

The Sixth and Seventh Senses

A Sense of Wonder

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

...it is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow."

Rachel Carson, *A Sense of Wonder*, 1956

It's important to help children recognize the awe in every day! And then have questions -- wonder about the phenomenon they just observed and perhaps devise ways to find answers. Learning begins with observation, followed by questions, then investigations.

Plan adventures:

- **Take a rainy day hike.** How does the air and water feel on their skin? Look for droplets on a spider web or leaves. Watch splashes in a puddle. See where water flows and collects on the schoolyard and street. Is there erosion? Collect some rain to use making a water color picture.
- **Visit the pond or creek.** Don't worry about getting dirty. Focus on the diving beetles that carry a "scuba tank" in the form of an air bubble trapped under their wings. Or the tadpole that will amazingly transform into a frog. Or so many more amazing creatures that manage to "breathe" underwater!
- **Lie on the lawn.** Watch clouds wisp across the sky in imaginary animal forms. What are clouds? Where do they come from? Are they related to weather?
- **Go on a Wonder Hike.** List wonderful things the group observes – and list things the students wonder about. Come back with a list of good feelings and good questions.
- **Be Schoolyard sleuths.** How many different kinds of creatures live here? Where are their homes? Follow an ant trail. Where do they go? Where do they live?
- **Plant Ideas.** Make a list of all the ways you depend on plants from the moment you awaken until days end. (cotton sheets, toilet paper, shade, air you breathe...) Go outside to thank the plants. Give them a little CO₂ take a little O₂. Lie down under a tree. Look up, listen, enjoy the shade. What's happening up there?
- **Winter Fun.** Use your sleds to explore gravity and the laws of motion. Catch snowflakes on your gloves or tongues.