

Helps and Hints

Family Child Care Newsletter

**Arkansas State
University**

Childhood Services

Volume 6

2006

Helps and Hints Family Child
Care Newsletter is funded by
the Department of
Health & Human Services
Division of Child Care and
Early Childhood Education
Little Rock, Arkansas

Inside this issue:

Field Trips and Resources

Animal Facts

Infant and Toddler Section

Sing, Song, Sway

Art and Creative Activities



Animals of Arkansas

The person who gave our Arkansas turtles the name "box turtle" probably never realized how many little turtles would be confined in cardboard boxes across our state. If ever given the opportunity, enjoy studying a turtle in a box and observe him for several days, before encouraging the children to set him free.



An excited child with a turtle in a box sets up a perfect teaching opportunity. Besides the little box turtle, we can introduce many other animals native to our state with the information in this issue of *Helps and Hints*.

When beginning this theme unit, take time to create a "web" with the children. Using a piece of chart paper, draw a circle in the center. Label the inside of the circle "Arkansas' Animals". Ask the children what animals they have seen that are not farm animals or pets. If the children have trouble thinking of any, give them examples to start their thinking. You might ask "what animals do you see in the play yard?" List the animals by drawing straight lines out from the middle circle for each animal, creating a web. Ask the children what they know about each animal listed and what they would like to know. Write this information below each animal's name.

When you complete this activity, you will know what animals to focus on during your study and what information the children are interested in learning.

Did you Know?! The earliest known nickname for the state is *The Bear State*. Early settlers arriving in Arkansas saw many bears; at that time, the settlers pronounced it "Bar" State.

Let's Begin!!

Did You Know...

Arkansas is blessed with many native animals, including 15 varieties of bat, 3 each of rabbit and squirrel, mink, armadillo, white-tailed deer, chipmunks, black bear; and 300 native birds such as eastern wild turkey, mourning dove and bobwhite quail. Also, there are local fish such as catfish, gar, and unusual paddle fish, 20 frog and toad species, 23 varieties of salamander and 36 kinds of snakes!



Use this study to talk about what "endangered species" means. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission lists several of the animals of Arkansas as being endangered. At one time, there were only 35 black bears left in Arkansas. Thanks to a careful plan by the Fish and Game Commission, they are no longer considered to be endangered. Many of Arkansas's other wildlife; however, is endangered.

Some of the animals of Arkansas to be considered endangered:

- *American Alligator
- *Bald Eagle
- *Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

For a complete list of endangered species of Arkansas, go to:

http://agfc.com/critters/endangered_species.html

Parent Involvement

- Send home a parent letter or newsletter telling the parents about the Animals Of Arkansas theme. Encourage parents to watch for native wildlife whenever they are outside with their children, especially while driving or doing outside activities together.
- Ask parents for stories of times they saw or had contact with animals such as armadillos, squirrels, deer, etc. Some parents may have had a box turtle, raccoon, or armadillo as a pet. Invite parents to come and share their stories, tape them, or write them down to share with all the children during Circle Time. Ask parents if they have pictures they can share.

Useful Resources and Field Trips to Consider

- <http://www.agfc.com/index.html> is the website for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Click on the educational link and it will take you to a wealth of resources, including a free aquarium program! Click on the Critters link to see pictures and information about the animals of Arkansas. Much of the information contained in this theme came from that resource.
- Contact your local forestry service. The forest rangers have great programs they can bring to your home on subjects such as birds, insects, animals, trees, etc. "Smokey the Bear" and "Woodsy the Owl" can visit your program. Usually the rangers will also bring posters and other free materials to aid in your study.
- There are currently two nature centers open in the State of Arkansas. If you live near Pine Bluff or Crowley Ridge area, contact these nature centers for information and field trips.

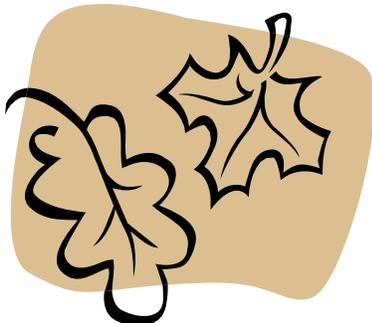
Governor Mike Huckabee Delta Rivers Nature Center
1400 Black Dog Road in Pine Bluff's Regional Park
Pine Bluff, AR 71611 (870) 534-0011

Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center
600 East Lawson Road
Jonesboro, AR 72404(870) 933-6787

- Two other nature centers are currently under construction and may be available to you:

Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center
Ft. Smith, AR (479) 452-3993
Temporary Mailing Address: PO Box 23669 Barling, AR 72923

Witt Stephens, Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center
Little Rock, AR
(currently under construction)



