

MICRO HIKE

You don't need to go on a long journey to discover something new. Forget a one mile hike, try a three foot hike instead!



Activity Summary

Shrink your kids down to the size of a bug and send them off on a miniature hike through the Emerald Necklace parks, your backyard, a sidewalk, or even indoors! Kids take on a different perspective as they slow down and observe smaller elements in the landscape and ecology.

Materials Needed

- string, thin rope, or yarn
- scissors
- a magnifying glass (optional)

Micro Hike Activity Steps

1. Go into the Emerald Necklace parks, your local green space, sidewalk or living room!
2. Measure out about three feet of string for each hiker or set of hikers. This will be your hiking trail.
3. Imagine you've shrunk! You are now the size of an ant (or thumbnail, spider or other unit of measurement.)
4. Does your ant-self have a name?
5. Lay down your trail and begin your hike at one end of the string, getting close and looking at every detail.
6. Hike slowly! Remember you are only the size of an ant and have very short legs.
7. Record your discoveries. What would you say if you were a tiny, thumbnail-sized person seeing the trail for the first time?
8. Capture your favorite discoveries on the trail, through photographs or drawings.
9. Does pretending you are tiny change the way you look at the world? In what ways did the journey change your perspective?

Extension Ideas

1. Estimate how many blades of grass an ant will need to pass if it walks across the yard or park. Start by counting blades of grass along the Micro Hike string line, then multiply by the number of string lines it would take to cross the space.



2. Estimate how many bugs live on the yard or park through counting then multiplying the number of bugs in a 3 foot square.
3. Write a story of a bug's journey across the school grounds. What terrain does it pass through and who does it meet?
4. Use field guides, online keys or image searches to identify insects found on the Micro Hike.

Reflection

1. Create a list of some of the terrain, plants and animals the kids observed. You could write it on a 3 column chart, with a column for each of the above observations.
2. Invite kids to share their answers to the question: "Does pretending you are tiny change the way you look at the world?"
3. Brainstorm other ways to imagine a different viewpoint and how you would try them out.

Thank you to [Nature Passport](http://www.naturepassport.org) from Islandwood and Nature Play, WA for this activity idea. Visit www.naturepassport.org, where you'll find useful information on how best to use Nature Passport.