Family Fun Activity #3
Mapping Your (Natural) World

Making a map and reading a map is a fun way to connect your family with its natural surroundings. Making a map allows us to express our sense of place, as well as building spatial awareness and visual literacy.

We’ll create a map of your backyard and surrounding area, then mark (on the map) where you’d find clues left by critters that live around your house.

Materials for this map making activity:
Large sheet of paper, or posterboard
Marker, pens, pencils, color pencils

The ‘Step by Step’:
1. Ask your family - if they’ve ever been on a plane – and looked out the window – what did the ground look like?
   The houses? Were they rectangles – or squares?
   The trees – were they rounded squiggles?
   The forests - a bunch of rounded squiggles?
   And a pool – would it be a blue circle or rectangle?
   A pond – would it be a blue oval shape?
   What about roads – would they be curving thick lines?

2. Walk around your house or apartment - and notice where things are – notice where things are in relation to one another.
   The placement of bushes, swing set, driveway, garage, garden, trees – you get the idea.

3. Draw your house (or apartment) first – draw a rectangle or square for your house.

4. Draw a map of the (natural) area around your house – the more details the better.
   Don’t worry about the map being perfect, or accurate. The map is meant to be a general guide.

5. If appropriate, collect samples from nature that you find around your house (please don’t pick up things that are living – pick up things that have fallen to the ground) and glue down onto your map at the appropriate location on the map.

Now that you’ve finished your map – think of the animals, or insects, or amphibians, or reptiles or birds that you’ve seen around your house.

Where would they live?
- a nest in a tree?
- a cavity in a tree?
- a burrow in the ground?
- a web in the bushes?
- a ledge?
- is there a pond near your house, or a stream…who might live there?

6. Mark an ‘X’ on the map where an animal that you’ve seen or heard - might live.
   Now - take a ‘walk’ on your map…fun, right?

Making this map is another way to connect to the world outside your house.
And to the animals that live outside your house.
Remember – there’s always Nature somewhere.
Everywhere.
Right outside your house – and sometimes even _inside_ your house!

Enjoy Nature!
Be Considerate!
And Gently Cautious!