

Simple activities can bring out the scientist in your child

Every day is filled with opportunities for parents to help children learn science. And you don't have to have a background in science to do it—or expensive chemistry sets and books.

Just encourage your child to observe what goes on in the world around her. Together:

- Keep a weather chart. Keep track of the temperature and other weather conditions every day for an entire month.
- Watch the moon as it goes through its phases. Have your child record the changes she sees.
- Watch a TV show about science and discuss what you each learn.
- Take a walk at night and look at the stars. Can your child identify some constellations? If not, look for a book or a smart phone app to help.
- Figure out how the spin cycle of the washing machine gets the water out of the clothes.
- Adopt a tree. Every day, observe the changes in the tree. Are the leaves emerging? Are the branches growing?
- Visit a nearby park or nature preserve. Have your child record the animals you see. Classify them as mammals, birds, reptiles, etc.
- Use a magnifying glass to look closely at a flower, a bug or a hair from your child's head.
- Begin a collection of shells, rocks or leaves. Each time you and your child add something new, talk about how it compares with the other items you've gathered.

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