

# CONNECTIONS

A weekly newsletter brought to you by

*Kids Path*

a service of AuthoraCare Collective

## Strong, yet Flexible

*Lessons from Nature*

A number of years ago, I met a young woman who had immigrated to the U.S., having been born and grown up in Thailand. "Suree" taught me about her culture, including the importance of bamboo to the Thai people. Suree spoke of the versatility of bamboo and its many uses in Thailand.

Suree said that she had grown up learning to cook with bamboo, as it was a good source of vitamins, and was used in a variety of recipes. I also learned that bamboo is incredibly strong, and is used to make instruments and furniture as well as to build houses. Suree shared that she had found a bamboo forest in nearby Mebane, NC, and gathered bamboo to add to her meals in the U.S.

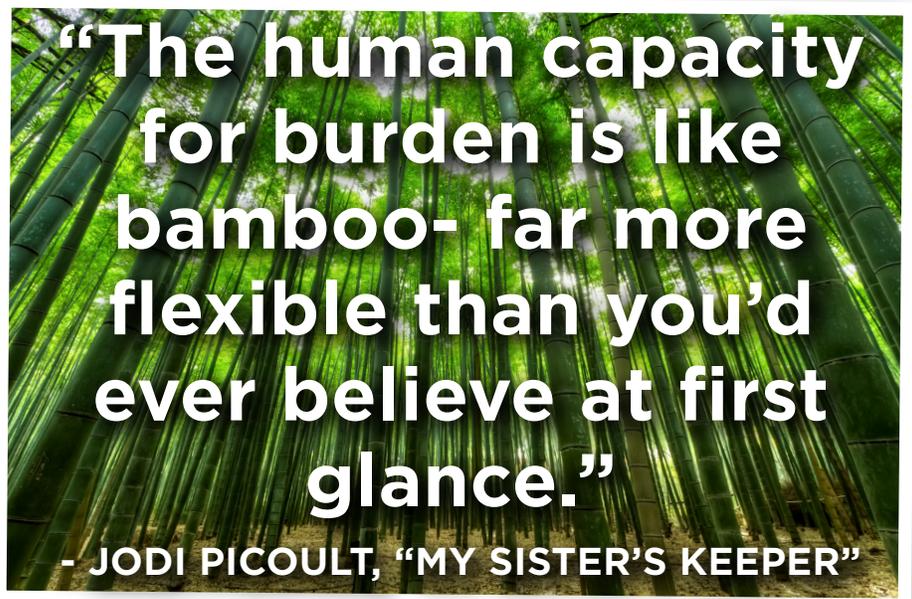
As I learned more about bamboo, I saw its contrast of flexibility and strength.

Bamboo is gentle as it grows, and yet in a

storm, it bends over and then returns to its upright position. Some consider bamboo to be a symbol of harmony and balance in a person's life. In some cultures, bamboo is a symbol of prosperity, and in others, a symbol of friendship. In many cultures, bamboo has come to symbolize strength, flexibility, and resilience.

We can learn so much from nature. As children grow and mature, there will be strong winds that may throw them off balance. Guiding and supporting our children so that they are able to adapt to change can nurture their flexibility. As children continue to grow and become more resilient, it strengthens them to meet the next challenge.

Science tells us that being outside has many physical and emotional benefits. We hope you will take time to enjoy nature with your children this week and experience the well-being it brings to your family.



*Patti Gasparello*

Patti Gasparello, MSW, LCSW

Director of Kids Path





# CONNECTIONS

## Children

ISSUE 3 | 4/24/2020

### LEARNING RESOURCE

#### Getting Outside

This week, we're sharing activities and resources related to the importance of getting kids outside. The information on this site is focused on pediatric health. This page gives ideas and information for the benefits of playing outside. When you all are feeling exhausted from staring at screens for work, school, and hopefully some virtual human interaction, getting outside to collect items for an art project or going for a walk will counteract the fatigue. Many greenways are still open in Guilford and Alamance, or just create a daily practice of exploring your neighborhood. Rain or shine, cool or warm, there are many opportunities to get outside and play.

