

# Sustainable At-Home Activities for Kids

Warm greetings from the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition's Education Action Team! We are dedicated to encouraging sustainable practices and mindfulness in the community's youth. Our work often takes place in Benton County's schools, but the current public health crisis has made that impossible. Because there's no reason sustainability teachings need to be limited to schools, we hope that you will utilize this list of fun books and activities to enjoy at home!

## Chapter Books\*

***Sign of the Beaver*** by Elizabeth George Speare: This book is a family favorite about a young boy left on his own for a year in Maine. He meets a boy from the Native American tribe nearest him and in exchange for English lessons, the boy helps him survive by teaching him how to trap food, fish, make shoes, plant seeds, etc. A great read-aloud, as parents will also find this book interesting and it could appeal to children of a wide range of ages.

***Farmer Boy*** by Laura Ingalls Wilder: What a great time to give the Little House on the Prairie Books a try. This one is our family's favorite because Wilder gives the juiciest descriptions of Mama-cooked farm food throughout the story. After reading *Farmer Boy*, we bought *The Little House Cookbook: Frontier Foods from Laura Ingalls Wilder's Classic Stories*, and we copy some of those recipes from time to time." There are great lessons of responsibility, hard work, money management, animal care, and earth care in this book.

## Picture Books\*

***Andrew Henry's Meadow*** by Doris Burn: Andrew likes to build things. His family grows intolerant of all of his inventions so he moves out and builds his own house in a meadow. One by one, other misunderstood children join him and he builds houses for them too, houses that perfectly fit their passions. Great illustrations and inspiration for a day of making your own stick houses (fairy gardens) outside!

***We Were Tired of Living in a House***, also by Doris Burn: Tired of living inside, this group of siblings moves outside! They move from cave, to tree, to pond to beach and meet many natural phenomena along the way. With delightful illustrations this book is another personal favorite!

\* Please contact Grass Roots Books to see if books are available locally before ordering online.

## Activities

- Hike, fish, go for a walk, etc. – get outside!

- Plant some fruits and vegetables. This could be the perfect opportunity for kids to pluck seeds from the foods they are eating and experiment with gardening. The Coalition's Food Action Team has great resources for at-home gardening [here](#).
- Make a map of your property and label all the plants that grow there. Use a panel from a large shipping box, a paper bag broken open, the backside of wrapping paper...(re)use your imagination! Hang it on a wall and label it over time or all in one day!
- Make a fairy garden but don't buy a dang thing: Sticks, twine, rocks, twigs, old toys, repainted.
- Make a [Willow Fedge](#): (or [THIS](#) video) Find a willow tree. (Ask a neighbor, find a wild one along streams and empty meadows, or come to my house. We have dozens! Feel free to email me at [ashleymerback@gmail.com](mailto:ashleymerback@gmail.com).) Make a willow fence, vegetable trellis, or garden edging. This doesn't have to be complicated or look perfectly tidy! These bendy sticks have limitless potential.
- Build and begin using your outdoor at-home compost system. Instructions [here](#)!
- Life Skills we rarely have time for – At our house we have older kids, and we rarely have time to teach many home management/life management skills we want our kids to be familiar with. This is our moment! Changing a bike tire, tweaking bike breaks, changing the oil in our car, and mending the gates on our fences – to name a few. It has been tremendously rewarding to “put them to work”! And they're having fun!
- What have you always said you'd do when you had more time? This is your moment!