Children Connecting to Nature

# **Letters to the Editors- Guidelines and TemplateMarch 2018**

Dear Nature Canada Members:

Letters to Editors are an excellent way to encourage and promote discussion of nature topics you are passionate about. A Letter to the Editor can help create awareness about an important issue and help to influence public opinion.

Publishing a Letter to the Editor is not a simple process. Most editors of publications receive up to 300- 500 letter submissions daily.

You can significantly improve your chances of having your letter published by following these guidelines.

**Letters to the Editor Guidelines**

* A timely letter will be more likely to be chosen for publication. It is best to respond within seven days to a particular article or news event that was published by the newspaper.
* Try to make the letter concrete if you are commenting on a national issue, highlight the national significance and try to link it to a recent event or article that discusses the issue.
* If you are responding to a community event or issue, your local (community) newspaper is the best publication to submit your letter to.
* Be concise, try to keep letters to fewer than 150 words. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.
* Send letters by e-mail and include the contents of the letter in the body of the e-mail message as plain text only. Do not use Microsoft Word format or rich text format (RTF).
* Do not send letters as an attachment.
* Ensure you include your name, address and daytime phone number.

***Children Connecting to Nature***

**Letter to the Editor - Template**

Name of Media Outlet or Publication

Attention: Editor

Address

City, Postal Code

Dear Editor:

RE: *[State your reason for writing your letter right at the beginning. If you are responding to articles or editorials by the media, use the first sentence to reference the title or topic of the article (such as Declining Monarch Butterflies), name of the author or source (i.e, Globe and Mail), and the date the article was published.]*

* In your [DATE] article [ARTICLE TITLE], columnist [NAME OF REPORTER/COLUMNIST] states [MAIN POINT OF ARTICLE].
* The sad reality is our children are not as active in their daily lives as they once were. They are spending more sedentary time indoors, and less time outside playing and exploring.
* According to the research outlined in the [24-Hour Movement Guidelines](https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/thought-leadership/benefits-and-guidelines/5-17), children’s optimal health includes high levels of physical activity, low levels of sedentary behaviour, and sufficient sleep *each day*.
* It is troubling to know that Canadians spend 90 percent of their time indoors; and that children are spending less time outdoors, and as a result, are becoming less connected to nature.

 *[If you responding to a current issue, state that you are responding to the issue and where the issue is being addressed. State your points here. Include facts, references, or research here to establish credibility. Keep length in mind.]*

* An excellent way to reverse these statistics is to get children outside and active in nature.
* The benefits of connecting children to nature are well documented in numerous scientific research studies and publications. The research is conclusive—children’s social, psychological, physical and mental health is positively impacted when they have daily contact with nature.
* Further research evidence suggests, contact with nature and green environments is needed daily - just like a vitamin - in frequent and regular doses to keep our bodies and mind healthy.
* Nature Canada’s [NatureHood](http://naturecanada.ca/what-we-do/naturehood/) program takes all of this evidence into account and provides activities to help people connect to nearby nature – especially children.
* Studies show that people not only feel calmer and more relaxed when they are in nature, but simply being in close proximity to a green space can improve the sense of well-being.
* Some medical professionals are even going so far as to prescribe “nature” to their patients.

[*Include a CALL TO ACTION: asking readers to follow up with some activity, such as joining in calling on policymakers to address the issue.]*

* Discover something new about your neighbourhood. Take a hike and explore your NatureHood on foot or by bicycle with your children. It is a great way connect with nature.
* Contribute to science through a citizen science program. Make your observations of nature count by sharing them with scientists and other nature enthusiasts.
* Have your child draw a map of the nature trail you’re exploring. What did you discover? What colours did you see? How many insects or birds did you count?

[*End with a strong, positive STATEMENT in support of your case*]

* Your NatureHood is any place in which you ‘connect’ with nature’s wonder – from watching a bee pollinate a flower in your planter box, to watching birds at a feeder, to witnessing the trees and other plants change with the passing of the seasons.
* Nature is fundamental to who we are as Canadians. It provides us with the clean air, water and food we need to survive, and inspirational natural beauty to nurture our bodies and soul.
* Let us hope for a healthier, more resilient generation of youth spending time learning about nature and wildlife. It starts with you! Please go to [Nature Canada’s website](http://naturecanada.ca/) to find out more about NatureHood.

Sincerely,

*Signature*

Name of writer