

Bird Hide role play

Most settings have a home corner, where children adopt different roles, mother, father, younger sibling, etc. They are comfortable doing this as they are familiar with these roles. The 'bird watcher' may not be so familiar but could be used to introduce them to many new words, for example, binoculars, telescope, camouflage as well as names of different bird species. For this to work well it is essential that children are given some background about why people watch birds, what they do, where they go and what they wear.

Within the setting, it may be possible to design an area with dressing up clothes, Wellington boots, binoculars, bird guides, posters, waterproof clothing, etc. You could hide pictures of birds around the setting, perhaps in the garden if you have one, and ask the children to find them.

Some birdwatchers observe birds in a hide. This is a shed-like structure that is blacked out except for a small window at the front. This means that the watcher can see the birds but they cannot see him or her. Ask the children how many birds they have seen, which were most common and why. Why not make your own bird hide? Begin by finding a window to ensure that children can see outside.

Making a hide is easy to do. By sticking sheets of black sugar paper on the window just above the children's head height and leaving slots 34cms wide at sitting or standing eye levels for children to look through. Children can then look through the window without disturbing the birds.

You can also turn your hide into an excellent space by putting up pictures of the birds you are most likely to see.

To get your children really thinking, ask them whether they would like to be a birdwatcher. What do you think makes a good birdwatcher? Do they think birds like to be watched.

Children can make their own binoculars. You can download instructions from our 'how to do' section.