

# PLUGGED IN

FUN FOR KIDS

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF THE SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS AND THE EDUCATORS' ROUNDTABLE, PUBLISHED MONTHLY TO PROMOTE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG READERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, AND ART

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## This Month's Theme: Getting Outside for the Summer

An outdoor adventure with your friends and family is one of the most exciting things you can do this summer. There are hundreds of great local trails, beaches, swimming spots, and other wild places you can visit during your summer vacation. This page is dedicated to helping you find new places to enjoy the wonders of nature.

Planning ahead can lead to successful adventures. Don't forget a water bottle or canteen, a hat to shield your head and eyes from the sun, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Take what you need to be comfortable, even if the weather changes. Snacks are a good idea as well.

Put together a family "nature backpack" that can be

grabbed quickly when you are ready to go outdoors. Ideas for an explorer's kit could include a small first aid kit, magnifying glass, zippered plastic bags for collecting, field guides, notebook and pencil, camera, and binoculars.

Be sure your parents have the right stuff too. They need to bring a map, compass, and a cell phone, just in case. Finally, remember to bring a smile and positive attitude to your adventure to help make sure you have a good time.

Now on to the wild places! Some of these you may have heard of, others may be new. We recommend starting your adventure by finding out as much as possible about these places, even printing a map and directions.



### Go to the Beach!

**Butterfly Beach** at Ellwood Mesa is a great place to explore. There are woods and trails, cliffs and bluffs, open meadows and of course, the beach. With great parking right off of Hollister, there are plenty of adventures to be had.

**Arroyo Burro and Goleta Beach** are also good family spots. A shovel and a bucket is enough equipment to help you to build your own sand creations. Check out the schedule for low tide in the newspaper or online. Explore tide pools. Watch the shore birds carefully to see what they are eating. Dig up tiny sand crabs.



Get creative!

### Go Rock Climbing!



Explore!

Take a trip to **Lizard's Mouth**, a large rock formation nestled high in the Santa Ynez Mountains. This is an easy walk with wonderful boulders to scamper across. From Highway 154, turn west on West Camino Cielo Road. Drive about four miles up the mountain, and look for the trail off to the left. If you reach the Gun Club, you've gone too far. The trail is only a few hundred yards in length but it's a great rocky adventure.

### Visit a Local Park!

There are even wild spaces in Santa Barbara. Visit **Rocky Nook Park** and explore the creek looking for Chorus Frogs and tadpoles. Remember to release what you catch. Picnic in the park and enjoy the easy trails with your family. The entrance to Rocky Nook Park is on your right, just past the historic Santa Barbara Mission on Mission Canyon Road.



Enjoy the scenery!

### Become an Insect Explorer

Tips on where to look to find butterflies & dragonflies on your outdoor adventures:

- **Sunny spots:** Both butterflies and dragonflies are cold-blooded and need to warm up. Find them "basking" with their wings turned to the sun.
- **Water and puddles:** Look for butterflies on the ground near mud. Males are looking for salt and other nutrients. Look for dragonflies along the edges of a water source such as ponds or creeks. Female dragonflies lay their eggs in water and males wait near the water for females.
- **Hilltops:** Males of both insects like to be on the look out for females. High spots give them a good view.
- **On plants and flowers:** Adult butterflies are looking only for nectar in flowers. Eggs and caterpillars can be found on host plants. Look for Monarchs on milkweed. Dragonflies can be found in fields and among tall grasses.
- **On sticks and stones:** Male dragonflies perch on sticks near water looking for a female. Stones provide warm spots for butterflies and dragonflies.



For more information, look for the book "Take a Walk with Butterflies and Dragonflies" by Jane Kirkland or visit the **Butterflies Alive!** exhibit at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

### Fun by the Sea: Ways to Enjoy the Beach


- **Make sand castles.** Dig deep enough to find really wet sand and mold it with your hands.
- **Get your feet wet.** Feel the sand between your toes, and the chill of the water.
- **Look for treasures.** Waves leave behind all kinds of interesting things: shells, polished pebbles, smooth beach glass, and driftwood. Use your treasures to make a mosaic on the beach and leave it for the next visitor.
- **Follow footprints.** Look for the tracks that shore birds leave behind.
- **Chase the waves.** Follow the waves as they retreat from the beach and try to get back before they come in again. Be prepared to get wet!
- **Skip stones.** Find a flat stone that will fit in your palm. Practice throwing sideways and see how many times you can make it skip across the water.
- **Run.** The beach is the perfect place to run as fast as you can and back again.



Page by Eric Carpenter, The Outdoor School at Rancho Alegre, and Elaine Gibson and Heather Moffat, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

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