[Click Here to Learn More About Getting Outside](#)



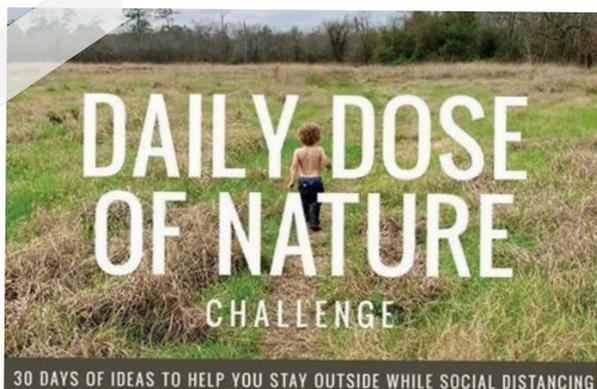
### MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

#### Daily Dose of Nature Challenge

This is a fun challenge (pictured left) that offers 30 days of activities to “challenge” you to try new games outside. We hope these activities will inspire families and as you try the challenges each day, take a picture and create a Covid journal for your kids to remember this moment in history. Most of these activities require few if any items. The activities are designed to be hands on and experiential which will engage the senses. These activities are a great way to “ground” and be present in the moment, for you and your child. Enjoy following the challenge or even creating your own versions.

Learn more about some of these activities:

[Stone Soup](#) | [Sink or Float](#)  
[Nature Faces](#) | [Salt Dough Fossils](#)

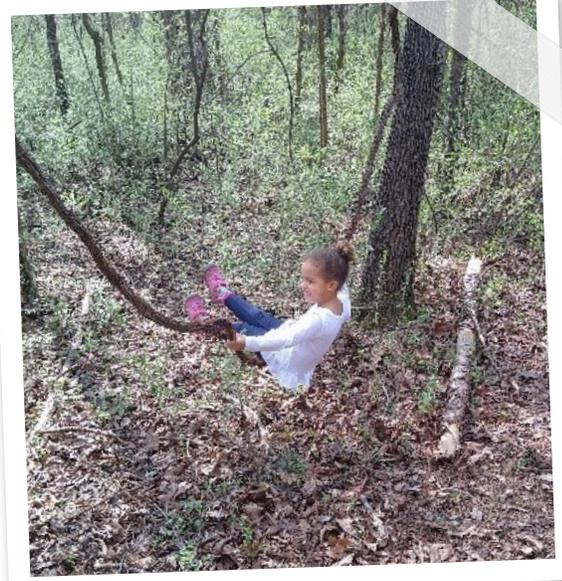


- |   |                            |                        |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. NATURE BRACELETS                     | 11. ROCK PAINTING          | 21. TINY TREASURES     |
| 2. BIRD WATCHING                        | 12. RAINBOW COLOR HUNT     | 22. SIGNS OF SPRING    |
| 3. PAINT WITH NATURE                    | 13. TREE/LEAF RUBBINGS     | 23. NIGHT WALK         |
| 4. WORM HUNTING                         | 14. BUILD A NEST           | 24. NATURE FACES       |
| 5. MUD PIES                             | 15. TAKE A CLOSER LOOK     | 25. NEW TRAIL          |
| 6. EXPLORE A NEW PLACE<br>CLOSE TO HOME | 16. BUILD A BUG HOTEL      | 26. PAINT WITH MUD     |
| 7. STONE SOUP                           | 17. GO ON A BIKE RIDE      | 27. WATER PLAY         |
| 8. PUDDLE JUMPING                       | 18. NATURE SENSORY BIN     | 28. SALT DOUGH FOSSILS |
| 9. NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT                | 19. LOOK FOR ANIMAL TRACKS | 29. EGG HUNT           |
| 10. SINK OR FLOAT                       | 20. BUILD A DEN/FORT       | 30. ANIMAL OBSERVATION |

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

### Finding a Special Spot in Nature

Shortly after my daughter’s school closed, we took a walk through an empty trail near our house. We stumbled onto a natural tree swing, and she has now spent hours visiting “her swing” along this trail. This has become a special ritual in her day and helped us all slow down and pay attention to the beauty and life around us. Whatever form it may take, finding a special spot in nature can provide both connection and security during times of uncertainty. If possible, encourage your child to get outdoors and find a special space to make their own. This may mean venturing down a trail near your home or setting up an old camping chair by that ant hill in your yard. If you don’t have access to an outdoor space (or even if you do!), consider setting up a special “nature” window in your home. You might place a special blanket or pillow nearby and your child may want to decorate with pebbles and leaves they’ve found outside, bird-watching posters, flower cut-outs from magazines, or hand-drawn pictures of nature. Amazon sells several bird feeders that attach directly to your window, and you may want to get into birdwatching or star gazing now that you have a special space. Perhaps your child enjoys reading or coloring; this could be the perfect space to dive into a nature-themed story or coloring book! Hopefully, this can be a place your child returns to again and again.



