Cómo te sentiste cuando tu amigo compartió su juguete?"

Repita lo que su hijo dice, usando las mismas palabras que utiliza él. Eso lo ayuda a saber que sus palabras son importantes. Le permite escuchar sus propias palabras repetidas nuevamente. "Tienes razón, es un pájaro."

Hable sobre lo que usted está haciendo o pensando. Hágalo mientras están comiendo, cocinando o haciendo las tareas domésticas. Describir lo que está haciendo le da a su hijo las palabras a utilizar para describir lo que está viendo. "Estoy vertiendo jugo de manzana en la copa verde." "Estoy lavando los platos. Voy a lavar los cubiertos primero y luego, los platos".

Desarrolle el pensamiento y el lenguaje de su hijo. Por ejemplo, su hijo podría decir "zapatos." Usted puede responder, "¡Sí, esos son tus zapatos azules!"

Describa lo que su hijo está haciendo. Eso lo ayuda a aprender nuevas palabras. Esto es importante porque usted usa palabras para ayudarlo a entender cómo hablar sobre lo que está haciendo o viendo. "Estás jugando con el camión azul." "Vaya, mira todos los bloques que has apilado. ¿Cuántos más podrías agregar?"

# Nature Walk






# -ANIMAL- Scavenger Hunt

- BEE OR WASP 
- WORM 
- GRASSHOPPER 
- SPIDER 
- CRICKET 
- SNAIL/SLUG 
- FLY 
- PILLBUG 
- ANT 
- MOSQUITO 
- LADYBUG 
- STINK BUG 
- BIRD 
- SQUIRREL 
- ANIMAL TRACKS 
- FEATHER 
- CATERPILLAR 
- TURTLE 
- BUTTERFLY OR MOTH 

# -ANIMAL- Scavenger Hunt



# - PLANT - Scavenger Hunt

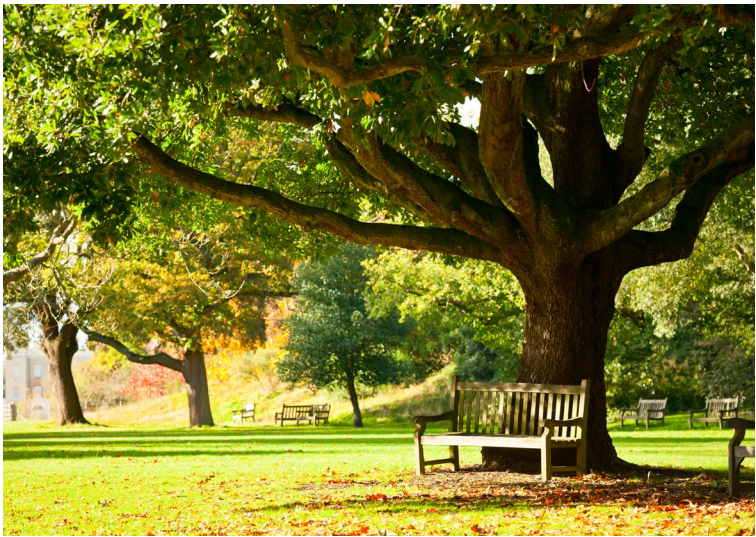
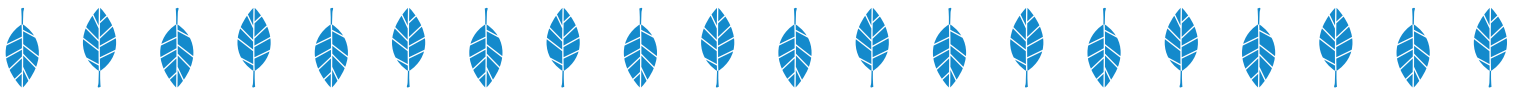
# - PLANT - Scavenger Hunt

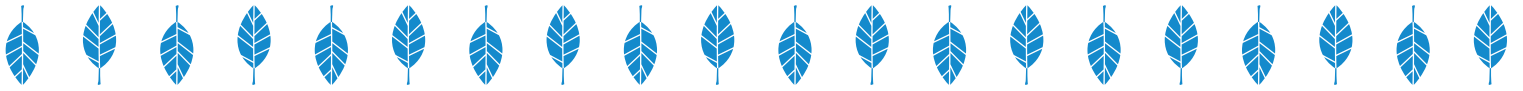


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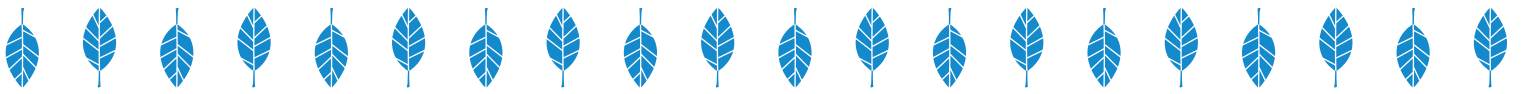






