



June is a Great Month to Get the Kids Outside

We have no more important mission than taking care of our children. From education to health to recreation, children need our attention.

Those of us involved in conservation and natural resources protection are rightly concerned about the future of those efforts. We need to prepare the next generation of environmental leaders.

How do we get today's youth interested in appreciating and preserving the outdoors?

To start, we need to take them outside.

That's why Governor Pat Quinn and all of us at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources promote at every opportunity the theme: "Leave No Child Inside."

The Governor has proclaimed June "Leave No Child Inside Month" in Illinois.

Every available study tells us that youth who spend time outdoors see health, wellness, educational and emotional benefits from getting outside.

Whether they're walking, running, hiking, biking, or playing ball, we want children to get outdoors and be active. We need to get them away from the video game controllers and TV screens.

But it isn't just a matter of opening the door and telling kids to head outside.

We need safe places where kids can spend time outdoors.

Whether it's a playground or a schoolyard or a neighborhood park or a state park, we need to be there with our children.

We need programs, projects, and events that provide safe outdoor fun – and that may teach kids some lessons about the outdoors and the importance of conservation stewardship.

After a harsh winter and cool, wet spring, we're inviting kids and families outdoors in June for "Leave No Child Inside" events and activities.

Our Urban Fishing Program provides simple, hands on conservation lessons to kids by showing them the fun of fishing – and the clinics are free and offered all over the state.

There are fishing derbies and nature hikes and adventure camps at state parks, local parks, and museums. Check with your local recreation agencies or the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov for event information.

Get outside this month – and throughout the summer – and enjoy all the great things the outdoors in Illinois has to offer.