



Geocaching with Kids!

Geocaching offers you a family-friendly way to teach your children about the wonders of the outdoors. It's a high-tech treasure hunt that can help engage your kids in the natural world.

What Is Geocaching?

The more helpful answer: Geocaching uses handheld GPS units to find hidden "caches" in your neighborhood or out on the trails. Caches are containers of all sizes that may be camouflaged to blend into their surroundings. Inside there will be—at a minimum—a logbook to sign, with larger caches also containing various inexpensive trinkets for trade.



How Do I Start Geocaching?

Start by looking up caches in your area. Geocaching.com lists more than 2.1 million active geocaches worldwide, so chances are excellent there will be several near you.

Some caches are easy to find while others may require a long hike, so check the difficulty and terrain ratings on the web page before you go. A "1 star" difficulty and terrain rating are just about right for a young child.

Cache sizes are also given online, so if your child is looking forward to finding and exchanging "treasure," be sure to select a cache that is "regular" size or larger.

What Do I Bring Geocaching?

Treat a geocaching-hunt as you would any hike by dressing your kids comfortably for the outdoors and carrying essential supplies such as water and snacks. You will need a hand held GPS receiver or Smart phone to locate the geocache.

Caches often contain small trade items or trinkets. The rule of geocaching is that if you take something from the cache, you must replace it with something of equal or greater value. So, have the kids pack an assortment of trinkets for trading.

For poking into dark cache-hiding places, bring a trekking pole or hiking stick and a flashlight. Lastly, you will want to sign the logbook in the cache to prove you found it, so don't forget to bring a pen.

For more information visit us at <https://5210.psu.edu> or email at 5210@psu.edu.



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5210 Healthy Children is adapted from Let's Go! www.letsqo.org.

Tips to locate a cache:

Look for likely places or objects that appear out of place (unnatural piles of sticks, etc.).

Recall the size of the cache (from geocaching.com); use the hint if needed.

Take your time and be patient.

Caches may be hidden in old logs or rock piles that are home to other creatures as well, so teach kids to look first before reaching in. Kids will likely search enthusiastically; just make sure they don't tear up the countryside looking for the cache. If you turn over a rock, replace it as found. Always follow Leave No Trace principles.

Once You Find a Cache:

You found it! Congratulations! Now what?

Take something from the cache.

Leave something in the cache.

Write about it in the logbook.

Look through the cache. Take an item and leave an item, and enter your name and experience into the logbook. Some people don't care to trade, and that's OK too. Carefully reseal the cache and hide it as well as you found it. Don't leave markers for the next cacher to find it or place it in a "better" spot.

Now is a good time to practice a little CITO (Cache In, Trash Out). If there is any trash in the area, pick it up and pack it out.

Once back at home, go to geocaching.com and write a log to let the cache "owner" know you found it. Let them know the condition of the cache, your experiences on the trail and any trades you made. This can be a fun creative-writing experience for the kids.

Now off to the next cache... and the next one... and the next one.

Geocaching can be fun for the whole family. Use geocache hunts to introduce your kids to new parks, new activities and/or the natural history of your area. It also can make a fun addition to your next vacation. Look up cache locations along highways and near hotels to make travel time more interesting.



This information was adapted from rei.com. Check them out for more ideas and tips on Geocaching.

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