

THE FAMILY JOHN MUIR AWARD



The [John Muir Award](#) is an environmental award scheme that encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places.

The Family John Muir Award offers opportunity for families to work towards a shared goal, helping improve parent-child and inter-generational relationships, boost confidence and simply enjoy spending time together outdoors. Families of any shape and size can get involved, including extended family, carers, guardians and foster families. It can be delivered by organisations working with families, including community learning and development services, schools and charities; families can also get involved directly in a 'self-guided' capacity.

What's involved?

At the heart of a John Muir Award are Four Challenges:

- Discover a wild place
- Explore it
- Conserve it
- Share your experiences

"Every part of this has been an amazing benefit. Learning new skills. Spending more time together, taking everyone out on walks and exploring different things we wouldn't of even thought. It's opened our eyes to so much."

Parent participant, North Ayrshire Council Family Learning Team

Families, and organisations supporting them, choose activities to meet these challenges that suit their interests, abilities and the wild places they want to visit. This may include getting creative, active, curious, hands-on, crafty, artistic and adventurous.

Family members learn and work together to collectively achieve the [Award Criteria](#). Families successfully completing the Award receive one certificate per family, offering valuable recognition of joint achievements. There are three Award levels, offering opportunities if families wish to progress.

Where can it be used?

The Award is suited to a range of wild places, from back gardens and community growing spaces; urban greenspaces and parks; canals, rivers and coasts; woods; hills; and National Parks. Many organisations choose to support families to get to know wild places in their local community, giving parents and carers inspiration for simple, free and fun activities that families can continue to do together in their own time and during school holidays.

Organisations use the Family John Muir Award in a variety of contexts.

We've seen an increased uptake of the Family John Muir Award in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As families have been spending more time together at home and within their local

THE FAMILY JOHN MUIR AWARD



areas, shared learning experiences offer opportunities to play, have fun and try different things, and can be a way for organisations to support those more at risk of social isolation. Dip into the examples below for inspiration relevant to your own priorities and settings.

Learning together and building school-family relationships

The Family Award can support learning at home through working towards a shared goal and can help build relationships between parents, carers and schools through fun and relaxed outdoor activities, including: engaging families outdoors to help raise attainment at [Shortlees Primary School](#), with a focus on improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing; encouraging collaborative family working and strengthening connections between parents and teaching staff at [Golfhill Primary School](#); helping plan and structure home learning outdoors for one [Glencoe-based family](#); and supporting families in North Ayrshire to learn about and enjoy local wild places together – see [Grace's video](#) and the families' [Record eBook](#) to find out what they got up to.

Strengthening community connections

Engaging families in local wild places creates fantastic opportunities to connect with communities, other families and nature on their doorsteps. See [3D Drumchapel's impact report](#) to find out how the Award helped foster closeness, friendships and connections to both neighbourhood greenspaces and a nearby National Park through a holiday programme. During the pandemic, supporting families remotely has been a priority for many, with the Family Award offering a framework for activities, helping connect families within Loch Lomond & The

Trossachs National Park with its special qualities through [Callander's Landscape](#); and inspiring and supporting families to share their local adventures with each other online through [Galloway Glens Partnership](#). See our [pandemic stories](#) for further examples from across the country.

Wellbeing and family resilience

From community drop-in services to holiday initiatives, the Award framework can be used to structure engagement programmes. See how it was used at [With Kids](#) to help parents, carers and children feel more included, active and connected; and how [Shelter](#) delivered an Award aimed at minimising the trauma of homelessness for vulnerable children and their families through nature connection.

Self-guided family experiences

Families are welcome to participate independently, deciding their own activities to achieve the Award Criteria. Get inspired by the ['Walkmill Gruffarolls' family](#) experience of deepening connections with and ensuring the protection of their beautiful community woodland; a [family in London](#) who took a close look at their local wild place, Barham Park, blogging about new discoveries and shared experiences; and how completing the Award with his family helped to inspire 10 year old Joe and his friend Magnus to fundraise for the John Muir Trust by undertaking a [Journey for Wildness](#), walking the 66-mile Bob Graham Round in Cumbria.

Want to know more? Visit www.johnmuiraward.org where you can:

- Watch our short introductory animation – [John Muir Award: What's it all about](#)
- See our [ideas and resources](#) page for inspiration, including links with health and wellbeing, education and literacy
- Find everything you need to [get involved](#)
- Learn about the John Muir Trust and how you can [support us](#) through your Award