



January 2010

Dear First Grade Teacher,

Time to make a Splash! Your field trip to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is coming up - get ready for the adventure! This year there are some changes to the previsit. Your previsit may now be conducted at your leisure with a video available on Safari Montage.

Attached are teacher instructions, a letter to parents, and a letter to chaperones. Only bring **three chaperones**. Before offering anyone the chaperone "job," make sure they have read the letter and understand the expectations.

Before your trip:

- Verify field trip date with Assistant Principal
- Go to the ELC's website for prep activity. [www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org) (under "For Teachers")
- Watch previsit video
- Go over vocabulary (p 2)
- Go over ELC Rules (p 3) and What to Wear (p 3)
- Discuss lunch and how to pack a minimal waste lunch (p 4)
- Send letter home to parents (p 5) and to chaperones (p 6)

Day of trip:

- Have everyone wear sturdy nametags
- Organize lunches for each class into **separate** laundry baskets, boxes or coolers
- **Arrive at the ELC at 9:30 am and leave at 1:15 pm.**

Feel free to call or email me if you have any questions. Thank you for helping provide a safe and fun learning opportunity. We appreciate your support☺.

Sincerely,  
Heather Stapleton  
Education Coordinator  
**(772) 589-5050 or [Heather@DiscoverELC.org](mailto:Heather@DiscoverELC.org)**

**[www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org)**



**Environmental Learning Center Field Trip  
Teacher Instructions – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

*One day's exposure to mountains is better than a cartload of books.* – John Muir, 1872

The Environmental Learning Center (ELC) field trip is a high point in the school year for first grade students. At the ELC, they learn about nature by exploring the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Experiences focus on the main themes emphasized in the ELC's curriculum for first grade, **Splash 1: Homes and Habitats**. (There should be a copy of this curriculum in your classroom; if not, you may contact Sue Curtis, Executive Director of Core Curriculum.)

**The Goal of the Field Trip**

To provide a positive, outdoor experience that will promote awareness of the environment and inspire interest in learning about the world around us. Hands-on learning is heavily emphasized. We hope that the trip will leave a lasting impression of good environmental ethics and stewardship.

**Preparing Students for their Adventure!**

The more prepared students are when they come, the more they will get out of their ELC field trip. You can greatly increase the impact of the learning experience by doing at least one activity from the first two activity sections in **Splash 1**, entitled *Awaken Enthusiasm* and *Focus Attention*, before your students come out.

Vocabulary introduced during field trip. Please introduce these to your students:

brackish	detritus	food	food chain
habitat	Indian River Lagoon	living/non-living	metamorphosis
native	shelter	space	water

Doing follow-up activities from the section entitled *Share Inspiration* in **Splash 1** (as well as additional on our website) will enhance the value of the learning experience.

**Pre-Visit**

Before your field trip, watch the ELC Field Trip video. This will help prepare you and your students for the field trip. During the video, you and your students will learn about your field trip. After the video, please lead the "Make Your Own Estuary" (making a mangrove estuary) with your class [Note: this document used by permission of the St. Johns River Water Management District]. You will find this activity (instructions and student worksheet) on our website at [www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org) (click on "For Teachers").

**Chaperones**

We realize that the ELC field trip is a popular one for parents, **but each class is limited to three chaperones** (in addition to the teacher). **If you have any special needs students, including wheelchairs or physical limitations, please call Heather Stapleton at 589-5050 prior to your trip.** And please encourage all parents to visit the ELC later with their children as their guides! There is no admission fee.

Chaperones should serve as role models during the field trip, maintain discipline, and help the students and Naturalist as needed. **They may not bring any children not enrolled in the class.** On page 6 is a letter to prospective chaperones that outlines their responsibilities. Please read the letter yourself, and make a copy to give to each person interested in the “job.”

### Field Trip Activities

During the field trip, your students will:

- ✓ explore the ELC’s Native Plant Garden
- ✓ discover the mangrove forest
- ✓ learn about animals and habitats
- ✓ examine animals found in the ocean and lagoon
- ✓ learn what fresh water critters inhabit our pond
- ✓ learn about conservation and stewardship
- ✓ get to know our wonderful Indian River Lagoon

### ELC Rules

Good student behavior is as important on the field trip as it is in your classroom. Please review with your students the ELC Rules:

- ✓ Have fun.
- ✓ Be respectful.
- ✓ Listen and follow directions.
- ✓ Keep shoes on. Always!
- ✓ Watch for fire ants and splinters!
- ✓ Have fun☺

Make sure parents know what the field trip will involve. Send home a copy of the parent letter found at the end of these instructions. Encourage your students to eat breakfast on the morning of the field trip so they have plenty of energy for the day’s adventure.