### Getting Social

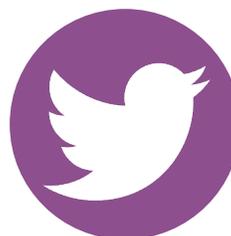
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# CONNECTIONS

*Tweens & Teens*

ISSUE 3 | 4/24/2020

## LEARNING RESOURCE

### Online Nature Resources

HAPPY EARTH WEEK!

While it's very normal to feel more nervous or anxious during difficult challenges or times of grief, there are ways we can cope through big changes. Having a routine or schedule can help you feel some normalcy in your life, and this new routine could include when you go to bed, when you get up in the morning, when you eat meals, when you have social time, and when you exercise. Being outdoors in nature can be a way of adding something interesting and creative to your daily routine, whether you go on a walk or jog, garden, hike, bike, practice a sport, watch for birds, or look up at the stars at night. It's important to let yourself connect to nature in a way that can bring you peace, understanding, and self-kindness.

Have you ever gone on a walk and felt much better afterwards? That's because doing any kind of activity (like walking, jogging, or biking) with left and right repetitive movements of your feet, actually helps to balance the left and right sides of your brain. There's science behind how good nature can be for you, how cool is that? When you walk, jog, run or bike, it can improve your mood while reducing anxiety and stress. Try to take a closer look at flowers, trees, green grass, leaves, and spring blooms around you. Being in nature can be a reminder that even in times of stress, grief, and loss, there is growth and beauty surrounding you.

Here are some resources for connecting to nature on a rainy day or expanding your knowledge of the world around you:

[NATGEO@HOME](#) | [National Aquarium](#) | [Houston Zoo](#)

[North Carolina Zoo](#) | [Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park](#)



## MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

### Phone Apps that May Inspire Your Connection with Nature

**[Audubon:](#)** This phone app includes a field guide to North American birds, and this is a great way for you to identify birds you see in nature. You can look up and read about birds you see, add your sightings, and get to know what birds others are noticing in your area. (Available on iPhone and Android, free, age 8+)

**[The Night Sky:](#)** This phone app can help you stargaze, while identifying constellations, planets, and stars above you. If you tap on the information icon, you can read about the history of planets and constellations. (Available on iPhone and Android, free, age 8+)

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

### Nature Phone Photography

Use nature photography as a way to inspire family connection, art, and self-expression. You'll need a digital camera, tablet, or cell phone. If you or family members prefer to use this activity tech-free, another option would be to draw or sketch what you see. For this week's activity, ask each member of your family to get creative and use nature photography to capture different feelings, thoughts, or ideas. Step outside in the sunlight, breathe in some fresh air, and take time to notice whatever you see around you including interesting colors, textures, shadows, and shapes. If you can do so safely, take a walk with your family while you photograph. Here are some ideas on photography prompts you and family members can use for this activity; take a photo that represents:



- Yourself
- Your family
- Your special person who has an illness or has died
- Any feelings or emotions that come to mind
- Changes and loss
- A special memory of the person in your life with an illness, or the special person who died

You may choose to take a photograph for any or all these prompts, remember this is your artistic expression. Sometime during this activity, take a fun nature selfie of you and/or your family to capture this moment. Next, come together in a comfortable space after everyone has taken their photos and made any edits they wish. Each person can decide whether to share their photography and anything you would like to say out loud about your creation. Remember to have some fun with this activity and observe any similarities and/or differences in your family's nature photography.

### Getting Social

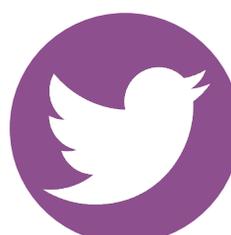
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# CONNECTIONS

## Parents & Caregivers

ISSUE 3 | 4/24/2020

### LEARNING RESOURCE

#### Why Going Outside is Good for Your Health, Especially Right Now

This recent article from Forbes describes the physical and mental benefits we can gain from the outdoors. It also shares some simple ways that we can all experience the outdoors, even when staying close to our homes.

[Click Here to Read the Article](#)



### MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

#### Live Nature Cams

This free website features hundreds of live nature cams. You can watch a baby hummingbird hatch from an egg, get an owl's-eye-view of treetops in Montana, enjoy the relaxing sights and sounds of a day at the beach in Hawai'i, or watch the underwater action of a tropical coral reef.

