Clover Kid
Exploring Nature

UNL Clover Kid Team

Before You Get Started:

Information for Parents

Re-Connecting Kids With Nature:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Mw-9W9VZU
How to Hike with Children:  Snacks - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ1aWbQxius
                        Clothing—http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0Z3bMTeALM
                        Shoes - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAitqULlsJ4
                        Staying on the Trail  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsYAsAQYgps

Poison Ivy, Berries & Plants: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwpSlqsguKQ

When You Finish This You Will Have Helped Your Child:

- Discover the world around them.
- Spark their curiosity of the great creatures that are so close to their home and inspire them to flip over logs to discover the wonders that lie beneath.
- Want to conserve these new-found animals and help form a connection between themselves and nature.

State Standards

Writing, Speaking, & Listening
LA 0.2.1.c Generate representations of ideas (e.g., pictures, labels, letter strings, words, simple sentences); select and organize ideas relevant to a topic
LA 0.3.1.a Communicate ideas orally in daily classroom activities and routines
LA 0.3.3.c Participate in learning situations (e.g., small groups, show and share, cooperative problem solving, play)

Science
SC2.1.1.b Conduct simple investigations
SC2.1.1.d Describe objects, organisms, or events using pictures, words, numbers
SC2.1.1.e Collect and record observations
SC2.1.1.f Use drawings and words to describe and share observations with others
SC2.3.1.a Differentiate between living and non-living things
SC2.3.1.b Identify the basic needs of living things (food, water, air, space, shelter)

University of Nebraska - Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.
A backyard is a great place to discover wild animals, but not just the obvious ones like squirrels and birds. This is a great activity to help kids realize the diversity of life around them. When kids think of their backyard, what usually comes to mind—a swing set, playing catch, a cook out? What about wildlife? Most everyone can identify birds and some small mammals, but what about smaller creatures, the ones that allow you to have a really close look?

Exploring Nature Activity

**Step 1:** Tell the kids we are looking for a few naturalists that can help us spot some animals in our backyard.

**Step 2:** Hand out the picture cards of different animals and lead them to the backyard.

**Step 3:** Help them find the animals by giving clues about what each animal would eat and where it might live.

**Step 4:** Remember to get across the message that all animals are important to the ecosystem, even the creepy crawly ones. Care for wildlife at home by providing backyard habitats.

**Questions to help with this Exploring Nature Activity:**

**“What sort of creatures live in your backyard?”** You know, it’s often the little creatures that are so important to us. Bees and butterflies help to pollinate flowers. Millipedes and cockroaches break down decaying plant materials and return the nutrients back into the soil. Spiders and bats help to control insect populations.

**“Why does wildlife come to your backyard?”** Because it contains food, water, and shelter. These are all things that every animals needs. Some animals come and go with the season, for example, you might see certain birds only in the winter. Why? Because the food they eat is disappearing...things like flowers, seeds, berries, and insects. You can add things to your backyard for the wildlife. Hang a bird feeder or decorate at tree with fruit, nuts, peanut butter, and seeds.

**“What animals live in your backyard?”** There are probably animals living there that you don’t even know about. Leaving piles of leaves or branches is a great way to attract some of the small insects and arachnids you see here. Examine the small places under logs or stones in your yard. All these little animals have their place in your yard.

**“What do these animals need to live?”** Food, water, and shelter, right. There are lots of things you can do to create habitats in your backyard...by planting trees and shrubs in your yard you can create the shelter that many animals need. Also, by leaving dead trees and logs in your yard, you can create the shelter that many animals need.

Wow, isn’t it amazing how much wildlife lives in your backyard!
### Exploring Nature Activities:

#### Ways to Explore Nature in Your Own Backyard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go cloud watching</td>
<td>Build a fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climb a tree</td>
<td>Roar at the moon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go on a nature scavenger hunt</td>
<td>Plant a garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a backyard beach</td>
<td>Explore a flower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dig in the dirt</td>
<td>Watch ants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp out in your backyard</td>
<td>Run barefoot through the grass (especially wet grass)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour your neighbor’s front gardens</td>
<td>Take a color walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jump in puddles</td>
<td>Go on a backyard bird watching expedition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bake mud cakes</td>
<td>Raise a caterpillar, release a butterfly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build a fairy house</td>
<td>Make leaf, rock, or bark rubbings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start a backyard field guide</td>
<td>Create rock art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaze at the stars</td>
<td>Plant a tree from seed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play with sticks</td>
<td>Build snow animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watch a sunset</td>
<td>Go butterfly watching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Host a backyard garden tour</td>
<td>Make a moon journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Run through a pile of leaves</td>
<td>Start a seed collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paint with mud</td>
<td>Take a flower walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a fairy garden</td>
<td>Plant a flower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Search for spider webs</td>
<td>Go on a backyard safari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore a tree</td>
<td>Design a backyard hiking trail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a treasure map</td>
<td>Enjoy a backyard campfire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make a birdbfeeder</td>
<td>Start a nature journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paint rocks</td>
<td>Go on a backyard bug hunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a compass walk</td>
<td>Make sand angels</td>
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</tbody>
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**Go on a nature hike or scavenger hunt to gather items**

The Hiking Song by the Chickadees:  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vY_3J2MNIw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vY_3J2MNIw)

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**Conservation Station:**

- To explore the area looking for wildlife in your backyard habitat
- To identify at least nine animals by sight
- To deliver the message “care for wildlife” by creating your own backyard habitat using assorted animal pictures that follow

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Bird

Rabbit

Beetle

Spider

Caterpillar

Praying Mantis
Different Types of Projects for the Fair

Each county has different projects, please check with your local Extension Office for a list of projects.

Bird feeder – Coffee can with both ends cut out. Decorate the can as you wish. Take the lid and cut in half. Put each half on the ends. Fill with bird seed. Tie a rope through and around the can for a hanger.

Bird feeder - Take a paper towel roll, cut to whatever length you want. Spread peanut butter on the roll and then roll it in bird seed. Tie a string through the roll and hang in the tree.

Gather twigs from a nature hike and break them into even lengths. Use twine to tie the twigs together to make a star.

Design miniature houses out of nature items.

Make these paint brushes out of things you find in nature and paint a picture.

Make decorations from items found on a nature hike.

Use items from a nature hike to design a picture.
Questions???

- Ask the kids to name some animals they see around their homes. Do they do anything special to help those animals out?
- You may briefly discuss things like bird feeders, bird baths, and how they positively impact wildlife.
- What do insects eat?
- How do birds make a nest?
- Where do you see insects?
- What is your favorite insect?
- How do ants carry food?
- Where do you play outside?
- What is your favorite outdoor activity?
- Can you name some different trees?
- What is the fruit of a tree?