

"The world on your doorstep ..." Ideas to explore nature with stories and creativity

The following text describes a project modul from the work of the Schleswig-Holstein library center. It was developed during the period of the COVID 19 pandemic as a part of the project "Sustainability and storytelling . (www.nachhaltig-erzaehlen.de).

Translations of materials from this activities are possible on request: brandt@bz-sh.de

Spring 2020: A pandemic has changed everyday life. Suddenly so many things are no longer possible. Other challenges and feelings determine thinking, acting and making decisions: compassion and care, solidarity and cohesion, but also fears and tension, loneliness and longing for freedom, conflicts, restlessness and patience, hope for the future and the provisionality of all plans.

Children experience all these things too, but differently than adults. At the same time, families now spend more time together in a confined space than usual.

There is no magic formula that promises help in this situation. But there are experiences and resources that have already proven to be beneficial and helpful for body and soul in other global crisis situations in human history: movement is one of them. And experiencing nature. By looking over your own four walls, into the wide sky, up to the tops of the trees or deeper into the astonishing connections of life on your own doorstep, you can strengthen your compassion, the relationship and connection to the world.

What does all this mean for the time of school closings, canceled events, limited contacts and canceled vacation trips for families?

The examples of the small booklet "**The world on your doorstep ... - Ideas to explore nature with stories and creativity**" (in german language) can inspire you for ways to go outdoors with children - in everyday life, on vacation, in the forest, on meadows or in your own garden, on less busy side streets or in the small park next door - always with the necessary care to protect other people and the nature:

- Example 1: "Strange shapes" – surprises and imaginations
- Example 2: "Lots and lots of stones" - little poems about thick rocks
- Example 3: "Here we live" - design your own mini-book
- Example 4: „Songs for world explorers“
- Example 5: "5-finger stories" with a colorful collection of words

On so many ways you can find such freedom for movement, sensory perception and body experience, which are connected with stories and offer surprising narrative events.

Because linguistic development and creativity are dependent on a lively exchange with the diversity what touches and surrounds us. This can also be done indoors - but movement and perception under the sky, the resonance of encounter with nature, with the familiar environment as well as with the strange and astonishing, stimulate the imagination and the desire to tell.

Elementary and inspiring experiences that are possible in the nearby forest, in the park, in the garden or even on the balcony cannot be planned or conveyed exactly.

Here are just a few examples of what can happen ...

- diverse sensory perceptions that enrich vocabulary and expressiveness
- an emotional connection to the living around us, which is experienced as delightful and vulnerable
- an appreciative relationship with the environment that can develop from this connection
- the understanding of relationships through recognizable changes and cycles in nature
- the search for meaning in such contexts and through your own questions
- become familiar with a set of symbols for self and world interpretation
- the processing of experiences through free play and movement, through storytelling with imagination and natural curiosity
- astonishment and thinking ahead in dialogue with adults as sensitive companions

What is necessary to experience all of this, even under the restricted conditions in times of the pandemic? Actually only the desire and willingness to go outside with one another, to exercise caution with consideration for other people and to enjoy the view of an expanded horizon. Because it opens up through stories, shows itself in nature and can be experienced through movement.

More to read as an inspiration for libraries:

<https://www.findingnature.org/post/how-public-libraries-are-helping-us-find-nature-during-the-crisis>

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Links to the project (in german):

www.nachhaltig-erzaehlen.de

<http://waldworte.eu//wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Arbeitshilfe-Vor-der-Haust%C3%BCr-.pdf>