- Go to a local park, state park, or a wooded area. Don't forget the easiest field trip of all...YOUR BACK YARD!! Provide children with small notebooks or clip boards, paper and pencils to record the animals they see. List the animals and count them. Spend time laying on blankets watching the squirrels and birds in the trees. Encourage children to notice not only what animal they are watching, but the animal's habitat and habits. Encourage them to use their notebooks or clip boards to draw what or write what they see; also, they should listen to the sounds the animals make.
- For information about insects and worms the children see, you can refer to the *Helps and Hints* Volume 5 Issue 13, "The World Underground" (Volume 5 Issue 10 is "All About Birds"). If you do not have these issues, you can contact Jennifer Spriggs at the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to request they be sent to you or download free of charge at:
<http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/helpshints.htm>
- For more information and wonderful photos of Arkansas's birds, go to:
http://www.agfc.com/pdf/backyard_birds.pdf
- For great downloadable brochures showing birds, snakes, etc of Arkansas, go to:
<http://agfc.com/publications.html>

Helpful Hint!! Print pictures and brochures on cardstock and then laminate the pages. You can punch holes into these and insert them into a notebook. The children enjoy looking through the books and they are convenient to carry into the yard as you are exploring and will help to identify the animals the children see and ask questions about.

Blocks

In the block center, place toy animal which represent the animals you are discussing in this theme. Be sure to include not only plastic animals, but also stuffed animals for softness. Provide various types of paper, markers, tape, scissors for children to create natural habitats for the animals. Include books showing the animals in their natural habitat so that children can refer back to them as you go along if they have any questions.

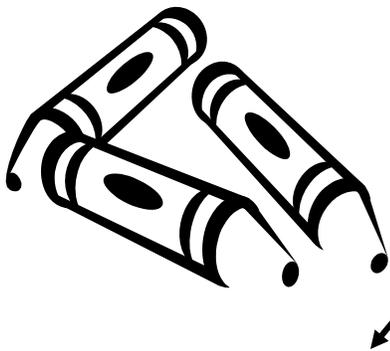


Art and Creativity Activities for Field Trips

Field Trip Preparation or Review

You will need: Wildlife magazines (available at local libraries or through donations from parents), glue, paper, scissors, 4x6 index cards

Encourage children to go through wildlife magazines and cut out pictures of animals they think they will see on the field trip. Ask them to glue each one to an index card. This card will be kept with the children during the trip. Each time a child sees an animal shown on one of their cards, they will place a pencil mark on that card to keep count of the animals. To make accessing the cards easier, help children use a hole punch and then use a hinged key ring to put the cards onto 1 ring for reference while they are walking. This could also be used to create a book remembering which animals they saw during the trip.



Molding Play dough Recipe

You will need: 1/2 cup salt, 1 cup of flour, 1/2 cup of boiling water, 1 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil, food coloring, wax paper (Optional: clear nail polish or varnish)

Combine flour and salt in mixing bowl. Add oil and boiling water. Stir with spoon until well blended and dough comes away from the sides of the bowl. When it is cool enough to handle, knead the dough with your hands until it is smooth. This should take 1-2 minutes. If you want colors other than white, separate the dough into separate balls. Flatten the ball and make a well in the center. Add 2 or more drops of food coloring to the well. Knead the dough until the color is even. Pinch off as much as you need to make the shape and leave the rest in a concealed container. Work the dough; when you have your desired shape, let dry on wax paper overnight. Pieces may be left plain or can be painted to add durability and color. Small pieces can be painted with nail polish, use acrylic for the larger pieces. Store your finished dough in an airtight container; this will keep for weeks if stored in the refrigerator.

Sculpting or Molding

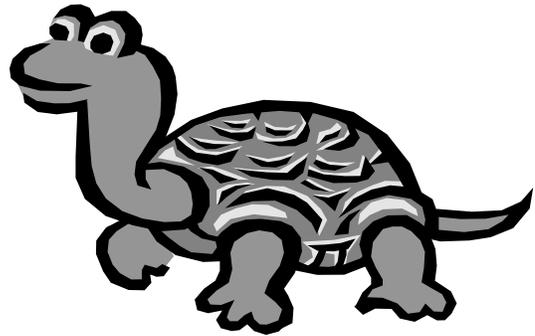
You will need: Molding play dough, wax paper (Optional: clear nail polish, acrylic paints, varnish)

Make some molding play dough and encourage children to sculpt or mold the animals they have seen or a favorite Arkansas animal. The recipe below will dry and can be varnished or painted for durability after the children finish their models. Display where everyone can enjoy the models.

Turtles

FACTS

- Turtles we see crossing the roads and in our wooded areas are commonly referred to as "box turtles". The name comes from the ability of this reptile to tightly close its shell when frightened. The box turtle is able to do this because there is a hinge across its lower shell. When frightened, the turtle pulls its head and limbs into the shell for protection. It moves each half of the hinged lower shell up to meet the top shell, closing itself into a box.
- Box turtles live to be about 50 years old in the wild.
- Box turtles inhabit areas close to woodlands. They forage on insects, worms, snakes, slugs, fallen fruit, and annual plants.
- Because box turtles need a carefully balanced diet, special lighting and care, it is not a good idea to keep them captive. Most box turtles will not survive over a year in captivity. Without the specially balanced diet and lighting, box turtles' shells become soft, their feet become deformed and they suffer and die. Because of this, please discourage children from keeping them in captivity. If you do have box turtles for observation, keep them inside a glass enclosure or some other enclosure so children can not touch them. Place them where they can have both sunlight and shade, and be sure to provide plenty of clean water. They need a balanced diet, including foods high in calcium (such as dark leafy green vegetables) and small insects (such as crickets, worms, slugs), They enjoy soft fruit such as strawberries. They actually will do better in an outside pen.



