

Make It Monday: Best Nest Challenge



Overview

Explore bird nests with the following challenges:

- Act out how different birds build different types of nests
- Try to build a “structurally sound” nest out of twigs, pinestraw, or yarn using a simulated bird beak (tweezers, chopsticks, pinched fingers, etc.)
- Create a “best nest blueprint” to design a nest that stands up the real-world challenges that birds face every day

Think and Talk:

- Animals—even humans!—need food, water, and SHELTER to survive! Think about where you live...
 - ⇒ How does it provide shelter?
 - ⇒ Did you build it?
 - ⇒ Could you build it? What materials & tools would you need?
- Can you think of some places that animals build or use for shelter?
 - ⇒ Some shelters are for adults and or families—such as ant hill, wasp nest or the underground burrows
 - ⇒ Nests are special homes just for keeping baby animals safe and warm until they are old enough to be on their own!
 - ⇒ Birds aren’t the only animals that build nests! Did you know that alligators build nests too?
 - ⇒ Different birds build different types of nests. The type of nest built is partly based on genetics (every bird makes a nest similar in shape/structure to the one its parents made), and partly based on the resource availability in its habitat. Parents don’t teach nest building classes—birds are just born knowing how to do it!

Challenges:

- Pretend to be a bird building a nest
 - ⇒ Woodpeckers and chickadees use their beaks to make a hole, or cavity, inside of a tree for their nesting site.
 - ◇ First, tap around to find a weak spot on the trunk.
 - ◇ Next, tap out a chunk of wood—you may need to spit out chunks as you excavate the hole.
 - ◇ Okay—once it’s nice and roomy inside—Hunt around for material like grass, leaves, feathers or fur and make a cozy, soft nest inside the tree.
 - ⇒ Big birds like eagles, hawks and herons need bigger nests. They make platforms.
 - ◇ Fly around looking for some large branches—if you find one, pick it up with your talons and flap hard to carry it back to your nest site.
 - ⇒ Drop it into place and go look for another.
 - ⇒ Once your pile of is started, plop down on top and kind of push with your feet to press the sticks together and give a little wiggle to set them into place. Keep doing that until your nest seems secure!

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BEST NEST "BLUEPRINT"

Design a nest for your favorite bird

What Type of Bird Do You Want To Be?

What type of habitat do you live in (In the city? In the forest? Near a pond, river, or ocean?)

Think about your nest's location...What is the best shape nest for the location?

What materials will you use for:

- Building a Strong Structure?
- Keeping Eggs Warm?
- Keeping Eggs "Hidden"?

Turn the Page for the Next Challenge



Test Your Ideas

- **Egg Test:**

How many eggs will your nest hold?

(Fill a plastic egg with something to provide weight or try filling it with "pretend eggs" like pennies or marbles)

- **Rain Test:**

Sprinkle or spray your nest with water. How does it hold up? Can it still hold the eggs?

- **Wind Test:**

Fan your nest with a piece of cardboard. Can it withstand the wind?

If you have a hairdryer, have an adult help you plug it in so you can test out your nest in a super strong wind!

- **Camouflage Test:**

Does your nest blend in to its surroundings? Take it outside and hide it. Can a friend spot it?



Learn More:

Check out birds at work with these Nest Cams!

Cornell Lab: All About Birds

<http://cams.allaboutbirds.org>

View Nesting Birds

<http://www.viewbirds.com>

Audubon Bird Cams

<http://www.audubon.org/birdcams>