

# Re-creating natural phenomena with children: creativity and education combined

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Some natural phenomena occur rarely (like volcano eruptions), occur too slowly and obscurely for us (like climate changes). Nevertheless children always show interest to the causes of such phenomena. These are dealt with in Natalia Ryzhova's program "Nature is Our Home". The author developed means to re-create various natural phenomena with the simplest equipment. The key point of this method is the involvement of children in planning, making and operating these models. The teacher encourages children, helps them to plan and make the functional model and suggests analogies from nature. Five and six year old children are very enthusiastic when creating a mountain landscape with a functioning river system (springs, river, waterfall and lake) and an active volcano. Materials required for this model are: modeling clay, some plastic cups and containers, flexible pipes with clips and a couple of PET bottles. Plastic cups and containers are placed on the cardboard base and shaped to resemble natural landscape. Then the plastic structure is covered with modeling clay to enhance the natural look. Children may want to re-create a real landscape, or an imaginary place from a book or movie, or just their own fantasy.

For seven and eight year-olds the model may be supplemented with a transparent vessel for ice or snow, which is then placed under a heat source (like a lamp or a heater). This enables vivid demonstration of the way climate works and changes. During all the phases of creating the model children's creativity is driven by the principle of interactive education: "I hear - I forget, I see - I remember, I make – I understand."

**The demo session of creating a model is suitable for 10 to 12 people and takes about an hour.**