

Field Institute of Taos - I Play Outside At Home - Activity Two



SECRET SPOTS

Overview: Daily 10-30 minutes; observations; knowledge; peace.

Parent Note: If your child is very young (not yet writing) or needs you to be with him or her, you can absolutely share the secret spot or have your spot just beside them. Remember, observations are made in silence so your senses can tune into all that is happening around you. No talking until it is time to help them with the writing part, if needed. Also, many observations can be made by drawing so encourage your child to draw what they see.

SECRET SPOTS – THE FIRST DAY

Before leaving your home, be sure to dress for the weather, bring water and maybe a snack, and grab your Field Journal and a pencil. We like to use pencil in the field as it will not run on the page if it happens to get wet. Bring along a parent, if you are a child.

Find a place within easy walking distance from your home, a place that you can and will return to day after day. You are looking for a spot that draws you to sit. Maybe it is a cool rock or a spot beside a tree. Maybe it is a place with a great view or a nice log to sit on. Maybe it is in the warm sunshine or just on your patio. Anywhere is fine as long as it is outside, easily accessible for you without needing transportation, and safe.

Parent Note: Make sure to give your child the guideline that they need their secret spot to be somewhere within sight and hearing distance of you.

Once you have found your Secret Spot, sit down. This is not a place you will purposefully change in any way. The idea is for you to get to know all you can about this piece of the Earth without impacting it. No fort building here (we will do that later at another location). No digging (leave that to the animals that live here). Leave plants, flowers, and animal evidence as it is. Just sit, breathe, listen, look around, and absorb the feeling of your brand new Secret Spot.

After getting the feeling of your spot, think of a name to give your new favorite place. Pull out your Field Journal and turn to the first page. We begin each day in the Field Journal with writing down the date and the weather. Now write the name of your secret spot. It would be good to write down why you chose this spot as well. Next, draw a map so you know where your Secret Spot is and you can find it again. Even if it's very easy to find since it's close to home, draw a map showing landmarks (roads, mountains, arroyos, your home, trees, etc).

When you are finished, say farewell and thank you to your Secret Spot for today, pick up your belongings, and head home. We will “see” you soon for your next Secret Spot activity. Of course, you may visit your Secret Spot anytime before then, if you'd like. Thank you for getting outside with all of us here at Field Institute of Taos!