ART AND CREATIVITY

EASY TO MAKE TURTLES

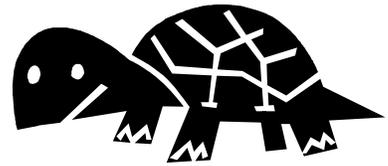
You will need: paper bowl, small paper plate, construction paper, glue, paint, paint brushes

Paint the bowl to resemble a turtle's shell. Paint a small paper plate as the bottom shell. Cut construction paper legs, head, and tail, glue to bottom of plate. Glue top plate over the bottom shell and body parts.

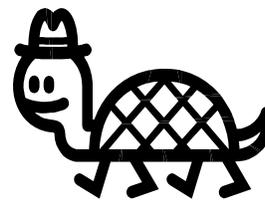
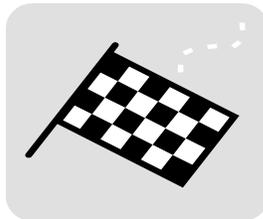
Turtles Continued

Turtle Puppet

You will need: 2 small paper plates, brown, yellow, orange, red, green paint, paintbrushes, stapler, brown or green sock, green construction paper or green or brown gloves, stuffing



Paint the paper plate to resemble a turtle's top shell, paint the other plate for the bottom shell. Cut out construction paper legs or cut off the fingers from a green or brown glove for the legs. Put a little stuffing into the glove legs, lay between the paper plates so that the legs stick out when the plates are stapled together. Lightly stuff the sock in the toe. Lay across the bottom paper plate so that the toe extends as the turtle's head and the top of the sock becomes his tail. Place top plate over all legs and head/tail; staple on both sides. Use marker or glue and construction paper to make features for the turtle's face. Place hand into the "tail" of your turtle and you have a turtle puppet.



Gone to the Turtle Races!!

You will need: turtles children made from the previous page, string or yarn, hole punch

Punch a hole in the top shell of the turtles the children made earlier. Attach a size foot length of yarn or string. Half of the children will race their turtles, while the other half cheer them on. Set up some spectator's seats, a starting line and a finishing line.

When the teacher says "Go!!", the children will use their strings to make their turtles "bounce" to the finish line. No pulling...turtles have to bounce. Spectators can cheer them on. Children may want to paint the name of their turtles on their turtle's back (or you may want to provide sticky notes with numbers on them to mark the turtles).

Graph the race results. Which turtle won the most races? Which turtle was the fastest? Which was the slowest? Read the Aesop Fable [The Tortoise and the Hare](#) while children are resting after the races.

Turtles Continued

Language Arts

Aesop's the Turtle and the Hare

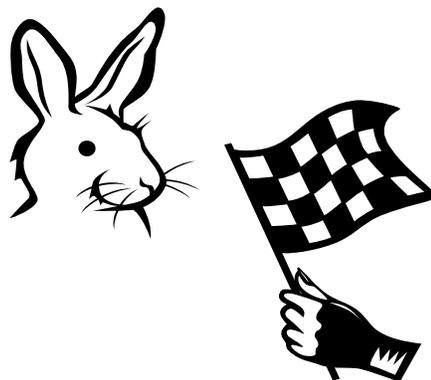
Materials: Aesop's fable The Tortoise and the Hare, toy turtles (the turtles can be the ones the children made from the previous art section), or help the children make tortoise costumes, toy rabbits, rabbit costumes.

Read the story to the children, outside if possible. Then encourage the children to take turns acting out the story.

Five Turtles

Materials: 5 felt or magna board turtles

One lonely turtle, feeling so blue
Along came another
Now there are two
Two happy turtles, on their way to the sea
Along came another, now there are three
Four happy turtles going for a dive
Along came another, now there are five.



Sing, Song, Sway



My Turtle

This is my turtle (make fist, extend thumb)
He lives in a shell. (hide thumb in fist)
He likes his home very well.
He pokes his head out when he wants to eat (extend thumb)
And pulls it back when he wants to sleep!!

The Turtle

There was a little turtle,
He lived in a box.
He swam in a puddle,
He climbed on the rocks.
He snapped at a mosquito,
He snapped at a flea,
He snapped at a minnow, He snapped at me!
He caught the mosquito.
He caught the flea,
He caught the minnow,
But he didn't catch me!



Bringing Home A Baby Turtle

Oh, I'm bringing home a baby turtle
Won't my mommy really pop her girdle,
Cause I'm bringing home a baby turtle,
Snap, snap, snap. Oh! It bit me!!

Bears

Native Americans

Arkansas Native Americans have many stories about bears as healers and keepers of spiritual well-being. Bears were often hunted during winter while they were in dens. Sometimes the dens would be as high as 50 feet above the ground in a hollow tree. To hunt them, the Native Americans started a fire at the base of the tree or cave and then killed the bear as it emerged. Every part of the bear was used. Meat and fat for food, skin for clothing, claws and teeth for jewelry. There are even reports of the oil being mixed with sassafras and used as an insect repellent!!