[See the Live Nature Cams Here!](#)

  
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## FAMILY ACTIVITY

### Gardening with Family

Did you grow up in a family that gardened? Lucky for me, I did. I am so thankful my mom shared her fascination and love of nature with her children. And though she died many years ago, whenever I garden I feel very close to her. All these years later, I know I can always turn to the natural world to find a deep sense of peace, wonder and connection.

If you'd like to share gardening with your family, it can be simple and affordable (a single pack of seeds can cost less than two dollars!). And if you've never gardened before you can start small by planting a single pot of flowers. Or if you have the option and inclination, you can dig up a patch of earth and grow an array of flowers, vegetables, or herbs. Even a tree! Some families, like mine, have a tradition of planting a small tree, shrub or flowering plant to honor the life of a loved one who has died. Some families do the same to celebrate the birth of a child or another milestone such as a wedding or anniversary. Or a historical moment in time. Does your family have a tradition like this? Do you want to start one? Or do you just want to garden for fun?

Here's a fun and easy option for getting kids started with gardening: Grow a "sunflower house"!

**Overview:** Sunflowers are easy to grow. Just plant them when temperatures are warm during the late spring and summer, in a spot with plenty of sun. Sunflower seeds are edible for humans and wildlife.

**Materials:** Sunflower seeds, Morning glory or moonflower seeds, Shovel

**Location:** Choose a location with full sun (6-8 hours of direct sun a day) and well-drained soil

### Instructions:

1. Begin by picking out a good spot to grow sunflowers. Sunflowers grow best in full sun and prefer moist but well-drained soil. Your sunflower house can be any size or shape you want it to be, but a good start is to plant one covering an area that is 4' x 4'.
2. Next, create the house outline by sprinkling flour on the ground to mark the perimeter of the house where the sunflower "walls" will grow. Clear the weeds and grass in a 6-12" wide area along this perimeter line to form a planting bed.
3. Next, plant seeds in this cleared area. The plants that grow will form the "walls" of your house. You can plant seeds in a single row or in multiple rows to create thicker "walls." Make sure to leave at least one unplanted opening big enough to serve as your doorway.
4. Water your seeds and keep the soil moist, especially while the baby plants are young. Once your plants are older, they will grow deep roots and be able to handle drier conditions.
5. Once the plants have a few sets of leaves, gently place mulch around them to help keep the weeds and grass from growing back and competing with your sunflowers. Once the sunflowers are established, you can also plant a pack of morning glory or moonflower seeds to grow up the stalks of the sunflowers!
6. Depending on the variety of sunflower you planted, plants will begin to produce flowers in 7 to 12 weeks.
7. Time to play! Let your kids decorate and furnish the house by adding a stone doorstep or maybe chairs and a table for visiting with friends. Let them explore and play in the house during outdoor time.

For more family gardening ideas check out [kidsgardening.org](http://kidsgardening.org)



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## Kids Path Connections Resources

### How to Explain COVID-19 to Children

- **Talking to Children about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**  
<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid19>
- **Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus**  
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>
- **How to Talk To Your Kids about COVID-19**  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/kids-covid-19/art-20482508>
- **Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19**  
[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

### Resources for Food and Other Assistance

- **Phone Call regarding resources/food:** Dial 211
- **United Way:** resources including regarding food, housing  
Burlington, Greensboro, Orange Co.
- **Texting tool for students who are on free/reduced lunch for info:** Text FOODNC to 877-877

### Emotional Health Resources

- **The Kellin Foundation – A Variety of Resources**  
Builds resilient children, families, and adults through behavioral health services, victim advocacy, and community outreach.  
<http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html>
- **Now's a Good Time to Teach Your Kids to Play on Their Own**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/parenting/kids-independent-play-coronavirus-quarantine.html>
- **If Your Kid Keeps Asking 'Why,' Give Them an Answer**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/parenting/kids-asking-questions-development.html>



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Formerly Hospice & Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell & Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro

- **4 Ways to Help Your Anxious Kid**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/parenting/coronavirus-help-anxious-kid.html>
- **You and your Kids Can't Stand Each Other – Now What? – The New York Times**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/well/family/coronavirus-quarantine-conflict-family-meeting.html>
- **The Heartbreaking Reality of Parenting in the Coronavirus Pandemic**  
[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/parenting-social-distancing-coronavirus\\_n\\_5e6fb52ac5b6eab7793a0c4d](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/parenting-social-distancing-coronavirus_n_5e6fb52ac5b6eab7793a0c4d)
- **Guide to Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty**  
[https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide\\_to\\_living\\_with\\_worry\\_and\\_anxiety\\_amidst\\_global\\_uncertainty\\_en-us.pdf](https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf)
- **Teaching Our Kids (and Ourselves) Mindfulness to Get Us Through the Coronavirus Anxiety – The Washington Post**  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/20/teaching-our-kids-ourselves-mindfulness-get-us-through-cononavirus-anxiety/>

