



Nature Treasures from Land to Sea

Rosemarie Biocarles-Rydeen, Jeanine Blum, Angie Kenny, Latanya Lockett & Michelina Miedema
Kindergarten
High Tech Elementary Chula Vista

In this interdisciplinary project, our Kindergarten students explored the diversity of San Diego's natural spaces and investigated the essential question: What treasures lie hidden in nature? From the fields of the Otay Valley to the tidepools of La Jolla, our students uncovered treasures that can only be found when we slow down and look closely. Using children's questions as our guide, we explored plant and animal life cycles, looked deeply into the life found in the chaparral and ocean habitats, and learned to identify the rocks and minerals found in our neighboring canyon. To support our study, we learned to write informative and explanatory texts. We wrote "How To" books and published "All About" Books with accompanying hand-sewn stuffed animals. To share our love and appreciation of nature, students led their families and guests through a nature-inspired art gallery, a guided nature walk, "All About" book readings, nature learning stations, and a nature-inspired Performing Arts show.

Teacher Reflection

Exploring nature with children is one of my favorite things to do as a teacher. Young children are naturally curious about the world around them and being in nature with them brings out so many questions! This experience was a beautiful example of collaborative design as it was these questions that drove the content and direction of our project. My biggest highlights were the unplanned life lessons that often happen when spending time with nature. By observing and connecting with our neighboring plants, trees, and bugs, we discovered connections between their thriving ecosystem and our own classroom ecosystem. It was these relationships that inspired how we could be in community with one another. To work together, to handle with care, to approach with curiosity...these were the ways we were transformed by our experiences in nature.

—Rosemarie Biocarles-Rydeen

Student Reflection

My highlight was looking at all the nature. It was so colorful and beautiful. Bugs lie hidden in nature. They do similar things with each other. My favorite was when we went to the beach and the tidepools because I liked looking at all the barnacles on the rocks. I still love nature because I find out new things about nature everyday.

—Reagan