

*talking to children*

*about climate change*



**6-9**  
years old

## what we do in our homes affects nature, and nature affects our homes

Children of this age level are old enough to start exploring cause and effect: the ways nature affects their daily lives, and the idea that humans can also impact nature. Start with simple causes that have clear effects. For instance, weather events (such as rain, snow, a very cold or hot day) can lead to conversations about how weather, as part of nature, affects your day-to-day lives. Meanwhile, human actions like cutting down trees or picking up litter have obvious and direct impacts on nature.

This is a good time to introduce the idea of climate (what the weather is “always” like, over a long period of time) as an early prelude to discussing how climate can change.

### *guiding questions:*

Does the weather ever change what you do? What would you do differently on a sunny day than you would on a rainy day? What about a snowy day? Are there places you like to go to be in nature? What do you do there? Does it look the same every time you visit? What is the same and what is different? Do you think nature notices that you were there? What are ways that you help protect nature when you go to a park?

### *activities at home:*

Set up a rain catcher or a thermometer at home. Keep a weather journal, or just check to see how the weather changes from day to day. Does weather in Chicago follow any sort of pattern? How can we find out about these patterns?

### *examples:*

Heavy rains can cause floods in your own house (nature affecting a human). When people use lots of water during a rainstorm, they add a lot of water down the drain and flooding can get much worse (humans affecting nature). Using less water when it’s raining is a good way to help nature and ourselves.

### *Our House exhibit connection:*

Visit ‘Today’s Forecast’ with your child. Look at the pictures of different seasons and extreme kinds of weather, and talk about how weather impacts your lives.

