

OBSERVE!

Take your Family on a Micro Hike

A micro hike is the perfect way to take time to slow down and observe the incredible diversity under our own feet- in our very own backyards.



What you need:

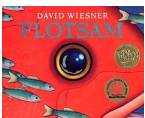
- A string that is about 20' long, tied into a loop
Or
- The side of a cereal box with the middle cut out, ...like a frame
- Hand Lens for magnification

How to do it:

1. Lay/throw your string or cereal box frame down on the ground outside to "frame" the area you'd like to explore.
2. Begin by studying what you can see with just your eyes at first.
 - a. How many different kinds of plants do you see?
 - b. How many different shapes or colors can you spot?
 - c. Are things dry or wet, shiny or dull?
3. Start gently parting the vegetation and looking down low for different plants and animals that live in this miniature forest.
 - a. Take your time- an insect might move into your view as you look or the wind might blow and move things around a bit.
4. Use your hand lens to examine things even more closely.
 - a. What did you spot that you'd like to look at in a different way?
 - b. What shapes, patterns or critters show up when you use the lens?
5. When you've really taken time to get to know your first hike, move your frame and try again!

Book Suggestions for Practicing the art of Observation

Don't have these books at home? Use the links below to view them online.



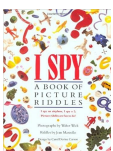
Flotsam by David Wiesner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MTKWnxzqvM>



Zoom by Istvan Banyai

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMhUujrN4iU>



I Spy by Walter Wick and Jean Marzollo

How "I Spy" books are made: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sz8luEznxbM>

Give a "hoot" if you see an owl.
Can you find all 9 owls hidden in this picture!



Other ways to "Take it Outside!"

Try some of the activities listed below to practice making observations about the natural world.

**Lay back and watch the clouds for a while, see different clouds in different parts of the sky.*

**Make a map of your backyard or neighborhood. Be sure to mark important landmarks!*

**Go for a night hike! Explore the world around you after dark. Look up!*

**Explore a natural area at your home: birds, squirrels, the neighborhood deer's nightly tracks!*