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**Zionsville celebrates getting kids outside through Nature Play Days**

*Organizations across Zionsville will host Nature Play Day events this June*

Between June 10 – 18, Nature Play Days will encourage families in Indiana to play outdoors and reap the physical, mental and emotional benefits nature play provides. The primary goal of Nature Play Days is to reconnect children with the outdoors and provide a space for outdoor exploration and fun. Events are free and open to the public.

Zionsville Nature Play Days will feature opportunities to explore Eagle Creek and other natural habitats with the Zion Nature Center. There are events to build kites and solar ovens. Participants can listen to stories, go on a nature walk with dad or join a teddy bear picnic. There's even an opportunity to bike through Zionsville with the Zionsville Police Department.

"This year we want to highlight the local parks and the amazing community organizations we have here in Zionsville," Murdock said. "My hope is that this will become an annual event, and we can continue to add partner organizations and outdoor opportunities in the years to come."

Nature Play Days are an opportunity for nature lovers and the underserved to connect with nature and begin to create what will hopefully be a lifelong relationship with and in nature. Kids today spend, on average, 50 hours a week on electronic devices and over 90% of their time indoors. The rise of childhood obesity and diseases such as Attention Deficit Disorder are challenges for children across the country from every social and economic class. Time spent outdoors supports many aspects of children's mental, emotional and physical health as well as cognitive development, teambuilding skills and interpersonal relationships.

The week of June 10 – 18 has officially been declared by Mayor Haak as "Zionsville Nature Play Days." Participants are encouraged to post photos to social media using the #ICANNaturePlayDay hashtag to win prizes. Find a detailed list of programs and partner organizations at [www.zionnaturecenter.org](http://www.zionnaturecenter.org) under the Nature Play Days tab.

Nature Play Days is an initiative of the Indiana Children and Nature Network (ICAN), which builds collaborative efforts to encourage children spending time in the natural environment, and the Environmental Education Association of Indiana (EEAI). More information and a listing of Nature Play Days across the state is available on the ICAN website:

[www.indianachildrenandnature.org](http://www.indianachildrenandnature.org).

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