## Educational Resources

- **Teachers Share Their Favorite Free Learning Websites and Apps for Kids**  
[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/free-online-learning-activities-for-kids\\_l\\_5e73848dc5b63c3b648bc968](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/free-online-learning-activities-for-kids_l_5e73848dc5b63c3b648bc968)
- **Veteran Home-Schoolers Share Tips for Parents during Coronavirus Closures**  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/18/veteran-homeschoolers-share-tips-parents-during-coronavirus-school-closures/>
- **Khan Academy**  
A nonprofit with the mission to provide a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere.  
<https://www.khanacademy.org>
- **Scholastic Learn from Home**  
Day-by-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking and growing  
<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>
- **TED-Ed**  
Free daily lessons, activities and challenges to support student, parents and teachers  
<https://ed.ted.com/>
- **Duolingo**  
The world's best way to learn a language  
<https://www.duolingo.com/>

## Fun Activities

- **18 At-Home Ideas to Keep Kids Busy and Entertained During the Coronavirus Outbreak**  
<https://apple.news/A5MpYtgBZTfajPmUofqJ9Dg>
- **Video Games to Play with Your Kids That Won't Drive You Crazy**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/arts/video-games-kids-parents-covid-virus-coronavirus.html>

## Activities to Remember Your Loved One

- **The Dougy Center**  
The national center for grieving children and families  
<https://www.dougy.org>

## Behavioral Health

Mental Health, Bereavement Care, Substance Abuse, Suicide Intervention, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- **The Kellin Foundation – A Variety of Resources**  
Builds resilient children, families, and adults through behavioral health services, victim advocacy, and community outreach  
<http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html>
- **Alamance County Crisis Care: RHA Walk-In Crisis Center** (behavioral health and/or substance abuse)
  - Walk-in between 8 am and 3 pm M-W-F
  - “Crisis Hour” between 8am and 8pm Monday - Friday
  - Payment based on a sliding scale to those living in Alamance Co., no charge if unemployed
  - 2732 Anne Elizabeth Dr.
  - Burlington NC 27215
  - **336-229-5905**
  - 336-229-5906 - FAX #
- **Cardinal Innovations**
  - Includes 24 hr/7 day a week crisis and mobile crisis team
  - Only serves the following counties – Alamance, Caswell, Person, Orange and Chatham
  - **1-800-939-5911**
- **Open Door Clinic**
  - For those not eligible for Medicaid or stat funding
  - **336-570-9800**
- **AuthoraCare Collective and Kids Path**
  - Adult/Child Bereavement/Grief Counseling
  - **336-532-0100**
- **Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)**
  - Children under 3 years
  - 336-334-5601

- **Residential Treatment Services of Alamance**
  - Detoxification & Crisis Stabilization
  - Offers recovery programs that are invaluable to those struggling to overcome alcoholism, addiction and/or mental illness.
  - **336-227-7417**
- **Crisis Intervention Team**
  - If **911** is called, Alamance Co. does have law enforcement members trained to handle calls related to mental health or substance abuse.
  - Prefer that the above is used instead of CIT
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Also Veterans Crisis Line)**
  - **1-800-273-8255**
  - Call will begin with a recording, follow prompts
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline Web chat**
  - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>
  - Texting option: text HOME to **741741** (Not a part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, but you are connected to qualified professionals who can help)
- **Mobile Crisis Team** (by phone or home visit)
  - Provided by Psychotherapeutic Services
  - 24-7, 365 days a year
  - **336-538-6990**
  - 336-538-6991 - FAX #
- **Mobile Crisis Services—other Counties**
  - **Caswell Co.**
    - Provided by Psychotherapeutic Services
    - 24-7, 365 days a year
    - **336-538-6990**
    - 336-538-6991 - FAX #
  - **Orange and Person Co.**
    - Freedom House
    - Offers residential recovery services for adults who are alcohol or drug addicted and those who are dually diagnosed with a mental illness
    - **1-877-967-8844**
  - **Durham Co.**
    - Alliance Behavioral Healthcare
    - Serves people in Durham, Wake, Cumberland and Johnston counties
    - Offers treatment and support for mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities
    - **1-800-510-9132**
    - Call will begin with a recording, follow prompts