

Connecting Kids to Nature

Engage children in learning about the environment and the world around them with this hands-on activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's fun and educational!

Then and Now

If your community is like most others, it is much different than it was 100, 50, 25, or even five years ago. By viewing pictures and interviewing elders, children can begin to understand how people affect the environment in which they live.

It has been said that change is really the only constant in the universe. Some changes happen quickly, such as a tree falling in a storm. Others happen very slowly, like the washing of mountains into the sea. History is a record of changes, be it the history of a tree, forest, society, or nation.

To begin investigating changes in your community, ask children if they have noticed any new developments—are there new stores, houses, parks, or schools nearby? If so, how do these changes make them feel? Discuss the pros and cons of how new developments affect people and communities. Talk about how such changes might affect animals and plants in the area.

Have children learn more about the history of their community by interviewing an older person who has lived there many years. This person could be a parent, grandparent, or neighbor. Children can begin with the questions below, and then ask their own:

Interview: Ask the Elders

1. How long have you lived in the community? _____
2. How has the landscape changed during that time? _____

3. Have the changes helped you in any way? If so, how? _____

4. Have the changes hurt you in any way? If so, how? _____

5. Have the changes helped or hurt the community? If so, how? _____

Encourage Your Child's School to Incorporate Environmental Education

For more activity ideas and materials:

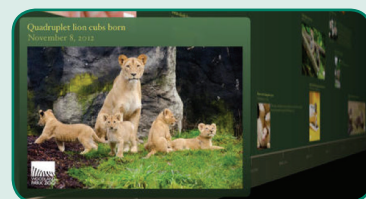
- Attend a PLT workshop, www.plt.org/state-network/
- Visit shop.plt.org

Community Timeline

Have children create a book or timeline that documents change over time in your town or community. It could include pictures, maps, copies of public records, and other documentation. Use photographs and poster paper or incorporate technology with a website (try ReadWriteThink's free timeline creator available at <http://bit.ly/1gJMgon>) or an app such as "Timeline 3D" (available for purchase on iTunes).



Traditional Poster Paper Timeline



Timeline 3D App



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

www.plt.org