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Quick & Easy Habitat Education Activities

Animal Survival Skills

Adapted from 'Tom Brown's Field Guide to Nature' and Jon Young's 'Nature Awareness' programs

Fourth Grade
15-20 Minutes
Outdoors

4-1

<p>Description: Students learn skills for observing wildlife in the habitat project by imitating wildlife survival techniques, while also practicing good outdoor etiquette. These skills help students to move quietly, and to see and hear more clearly. They are also helpful for managing student behavior while visiting habitat areas.</p>	<p>Vocabulary Wildlife: <i>animals that are neither human nor domesticated</i> Habitat: <i>the environment where a plant or animal naturally lives and grows</i> Wildlife habitat components: <i>the major parts of a habitat required for wildlife species to survive- food, water, shelter and space enough to provide food and raise young</i></p>
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students understand that there is wildlife in the habitat area. • Students model wildlife behavior to enhance observation skills. • Students learn skills for wildlife-friendly and good outdoor etiquette in habitat areas. 	<p>Washington State EALRs Science 1.3.8 Identify the characteristics of organisms living in a given habitat and explain how those characteristics allow the organism to survive in that habitat. Geography 3.1.1a Identify choices individuals have in how they interact with the environment. Civics 4.1.1a Identify individual rights and the responsibilities they imply and the importance of respecting the rights of others. Communication 1.1 Focus attention. 1.2 Listen and observe to gain and interpret information.</p> <p>Science Kit: Ecosystems</p>
<p>Print Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images: 'Animal Survival Skills', 'Image Labels', 'Seattle Habitat Wildlife' poster, 'Poster Overlay' 	

Activity

- Gather near the entrance of a habitat area. Speak softly for a quiet discussion. "This is called a habitat area. What is a habitat?" (the environment where a plant or animal naturally lives and grows).
- "What might live in this habitat?" Show image: 'Seattle Habitat Wildlife' poster. "Have you ever seen any of the animals that are in this poster? In this habitat?" Share stories and discuss. "Do you think you will see wildlife in the habitat area if you behave as though you are in a playground? What do you think wildlife will do if you do that? Why? How can we behave in the wildlife habitat area and not frighten wildlife away?" Share ideas. "How does wildlife survive in urban (city) habitat? What do they do to keep themselves safe? We are going to learn some of the skills that wildlife uses to survive."
- Form students into a large circle with enough room between students for outstretched arms.
- "We are going to learn some of the skills that wildlife uses to stay hidden while they observe humans, dogs and other animals entering the habitat area. These skills will help us to observe wildlife. These are some of the same techniques used by Native Americans, hunters, naturalists and explorers when they travel through the forest."
- Show owl image. "What do you notice the most about owls?" (eyes) "Let's use 'See like an Owl' to learn how owls and other animals see so much." Stand in the center of circle and demonstrate. Say, "Hold your hands up and out to each side. Focus your eyes on the center of the circle. "Wiggle your fingers and slowly move your hands forward until you can see your fingers. This is 'seeing at the side' is called peripheral vision and helps animals see things around them".
- Show deer image. "What do you notice about this deer? (ears) Let's use 'Hear like a Deer' to learn about how deer and other animals hear so well." Demonstrate cupping your hands behind your ears and listening. "Can you hear my voice or others sounds better? These big ears also help to locate sounds such as bird song, water falling, or other sounds."
- Show fox image. "What is the fox doing? (walking) Foxes and other animals can walk silently in the forest. Let's learn how foxes and other animals walk so silently." Show students how to roll on the outside of their foot from heel to toe, and glide smoothly as they walk to move silently. "We call this 'Walk like a Fox'."
- Take students on a simple walk in the habitat area to review and practice 'See like an Owl', 'Hear like a Deer' and 'Walk like a Fox'. Ask students to use these skills while looking and listening for wildlife while walking through the habitat area. At the conclusion of the walk discuss wildlife observed, and what animal students hope to see in the future.
- Remind students to use these 'animal survival skills' before going into the habitat area on future visits. These behaviors are effective for field behavior management of students, and increase the likelihood of observing wildlife.