Kids Explore!

Build a Bird Nest

Pretend you're a bird and use natural materials to create a nest.

Materials:

Note: You don't need all the things on the list below. These are just a few suggestions. As you collect, don't take the last of anything or pull up live plants.

- Twigs
- Lichen
- Dried grasses
- Long pine needles
- Moss
- Mud
- Leaves
- Feathers
- Fur
- Fluffy seeds

1. Go for a walk and see if you can find any nests in trees, under bridges, or on the ground. If you see a bird with nest making materials, there might be an active site nearby. (Note: Some birds actually nest *inside* trees! If you find a nest, be sure you don't disturb its inhabitants.

What shape is it? Round, flat, sock-like, cup-like, or something else? Is it tiny, medium, or huge? What's it made of? There are SO many kinds of nests.

2. If you don't see any nests on your walk, look in books or on-line for some samples. A few fun bird nests from nature nearby to look up include those of bush tits (sock-like), robins (cup-shaped), eagles (HUGE), herons (made of big sticks), hummingbirds (tiny and very soft), and swallows (some made of mud).

3. Next go outside and collect a variety of natural nest building materials. See the list to the left for ideas. Look in your yard, on side-walks, in gardens, and in parks.

4. Find an open spot outside where it won't bother anyone if you make a bit of a mess. A field, a lawn, or a deck or patio will work fine.

5. Remember the bird nests you saw in person or pictures and use your natural materials to try make a nest of your own. Imagine if you had to build it just using your beak and feet! Hint — if you make some mud, you can use it like glue, which makes this activity quite a bit easier!

6. For some inspiration, check out the osprey nest you can see through a webcam at the UO Law School (*https://law.uoregon.edu/osprey*). Through this webcam, you can watch a pair of osprey all season long, nest building, taking care of eggs, feeding their young, and more! They haven't laid eggs yet, but hopefully will do so soon.

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