Explorers and Settlers

Bear meat was relied upon for survival by European explorers and settlers. Grapevines would climb high up trees to seek the sunlight in dense forests. Bears climbed up to eat the grapes which caused their meat to have a sweet flavor. Bear meat was not only considered to be a staple, but a treat as well.

Facts

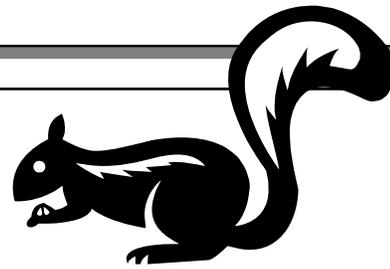
- Black bears in Arkansas can actually be a brown or cinnamon color, especially in the Ouachitas.
- Black bears den for about 100 days . Bears enter their dens in early January through early February and emerge in late March to April.
- Black bears eat mostly berries, acorns and other vegetation. They also can smell carrion for a long ways and will eat it. Their main source of protein; however, is ANTS! They don't eat fire ants, though.
- Female bears produce cubs only every 2 to 3 years. They usually have one or two cubs, but sometimes can have three or four. The cubs are born while the mother is hibernating. Baby bears are very tiny, only about the size and weight of a can of soda. The mother bear can weigh up to 200 pounds.
- Black bears are shy and will usually run from humans. However, if they are fed by humans, they can become dangerous. Don't ever feed a bear or a bear cub!



Animals



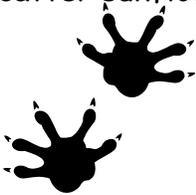
Squirrel Information



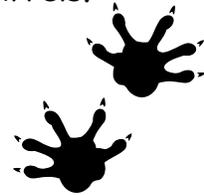
I was surprised while researching this theme to discover that flying squirrels are native to all 75 counties in Arkansas! Since these squirrels tend to be nocturnal, rather than diurnal as their cousins the fox squirrel or gray squirrel, they are not noticed as often. Flying squirrels like to nest in cavities of trees. During the summer, they nest alone; however, in colder months, they prefer to live in large groups together for warmth.

Squirrels eat nuts, berries, and insects. If you have not seen flying squirrels in your area, it is probably because you weren't watching for them. Flying squirrels can be easily attracted by making a feeding and nesting area. Especially between October and May when the weather isn't too hot; flying squirrels are attracted to nest boxes. According to an article by Keith Sutton on the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's website, you can build "boxes from sections of hollow logs or use one inch thick lumber to construct a box with inside dimensions of 5" square by 12" deep, with a 1 1/4 inch entrance hole placed on one side two inches below the top."

Scatter sunflower seeds and peanuts on the ground to attract the squirrels.



Opossum Information



Opossums are North America's only marsupial. Compare the opossum to kangaroos which children usually have heard about more frequently. Explain that opossums carry their young in a pouch. AN opossum mother may carry as many as 13 babies in her pouch. Often, when an opossum mother is killed by a car, it will have uninjured babies in her pouch. Like monkeys and humans, opossums have opposable thumbs..but on the opossum, their thumbs are on their REAR feet. They can also grasp with their tails.

Opossums eat snails, slugs, and insects like cockroaches and beetles. They even eat rats! The eat carrion, which is why we often see them on the roads, and leads to their own deaths frequently. They are very intelligent, ranking higher than a dog!



Animals Continued

Baby opossums are the size of a dime when they are born. They remain in the mother's pouch for two months.

Although a possum has 50 sharp teeth and can look very intimidating, when frightened, an opossum screeches, hisses, and drools trying to intimidate the enemy. With 50 sharp teeth, it can certainly look fearsome. If intimidation doesn't work, it will play dead, which is where the expression "playing opossum" came from.

Opossums are nocturnal animals. But no, opossums do not hang from their tail to sleep!



Armadillo Information

Armadillo's are not very reptile, despite their appearance. They are actually mammals. They did not originate in our country. They came from South America. The nine-banded Armadillo migrated north over the course of several hundred years. The first reports of armadillos in Arkansas occurred during the early 1920's.

Armadillos have none hard bands to their shells. They underside is soft. They love to burrow. In summer, they are nocturnal animals, sleeping during the day and coming out at dusk to forage for food. In winter, they prefer to forage during the warmer daylight hours and sleep at night. Their diet consists primarily of invertebrates, such as insects, earthworms, grubs, termites, spiders, and crayfish. When digging for food, they grunt like small pigs!

When an armadillo is scared, it leaps straight up into the air, then goes to the nearest burrow. If no burrow is available, it wedges into rock crevices or other holes. An armadillo can walk across shallow srre3atms, or hold its breath and swim across.

In many areas of the southwest, armadillo meat is prized. It is called the "poor man's hog".

Although people do not like armadillos digging in their yards and gardens, they are protected by the Arkansas wildlife Code. Contact you local county wildlife officer for help with 'dillers! For an excellent article with great pictures, go to: <http://www.afgc.com/pdf/armadillo.pdf>

Did you know?!

