

Children Discovering Nature (CDN) Grade School Programs

Explore

Children Discovering Nature is a two-session educational program in which students learn about local flora, fauna, and habitats through hands-on activities in the classroom and field.

Educate

First, a naturalist educator visits your classroom with inquiry based activities that complement your curriculum and prepare students for a field trip.

Enrich

The following week, your class visits the Durango Nature Center for a half-day educational field trip. Trained naturalists guide small groups through a variety of habitats, engaging students with activities, nature games, and guided explorations.

	PK-K	1	2	3	4	5
Vertebrates Have Backbones	●	✓				
Living Things Grow & Change		●	✓	✓		
Animal Adaptations			●	✓	✓	
Weathering/Erosion/Deposition			✓	●	✓	
Habitat is Where It's At					●	✓
Weather: Under Pressure					✓	●

- ✓ Program appropriate for suggested grade level.
- Correlates to Durango District 9-R Content Standards and Expected Performances in science.

Durango Nature Studies curriculum correlates with Local, State and National Education Standards in CO and NM.

K Kindergarten “Vertebrates Have Backbones”

In the Classroom - We will examine the five classes of vertebrates: mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and fish. Students will then help the instructor group the creatures into their proper class.

At the Nature Center - Students will look for all types of evidence of vertebrates as well as catch some invertebrates to compare and find differences. Included will be information on the habitats in which our local vertebrates live.

Standards - Meets Colorado Science Standard 2.1

1 Grade 1 “Living Things Grow & Change”

In the Classroom - Students will examine how all creatures change over their lifetime. Some things look similar when they are a juvenile and when they are an adult, like humans, mammals, fish, reptiles and birds. Others, like amphibians and insects can look very different throughout their life stages.

At the Nature Center - Students will examine how all organisms change over their lifetime. Some look similar when they are a juvenile and when they are an adult, like humans, mammals, fish, reptiles, birds, and plants. Other organisms, like amphibians, and insects can look very different throughout their life stages.

Standards - Meets CO Science Standards 2.1 & 2.2

2 Grade 2 “Animal Adaptations”

In the Classroom - Students will study animal skulls and pelts to provide explanations as to why certain animals have specific structures, or adaptations, and how these structures help them interact with their environments and climates.

At the Nature Center - Students will focus on looking for clues of specific native animals. Exploration will help them understand why certain animals have specific adaptations to survive within their habitats.

Standards - Meets Colorado Science Standard 2.1

3 Grade 3 “Weathering, Erosion, and Deposition”

In the Classroom - Students will predict, discuss, test, and observe the forces that drive weathering, erosion, and deposition.

At the Nature Center - Students will recognize active weathering, erosion, and deposition, design and test erosion mitigation structures, and synthesize the importance of soil to a healthy ecosystem.

Standards - Meets CO Science Standard: 3.1

4 Grade 4 “Habitat is Where It's At”

In the Classroom - Students will investigate what organisms need to survive and the interaction between living and non-living components of their habitat.

At the Nature Center - Students will explore the different habitat zones and identify the components that make each ecological zone unique.

Standards - Meets CO Science Standards 2.1 & 2.3

5 Grade 5 “Weather: Under Pressure”

In the Classroom - Students will explore the relationships between temperature and pressure through hands-on experiments that reveal the driving forces of global weather patterns.

At the Nature Center - Students will measure local weather conditions and make inferences regarding how weather affects the living and non-living things at the Nature Center.

Standards - Meets CO Science Standard: 3.3

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**Nature in the Classroom
Middle School Curriculum
Surviving and Thriving in Winter
High School Field Science Internships**

I think that DNS does a wonderful job meeting science standards. The lesson in the classroom only enhances what the students will be learning. They are excited and actively engaged in the activities. How wonderful to get these kids outside to learn. Thank you for the experiences that are tailor made.
-3rd Grade Teacher

Wow!!! We had a wonderful time today! Thank you so much for the opportunity to let us enjoy it. All of your leader were AMAZING!!!! They made all of us teacher really reflect about the power of science and the enjoyment of simple wonder.
-5th Grade Teacher

