

Connecting With Your Child

Fossil Safari

There are a number of ways to give your child a firsthand experience with fossils. If your community or a nearby community has a museum of natural history, or if you are planning a family trip to such an area, be sure to visit exhibits that include fossils or organisms reconstructed from fossils. Try to arrange a visit with a curator or an educator who can identify a particular fossil and explain where it was found and how it is significant.



Ask your child to prepare for such an experience by making a *list of questions* concerning fossils.

Here are some questions to discuss with your child:

- What is a fossil?
- What parts of ancient organisms are most likely to become fossils?
- In what materials are most fossils found?
- If you found two different fossils, what is one way you might be able to tell which is older?
- What can a fossil tell you about ancient organisms?
- What can a fossil tell you about the environment in which it lived?
- What can fossils tell you about rocks?
- What can rocks tell you about fossils?

When at the museum, have your child sketch a favorite fossil and write a brief report about the fossil. The report should include:

- The age of the fossil
- Where it was found
- What its environment was like when it was alive
- When that type of organism became extinct (if it did)
- Why the organism became extinct (if it did)
- A few interesting or fun facts about the fossil