**School buses arrive at the ELC at 9:30 am and depart at 1:15 pm.**

### What to Wear

During the field trip, all activities take place outside. **Students, teachers, and chaperones must wear closed-toe and closed-heel shoes, and clothing that can get wet and dirty. Water shoes, CROCs and sandals are not acceptable.** For safety reasons anyone not wearing appropriate footwear may not be allowed to participate in all activities. Shoes must be kept on at all times. Dress appropriately for the weather – we will come inside during lightning storms, but may stay out in light rain. **Make sure children wear sweaters or jackets when cold or rainy weather is expected.**

Please have everyone wear sturdy name tags. This allows the Naturalist to interact on a personal level. Be prepared to divide the children into groups or buddy pairs when needed.

Water and restroom breaks will be provided during the trip. **No one should have food or drinks with them while walking around the ELC.** Should a child need to use the restroom outside of scheduled breaks, an adult must accompany him/her.

Teachers are responsible for administering first aid, tending to any child who has allergic reactions, and handling any special medical conditions. Make sure that the Naturalist and chaperones are aware of any such conditions. A first aid kit will be available.

## Lunch

Please combine your class's lunches in large containers (coolers, boxes, clothes baskets) for transport and organization. **Please make sure you and your chaperones can carry these.** Lunches for each class must be packed separately. Children should not carry their own lunches. Lunch is between 10:40 am and 11:30 am.

ELC emphasizes conservation and stewardship, including the Triple R Philosophy: **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.** We will discuss the problem of our ever-expanding landfills. After lunch, we will sort our trash, separating recyclables (plastic containers marked # 1 - # 7, glass, cans, paper bags) and compost (fruit and vegetables) from the garbage.

Challenge your students to bring lunches that produce minimal waste. Note that aluminum cans and foil can be recycled, but foil snack and beverage bags (for example, Capri Sun) cannot. Here are some other suggestions:

- ✓ Put drinks and foods in reusable containers that can be taken home and reused.
- ✓ Bring naturally packaged foods (hard-boiled eggs, bananas, or apples).
- ✓ Ziploc bags and plastic utensils can not be recycled. Bring a lunch box that you can take home and reuse.

We emphasize that 1) leftover food could have been **Reduced** by remaining at home, 2) sturdy containers can be washed and **Reused**, and 3) certain materials can be **Recycled**.

## After the Field Trip

Take advantage of student enthusiasm after the trip by doing follow-up activities to reinforce what your students learned during the trip. The five activities in the *Share Inspiration* section of **Splash 1** are designed to do just that. A few additional activities are available on our website for you after the trip.

You may also have students create story maps to show the sequence of activities they did on their field trip. The maps can be illustrated with pictures and included in student nature journals.

Another idea is to have students collectively create a single thank you card for the Naturalist and Naturalist Assistant. Save paper by making a single card rather than sending letters from each student. Students can be assigned different tasks: making drawings, lettering the card, and pasting on art. The card could even be shaped like a fish! There is lots of room for imagination.



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Dear Parent,

The field trip to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a high point in the school year for first grade students. They learn about nature by exploring the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Hands-on learning is emphasized, and activities take place outside. The goal is to provide a positive, outdoor experience that promotes awareness and inspires interest in the environment.

Your child's adventure will be on \_\_\_\_\_.

- Your child should eat a good breakfast so s/he has plenty of energy.
- Your child must wear closed-toe and closed heel shoes, and clothing that can get wet and dirty. **Water shoes, sandals and CROCs are not acceptable.**
- Dress your child appropriately for the weather, especially on cold and rainy days. We come inside during storms, but stay out in light rain.
- Apply sunscreen and bug repellent to your child before the trip.
- Make sure the teacher is aware of any allergic reactions or special medical conditions that your child may have.

We emphasize conservation and stewardship of our natural resources. This includes the Triple R philosophy that encourages all to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. We discuss that 1) leftover food could have been **Reduced** by remaining at home, 2) sturdy plastic containers can be washed and **Reused**, and 3) certain materials can be **Recycled**. Please help by sending your child with a lunch that produces minimal waste. You can do this by:

- 1) putting food and drinks in plastic containers that can be washed and reused;
- 2) including foods that are packaged naturally such as hard-boiled eggs, bananas or apples; and
- 3) not giving your child prepackaged meals (**which have a lot of packaging**).

Thank you for your help in this wonderful learning adventure! Entrance to the ELC is free, and we encourage you to come back with your child and let him/her be your nature guide ☺.

Sincerely,

Heather Stapleton  
Education Coordinator

**[www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org)**



January 2010

Dear Prospective Chaperone,

The field trip to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a high point in the school year for first grade students. They learn about nature by exploring the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. Hands-on learning is emphasized, and activities take place outside. The goal of the field trip is to provide a positive, outdoor experience that promotes awareness and inspires interest in learning about the world around us. The trip will also leave a lasting impression of good environmental ethics and stewardship.

