

## Connecting to Nature as an intention in Port Coquitlam Summer Camps

For summer camps and programs in Port Coquitlam, Connecting to Nature is one of the 2016| 2017 “intentions”. This is a key area of the Children Services business plan in the Recreation Department of Port Coquitlam – and Janis Dancs, Children Services Coordinator incorporated it creatively into the staff summer training. During training, Janet Ready, Instructor, Langara College, presented a session on “Connecting to Nature” – some theory about why it is important, why it is important for community recreation and some ideas about how to do it.



Camp and Program leaders were encouraged to use nature ideas, activities to “intentionally” provide opportunities for kids to connect to nature.

Leaving it open as an “intention” really ignited energy and creativity about how leaders incorporated nature into their summer programs

and camps.

### Here’s what happened – stories from the camp leaders:

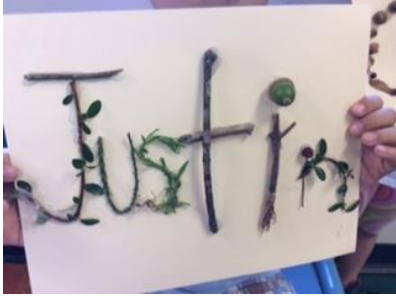


I really enjoyed the nature focus of camps last summer and even though the Port Coquitlam Recreation Complex is not surrounded by forests we found some wonderful little spots to explore. As well, I have found bringing flowers into the room and just having them on the tables calms the room down and makes children a bit more aware of the space on the tables.

The preschool camps were lots of fun as we could go out and collect treasures (and we found lots) and use them for various activities. One day our focus was to find sticks we brought them back and used them for painting.



We went out with brown paper bags and collected anything we found interesting. I did not give the children ideas of what we were going to do with the found objects. When we got back to class we dumped out our bags and I suggested we make bugs with our nature objects.



With the older camps we talked about looking for items on our walk that we could use to make name art. The children were very engaged and invested in our time outside. I often heard them calling friends over to look at an object that would work for a letter in that friend's name. The children were quite purposeful in what they chose to bring back and use.

I think for me, seeing the engagement and excitement in the children made these activities a success. There were so many areas of development that were encompassed in the activities that the time spent outdoors instead of indoors was valuable.

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