

Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom
Topic of Study: Building a Nest

***Mama Built a Little Nest* by Jennifer Ward, illustrated by Steve Jenkins**
***The Best Nest* by P. D. Eastman**

Introduction

In this guide children are engaged in activities that primarily support three domains in the *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months: Language Development, Emergent Literacy and Science and Technology*. The **Learning Goals** (with **Strands**) that precede each activity relate to specific areas of development and learning that are the focus of the activities.

Children are introduced to a variety of ways that birds build their nests in this informational book, *Mama Built a Little Nest*, a book filled with rich language and amazing collage illustrations. The storybook, *The Best Nest*, with bright colorful, fun illustrations introduces children to a different place to build a nest.

Teacher Note: *Before beginning this topic of study, the developers suggest that you spend time reviewing the informational book, Mama Builds a Little Nest, as well as the following list of words and their definitions as used in this book.*

Bird	Word	Definition
Falcon	scrape	nest of a bird such as a falcon that is created when the mother and father scrape away at the edge of a high cliff and create a small indentation; often there is gravel or other debris that they use
Falcon	fledge	to leave the nest after growing enough feathers to fly and be independent
Cactus Wren	roosts	a place to rest
Cactus Wren	decoy	empty nest used to distract the coachwhip snake from finding the real nest where the cactus wren is laying eggs, incubating them and raising the young birds
Cactus Wren	predators	an animal such as the coachwhip snake that hunts, kills and eats other animals such as the cactus wren
Burrowing Owl	burrow	a hole in the ground made by the burrowing owl or by another animal such as a rabbit, prairie dog, armadillo, or skunk
Grebes	Grebes	waterfowl who are divers and use their wings to propel themselves under water in order to get food; they are more able to swim in water than they are to walk on land
Shorebirds	scrape	nest of shorebird that is made of sand and pebbles
Shorebirds	camouflage	a way of hiding something such as eggs which have colors and patterns of the pebbles around them
Hornbill	incubate	to keep eggs warm, usually by sitting on them to keep them warm until they hatch, which is when the egg breaks and the baby bird comes out.
Bald Eagle	aerie	nest of a large bird such as an eagle or hawk, usually built in a high place such as on a cliff or mountaintop, a place that cannot be easily reached

Connection to Adventures in Learning

This curriculum guide can stand alone or be used as a supplement to the following:

Adventures in Learning

- Focus Area #7: Things that Grow – Topics of Study: Birds

Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom

- Birds
- Owls

This curriculum guide can also be used with similar topics of study from any curriculum.

Materials to Collect and Make

- Laminated pictures of a variety of nests, labeled with name of appropriate bird, and if available, picture of that bird, or **See Attachment: Bird Nests**
Print on Cardstock, laminate and cut each page into 4 sections along the lines to make labeled picture cards of birds and their nests.

- Chart Sheet titled **Why Do Birds Build Nests?**

Teacher Note: Add a picture of a nest to the chart (empty nest, no eggs, no birds)

Why Do Birds Build Nests?



- A collection of items that birds may use to build nests: twigs, sticks, stems, straw, grass, dried leaves, bits of brightly colored yarn and string, feathers



Introducing and Concluding the Topic

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory, long-term memory*)

CD3.2 Engages in symbolic and abstract thinking (*abstract thinking*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

Introduction: Building a Nest

- Take the chart, *Why Do Birds Build Nests?*, to the book reading area prior to reading the book, *Mama Built a Little Nest*.
- Show the chart to the children and read the title, then ask this question: “Why do you think birds build nests?” Accept all of their answers.
- Record their answers on the chart.
- Say to children, “For the next few days we are going to be reading stories and learning about different types of birds and how they build different types of nests. Be looking and listening for clues as to why birds build nests. At the end of this study, we’ll look at the chart and read what you said today. Then we will see if what you said today is correct and if you have some new things to add to the chart.”

Why Do Birds Build Nests?



Conclusion: Reviewing the Topic of Study, Building a Nest

- Gather the children in a group at the conclusion of the topic of study about Building a Nest
- Show the chart, *Why Do Birds Build Nests?*, and recall that “We recorded your answers to the question, Why do birds build nests? Here are the things you said that day.” and read their recordings.
- Ask children if what they recorded that day is correct and if they have any new things to add.
- Record any new things they want to add.
- Review the entire chart with the children.

Teacher Notes:

- *Birds build nests*
 - *To hold the bird's eggs*
 - *To hold the baby birds*
 - *To serve as camouflage (so predators can't see the eggs and/or baby birds)*
 - *For shelter*
- *Children may answer in words that in some way relate to the 4 reasons listed above. For example, they may say “so they can lay their eggs” or “so the baby birds don't get wet.” Record exactly what they say if it is acceptable.*

Story Presentations

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

LD2.1 Uses increasingly complex vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure (in child's home language) (*expressive vocabulary*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge*)

ST2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of core science ideas and concepts (*stability and change*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*living things, nature and the environment*)

Book: *Mama Built a Little Nest*

- Prepare to read the book, *Mama Built a Little Nest*.
- Gather a small group of children (four to six) if possible for the reading of this book because of the importance of children being able to clearly see the illustrations which are essential to the understanding of the story.
- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the story and the illustrator is the one who draws the pictures.)
- Invite children to look at the cover and describe what they see. Ask what they think the bird is using to build the nest.
- Show the cover page and again read the title and give author and illustrator and invite them to describe what they see on this page. Ask what they see as the difference in the two nests, especially the materials used to build the two nests. Show the cover again if children seem to need this.
- Read each page slowly, allowing children to see the illustrations and make comments and ask questions. Define words that may be unfamiliar to children. Refer to definitions on page 1 of this guide.
- Follow up the reading by inviting children to tell you what they enjoyed most about the story. What surprised them?

