



thefamilycenter

VIRTUAL CENTER

Welcome to The Family Center!

Franklin County's newest resource for families with young children.

The Family Center website is now LIVE! Visit today for resources, tips, and more!

[Click here to visit the site!](#)

The Benefits of Time Outside

Happy Summer!

If your family has been anything like mine, after a year of virtual/hybrid learning, we are ready to be out and about. Summer is full of so many outdoor learning opportunities and ways to connect children to nature. Did you know that being in nature actually helps your child to learn? Naturalist Richard Louv studied the effects of spending the majority of our time indoors using technology, stating we can even suffer from something called nature-deficit disorder. This results in lack of focus, ADHD, higher levels of stress/anxiety, and an increase in obesity. There is a cure! Nature-Deficit Disorder can be reversed by increasing the amount of time we spend outdoors and connecting to nature. According to The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley time spent in nature can:

- Restore children's attention
- Improve stress hormone (cortisol) patterns resulting in lower stress and better adaptation to stress
- Improve self-discipline and impulse control
- Increase physical activity
- Promote creativity and social connections

Want to get started? This edition of our Family Connections will feature great ways to get your children outside this summer in Franklin County!

Good For Bodies

Children who spend more time outside...

- ★ are more physically active.
- ★ have ↓er BMIs.
- ★ are less likely to develop myopia.
- ★ have improved motor abilities.

Sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical health.
(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008)

Good For Minds

NATURE ACTIVITIES...

- Boost cognitive functioning!**
"More recess time & greener playgrounds might also enable children to learn more effectively, and improve a child's ability to concentrate in the classroom!"
- Dr. Martha Erickson
- Reduces stress!**
 One study found that the presence of nearby nature bolsters a child's resilience against stress and adversity.
- Soothe ADHD!**
In a study, green outdoor activities reduced ADHD symptoms significantly more than activities in other settings - even when the activities were the same!

Good For Families

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FAMILIES "UNPLUG"?

"...because the natural world is filled with sights, sounds, and smells that ignite a young child's curiosity and invite active exploration, being outdoors also can make it easy for a parent to follow the child's lead, to respond to the child's cues and expressed interest, to share the child's delight in new discoveries & experiences - the very ingredients shown to lead to a secure attachment."
- Dr. Martha Erickson

Good For Schools

78% children who spend regular time in unstructured outdoor play are better able to concentrate and perform better in the classroom!

75% students who spend regular time outdoors tend to be more creative and better able to problem solve in the classroom!

A 2005 study of middle schools that linked the environment with the syllabus saw...

- ★ **22%** ↓ in absenteeism
- ★ **56%** ↓ in discipline referrals

Good For The Planet

Nature is good for you!

Children who make connections with nature become adults who value the environment.

Nature Kids Institute

Summer Learning Series

Join us beginning July 19th for a summer learning series! Using some items you most likely have around the house, we will help you to get your children ready for school with some fun activities. Tune into our [website](#) each week for new learning activities for babies through early elementary.

Community Spotlight

Since 1990, The Institute has provided hands-on environmental and cultural education and a variety of family events. Activities are conducted at various parks, natural areas, and historic sites around the greater Waynesboro area.

Formerly based in Waynesboro's Renfrew Park, The Institute left that property in 2020. This departure resulted in expanded programming opportunities for area residents of all ages.

The Institute's mission is to guide the people of the Cumberland Valley region to become stewards of their natural and cultural worlds. Its purpose is to help people gain a better understanding of the relationship between themselves and the natural world and to teach the importance of preserving the richness and diversity of our shared cultural and natural heritage. We accomplish this through programming that educates, inspires, and unites.

For more information on The Institute, and its programs, visit their [website](#).



The Institute has several upcoming nature exploration programs perfect for kiddos! Three of them are coming up this month, more info is below!

Wed., July 14, 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Explore! Fairy Houses

Pine Hill Recreation Area

12684 Mentzer Gap Rd, Waynesboro, PA 17268

Grades: K–5; Cost: \$8 Institute member, \$10 non-member.

Presented by The Institute.

After listening to the book, “Fairy Houses” by Tracy Kane, kids will take a hike in the woods, collecting treasures from nature along the way—leaves, rocks, sticks, vines and more—to build a fairy house in the woods. Fairy houses can be created in any season in any outdoor setting. Pre-registration required. Visit www.NatureAndCultureInstitute.org or email

at: info@natureandcultureinstitute.org. Check out other Summer Institute programs on the website, too.

