

Annie's BIG Nature Lesson: The Classroom is Outdoors



Teachers, students, and parents begin each ABNL day with the “First Look” activity: observing their surroundings, noticing temperature, precipitation, cloud type, wind direction and speed, and other weather characteristics. They look at the ground, eye, and sky levels. Many teachers do First Look every day of the school year, and over time, students notice patterns and trends, and look forward to starting each day outdoors.



Teachers participate in professional learning workshops early in the school year, and then receive ongoing support to develop and implement their ABNL lessons with students. They learn about how to use the out-of-doors as a place of learning for their students, and how to engage parents for active participation. Parents learn along with the children, and help the teacher with small groups.



Students, teachers, and parents observe in natural habitats (woods, pond, prairie, wetland) for a full hour each day. Students choose a topic to research, and use journals for drawing and writing while they reflect, slow down, and make sense of their own lives as they connect with nature.

Annie's **BIG** Nature Lesson



Naturalists teach students, teachers, and parents a lesson each day, using the trails, habitats, and resources at the nature center. Lessons are highly interactive, with hands-on, real world application. Naturalists are available throughout the week, answering questions and helping the teacher as needed.



Teachers choose a theme for their ABNL week, and focus students' learning on academic, social, and personal growth. Teachers expand on the naturalists' lessons with activities and explorations, and connect the ABNL lessons to state curriculum standards of literacy, science, math, civics, history, geography, writing, reading, communication skills, and the arts.



Teachers, students, and parents work with the naturalists to plan and implement stewardship projects for the benefit of the nature center, school, or community. Our children are the community leaders of tomorrow, and ABNL prepares them to be stewards of the environment and caretakers of their community resources.