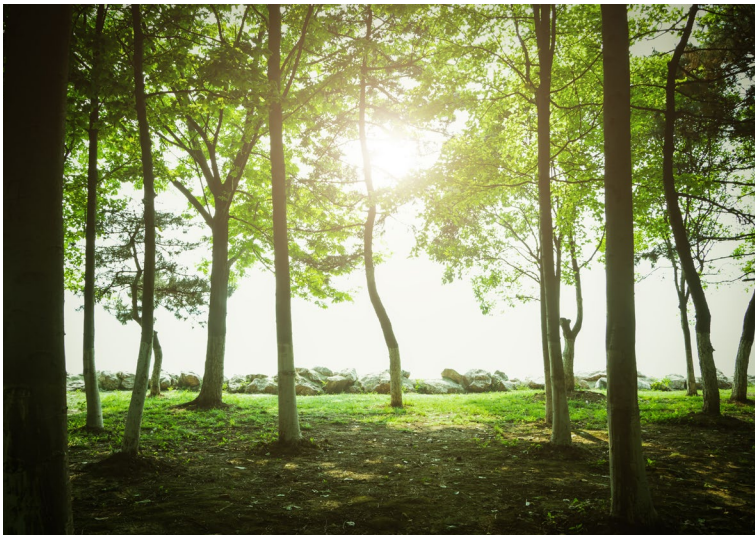


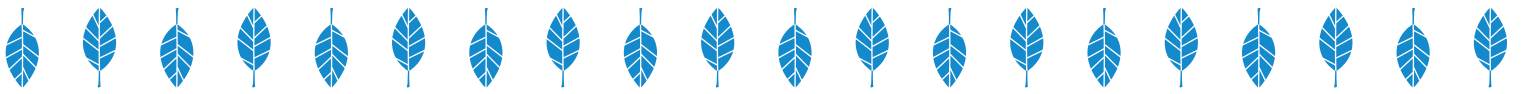












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# CONVERSATIONS ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Think of how much fun it is to make popcorn—the sound of kernels popping, the buttery smell and taste. That simple experience can be a good time for hearing new words and having fun conversations while cooking and eating together. A ride on the bus or subway or in the car can be full of new sights, sounds, and conversations. So can a trip to the grocery or laundromat or a visit to the dentist or doctor. Stop and think about the words you could use and the conversations you could have with each of these experiences. Everyday routines also provide many opportunities for expanding language.



## - PLACES -

**ZOO:** turnstile, ticket, map, primate, reptile, path or walkway, exhibit, names of particular animals and words describing them (such as enormous elephants, waddling penguins, barking seals, venomous snakes)

**GROCERY:** produce, recipes, grocery lists, coupons, receipts, shopping carts, recycled bags, the colors and names of produce (such as avocados, apricots, artichokes), types of bread (such as naan, pita, muffins, baguettes, challah)

**DENTIST OFFICE:** check-up, tooth/teeth, brush, floss, examine, x-ray, enamel, plaque, cavity

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## - ROUTINES -

**PREPARING A MEAL:** portions, cooking utensils, ingredients, following a recipe, nutrition, words tied to food preparation (such as slicing, dicing, chopping, stirring, blending, pouring, baking)

**DOING THE LAUNDRY:** articles of clothing, sizes, colors, bleach, detergent, sorting, washing, rinsing, drying, folding, putting away

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# CONVERSACIONES PARA REALIZAR EN CUALQUIER MOMENTO Y EN CUALQUIER LUGAR

Piense en lo divertido que es hacer palomitas de maíz—en el sonido que hacen los granos al estallar, el aroma a mantequilla y el sabor. Esa simple experiencia puede ser un buen momento para escuchar nuevas palabras y tener conversaciones divertidas mientras cocinan y comen juntos. Un paseo en el autobús, el metro o en carro puede estar lleno de nuevas imágenes, sonidos y conversaciones. Lo mismo puede ocurrir con un viaje a la tienda de comestibles o a la lavandería, o una visita al dentista o al médico. Deténgase y piense en las palabras que puede utilizar y las conversaciones que podría tener con cada una de estas experiencias. Las rutinas diarias también proporcionan muchas oportunidades para la expansión del lenguaje.