Armadillos are born alive in litters of four. All four will be the same sex!!

Sing, Song, Sway

Frogs

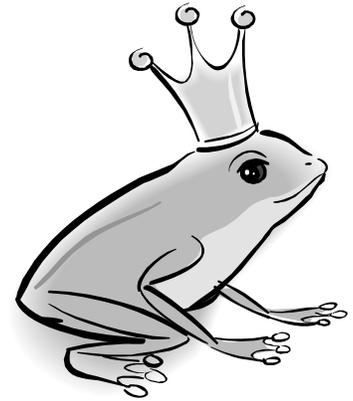
The Frog on the Log

There once was a green little frog, frog, frog,
Who played in the wood on a log, log, log.
A screech owl sitting in a tree, tree, tree,
Came after the frog with a screech, screech, screech.
When the frog heard the owl in a flash, flash, flash,
He leaped in the pond with a splash, splash, splash!



Frog

Croak said the frog (make croak)
With his golden eyes (fist to eyes)
Sitting on a lily pad, catching flies (grab air with hand)
I have a sticky tongue (with index finger, make darting motion)
I'm fast as can be.
I catch mosquitoes 1,2,3.



Let's Hear it for the Frogs

(Sung to the tune of "Do you Know the Muffin Man?")

Oh, look! I see some (hopping) frogs,
Some (hopping) frogs, some (hopping) frogs!
Oh, look I see some (hopping frogs)
(Hopping) around the pond!

(Change with additional using actions such as dancing,
croaking, and sleeping)

Little Froggy

(sung to the tune of "I'm a little Teapot")

See the little froggy
Swimming in the pool
The water's great-
It's nice and cool
When he gets all
cleaned up,
Out he'll hop
Squeaky clean



The Frog lives in the Pond

(Sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

The frog lives in the pond
Her tongue is oh, so long.
It reaches high to catch a fly.
The frog lives in the pond.

Sing, Song, Sway Continued

Five Freckled Frogs

Five little freckled frogs, setting on a speckled
log (5 fingers on bent arm)

Eating the MOST delicious bugs, yum, yum!
(pick bugs out of air, rub tummy)

Then there were four freckled frogs!

Continue with 4 frogs, then three, and so on.
Then there were NO freckled frogs!!



Bears

Mama Bear

(Sung to Fere Jacques)

Are you sleepy, are you sleepy, Mama Bear,
Mama Bear?

Wintertime is coming, wintertime is coming,
Very soon, very soon.

Find a cave, find a cave, Mama Bear, Mama Bear.
Wintertime is here, wintertime is here.
Go to sleep, go to sleep.

Are you sleeping, are you sleeping, Mama Bear, Mama Bear?
Tiny cubs are coming, tiny cubs are coming.
While you sleep, while you sleep.

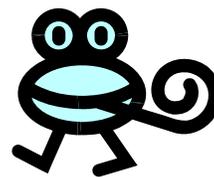
Time to wake now, time to wake now, Mama Bear, Mama Bear.
Springtime is coming, springtime is coming,
Time to wake, time to wake.

Time to wake up, time to wake up,
little cubs, little cubs.
Springtime is here, springtime is
here,
Come and play, come and play
WAKE UP!! (children shout)



See the Little Froggy

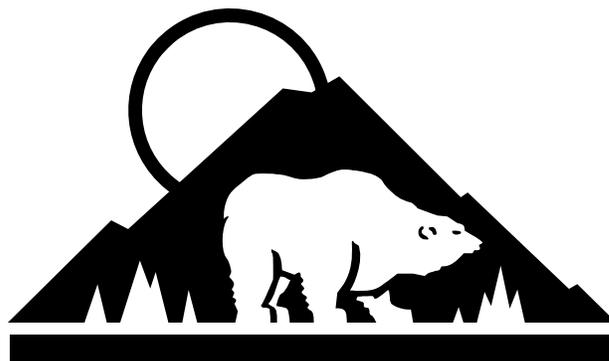
On the lily pad
Trying to Catch flies
She's getting sad.
When she catches one,
She'll gobble it up.
Back in the water,
She'll go kerplop!



Sing, Song, Sway Continued

The Bear went over the Mountain

The bear went over the mountain
The bear went over the mountain
The bear went over the mountain
To see what he could see
And all that he could see
And all that he could see
Was the other side of the mountain
The other side of the mountain
Was all that he could see.



Bear Fingerplay

Here is a cave (Bend fingers on one hand)
Inside is a bear (Put thumb inside fingers)
Now he comes out
To get some fresh air. (Pop out thumb)

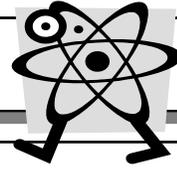
He stays out all summer
In sunshine and heat.
He hunts for berries to eat. (Move thumb in a circle)

When snow starts to fall
He hurries inside
His warm little cave
And there he will hide. (Put thumb inside fingers)

Snow covers the cave
Like a fluffy white rug.
Inside the bear sleeps
All cozy and snug (Place one hand over the other)

Sand/ Water

Put a small amount of water in a small wading pool or other tub, add greenery (live or plastic), plastic gold fish, minnows, frogs, toads, turtles, cut lily pads from foam.



