

At Home with Nature

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



A resource for **ELEMENTARY-AGE CHILDREN** and their families
so they may feel right **AT HOME WITH NATURE**.

Habitat Hunt

Videos and activities celebrating a variety of different animals and their habitats in our Raleigh Parks.

Frog and Toad Hunt

Enjoy this video as we search for frogs and toads at **Lake Wheeler Park**.

<https://youtu.be/OamqM4LpoC0>

Dragons of the Pond

Enjoy this video and learn about the dragonflies that live in and near the pond at **Laurel Hills Park**.

<https://youtu.be/JxGrHTaWZ-I>

Beneath a Rotting Log

Enjoy this video and see what creatures are living beneath the logs at **Lake Lynn Park**.

<https://youtu.be/9tVRFHJfXYM>

Turtles

Enjoy this video and learn about the amazing turtles living at **Shelley Lake Park**.

https://youtu.be/m_5z8hlvVNq



Literacy Connection

Enjoy the poem ***If You Should Look Closely at a Pond*** and discover some amazing changes happening in a pond habitat.

<https://youtu.be/trVvjAvp-io>

Music and Movement

Sing along and learn about habitats with ***The Habitat Song***.

<https://youtu.be/yWef2vteOCQ>

Math Connection

Measure and compare your jumping skills to that of a Green Frog.

Directions are below.

Creative Expression

Create a habitat that will satisfy both young tadpoles and grown frogs.

Directions are below.

Let's Explore Outdoors

Take the learning outdoors with memorable family activities.

Details are below.

Math Connection



For the Record!

Frogs are excellent jumpers. An inch-long Spring Peeper can jump 17 inches in a single leap. A Green Frog can jump 10 times its length.



Using a tape measure, help your child measure how far he or she can jump. Compare the length of the jump to your child's height. Calculate how far your child would need to jump to match a Green Frog's ability. (10 X your child's height) Help your child to measure out this length. What a jump this would be!

Tadpoles have small mouths for eating algae. As tadpoles grow, their mouths change. Adults frogs have relatively large mouths. Challenge your child to open his or her mouth as wide as possible, like wide-mouthed frogs! A sticky tongue springs out from the frog's mouth and grabs flies and other prey. A frog's tongue is attached to the front of the frog's mouth, rather than the back.

Enjoy this family game. Give each player a small loop of tape (with the sticky part facing out) to put on their fingertips.

Scatter "flies" (small pieces of yarn tied into bows) on tables, chairs and the floor. Using their fingers as sticky tongues, players capture as many flies as they can in 2 minutes.

Invite your child to count, tally and compare the success of each player. Which player found the most flies? How many less did the second-place player collect? How many flies were collected by all the players?

Music and Movement



Habitat Song

1...2...3...4 (make the signs for the habitat parts as you count: food = hands on your stomach, water = hands just below your lips, shelter = hands above your head, space = hands stretched to your sides)

Habitat, (clap twice)

Habitat, (clap twice)

Everybody needs a habitat. (clap twice)

Habitat, (clap twice)

Habitat, (clap twice)

A habitat is where it's at!

All animals are classified according to how they look and behave. Insects belong to a large group of animals called arthropods. Learn the body parts of insects with this song!

Insect Song

Sung to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes"

Head, thorax, abdomen (point to your head, stomach and knees)

And six legs. (make six little legs with six fingers placed near your waist)

Head, thorax, abdomen (point to your head, stomach and knees)

And six legs. (make six little legs with six fingers placed near your waist)

Antennae, mouthparts, compound eyes (make antennae on your head, mouthparts and compound eyes using your fingers)

Head, thorax abdomen (point to your head, stomach and knees)

And six legs. (make six little legs with six fingers placed near your waist)



Creative Expression



A Changing Habitat

Materials Needed:

White paper
Blue construction paper
Green or brown construction paper
Bubble wrap to represent frog eggs
Small strips of green tissue paper (algae)
Small pieces of yarn tied in bows (flies)
Egg carton sections, chenille stems, wiggly eyes
Colored markers
Scissors
Glue



Directions:

- Glue a piece of blue (water) and a piece of green/brown (land) construction paper onto the white sheet.
- Create tadpoles and frogs using the egg carton sections. Be sure to add tails on the tadpoles and legs on the frogs.
- Place the tadpoles and frogs in the appropriate habitats.
- Provide food: “algae” or “flies” for each creature in its appropriate habitat.



Creative Expression



Inviting Birds to your Backyard!

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.



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.

A Habitat Beneath our Feet!

Many animals make the soil their home. Search for worms, beetle grubs, millipedes and snails. Gently overturn rocks, sticks, logs or, if



possible, dig into soil with a trowel. Moist soil often contains the most activity. Once creatures are found, determine what the animal eats and how the animal stays safe. Once observation is complete, return the creatures back to the area where they were found.

Let's Explore Outdoors



Hiding in Plain Sight!

Animals are often adapted with colors, spots and stripes in order to hide from hungry predators within their habitats. Camouflage is a powerful way for animals to hide. Sometimes animals are right before our eyes but are “hiding in plain sight!”

Enjoy this outdoor family game. One player is chosen to be the predator. This player closes his or her eyes and counts aloud to 20 while other players—prey animals—hide. The prey animals must be able to see some part of the predator at all times.

After counting, the predator opens his or her eyes and without moving his or her feet, looks for the prey animals. If spotted, a prey animal moves to the place where the predator is located but must wait for the next round to become part of the predator group. When the original predator can no longer see any other players, a new round begins. ALL of the predators now close their eyes and count aloud to 20 while the remaining prey must move closer to the predators still trying to remain hidden.

Which players were the hardest to be seen? Were they quiet, clever or camouflaged? All three of these qualities allow animals to be safe in their habitats from hungry predators!

Everybody eats, but nobody wants to be eaten!

