

Build a Home

This activity can be run out in the school grounds or as part of a nature walk. This activity can also be adapted for use indoors.

Aim

This activity encourages children to consider the shelter requirements of different animals as well as strength of materials and structural design.

The children need to think about the habitat, food source, camouflage and home of their animal.

Materials needed:

- Small stuffed animals
- Building materials:
 - Twigs
 - Leaves
 - Moss

The children can collect the materials as part of a scavenger hunt. This will encourage them to consider the colours, sizes, shapes and textures of the materials they are seeking. Refer to the 'Caring for the Environment' strand unit at this point.

Children work in groups. Each group has a different animal. Allow 5 or 10 minutes design time before children start to build. During design time, ask the children to consider whether their animal needs a roof on its home and whether the home should be



camouflaged. Can they think of any other feature that would be beneficial? e.g. would a duck prefer a home near a pond?

Allow the children time to construct their animal's home. When working outdoors ensure that the children work within a defined area.

At the end of the allowed time period, each team presents their shelter or 'home' to the rest of the class, explaining the features and how they meet the requirements of the animal.



Duck's nest on a low tree branch



Squirrel home built at the base of a tree



Owl home built at the base of a tree



If an outdoor area is not available or practical for your group, this activity can be run in the classroom. The teacher can bring natural materials into the classroom or use the suggested materials below.

Indoors:

- Small stuffed animals
- Drinking Straws
- Card and/or egg boxes
- Masking tape or sellotape (optional)

The building activity can still run by the same method as the outdoor version.

Suggested extensions:

If the teacher is providing building materials in the classroom, it is possible to add cross-curricular links to this activity. For example, supply each group with only basic building materials. Each group can then 'earn' extra materials by performing tasks such as correctly spelling words from that week's spelling list, giving the correct answer to a sum, etc. This adds an extra facet to the activity and can help revision of other topics addressed during the week. These tasks can also be differentiated so that children of all abilities can succeed and help their team by earning extra building materials.