Fin, Fur, or Feathers

Provide 3 mats: one with a picture of a fin, one with fur, and one with feathers.

Provide toy animals and ask children to sort onto the correct mat: Fin, Fur, or Feathers.

Discuss with the children why each type of covering is best for the animal it covers.

Who Hibernates?

Materials Needed: Pictures or toy animals of animals in this theme unit, or others: Armadillo, deer, rabbit, squirrel, birds, bear, frog, turtles, etc., also provide a series of domestic animals: dogs, cats, horses, pigs, goats, etc., a mat with a sleeping face and another mat with a face with open eyes.

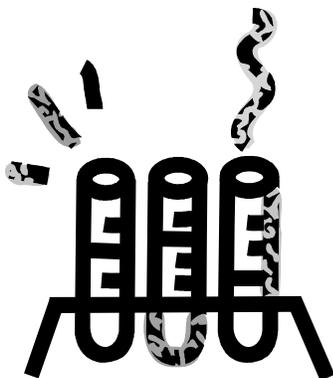
Children will sort the animals according to whether they hibernate or not.

See the follow up graphing activity in the math section. What does this activity tell us about wild animals and domestic animals? Who hibernates the most? Why do you think more wild animals hibernate?

Turtle-Frog-Fish Shaker

Materials Needed: Clear, clean soda bottle with screw on cap, blue and/or green food coloring, water, vegetable oil, white or colored plastic bottle (bleach or soda bottle) or foam trays, aluminum foil, scissors, super glue

Fill The clear bottle about 3/4 full of water. Add a few drops of food coloring. Add a small quantity of vegetable oil. Use scissors to cut fish, turtle and frog shapes from the colored plastic or trays, make sure they are small enough to fit into the clear bottle. Make balls and other shapes with foil. Put into water and oil bottle. Super glue lid on top to be secure.





Math and Manipulatives

Memory Match Game

Materials Needed: Internet website (<http://www.agfc.com/index.html>), or clip art, magazines, or freehand pictures of animals studied, 3X5 index cards

Print or draw a picture of each animal on 3X5 index card. Make 2 sets (laminates or use clear contact paper to cover for durability). Use the cards to play Memory. Children mix the cards, then place them face down on the table or floor. Children take turns turning up 2 cards. If they find a match, they keep that set of cards. If not, they turn the cards back face down and another child takes a turn. At the end of a round, the children show the cards they found matches for and name one thing about that animal on the card (such as what they eat, how they move, how they produce young, etc).

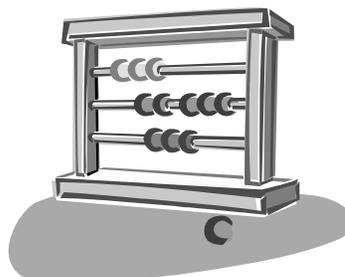
You may want to make a 3rd set of cards and program the back of the card with information about each animal for your own use during play to give hints to the children or check the answers.

For children under 3.5 years of age, play this game with the cards face up and let them make matches, telling you something they remember about that animal. If they can't remember, give them some information about each animal as they make a match.

Movement File Folder Game

Using the same resources that you accessed in the previous game, create another set of cards of 3X5 index cards or cardstock (laminates for durability). Create another set showing the animal's movement. Using simple stick figures, draw the movements the animals make, such as a stick figure rolling a ball for the armadillo, laying out playing dead for the opossum, jumping as a frog, etc.

Another option would be to use a camera or digital camera and take pictures of the children using these movements. Print, cut out and mount in a file folder. Laminates or cover with clear contact paper for durability. Children will match the animals to their movements.



Math and Manipulatives Continued



Feed the Squirrels

Materials: Balance scale or postage scale, assorted nuts (pecans, walnuts, acorns)

Which nut will be the heaviest for the squirrels to carry and hide? Encourage children to weigh the nuts and find out which are the heaviest, which are the lightest. Provide a math mat for them to record their findings or graph the results with the children.

Frogs and Lily Pads

Materials: 10 construction paper frogs (lamine for durability) or print on cardstock and laminate, 55 plastic flies or pint flies on cardstock or construction paper and laminate.

Program the frogs with numbers 1 through 10 and spots to match. Children will feed the frogs the appropriate number of flies.

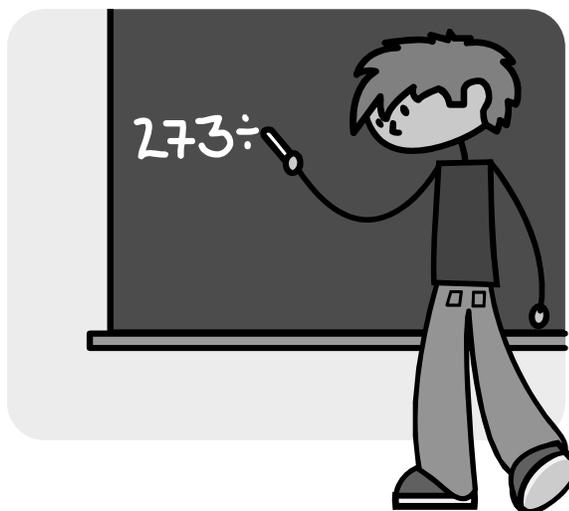
Hibernating Animals

Using the hibernation mats in the science area, graph how many of the animals studied hibernate and how many do not. Do more animals hibernate or stay away during winter?