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## - LUGARES -

**ZOOLOGICO:** torno de entrada, boleto, mapa, primates, reptiles, ruta o pasarela, exposición, nombres de animales en particular y palabras que los describen (como elefantes enormes, los pingüinos contoneándose, las focas ladrando, serpientes venenosas)

**TIENDA:** productos agrícolas, recetas, listas de compras, cupones, recibos, carritos de la compra, bolsas recicladas, los colores y los nombres de frutas y verduras (como aguacates, albaricoques, alcachofas), tipos de pan (como naan, pita, panecillos, baguettes, jalá)

**CONSULTORIO DEL DENTISTA:** chequeo, diente/dientes, cepillo, hilo dental, examinar, radiografías, esmalte, placa dental, caries

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## - RUTINAS -

**PREPARAR UNA COMIDA:** porciones, utensilios de cocina, ingredientes, seguir una receta, nutrición, palabras vinculadas a la preparación de los alimentos (como rebanar, cortar en cubitos, picar, revolver, mezclar, verter, hornear)

**LAVAR LA ROPA:** prendas de vestir, tamaños, colores, lejía, detergente, clasificar, lavar, enjuagar, secar, plegar, desechar

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**Twig**



**Eagle**



**Stone**



**Cardinal**





**Pebble**



**Cumulus Clouds**



**Monarch butterfly**



**Grasshopper**





**Moss**



**Erosion**



**Lichen**



**Poison Ivy**





**Sunshine**



**Forest**



**Squirrel**



**Mosquito**





**Blossom**



**Trail**



**Evergreen tree**



**Waterfall**





**Star**



**Vine**



**Fungus**



**Boulder**





**Fern**



**Mushroom**



**Compost**



**Bat**







**Pine Tree**



**Bark**



**Lady Bug**



**Snake**





**Spiderweb**



**Nest**





la ramita



el águila



la piedra



el cardenal





**el guijarro**



**el cúmulo**



**la mariposa  
monarca**



**el saltamontes**





**el musgo**



**la erosión**



**el liquen**



**la hiedra venenosa**





la luz del sol



el bosque



la ardilla



el mosquito





**la flor**



**el sendero**



**el árbol de  
hoja perenne**



**la cascada**





**la estrella**



**la enredadera**



**el hongo**



**la roca**







**el helecho**



**el hongo**



**el compost**



**el murciélago**





**el pino**



**la corteza**



**la mariquita**



**la serpiente**

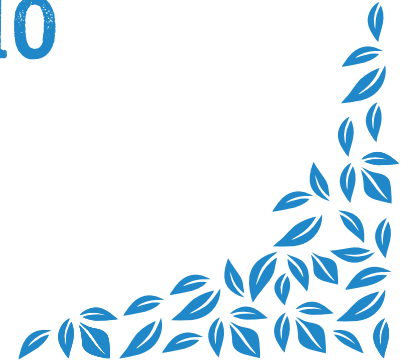




**la telaraña**



**el nido**



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# OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS & EXPANSION



## - OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS -

- Need more than one-word answers
- Can have many right answers

## - SAMPLE QUESTIONS -

- What else could (character) do?
- What would you do?
- Tell me more about...
- What do you think will happen next?
- What would happen if...?
- Why do you think that happened?

### 1 Asking open-ended questions encourages your child to answer with more than one word.

Instead of saying, "What is this?" you can say, "What do you see on this page?" and she may respond with more words to describe the picture.

Another way to ask the questions is to say, "Tell me about the picture," which encourages her to use even more words.

### 2 If your child doesn't have anything else to say, you can say something about the picture.

Say, "I see a cat in the tree," and ask your child to repeat what you said by asking, "Can you say I see a cat?"

### 3 When your child is comfortable talking about the pictures, encourage him to say more by asking a question.

You might ask, "What else do you see?" or "Tell me what you think is happening."

### 4 You can expand what your child says by repeating what she says and adding more words about it.

If your child says, "Dog barks," you could say, "Yes, the dog is barking at the cat."

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### - PREGUNTAS DE FINAL ABIERTO -

- Necesitan más de una sola palabra de respuesta
- Pueden tener muchas respuestas correctas

### - EJEMPLOS DE PREGUNTAS -

- ¿Qué otra cosa podría hacer (un personaje)?
- ¿Qué harías?
- Dime más sobre...
- ¿Qué crees que sucederá después?
- ¿Qué pasaría si...?
- ¿Por qué crees que pasó eso?

# PREGUNTAS DE FINAL ABIERTO Y AMPLIACIÓN

## 1 Hacer preguntas de final abierto alienta a su hijo a responder con más de una palabra.

En lugar de decir, “¿Qué es esto?” usted puede preguntar, “¿Qué ves en esta página?” y el niño podrá responder con más palabras para describir la imagen.

Otra manera de hacer las preguntas es decir, “Háblame de la imagen,” que anima al niño a utilizar aún más palabras.

## 2 Si su hijo no dice nada más, usted puede decir algo sobre la imagen.

Diga, “Veo un gato en el árbol,” y pida a su hijo que repita lo que usted dijo por preguntar, “¿Puedes decir veo un gato?”

## 3 Cuando su hijo se sienta cómodo hablando de las imágenes, animelo a decir más por hacerle una pregunta.

Podría preguntar, “¿Qué otra cosa ves?” o “Dime qué piensas que ocurre”.

## 4 Usted puede ampliar lo que su hijo dice por repetir lo que dice y añadir más palabras al respecto.

Si su hijo dice, “Perro ladra,” usted puede decir, “Sí, el perro le ladra al gato”.

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