

# Families for Literacy Program Newsletter

## October, 2019

**Tutors: please go over this newsletter (whatever is appropriate) with your adult students and encourage them to visit the Story Times with their children, it's a lot of fun and so very important:**

**Children who grow up being read to, grow up to love books and reading.  
Join our free Library Story Times to become a Family of Readers:**



**Lakeport Library, 1425 N. High Street, Fridays, 10:15 am and 2:30 pm**  
**Middletown Library, 21256 Washington Street, Middletown, Tuesdays, 11:30 am**  
**Redbud Library, 14785 Burns Valley Road, Clearlake, Thursdays, 10:30 am**



**Are your children spending too much time inside? Learn the high cost of "nature deficit disorder" - and how easily you can avoid it by getting your kids outdoors.**

"You've probably had this experience: The kids have been cooped up all morning and now you're heading out to the park, just to get them outside. In the car, they squabble and sulk — the oldest doesn't want to go, the second complains about the third's singing, the third begins to cry — and you're on the verge of losing it. No one, you're convinced, will make it back from this outing alive. But when the kids pile out of the car, everything changes. They begin running around, exploring, getting dirty, discovering rocks, and making up games. When it's time to pack up, everyone is cold, muddy, and hungry but miraculously transformed." Connie Matthiessen



Does that sound familiar? What happened, exactly? Call it the **restorative power of nature**: nature's therapeutic effects on children and adults. Time spent outdoors reduces symptoms in children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Exposure to nature can increase self-discipline, nature makes people more caring. Nature plays a fundamental role in stimulating kids' imaginations and creativity, promoting health, and building resistance to stress and depression. It helps to reduce childhood obesity and other physical and developmental issues.

**Nature deficit disorder:** Many children today have little contact with the natural world. Children today spend far more time indoors than their parents did. Kids and teens age 8 to 18 spend an average of more than seven hours a day looking at screens. The new warning from the AHA recommends parents limit screen time for kids to a maximum of just two hours per day. For younger children, age 2 to 5, the recommended limit is one hour, or less per day.

### Go out and play

Crisp, cooler weather, falling leaves, a gorgeous landscape of orange and gold and Halloween lurking just around the corner: October with all its magic and with so many fun things to do is a great time to go outdoors and fall in love with nature.

\***Re-discover old favorites** like "Hide and seek", "Chinese jump rope", "Duck, duck, goose",

"Hopscotch" (<http://grandparents.about.com/od/projectsactivities/qt/Hopscotch.htm>);

"Swing the statue" (<http://grandparents.about.com/od/projectsactivities/qt/Statue.htm>)

"Red light, green light" ([http://grandparents.about.com/od/projectsactivities/qt/Red\\_Light.htm](http://grandparents.about.com/od/projectsactivities/qt/Red_Light.htm))



\***Make a nature collection.** This is a great time to talk to kids about leaves, their different shapes and colors; you could play a matching game and see if they can match the fallen leaves with the right tree.



\***Make "Nature Faces"**. Go on a nature walk and pick up whatever treasures you come across. Then use your treasures to make fun nature faces. They can be made virtually anywhere, at any time, so remember this activity next time your kids say, "I'm bored!"



1. Gather natural materials. A paper gift bag is a handy way to carry around your natural



treasures. Choose all kinds of different items, such as leaves, flowers, moss, grass, rocks, pine cones....

2. Two matching items can be used for eyes or ears, or a handful of the same item can become hair or other accessories.

3. Spread out your materials so they are easy to see. Younger kids might enjoy sorting the items and putting them together by category.

4. Clear off a spot on the ground, and create faces! It might be helpful for some kids if a chalk circle is drawn on the ground so they will have a starting point for their face creations.

If your kids are too small to make their own faces, let them play with the materials while you make simple faces, and then let them point out eyes, nose, etc. (or ask them what various parts are called).

**Do not forget to take pictures of your work!**

\***Go on a fall scavenger hunt.** Make a list of various fall items (acorns, leaves, rocks, etc.) and see who can find everything on their list first, or visit a nature trail (Boggs Mountain, anyone?), or the state park.



\***Go to the pumpkin patch.** As Halloween approaches, there are plenty of opportunities for fun outdoors, including planned events. Local farmers are offering homegrown pumpkins and other produce, a corn maze and pumpkin patches (on HWY 29, across from rainbow AG) - or check out the newspaper for events.

\***Go on a picnic.** Even if it is only on a blanket in the backyard, a picnic is a nice way to get in some outdoor time enjoying the weather.



\***It is still time to plant your winter garden:** Creating an organic garden in the back yard can be a major draw for children - in different ways: getting down and dirty, finding bugs and bees and worms, or being more of an observer, and even \***Take digital photos!** Don't just take pictures of the kids. Let them use the camera to take pictures of anything they find interesting.

\***Visit the playground.** Playgrounds are not very crowded in the fall since most kids are busy with school-related activities, but the weather is perfect for playing outside.

\***Go bird-watching.** Head outside with some binoculars and a bird book and see how many of your native birds you can identify.

\***Go fishing, or to the beach.** If you can make a trip, fall is an incredible time to go to the beach.

\***Go on a bike ride.**

\***Go star-gazing.**

\***Play football or another outdoor sport.**

\***Rake leaves and jump in them.** Nothing is quite as enticing as a pile of fallen leaves; the urge to jump, kick and dive into them is something instinctive. But before they begin playing in the leaves show your children that work can be fun too: get those little gardening hands on a pint sized rake and let them help rake them up.



Little Jack Pumpkin Face lived on a vine  
Little Jack Pumpkin Face thought it was fine  
First he was small and green  
Then he was big and yellow.  
Little Jack Pumpkin Face is a fine fellow.

**Autumn (let the children act out the words to this seasonal rhyme)**

In autumn when the trees are brown  
The little leaves come tumbling down  
They do not make the slightest sound  
But lie so quietly on the ground  
Until the wind comes puffing by  
And blows them off towards the sky.