How many ants?

Materials Needed: Ten printed or cut out bears, toy ants

Program the bears with the numbers 1 to 10. Children will "feed the bears" with the programmed number of ants.



Fine Motor

Sewing Cards

Materials: simple pattern or print out of a bear's shape, black or brown faux fur or lots of small pieces of black or brown yarn, yarn or lacing string, blunt tipped yarn needle (optional)



Encourage children to trace around the bear template onto a piece of cardstock or cardboard. Provide a hole punch for children to punch holes around the shape. Glue fur or yarn pieces into the center, leaving the holes uncovered. The fur provides an extra sensory dimension to the sewing card. Provide a length of yarn for the children to lace through the punched holes. With supervision, you can also supply a blunt tipped yarn needle for the child to "sew" with.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS: Squirrel: use faux fur or gray lint from clothes dryer to glue in the center. Turtle: Glue overlapping half-circles of cardstock or egg carton cups on the shell.

Opossum's Opposable Thumb

To demonstrate why the opposable thumb is so unique for an opossum, use the following activity:

Provide several items or activities for children to do which are usually simple such as coloring, picking up rocks, combing hair, eating, etc. First, allow children to do the activity as they normally would, then ask them to hold their thumb against their hand so that it can't be used. Was it more difficult to do the activity without the use of their opposable thumbs? Very few animals in the world have opposable thumbs.



Gross Motor

Froggie in the Middle

Children stand in a circle. One child (or more if it is a large group) goes into the center and jumps like a frog. As the "frog" jumps the children sing "Froggie in the Middle".

There's a froggie in the middle
And she can't get out,
She can't get out,
She can't get out.

There's a froggie in the middle
And she can't get out,
(name child) lend her a hand (Children hold hands)
And help her out (children jump out of the middle together)

Play continues with new frogs in the middle.

Leap Frog

Choose several children to be "frogs" leaving over each other as the rest of the "frogs" sun themselves on rocks and chant: Leap frog, leap frog.

Easy as can be.
I'll leap frog you,
Then you leap frog me.

Little Green Frogs and Great Big Toads

Materials Needed: Play yard area, Construction paper, scissors

Cut out enough small green frogs and great big toads to divide equally among the children in your group, or use toy frogs and toads. Place the frogs and toads into a bag or a box. Children will come up and draw a frog or a toad, but hide it from the other children. When the teacher says "Go", the frogs will begin to call out "ribbitt, ribbitt" and the toads will say "croak, croak". The frogs and toads will try to hop together by the sounds so all the frogs end up together and all the toads end up together.

Gross Motor Continued

Little Green Frogs

Have the children pretend to be little green frogs crouched down in the grass. Then recite the rhyme below and have the children take big "frog hops" every time they hear the word "Hop". When they hear the word "Stop", have them stay crouched down without moving. Repeat the rhyme, changing a different "hop" to "stop".



Little green frog, wont you Hop-hop-hop?
Little green front, wont you hop-hop-stop?

Jump, Frog, Jump

Materials Needed: Pillows or foam lily pads, plastic flies

Encourage children to pretend to be frogs. They will squat down on their lily pads with their arms straight out in front of them. Have them jump forward, raising their arms high into the air before returning to squatting on the lily pads. Ask them to take big jumps, little jumps, jump forward, jump backwards. Throw plastic flies into the air and let them jump to catch the flies.

Ten Little Froggies Go Hop, Hop, Hop

Ten little froggie goes hop (children hop once and hold up 1 finger)

Along comes another and they just can't stop so...

Two little froggies go hop, hop (Children hop twice and hold up 2 fingers)

Along comes another and they can't stop so.... (continue adding frogs until all 10 fingers are up).

Ten little froggies go hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop DROP..its time to stop (children drop to the ground).

The Bears are Sleeping

Choose several children to be "bears". During the game, each child will have a chance to be a bear. The "bears" lay down and pretend to be asleep inside a circle of the remaining children. The circle holds hand and walks around the sleeping bears singing (*to the tune of Fere Jacques*):

Bears are sleeping, bears are sleeping.

In their dens, in their dens.

If you are a stranger, you will be in danger,

Don't wake them, don't wake them.

Gross Motor Skills Continued

The circle of children shout "Wake up Bears!!". The bears wake up and growl loudly, then a new group of children become the bears. For extra fun outside, let the bears chase the children for waking them up. When they catch a child, that child becomes a bear for the next round.

Who am I?

