

# At Home with Nature

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



Videos, hands-on activities, stories and songs celebrating our natural world. The videos in this resource may be accessed on our **Raleigh Parks PLAY ANYWHERE** website:

<https://raleighnc.gov/play-anywhere>  
**AT HOME WITH NATURE - SUMMER FUN**

## Life in our Backyards

Enjoy this video and learn about habitats and then see up close some of the many animals that live right in our own backyards.

<https://youtu.be/78urS22PT8I>



## Bug Safari

Enjoy this video and discover why insects are such fascinating creatures.

<https://youtu.be/d0JAqWIK6I>



## Math Connection

Enjoy this activity and discover one of nature's geometric wonders - the hexagon.

*Directions follow.*

## Garden Wonders

Enjoy this video and learn about plants and how they grow.

<https://youtu.be/KegWL3MFNf0>



## Music and Movement

Sing along and learn about habitats and some animals that live within them.

<https://youtu.be/yWef2vteOCQ>



## Life in a Pond

Enjoy this video and learn about pond habitats and see up close some of the many creatures that make the pond their home.

<https://youtu.be/0vnX5nvDrxM>



## Literacy Connection

Enjoy the poem *If You Should Look Closely at a Pond* (provided by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science) and discover some amazing changes happening in a pond.

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



## Creative Expression

Create some easy-to-make nature treasures.

*Directions follow.*

## Let's Explore Outdoors

Take the learning outdoors with fun activities.

*Details follow.*



# Math Connection



## A Geometrically Perfect Home!

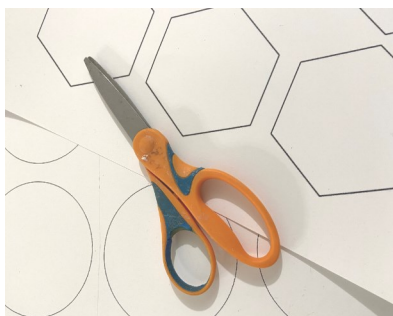
*Bees are amazing insects and powerful pollinators. They make 60,000 flights to flowers in order to gather nectar for making just one teaspoon of honey! Their hives, too, with their perfectly designed cells, are a true marvel.*



**The hexagon is one of nature's geometric wonders. We see six-sided hexagons on the scales of snakes, on the shells of turtles, on the eyes of dragonflies and within beehives!**

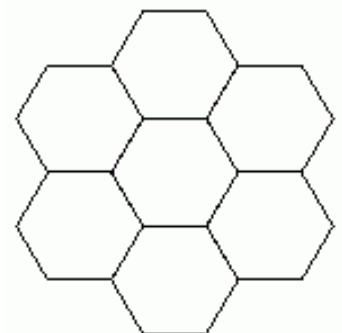
**Use craft sticks to create a six-sided hexagon.**

**Add more craft sticks to create a series of them. That's called a tessellation – a pattern of linked shapes.**



**Cut 12 paper circles and 12 paper hexagons using the templates. Using two sheets of paper, arrange as many circles on one sheet and as many hexagons on the other sheet as you can without overlapping the pieces. Count and compare the number of shapes placed on each paper.**

**Which shape would use the least amount of bees' wax to create the most cells in a bee hive? Wouldn't you agree that bees are efficient architects?**





# Hands-On Science



## Watch It Grow!



### Materials Needed:

Bean seeds  
Resealable sandwich-size plastic bag  
Paper towel cut into a 4" square  
Tape

### Directions:

1. Moisten the paper towel with water and place 2 beans on top.



2. Fold the paper towel with the beans inside. Place the folded paper towel into the plastic bag and seal.



3. Tape the bag to the inside of a sunny window. Keep the bag closed and in just a few days, the seeds will sprout! When the seedlings are about 2" tall, open the bag and plant the seedlings in a sunny place outdoors or in a pot filled with rich soil.



Water the plants regularly. Enjoy watching as the plants grow, create flowers and then produce more seeds!



# 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



## Walking Stick Bug

### Materials Needed:

Small y-shaped stick  
3 chenille stems  
Wiggly eyes  
Glue

### Directions:

1. Wrap 3 chenille stems around the stick and bend them to form 6 legs.



2. Glue wiggly eyes to your stick bug.



# Creative Expression



## Clothespin Grasshopper

### Materials Needed:

Clothespin  
Green or brown marker or crayon  
Chenille stems  
Wiggly eyes  
Glue

### Directions:

1. Color



the clothespin green or brown.



2. Twist and tuck 2 chenille stems that are 6" in length in or around the clothespin to create the first two pairs of legs and a 10" chenille stem to create the grasshopper's long back legs. Bend each stem to represent leg joints.



3. Twist another 6" chenille stem around the top of the clothespin to create antennae.



4. Add wiggly eyes.



**Let's Play!** Place your stick bug and grasshopper in areas that match their coloring while other family members hide their eyes. Invite these players to seek the stick bug and grasshopper that are "hiding in plain sight." Insects are masters of disguise!



# Creative Expression



## Inviting Birds to our Backyard!

### Materials Needed:

Empty plastic milk jug and lid  
Scissors  
Wooden chopstick  
String  
Permanent markers (optional)  
Bird seed

### Directions:

1. Use scissors to cut a 3 inch circle on 2 sides of the milk jug.



2. Use a pointy object to create a hole beneath each cut circle. Push a wooden chopstick through the holes.

3. Use permanent markers to decorate the milk jug, if you would like.



4. Use string to tie the bird feeder to a tree. Fill the feeder with bird treats 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 the shape of a bowl. 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.*

## Creatures 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!***

