

Habitats

3+

Mud House

Science skills

The children observe the changes in mud "clay" as it hardens.

Materials

Mixing bowl

Soil

Water

Cookie sheet

Toothpicks

Large spoon

Grass

Loaf pan

Paint shirts

Oven

What to do

1. Mix together the soil, grass and water in the bowl. Add more water, grass or soil as needed until it is the consistency of clay.
2. Let the children touch, squeeze and mold the mixture for a few minutes and talk about how it feels.
3. Using the loaf pan as a mold, place enough of the mixture into the pan to mold it into the shape of a brick or rectangle.
4. Take it out of the loaf pan and place it on the cookie sheet. If desired, use toothpicks to draw windows, doors or even tiny brick shapes.
5. Bake in the oven on low for several hours, or bake in the sun for several days. Emphasize how mud is used to construct buildings.
6. Optionally, children could help construct a little diorama for their mud house.

More to do

More science: Add more grass and some twigs and use the mixture to build nests, beaver dams or caves.

Outdoors: Go for a walk and look for different types of homes.

■ Susan Rinas, Parma, OH

3+

Trio of Animal Habitats

Science skills

Children practice observation and sorting skills.

Habitats

Materials

Chart paper and marker
Small pictures of animals from various habitats: land, sea or air
A tray divided into three equal sections or a shoe box with taped-in cardboard dividers

What to do

1. Label each area in the bottom of the tray so that items can be sorted by land, air and sea (blue for water, brown/green for land, and light blue with cut-out of cloud or sun for air).
2. In a group, ask the children to think of animals that live in each area of the environment. Make a graph with a column for each habitat.
3. Take out the activity. Be sure to show the children how they are to sort, and what each picture stands for on the bottom of the tray.
4. You may also explain to the children the care to be taken with the items, how many children can use the activity at one time and how to put the activity away.

■ Melissa Browning, Milwaukee, WI

Indoor Pond

4+

Science skills

Downloaded by test@gryphonhouse.com from ProFilePlanner.com
Over several weeks, children make and record observations and are encouraged to ask questions about nature.

Materials

Plastic wading pool
Water buckets
Goldfish
Aquarium filter
Crayons

Water
Tadpoles
Water plants
Drawing paper
Camera, optional

Note: You might want to send a note home with your children asking parents to donate these items.

What to do

1. Explain to the children that you are going to create an indoor habitat so you can watch living things grow right in the classroom. A habitat is a place where a plant or animal lives in nature. The habitat that you are going to create is a pond.
2. Ask the children to discuss what they already know about a pond and make a list of their thoughts on the chalkboard. Then ask them what they would like to learn about a pond and make a second list on the chalkboard.
3. Place the wading pool in a well-lit area of the room. Ask the children to help fill the pool about half full of water. Make sure to take the chlorine out of the water by letting the water "stand" overnight.