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Call of the Wild *Benefits of an Outdoor Summer Camp* by nccoast.org

Summer is right around the corner and while kids from coast to coast are looking forward to a much needed break from academics and early morning routines, parents are fraught with how to keep their kids from spending the summer in front of an electronic gadget.

An outdoor, nature-filled camp experience may be just the solution to take away the technological distractions, get their hands dirty and help kids learn to be kids again.



Richard Louv, in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*, describes the growing gap between children and nature as "nature-deficit disorder". Spending time outside is the perfect

antidote for this lack of connection to the natural world, and a nature-based day camp is a wonderful way to jumpstart your kid's interests in the great outdoors.

Check out our list of some of the benefits an outdoors summer camp experience can provide your child.

1. They'll Still Be Learning (but it will be fun)

With a classroom comprised of local parks, islands, creeks, sounds and beaches, the hands-on experiences kids get during our outdoors camp will help them make connections in the classroom. Nature-based experiences are a great complement to traditional classroom lessons in subjects from ecology, geology, biology, art and more. Time spent outdoors at camp allows kids to actually observe, measure, test and touch things they may have only seen in books.

2. Unplug from Online

Recent studies found that the average child between the ages of 8-18 spends 45 hours a week interacting with electronic media. An outdoor day camp is a great way to get your kids to disconnect during the day. Spending time away from video games, social media and television help them to make personal connections with others and engage with the outside world.

3. It's a Great Adventure

Have you ever explored a marsh? Planted a living shoreline? Hunted for seashells on an island? Or traced the steps of native explorers? Outdoors camps get kids out in the field and out of their comfort zone, exposing them to new experiences they may never have dreamed of and perhaps spark a new interest that lasts beyond their week at camp.

4. Fresh Air

Being outdoors and breathing in the fresh air during outdoor activities makes you feel great. It cleanses your lungs and improves blood circulation throughout the body, resulting in increased energy levels and an overall euphoric feeling-for a "natural high"!

5. Sunshine

Being outside in sun (with proper UV protection, of course) increases vitamin D3 intake, important for bone development and metabolic function. Getting kids more sunlight also keeps their body's internal clock adjusted, helping them sleep better at night.

6. **Reconnect with nature**

Many of our busy schedules count soccer games and yard chores as our kid's outdoor experiences. An outdoors day camp lets kids reconnect with nature. The exposure to new habitats and creatures encourages children's instinctive fascination with science and nature and opens up their world to new ways of thinking about the world around them.

7. **Get Moving**

Nature-based camps offer fun, excitement and lessons that last a lifetime. Outside activities get kids running, jumping, hiking and paddling with new and old friends. And research has shown that physical activity builds self-esteem and motivation at every age!

So, get moving and get the kids to an outdoors camp in your area this summer. For more information visit us at nccoast.org or call 252-393-8185.

Coastal Discovery Summer Camps

Spend a week of your summer exploring coastal North Carolina's great outdoors! Each day is filled with a new up-close encounter with our coastal environment.

- Get hands-on with a variety of creatures from the land and sea.
- Visit sites where Native Americans lived and pirates landed.
- Travel to a new location each day including local parks, islands and beaches.
- Discover what really lives in the waters and marshes along our coast.
- Help to keep our coastal waters clean and healthy.

Rising grades 4-6: June 29-July 2 and July 20-24

Rising grades 7-9: July 6-10 and July 27- 31

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., *Flexible drop off hours available*

Cost: \$200 per child, per week

North Carolina Coastal Federation

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