

**Eating Smart & Moving More  
Celebrating Healthy Families**

## **Moving More**

## **Five Easy Ways to Help Children Enjoy Nature**

'Nature Deficit Disorder' is all too common among today's video game generation. Luckily, the cure is quite simple. According to the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), all it takes is a *Green Hour*<sup>™</sup> of outdoor time every day with your children: [www.greenhour.org/](http://www.greenhour.org/).

### **Connect with nature in your own backyard.**

If you don't have a whole hour, you can start connecting kids with nature in just 15 or 20 minutes in your own backyard. Start with a simple activity like *Nature's Rainbow*. Sit or lie quietly in one place and let children name the colors they see in nature, like sky blue, brown tree bark, yellow dandelions and green grass.

### **Connect with nature in your neighborhood.**

Kids are naturally curious about the world around them. Their sense of wonder at small discoveries can help even the most stressed-out adult relax. At any time of year, amazing things are happening right outside your door. Bugs are crawling, flowers are blooming, leaves are turning color or squirrels are hiding food.

### **Connect with nature in your local parks.**

You don't have to be an expert to help kids connect with the joys of the natural world. If you want to know the scientific names of the trees or birds you see, buy a simple guidebook or borrow one from the library. Many children will be just as happy to make up names for the 'wild' things you find walking through the park.

### **Connect with nature in your state parks.**

North Carolina has a state park system of affordable outdoor adventures waiting for your family. Go to [www.ncparks.gov/Visit/main.php](http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/main.php) for details or check out Web sites for parks in neighboring states. Pick a park with an exciting natural feature, like a lake, waterfall, beach or meadow. Plan your visit around a map, a wildlife checklist or other outdoor fun.

### **Connect with nature in your National Parks.**

From Acadia to Zion, America's National Parks are a treasure trove of outdoor and historical activities for families. Many parks have Junior Ranger programs where children can earn badges or certificates. Go online to find a park program near your home or vacation destination: [www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.htm](http://www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.htm).



National Nutrition Month<sup>®</sup> - March 2008

Adapted by the NC NET Program from Eat Right Montana materials