

Phoenix, AZ



Teach Your Kids To Fish

from Ben Koller, [The Hook Up](#)

Enjoy The Outdoors With Your Family

As a professional fishing guide, I make my living taking people fishing. As you can imagine, I see all kinds of anglers. I also get all kinds of questions from my clients relating to how to get their loved ones more involved in fishing and the outdoors; more specifically, their kids.

On the surface, this question seems simple enough. But the importance of this question is rarely understood, even by the parents asking it. After all, it is the first few fishing experiences that will either hook kids for life, or send them running back to their playstations. Get them hooked, and you are raising your life long fishing buddy. Show them a good time, and kids will put the outdoors on top of their list of preferred activities, which is not only good for them, but is also good for society and especially fishing.

Kids are our future conservationists, our future activists for ensuring good fishing for years to come. Teach them well in the beginning, and our grandkids will thank you!

So, with the importance understood, follow these steps to insure a successful fishing trip with your kids.

1. Keep it simple!

I'm talking a hook, a split shot, a bobber, and a nighcrawler. It's a simple combination that kids can understand, and the bobber gives a visual aspect to fishing that will hold their interest longer. The bobber also helps the parents keep track of where the bait is. Parents with little or no fishing experience will find this set up very convenient, and I would recommend that they learn fishing with the same set up. This rig will catch any species of fish on any body of water.

2. Fish for action, not size!

Kids need a quick pace to keep their interest. It is vital that they start out fishing where bites will be easy to come by. Bluegills, sunfish, and small bass are perfect for this type of action, as these fish live shallow most of the year, and are easy find. All of the desert lakes and urban lakes will have these fish readily available. Catfish and trout can also be a good option if they are fished for shortly after stocking. Check with the game and fish department for their stocking schedule, and be there shortly after for some fast action.

3. Kids need praise!

This is where some careful planning and understanding will come in handy. Kids will no doubt make bad casts, fling the hook around like a flying gaff, and probably drop the rod a time or two. That's okay, if it's expected! Do yourself a favor, and smash the barb of the hook flat with a pair of pliers. Not only does it make unhooking the fish easier, but it makes unhooking the parents easier as well. You will be unhooking both. Let them know they're doing a great job, and show excitement when things are going well. Their opinion will be forged as much from your reaction, as their catch success. If they do something wrong, explain it to them, and teach them how to do it right. This is the time to leave the short temper at home.

4. Keep it about the kids!

We all have visions of what the perfect first fishing trip should look like. We're fishing side by side with our kids, they're making perfect casts, and the fish are biting like crazy. Although this can be the case, it can also be the complete opposite of what we actually experience. If the kids decide 2 minutes in to the fishing that they'd rather throw rocks, let them throw rocks. If they want to play with the bugs, or splash through the water, let them. This is their outing. In the beginning, it's all about having fun. Their version of fun, not ours. If the first few trips consist of 3 casts and 2 hours of skipping rocks, then great. They'll come around.

5. Teach them about conservation!

I know what you're thinking, boring! I agree, it can be, but I'm not talking about saving the forest or global warming, I'm talking about simple and interesting things about nature and preservation. For instance, when they catch a fish, hold it for them. Show them the fins and how the fish use them to swim. Show them the eyes and how they see through the water. If you don't know these things, learn them. More importantly, teach them catch and release. Teach them that by releasing the fish, it will be alive to reproduce, and that will create hundreds of more fish for the future. If you bring fish home, teach them to only bring home what they can eat, and releases the rest. This is the time when kids will learn the importance and integrity of conservation. Teach them well.

Teach Your Kids to Fish - Take The Kids Fishing

While there are never any guarantees in fishing, following these simple steps will surely bring success on your next fishing adventure with your kids. Remember the steps, teach them well, and have fun!

About the author: Ben Koller is the owner of **The Hook Up** fishing guide service, and a member of the Ranger Boats and Mercury Marine freshwater fishing team. Reach him at 623-412-3474 or www.TheHookUpOutfitters.com.

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