

INDOOR Activity

BUILD A NEST CHALLENGE

Have you ever examined a bird's nest closely? A nest is a complex structure and can be built out of a variety of natural and unnatural materials, including grass, twigs, trash, mud, moss, leaves, and just about anything else a bird might find while out searching for nest-building materials. Let's see what kind of nest you can construct!

Supplies: (Any of the following materials you may have available in your home or yard)

- Grass
- Twigs
- Moss
- Paper shreds
- Twine, string, yarn
- Leaves
- Cotton balls (pulled apart)
- Playdough (modeling dough)
- Bowl (for younger learners)
- Magnifying glass or binoculars (for examining real nests outside if you can find one)



What to do:

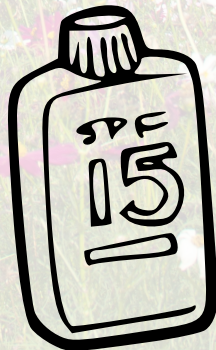
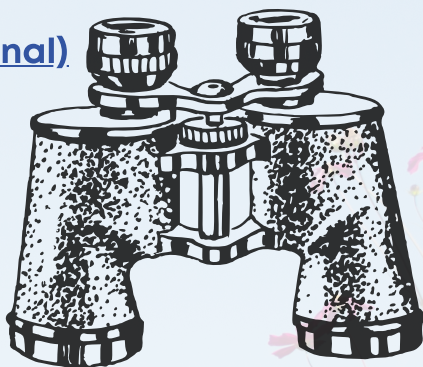
- Before you begin, it is helpful to examine a real bird's nest and see how its constructed.
- If you know the location of a nest in your yard or neighborhood, see if you can get a closer look with binoculars or if you're lucky enough to find a low hanging nest or one which has fallen out of a tree examine it closely with a magnifying glass.
- If you cannot find a real nest, simply search the internet for short video.
- Now you're ready to build! Select the materials you want to use and get started!

GO BIRDING!

Bird watching is a great way to spend time outside and become more connected to the natural world around you. And birding isn't just for adults; no age is too young. All you need is time and outdoor space. Birds are found in urban and rural areas alike, all you have to do is go outside and watch. Careful observation is the key to enjoying bird watching and learning to identify new birds. Let's go, birding!

Supplies: (All supplies are optional)

- Binoculars
- Note pad and pencil
- Camera or cell phone
- Bird song device or phone app
- Spotting scope
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent



What to do:

- For beginners, you do not even need a pair of binoculars. The best thing to do is find a comfortable spot to sit, preferably in a location with a good view of surrounding trees, buildings, or a water source.
- Next, just relax, enjoy the fresh air, and wait for your first bird to arrive!
- You may see birds flying, roosting, perched on a roof, or hopping about on the ground in search of food.
- No matter how close the birds may come, resist the urge to move forward. Simply sit still and watch them.
- Note the bird's behavior; How are they acting? Are they building? Are they eating?
- Don't worry about identifying the birds at first. Learning to identify birds takes time in the field, watching birds and seeing the same birds over and over until you become familiar with specific species or groups of birds.
- Finally, a great way to begin identifying birds is to take simple notes about their appearance.
- Note their overall color, as well as noticeable streaks, spots, or different colored parts of their bodies.
- Note the shape of their beak.
- Note what they are doing (feeding, singing, flying together or alone, etc.)
- Note or sketch the basic form of their body and if they are small, medium, or large.
- Also, note the location where you saw them or where you were bird watching.
- All these notes over time will help provide a better overall picture of what you are seeing in the field and can be very helpful when trying to identify a bird later.

