

Nest Builder

Learning objectives:

Experience tactile sensitivity by touching different natural materials.

Learning properties of different natural materials e.g. which are flexible (grass) rigid (twigs), sticky (mud) or heavy (stones).

Imaginative thinking, using loose parts to create something new.

Fostering a sense of care and responsibility for living things.



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Practitioner knowledge:

The peak season for bird nesting is April to July, with many birds choosing to make their nests in trees or bushes.

Nests can be made from a range of found materials, both natural and unnatural, for example, twigs, leaves, paper, string and fabric, and designs and sizes vary from species to species.

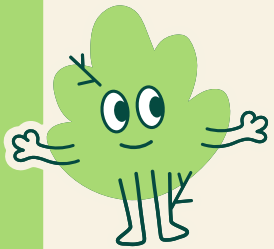
Birds build nests to keep their eggs and chicks safe and secure.



Activity:

Explore these questions with the children:

- Why do birds build nests?
- What do the nests need to do?
- Explain why the nests need to be strong, warm, and comfortable.



Go into your outdoor environment and encourage the children to find any materials that they think might be suitable for a nest, for example, things that might be strong (twigs), warm (like moss). Or things that could help make the nest comfortable (like leaves and grass), or even something that could help it stay together (like mud).

Children can then build their nests in their own chosen spot or as a group.

If you have some small cuddly toys, these can be the animals they are building their nests for, helping the children decide on the size needed for their nests.

Put your animals into their nests, children can explain why they have chosen to make it the way they have.

Explain to the children why birds build nests

Because they need a safe and cosy place for their eggs and babies.

What do the nests need to do?

Nests need to be strong, protect the eggs / chicks from the weather and keep them safe from predators.

How are nests made?

First the birds gather things like twigs, grass, leaves, feathers, even bits of string or mud. Then they use their feet and beak to arrange everything.

The nest needs to be made in a safe place, have a way to get in and out and be soft on the inside and strong on the outside.

Some birds weave, some stack and others use mud like glue to hold it all in place.

These are all great skills children can try!



What materials do they use and why?

Twigs and sticks – make a strong frame.

Grass and leaves – fill in the gaps and make it soft and comfortable.

Feathers and fur – keep the eggs warm.

Mud – works like glue sticking everything together.



Things to consider:

- How suitable are your outdoor environments for birds?
- Are there places for them to land?
- Are there materials available for them to use to make their nests?



Top tip:

You could always collect some natural materials and place them in gaps in a fence, between branches, or in any place a bird can collect them.



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