Materials needed: Internet website, clip art, 3X5 index cards

Using the website, clip art, magazines, photos or freehand drawings, make a card for each animal studied. Make duplicate set to use for playing a match game for math. For gross motor, put the cards into a bag or other container. Children will come up, draw a card and name the movement that animal makes. The children will repeat the movement with the leader, then name the animal the movement represents:

Armadillo- I can roll up like an _____. Opossum: I can play dead like a _____.
Rabbit: I can hop like an _____. Squirrel: I can run like a _____.
Frog/Toad: I can jump like a _____. Deer: I can leap like a _____.
Bear: I can stand up like a _____. Turtle: I can crawl like a _____.

Variation: Leader calls out the animal and children demonstrate that animal's movement.

Where Do I Live?

Materials Needed: Blankets, sticks, large boxes, bushes, pictures of animals

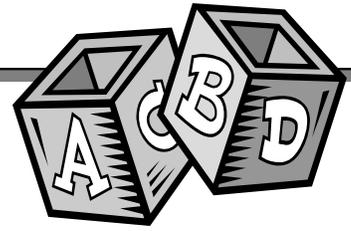
This game would be great played outside. Help the children create a habitat for each animal studied, such as a den for bears, hole for rabbits and armadillos, etc. Several of the animals may share the same type of habitat. Choose pictures of the animals. Call out: Run, little (animal's name), run fast, danger is near. Children will run to the appropriate animal's habitat.

Danger is Near

Materials Needed: Animal match cards.

Each of the animals studied has a specific response to danger. Call out "Run little (animal's name), run fast, danger is near!" Ask children to show you what each animal does when afraid. It will be lots of fun for the children while making the sound of an armadillo or being fierce like an opossum before playing dead.

Infant/ Toddler



SENSORY

Provide faux fur and feathers in a small tub for little ones to touch.

OBSERVATION

Take the infant or toddler outside. Point out the birds, squirrels and rabbits. Talk to little ones about the things the animal is doing. Listen to the sounds the animal makes.

SAND

Fill a tub with craft feathers, let the little ones explore the feathers.

WATER

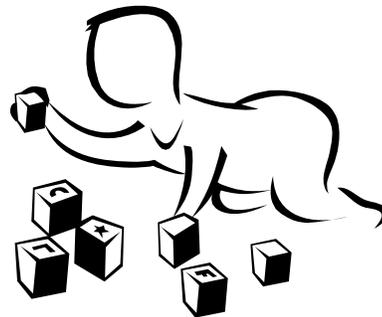
Fill a small tub about 1" deep with water. Put toy fish, turtles, frogs and large river stones (too large for infants to swallow) into the water. Let the children explore the animals and water.

SING SONG SWAY

This Little Squirrel

(Sung to the tune of "This Little Piggy")

This little squirrel ran up a tree.
This little squirrel gave a great big leap.
This little squirrel found some yummy nuts,
This little squirrel wanted some rest
And this little squirrel curled up in his nest.



DRAMATIC PLAY

Provide stuffed and toy animals and boxes for little ones to use as nests for the animals.

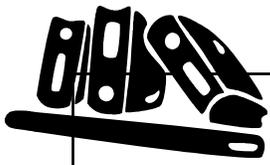
GROSS MOTOR

Help toddlers imitate the movements of rabbits, frogs, birds, squirrels, and other animals.

Hold mobile infants and help them mimic jumping. When they crawl, say "you're crawling just like the turtle", etc. Bring the animals into the conversation with the little ones.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Read books to the little ones about the animals the children have seen In your backyard or at home. Talk about the animals and point them out when outside or when you see them through a window.



Books Worth Reading

Title:

Panda Bear, Panda Bear
Brown Bear, Brown Bear
Aesop's Fables
Sra Squirrel and the Lost Acorns
Time to Sleep
In the Small, Small Pond
When the Earth Wakes
Wild Animals Touch & Feel
Under the Ground
Bears Life in the Wild
Alpabears
Berlioz the Bear
The Bear Snores On
Bear Wants More
Honeybee and the Robber
It's the Bear
Good Night, Bear
Teddy
Animals, Animals
Every Autumn Comes the Bear
Wake Me In the Spring
Blueberries for Sal
The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry,
 And the Big Hungry Bear
Where's My Teddy
Spike's Best Nest
Inch by Inch
A Forest Tree House
Who Says That?
Time for Bed

Author:

Eric Carle
Bill Martin, Jr.
Aesop
Julie Sykes
Denise Fleming
Denise Fleming
Ani Rucki
DK Books
Scholastic First Discovery Books
Monica Keiling
Hagee
Jan Brett
Jane Chapman
Jane Chapman
Eric Carle
Jez Alborough
Mattern
LeCourt
Eric Carle
Jim Arnosky
James Preller
McCloskey

Audrey Woods
Jez Alborough
Tony Maddox
Leo Lioni
World Book
Little Golden Books
Mem Fox



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

FAMILY CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

*April 20- April 21, 2007
Holiday Inn
Jonesboro, Arkansas*



EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

*August 2007
Fowler Center
ASU Convocation Center
Jonesboro, Arkansas*

*For More Information Call:
ASU Childhood Services
(870) 972-3055
(888) 429-1585*

