

At Home with Nature

Nature doesn't just happen in a park; it can happen right at home!



A resource for **PRESCHOOL** and **EARLY ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN** so they may feel right **AT HOME WITH NATURE**.

Feathered Friends

Videos, activities, stories and songs celebrating our world's feathered wonders - **BIRDS**.

Let's Get Started

Enjoy this video and discover why birds are such fascinating creatures. We'll even see many **REAL BIRDS** as we visit Winterpast Farm and Petting Zoo.

https://youtu.be/yVRt9PP_TVw



Literacy Connection

There are many kinds of birds. Enjoy The Bird Alphabet Book written by Jerry Pallotta and illustrated by Edgar Stewart and learn about a whole array of birds from A to Z.

<https://youtu.be/5gHJwB-Zkrg>

Music and Movement

Sing along and move like birds as they hatch and grow.

<https://youtu.be/RJjKeHv5-mM>



Math Connection

Count birds while learning the sounds of common backyard buddies.

<https://youtu.be/UZBwL8FVnek>

Older children explore different types of bird beaks and then count and compare each beak's effectiveness.

Directions are below.

Creative Expression

Create simple bird feeders and then watch as birds visit and enjoy a snack.

Directions are below.

Let's Explore Outdoors

Take the learning outdoors with memorable family activities.

Details are below.

Math Connection



Hunger Games

Specialized beaks allow birds to gather specific foods. The slender beaks of songbirds are good for reaching insects in bark crevices. Other birds can have beaks for cracking seeds or long beaks for gathering fish in ponds.

Gather a pair of tweezers, a clip-style clothespin and a pair of kitchen tongs. These will represent bird beaks. Also gather these food items and place in separate containers: raisins, dried beans and grapes (placed in a bowl of water.)

Set out the containers of food on a table. Have your child(ren) guess what type of bird food each could represent. (For example, raisins could represent crawling insects and grapes could represent fish swimming in water.)

Invite your child(ren) to use the different tools to gather food from the containers. Have your child(ren) gather food with a particular beak for 2 minutes. Have your child(ren) count the number of pieces of food and record the results. Repeat with the other tools. Compare the particular foods gathered with each beak. Compare the quantity of food collected with each beak. Invite older children to graph the results.

Warblers have sharp pointy beaks (tweezers) for gathering insects and worms (raisins). Sparrows have thick, cone-shaped beaks (clothespin) for gathering seeds (beans). Water birds have long grabbing beaks (tongs) for gathering fish (grapes) in ponds and lakes.

Music and Movement



I'm a Little Birdie

Sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot"

I'm a little birdie, (crouch down inside your "egg")
Ready to hatch,
Pecking at my shell, (make a pecking motion)
Scratch, scratch, scratch! (make a scratching motion)
When I crack it open,
Out I'll leap! (jump up)
I fluff my feathers, (put on "wings")
Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!

Late Last Night

Sung to the tune of "Mrs. O'Leary"

Late last night, when we were all in bed, (pretend to sleep)
Wise Old Owl popped up his head. (pop up your head)
He looked to the left and he
looked right, (look to the left and
then to the right, moving your
neck slowly in each direction)
hunting and searching all night.
Squeak, squeak, squeak!



Creative Expression



Bird Treat Basket

Materials Needed:

- Scooped out grapefruit or orange half
- String or yarn
- Birdseed OR a mixture of raisins and bread crumbs

Directions:

- Use a pointy object to poke a hole in either side of the grapefruit or orange half and pull the string through each hole. Knot the ends to create a basket.
- Fill the basket with bird treats and hang outdoors.
- Watch your visitors enjoy a snack.

Milk Jug Bird Feeder

Materials Needed:

- Empty plastic milk jug and lid
- Scissors
- Wooden chopstick
- String
- Permanent Markers
- Bird Seed OR a mixture of raisins and bread crumbs

Directions:

- Wash the milk jug.
- Use scissors to cut a 3 inch circle on 2 sides of the milk jug.
- Use a pointy object to create a hole beneath each cut circle.
- Push a wooden chopstick through the holes.
- Use permanent markers to decorate the milk jug.
- Use string to tie the bird feeder to a tree.
- Fill the feeder with bird treats.
- Hang outdoors and watch for visitors.



Let's Explore Outdoors



Build a Bird Nest!

Bird nests come in all shapes and sizes. Some are tiny cups made of moss and spider silk, other are massive piles of branches that weigh more than a car.



Invite your child(ren) to gather small twigs, grass and pine straw and arrange them in a bowl shape. Try using mud to hold the materials together.

Gather pieces of brightly colored yarn or string and place these in your nest. You may also place lint from your clothes dryer into your nest. Place your nest where birds will see it. After a few days, look around your yard to see if birds have “borrowed” your materials in their nest building!

Birds are wonderful architects. They gather twigs, grass, leaves and other things and then weave the materials to form nests...all without hands! Many birds build nests to keep their eggs and hatchlings warm and safe. Some birds, like robins and chickadees, build their nests in trees, while other birds build nests on cliffs, in marshy wetlands or even right on the ground.

Splish Splash!

Birds need water to drink, but they also like to play and splash in puddles.

Use an upturned garbage lid to create a bird bath. Place the upturned lid in your yard and place some stones in the base to keep the lid from blowing. The stones will also provide footing for the birds. Fill the bird bath with a few inches of water. Watch as birds splash in the bath!

Let's Explore Outdoors



Musical Messages

Birds call and sing in order to communicate with each other. The best times to listen for birds is either in the early morning or in the evening.



Find a comfortable place to sit or lie outdoors. Lying on your back beneath trees and closing your eyes is a great way to focus on sounds! Stay quiet and listen for some bird sounds. Repeat the sounds that you hear. Do the birds call back to you?

Listen for these songs:

Chickadee—Chickadee-dee-dee

White-throated Sparrow—Poor Sam Peabody-Peabody-Peabody

Robin—Cheerio, cheery me, cheery me

Carolina Wren—Cheeseburger, cheeseburger

Mourning Dove—Coo-oo, coo, coo, coo

Cardinal—Cheer, cheer, cheer, birdie-birdie-birdie

Make up your own song about birds and sing it to them!