**Chaperones play a vital role during ELC field trips. Your role is to promote a safe, successful learning experience and to help where needed. The responsibilities:**

- Serve as a role model. Your full attention is expected. Be enthusiastic!
- Supervise all children at all times. Should a child need to use the restroom outside of scheduled breaks, an adult must accompany him/her.
- Participate in all activities and help children and Naturalist as needed.
- Serve as disciplinarian and help children follow rules:
  - Have fun
  - Be respectful.
  - Listen and follow directions
  - Keep your shoes on. Always!
  - Watch for fire ants and splinters
  - Have fun☺
- Keep students together, and close enough to hear the Naturalist.
- Put cell phone on vibrate or turn off.
- Refrain from smoking.
- Help take lunches off of bus upon arrival at the ELC.
- Do not bring children **not enrolled in the class**.

Should you decide to accept this important "job," please notify your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Heather Stapleton  
Education Coordinator

**[www.DiscoverELC.org](http://www.DiscoverELC.org)**



### **Activities from *Splash 1: Homes and Habitats***

The more prepared students are when they come to the ELC for their field trip, the more they will get out of their adventure. You can greatly increase the impact of the learning experience by doing at least one activity from the first two activity sections in ***Splash 1: Homes and Habitats***, entitled *Awaken Enthusiasm* and *Focus Attention*, before your students come out.

Including the field trip, there are 20 different activities described in the ***Splash 1*** curriculum. To help you decide which ones to do with your class, these activities are classified into three categories below. Several activities take place outside. Refer to “Hints for having a happy on-campus expedition,” p. 9-10 in ***Splash 1*** for a summary of considerations, including safety. We know you are on a tight schedule. If you only have enough time to do a few activities before your field trip, we suggest doing Camera (pp 26-27), Animal Homes (pp 38-42), and Could Whales Live Here? (pp 46-47).

The following activities teach about homes, habitats, and the four things they must include (food, water, shelter, space):

- Mini Beasts (#4, pp 20-21). Make live insect traps by burying jars in the ground and leaving them out overnight.
- Outdoor Adventure (#5, p 22). Use magnifying lenses to find insects and other small animals.
- Field Walking Tour (#6, pp 24-25). Look for evidence of animals such as tracks and nests, then play a game to see if students can find enough “food” to survive.
- Everybody Needs a Home (#8, p 28-29). Draw pictures of student homes and compare them to animal homes.
- The Little Wood Duck (#9, pp 30-34). Read a story about a little Florida wood duck who is in search of a home.
- How Do Animals and Plants Grow and Change? (#10, pp 36-37) Students grow radish seeds or set up an aquarium.
- Animal Homes (#11, pp 38-42). Match pictures of animals to corresponding pictures of different habitats.
- Bark and Boot Barricades (#12, p 44). Look for animals living behind tree bark and in cabbage palm boots.
- Could Whales Live Here? (#13, p 46-47). Search for different kinds of habitat on campus using habitat cards.
- Fiddler Crab Habitat Choice (#17, pp 65-66). Draw fiddler crabs with the food, water, shelter and space they need.
- Life in a Mini-Habitat (#20, p 69). Compare types of plants and animals between areas on the school campus that are mowed and not mowed.

The following activities encourage students to think about physical and behavioral differences in animals that require their corresponding habitats to provide different resources:

- Animal Pantomimes (#1, p 14). Select a favorite animal and act out its behavior.
- Are You Me? (#14, pp 48-54). Match up baby pictures (student’s or parent’s) to a current picture, and pictures of baby animals to their corresponding adult pictures to illustrate growth and change among animals. This activity also introduces the idea of metamorphosis, in which the baby form is completely different from the adult form and both have entirely different habitat requirements.

- Crab Walk Race (#18, p 67). Run relay races moving as different animals.
- Super Creature! (#19, p 68). Create imaginary animals that are adapted for specific habitats.

The following activities stress observation skills through games and creativity in art and language:

- Posy Poetry (#2, pp 16-17). Write down words that describe several different flowers on display, assemble the descriptions into little poems, then guess which flower is described during a poetry reading.
- The Shape and Color of Things (#3, pp 18-19). Make “shape necklaces” from colored construction paper then go on an “I spy” nature walk to observe the colors and shapes in those necklaces.
- Camera (#7, pp 26-27). Pair up with one student as “photographer” and another as the “camera.” The camera closes his eyes until the photographer positions him in front of a pretty “picture” then presses the shutter by tapping him on the shoulder to open his “lens” (eyes) to capture it. “Develop” the pictures by drawing.
- The Outdoors: Springboard for Expression (#16, p 64). Use writing, art, and acting to build on the ELC field trip.

Stories are a wonderful way to get children excited about the environment, and there is an extensive reading list in ***Splash 1*** that begins on p. 70. Several of the books are available for check-out from the ELC library.

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