Wed., July 21, 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Explore! Dandy Decomposers

Pine Hill Recreation Area

12684 Mentzer Gap Rd, Waynesboro, PA 17268

Grades: K–5; Cost: \$8 Institute member, \$10 non-member.

Presented by The Institute.

Kids will explore the park and see decomposers hard at work, breaking down old material and recycling it into new life (like a worm that eats leaves and dead plant matter, or a fungus that helps to rot old logs). You might be surprised how many places you can find these helpful organisms! Participants will learn about decomposition and what it is, how it can be done, and will see real life examples of decomposers doing their jobs. Visit

www.NatureAndCultureInstitute.org or email

at: info@natureandcultureinstitute.org. Check out other Summer Institute programs on the website, too.

Wed., July 28, 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Explore! Here Comes the Sun

Pine Hill Recreation Area

12684 Mentzer Gap Rd, Waynesboro, PA 17268

Grades: K–5; Cost: \$8 Institute member, \$10 non-member.

Presented by The Institute.

Kids explore trees and flowers, and hunt for seeds as they hike along Fox Crossing Trail with their instructor. Participants will learn about our great star—the sun—and listen to a story about the sun. They will also create a make-and-take craft—nature sun catchers—to take home with them. Visit

www.NatureAndCultureInstitute.org or email

at: info@natureandcultureinstitute.org. Check out other Summer Institute programs on the website, too.

For older children (grades 4 and up) The Institute has an upcoming weaving workshop starting July 13! More information is below!

Four Tuesdays., July 13 through August 3, 10 a.m.–Noon

Common Threads: Wonders of Weaving 4-part Class

Pine Hill Recreation Area

12684 Mentzer Gap Rd, Waynesboro, PA 17268

Grades: 4 & Up; Cost: \$40 Institute member, \$45 non-member, plus \$18 materials fee.

Presented by The Institute.

With instruction by master weaver and Institute faculty member, Beth Skroban, students will explore the world of weaving and the beauty of color. Participants will learn to hand-paint yarn with dye, and then weave that yarn, using a rigid heddle loom, into a small drawstring bag. Using different techniques, they will also weave a potholder, and create a decorative tapestry wall hanging from a cardboard loom. Pre-registration required. Visit

www.NatureAndCultureInstitute.org or email at: info@natureandcultureinstitute.org. Check out other Summer Institute programs on the website, too.

GO Franklin

Click the image below to visit the GO Franklin webpage, and learn more about this fun summer challenge!



Go! Franklin County Get Outdoors!

June 7 - August 7

Find the 15 different hidden pages throughout Franklin County's parks and trails! The official program guide can be found at any Franklin County Library. This is a great opportunity to get outside and be active this summer!

For more information, please visit gofranklin.org.

"I know for sure what we dwell on is what we become."

- Oprah Winfrey



How would you like to have the support of an early childhood community at your fingertips?

Do you have a question about your child's development or behavior?

Do you need new ideas for things to do with your little one?

Are you struggling with an issue as a family?

Ask the forum!

The forum on our website is a community by you, for you to ask any questions or share your experiences raising littles! Post to the forum and engage with the community!

Visit the
Forum

Outdoor Summer Safety

Healthy Franklin County has put out a great article about how to keep your kiddos safe this summer when playing out in the heat. There's info on sun protection, how to avoid bug bites, and more! Read [here](#) for tips and tricks!



Local Events

PEACE IN THE PARK
A Mindfulness Program

Join us at parks throughout the county! Stay tuned to our Facebook page for dates/locations.

 

INSTAGRAM FACEBOOK

Scan for more info!

 **First Start Partnerships**
for Children & Families

 **the family center**

Other ways to connect with nature in Franklin County:

<https://www.explorefranklincountypa.com/home/outdoors/>
<https://www.explorefranklincountypa.com/home/environmental-centers-in-franklin-county-pa/>
<https://gis.franklincountypa.gov/recreation/>
https://www.healthyfranklincounty.org/sites/default/files/Lets_Play_Toolkit.pdf



Love what you see? Want to share it with your friends and family?
When you submit a referral, your friend or family member will receive this
amazing newsletter in their inbox each month!

AND you will receive a gift from us for helping us spread the word!

Submit a Referral Today!

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