

Late Ice, Kids and Mules  
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As spring is vastly approaching and warmer weather is coming more frequently, spending time on the ice fishing is so much more enjoyable at this time of year. The breezes are much warmer which makes sitting out on the open ice so much easier and enjoyable. The days of ice fishing without wearing a coat are here and this is something that most ice anglers always look forward to.

The days are getting longer and more sunlight is penetrating the waters of the lakes that we fish. The sun is much higher in the sky and very warm on the angler's backs while time spent fishing on the ice. With spring coming, everything feels and looks like life is being reborn, but at the same time another season is coming to an end once again.



The late spring of the year brings along with it the best ice fishing of the season in regards to fish quantities but more importantly fish quality. This time of year the fish are thinking of one thing and that is the upcoming spawn. This time of the ice season is a great time and opportunity

for getting kids out onto the ice as the frigid days of cold are gone and the fishes activity is picking up.

This late season ice is also a time that caution needs to be heeded as the ice is in the melting stages and shorelines are going to be eroding. Sunny shorelines are going to be opening up and becoming soft so getting onto the ice may entail some walking to find a good access point. Also once on the ice keeping an eye on the kids that were brought along is critical as well as we don't want them to get near the areas that the ice is weakening and by causing a bad situation.

Getting around on the ice is much simpler for the adults as well as the kids since the snow has melted and left a good flat surface. This is allowing better sun penetration and the lakes weeds are going to be growing and they will be putting more oxygen into the water

and this is an area that an angler should find as the fish are going to be congregating into these areas.

With spring and spawn vastly approaching this is prime time to getting kids onto the ice and trying their luck at ice fishing. Finding areas that have weedbeds are going to be areas that the baitfish is going to be in and as well as a bigger fish hangout. Fish are going to be at varying depths this time of year and by moving from shallow water to deeper water and watching your electronics and finding that magic depth will be fairly easy.



Setting up the kids is fairly simple and showing and explaining how to use a fishing rod/reel is fairly straight forward. Drill your two holes a foot or so apart and this way you



and a child can use the same electronics to see what is going on down there. Vary your bait depth and their bait depth so that the two of you can cover two different water columns and when fish come through, that way one of you can adjust your bait and both of you have the opportunity at catching fish.

Micro baits are a good choice of baits from the tiny hair jigs to the micro plastics that are on the market. This time of year the forage these fish are looking for are still a

tad on the small side and by matching the hatch, this allows the best catching opportunities. Changing the shape and color of your bait until the fish tell you what they want is the key and this will help you keep the kids attention on fishing.

If by chance the bite is a little slow let the kids play around some to kill some time until a new school of fish comes through. Another fun thing to bring along if you have one is an underwater camera and get that setup and watch the screen and see the excitement on their faces when either schools of fish swim through or when that occasional big fish swims through and watch how they want to fish once again.

This time of the season is when everyone has that opportunity and catching a mule, slab crappie. These big female crappies are feeding more regularly for the spawn and when you get into a school of these, there will be a lot of



rippin' lips as the angler is rearin' back. Watching a kid fighting a mule crappie in the 13, 14 and up to 18 inch class is something to see and the excitement that comes along with it is second to none.

If the weather has been too cold, wet, windy or the timing was never right, take those kids out on these last nice days of the season. By getting them out at a younger age gets them use to the rigors of getting set up and fishing in a totally different fashion. But the late ice fishing also makes things easier as well compared to open water fishing and more people can ice fish at once as opposed to the open water season. Enjoy these last outings of this ice season and instill another great outdoor adventure into the youth while they are rippin' lips and rearin' mules.