

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.**

BUG SAFARI

Videos, activities, stories and songs
celebrating some of our planet's
smallest creatures.

Let's Get Started

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

<https://youtu.be/d0JAqaWIK6I>

Literacy Connection

Enjoy The Icky Bug Alphabet Book written by
Jerry Pallotta and illustrated by Ralph
Masiello and learn about a whole array of
bugs from A to Z.

<https://youtu.be/-rn9pf4pkVU>

Music and Movement

Sing along and learn just what it takes for a
creature to be an insect.

<https://youtu.be/qFUOV4z0q54>



Math Connection

Younger children can count and sing while
learning to identify some common backyard
insects.

<https://youtu.be/F130BRt8f9Y>

Older children can jump and run to see how
they measure up with some of our world's
smallest creatures.

Directions are below.

Creative Expression

Create clever stick bugs and jumping
grasshoppers and then enjoy a family game
using your creations.

Directions are below.

Let's Explore Outdoors

Take the learning outdoors with memorable
family activities.

Details are below.



Math Connection



Mighty Muscles!

Younger children: Invite your child to jump several times as far as he or she can. In a large area outdoors, using rocks as marking stones, invite your child to lie down on the ground. Place one stone at your child's feet and another at the top of your child's head. Have your child lie down again, aligning his or her feet at the spot where his or her head was. Again mark the top of your child's head. Repeat until you have marked 20 body lengths. This is how far your child could jump if he or she could jump like a grasshopper!



Grasshoppers can jump great distances! They can jump about 20 times their body length.

Older children: Tie a rope between two trees or other items about 8 inches above the ground. Invite your child to try to jump over the rope without taking a running start. If he or she can make it over, raise the rope two inches and try again. Continue until your child cannot jump over. Record your child's highest jump. Divide this number by your child's height to determine how many body lengths high he or she can jump.

Fleas are high jumpers! They can jump 13 inches high which equals 130 times their body length.

Beginning from a still position at a starting line, invite your child to run as fast as he or she can for five seconds. Use a tape measure to determine how far he or she ran in inches. Divide this number by 5 to determine how far your child ran in one second. Divide how far your child ran per second by his or her height to figure out how many body lengths that is.

Cockroaches are fast! They can run 3.7 miles / hour which equals 50 body lengths / second.

Music and Movement



Creatures Big and Small

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

Our earth is home for creatures,
(extend arms to make a large circle)
Big and small. (reach up high and
then crunch into a small ball)

I love our planet Earth (extend arms to make a large circle)
And I'll protect it for us all. (nod head)

Here's a hill for ant. (make a hill with your hands)
Here's a hive for bee. (clasp hands together)
Here's a hole for beetle. (make a small circle with your fingers)
And here's a home for me. (extend arms over your head like a "roof")



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!

The 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
Brown chenille stems
Wiggly eyes
Glue

Directions:

- Wrap 3 brown chenille stems around the stick and bend them to form 6 legs.
- Glue wiggly eyes to your stick bug.



Clothespin Grasshopper

Materials Needed:

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

Directions:

- Color the clothespin green or brown.
- Twist 2 chenille stems that are 4" in length around the clothespin body to create the first two pairs of legs. Twist an 8" chenille stem around the clothespin body for the grasshopper's long back legs. Bend each stem to represent leg joints.
- Twist another 6" chenille stem round the top of the clothespin to create antennae.
- Add wiggly eyes.



Let's Play! Invite your child(ren) to place their stick bugs and grasshoppers outdoors in areas that match their coloring while other family members hide their eyes. These players are then invited to seek the stick bugs and grasshoppers that are "hiding in plain sight." Insects are masters of disguise!

Let's Explore Outdoors



A Looking Jar

It's fun to observe insects! You can use a clear plastic container for a "Looking Jar." Insects need air to breathe, so be certain your jar's lid has air holes. It is fun to decorate the top of your jar to look like a favorite insect! Be sure that the insects that are collected are not the biting or stinging type. It is best to observe creatures for just a short time and then return them to their natural habitats.

Life Beneath a Rock

Place a flat rock in a shady spot and another in a sunny spot. Visit your rocks each day for a week. Turn each rock over gently and look beneath. What do you see? Do you find the same critters under the rock in the shady area and the sunny area? Were there more creatures living under either rock?

Sit in the sun for 10 minutes and in the shade for 10 minutes. Which place do you prefer?



Let's Explore Outdoors



Ants on Parade

Use a black marker and ruler to divide a paper plate into fourths. Which foods do you think ants might like to eat? Put a different food item (some ideas: ripe fruit, bread, piece of a cookie, cheese, grass, leaves) in each section of the plate. Place the plate of food

outdoors on the ground. Wait and then observe if ants are attracted to any of the foods. Count the ants as they arrive at the different foods. Watch as ants leave the plate. Where do they go? Watch to see if more ants appear from this place and move toward the food plate.



Ants are social creatures that live in groups called colonies.

Ants touch their antennae to other ants' antennae to communicate.

Ants leave a trail of chemical signals called pheromones which other ants follow.



If I Were an Insect!

Create antennae using a few pieces of aluminum foil that has been crunched and molded. Create bug eyes using two sections of a cardboard egg carton and chenille stems. Invite your child(ren) to wear the antennae and bug eyes and then crawl and jump and scurry and step like a variety of different insects.

Ask your child(ren) to finish each of these statements:

If I were as small as an ant...

If I had six legs....

If I were waiting inside a pupa, I would think about...