



## Young Nature Explorers Itinerary

**Dates:** July 8-10

**Time:** 9:30 am-11:30 am

**Location:** Independence Grove

**What to wear:** Sturdy closed toe shoes, clothing that is appropriate for the weather, movement, and exploration. Wear or bring long, lightweight pants for field explorations; optional - hat and sunglasses. On water day, water shoes or shoes that can get wet and muddy and will stay on feet are appropriate. Clothing that can get wet and muddy.

**What to bring:** snack, water bottle, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

### Tuesday, July 8: Woodlands

*Park at the North Bay Pavilion, follow signs past the restrooms to gathering area under the oaks.*

Children play and begin exploring items that will get them ready for exploring the woods. Adults sign in and get name tags. Big Questions: What Lives and Grows in the Woods? How do Things Move? Using their senses and observation skills, adults will follow the children's lead to see what interests them most and what incredible discoveries they make. A spark or invitation for creative play may also be followed. What Magic will Unfold?

### Wednesday, July 9: Prairies & Grasslands

*Park at the North Bay Pavilion, follow signs past the restrooms to gathering area under the oaks.*

Play and sign in before we head out to the prairie area where we will sweep net for insects. Big Questions again: What Lives and Grows in a Prairie? How do Things Move? Following correct methods for insect collecting, we will discover insects of many shapes, sizes and colors along with other critters. Perhaps someone will want to create an ant circus?

### Thursday, July 10: Water Day

*Meet at the Independence Grove Canoe Launch, across from the North Bay Pavilion*

Play and sign in. We are heading to the river to discover what lives in the water. Big Questions: What Lives and Grows in the Water? How do Things Move? Using nets, we will be catching many critters to observe and investigate. We'll be in the water so there are many things to do and try. Allow children to use their imaginations and creativity.

**Program Instructor:** Jan Ward, [jward@lcfpd.org](mailto:jward@lcfpd.org), 847-276-5378

Please email [AskAnEducator@LCFPD.org](mailto:AskAnEducator@LCFPD.org) for general questions.

*\*Be sure to complete and return all forms at least one week prior to the start of the program.*

*\*Please note that some activities may be substituted or modified due to time constraints, site resources, participant interests, or inclement weather. In the event of prolonged inclement weather (excessive heat or thunderstorms and lightning) the day's session will be canceled.*

*\*See the backside for 40 Astounding Benefits of Outdoor Nature Play for Kids! Watch your kids this week to see if they are developing or engaging in any of these skills and if you see any of these benefits. It can be truly amazing and magical!*





### **Character development**

- Higher levels of creativity
- Increases appreciation and regard for the environment
- Builds imagination
- Teaches responsibility
- Creates opportunities for awe and wonder
- Encourages healthy risk-taking
- Promotes experimentation
- Develops critical thinking skills
- Improves social skills
- Improves self-discipline
- Develops empathy
- Promotes a deeper understanding of the world
- Increase life satisfaction
- Increases levels of kindness

### **Physical health**

- Lower blood pressure
- Decreased rates of obesity
- Provides sensory stimuli
- Increases energy levels
- Increases vitamin D levels
- Reduced risk of bone disease
- Reduced risk of heart disease
- Improves nutrition
- Improves eyesight
- Improves balance
- Improves range of movement
- Promotes muscle development
- strengthens immune system

### **Mental and Emotional Health**

- Improves cognition and thinking
- Increases focus
- Bolsters resilience against stress
- Increases mood
- Decreases anxiety
- Builds confidence
- Provides regulation sensory input for the nervous system
- Builds mindfulness skills
- Improves short term memory
- Decreases anger
- Reduces ADHD symptoms
- Boosts confidence
- Improved self-regulation skills

