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Comfort Play & Teach:

A Positive Approach to Parenting™

Every Day

Comfort, Play & Teach™: Involving Your Infant, Toddler or Preschooler in Caring about the Environment

Young children are naturally curious about what they see in their world, asking questions about the weather, animals, plants, and stones. It is never too early to develop your child's understanding of the earth and the living creatures that share it with us. Here are some **Comfort, Play & Teach™** tips that will encourage parents to explore and appreciate the environment with their infant, toddler or preschooler.



Comfort

- You and your infant or toddler can visit parks, gardens or other natural spots near where you live. Is there a beach, a forest or a marshy area to explore? Talk about the different things that you can see such as birds, trees, plants, insects or animals. This will help your child to learn about what is around him and to feel safe and comfortable as he experiences the natural world.
- Consider getting a small pet (such as a goldfish or hamster), or planting a garden or indoor terrarium. Your preschooler can participate in caring for a living thing as she notices different parts of its life cycle, and spend quality time sharing her questions with you. What she learns from caring for her own pet or plant could one day affect her feelings about endangered species or deforestation.



Play

- Play recordings of music that include nature sounds such as waves lapping, rain falling, birds singing or insects chirping. You can dance with your baby as you enjoy the gentle sounds, or provide your toddler with colourful scarves or squares of tissue paper to express his response to the music and sounds in creative ways.
- Make your own toys and craft materials together using recyclable materials and beautiful junk. Musical instruments can be made from empty ice cream containers, paper towel rolls and aluminum pie pans. Create beautiful collages using old magazines, flyers and scraps like onion bags and bottle tops. Your preschooler will discover new uses for old things as he plays and creates!



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Teach

- Take your infant or toddler to the library and sign out age-appropriate magazines published by various wildlife organizations. There are some wonderful materials designed to introduce the youngest children to nature concepts through photographs and simple text that will encourage their curiosity and their emerging literacy skills.
- Read books with your preschooler such as *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. This will provide an excellent opportunity for your child to learn about how some things that people do can be harmful to the earth and to think about how we might treat the environment with more care and respect.

What a child will be depends on you and me™

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