Teacher Note: *Make sure that all children have an opportunity to hear the story.*

Second Reading: **Mama Built a Little Nest**

- Gather the children in either a large or small group for the second reading of this story.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the reading by showing each double-page spread that features one bird and its nest.
- Invite children to recall the name of the bird and to describe the nest that bird builds. Ask questions and give support as needed.

Extension:

- Read the story with a small group of children, reading only the first page of each double-page spread.
- Involve children in identifying the rhyming words on that page. For example, on the first page, trunk and bunk, on the second page, snug and rug, and so forth.

Additional Learning Goal:

EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language (*rhyme*)

Book: *The Best Nest* by P.D. Eastman

- Prepare to read the storybook, *The Best Nest*
- Show the cover, give title, and author.
- Invite children to look at the cover of the book and describe what they see.
- Follow up by asking these questions: “Do you think the two birds built the nest?” “If not, who do you think built the nest?”
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Read with expression based on the text and illustrations. For example, emphasize NOT when Mrs. Bird says “It’s Not the best nest!” Sound sad and almost crying when Mr. Bird is looking for Mrs. Bird.
- Follow up the reading by showing the pages and inviting the children to tell the story in their own words.
- Ask children why they think Mrs. Bird is happy with the new nest on pages 61, 63 and 64.

Additional Language and Literacy Activities

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child’s home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension, follows directions*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences*)

Activity: Who Has This Nest? (See Attachment: [Bird Nests](#) and directions on page 2, Materials to Collect and Make)

- Invite children to join you in the book reading area.
- Give each child one of the laminated pictures of a bird nest, except for the woodpecker.
- Explain that you will show them the picture of a bird and/or bird nest and they are to match their card to the picture, say the name of the bird, and tell one thing about how the bird builds its nest.
- Give an example as a model for children. For example, show the double-spread pages of the woodpecker, show your card and say, “This is a woodpecker. Woodpeckers peck a hole in a tree for their nest.”
- Support children as needed.

Teacher Notes:

- *In addition to this activity, the pictures can be used in a number of ways as follows:*
- *Place the book, *Mama Built a Little Nest*, and the laminated pictures in the Discovery Center and observe to see if children match the pictures to the pictures in the book and if they name the bird and discuss with each other how the nest is built.*
- *Enlarge the pictures, laminate them, and create a booklet by placing each picture in a clear, plastic sleeve, and place each sleeve in a 3-ring binder. Title the booklet *Bird Nests*.*

Learning Environment

Outdoors

- Explain to children that they are going outdoors to look for things that birds use to build their nests. Later, they will use the items to build nests.
- Discuss with them some items birds use to build nests (refer to the books and to the section of this guide titled Materials to Make and Collect).
- Take a container such as a basket for collecting the items.

Teacher Note:

- *Consider adding items such as straw, twigs, and brightly colored string or yarn to the playground before going outdoors.*

Library Center

- Add the following books:
Mama Built a Little Nest
The Best Nest
Bird Nests (teacher-made booklet)

Discovery Center

- Add the book, *Mama Built a Little Nest*, and the laminated pictures
- Place some of the items birds use to build nests in a shallow box and add to Discovery Center.
- Add magnifying glasses

Art Center

Learning Goals;

PH2.1 Demonstrates fine-motor strength, control, and coordination (*hand-eye coordination*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Create a Bird Nest

- Place items such as string, yarn, pieces of ribbon, twigs, and straw in a container labeled Nest Building Material. Add a picture or two of nests to the label.
- Show the material to the children, read the label and ask if they think they can build a nest, using only the materials in the box.
- Show children the picture of the weaverbird in the book, *Mama Built a Little Nest*, and explain that the weaverbirds used only their beak and feet to build the best.
- Invite children to state what they will use to build their nest. Remind them that no glue or tape is allowed.
- Provide a space for children to display their nests.

Physical Activity

- Have available plastic eggs filled with small rocks or pea gravel for weight, or bean bags to represent eggs.
- Show children the picture of the emperor penguin in the book; *Mama Built a Little Nest*, and invite children to recall where the father penguin kept the egg until it hatched.
- Explain to children that they will have an opportunity to pretend to be the father emperor penguin with an egg upon his feet and try to walk across the ice.
- Allow each child an opportunity to try this activity.

Transition Activities

Learning Goal:

CD2.2 Shows flexibility in adjusting thinking and behavior to different contexts (*adjusting behavior to match context*)

- Use the bird nests pictures for a transition activity.
- Show one of the pictures and invite a child to name the bird and transition to the next activity.
- Continue this activity until all children have transitioned to the next activity

Teacher Notes:

- *Know your children and call on each one to identify a specific bird based on that child's ability to do so.*
- *One of the goals of this type of activity is to help children be successful, so adapt activities and support children as needed to meet this goal.*

Family Connection and Engagement

- Communicate with families that children have been learning about birds and the nests they build. Give them the name of some of the birds with which they might be familiar; woodpecker, hummingbird and eagle, for example.
- Suggest that families talk with their children about these birds or other birds they see in their neighborhood and how the birds build their nests. Look for nests in their neighborhood.
- Give to families a list of books about building a nest, especially those that were presented to the children. Suggest that they check the books out of their local library and read them with their children.

Additional Books

A Nest Is Noisy by Dianna Hutts Aston and Sylvia Long

Bird Builds a Nest by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Richard Jones

Have You Heard the Nesting Bird? by Rita Gray, illustrated by Kenard Pak

This Is the Nest that Robin Built by Denise Fleming