

Birds

Birds are one of the easiest, loveliest ways to enjoy nature with your children - or by yourself! Once you start paying attention, you'll see and hear them everywhere you go. With basically zero formal effort, I've learned to identify a cardinal by its call (or one of its calls anyway - it has many), and my girls can easily recognize robins and chickadees. This guide has lots of ideas for brand-new birders, but the best way to start is to just step outside.

- bird books to read together
- snack time: birdseed trail mix
- songs, poems, and rhymes
- what's the word, hummingbird?
- bird videos
- invitation to play: birdwatching binoculars
- invitation to play: bird feeder roll
- the Fort Bramble Birds badge

There's so much here to choose from! If you're not sure where to start, pick two books that look good and one activity idea that sounds easy and fun, and see how it goes!

for ages 3 to 7-ish

Books To Read Together

- *Beaks!* by Sneed B. Collard III, illustrated by Robin Brickman
- *Bird House* by Blanca Gómez
- *Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?* by Rita Gray, illustrated by Kenard Pak
- *Inch by Inch* by Leo Lionni
- *About Birds: A Guide for Children* by Cathryn Sill, illustrated by John Sill
- *Chickadee: Criminal Mastermind* by Monica Silvie, illustrated by Elina Ellis
- *Mel Fell* by Corey R. Tabor
- *Ruby's Birds* by Mya Thompson, illustrated by Claudia Dávila
- *Every Day Birds* by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater, illustrated by Dylan Metrano
- *How to Find a Bird* by Jennifer Ward, illustrated by Diana Sudyka
- *Elsie's Bird* by Jane Yolen, illustrated by David Small



Buy new or used, or print this list and take it to that most magical of places: your local library!

Snack Time: “Birdseed” Trail Mix

Make your own “birdseed” trail mix for snack time. Fill muffin tin sections with different seeds, nuts, and your other favorite trail mix goodies (we like Cheerios and M&M’s). Give your little bird a spoon and a bowl, and let them make their own “birdseed.” Eat your birdseed by the handful, or sprinkle it on yogurt or peanut butter toast. Tweet, tweet! A few seeds to try:

- sunflower seeds
- puffed quinoa
- hemp hearts
- pepitas
- pine nuts
- sesame sticks
- flax seed crackers



TRY THIS 

Have you read *Beaks* by Sneed B. Collard yet? Why are there so many different kinds of beaks? At snack time, invite your child to use tools and utensils from around the house as pretend beaks: chopsticks, tongs, round-tip tweezers, a clothespin, or a spoon are a few ideas to try. Which “beak” works best for your snack?

Bird Songs You Might Know



“Rockin’ Robin”
by Bobby Day



“Blackbird”
by The Beatles



“Three Little Birds”
by Bob Marley



Songs, Poems, & Rhymes

“Two Little Blackbirds”

Two little blackbirds
Sitting on a wall,
(hold both thumbs up)
One named Peter
(wiggle one thumb)
The other named Paul.
(wiggle the other thumb)

Fly away Peter
(fly one hand behind your back)
Fly away Paul.
(repeat with other hand)
Come back Peter
(fly your hand back to the “wall”)
Come back Paul.
(repeat with other hand)

from “A Bird, came down the Walk”

A Bird, came down the Walk –
He did not know I saw –
He bit an Angle Worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass –
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass –

by Emily Dickinson

“A Robin”

I wonder how a robin hears?
I never yet have seen his ears.
But I have seen him tip his head
And pull a worm right out of bed!

When a robin cocks his head
Sideways in a flower bed
He can hear the tiny sound
Of a worm beneath the ground.

“Child’s Song in Spring”

O Bluebird and Robin
O Catbird and Wren
I want you to rent
our birdhouses again.

I’m lonely all winter
When you’ve gone away.
Your song is as welcome
As flowers in May.

Snack time is a great
time for sharing
songs, poems,
stories, and
rhymes!



“Little Bird, Little Bird”

Little bird, little bird
Fly through my window
Little bird, little bird
Fly through my window
Little bird, little bird
Fly through my window
Find molasses candy

Through my window
My sugar lump
Fly through my window
My sugar lump
Find molasses candy.

This is an American folksong, and it’s one of my girls’ favorites. Instead of little bird, little bird sometimes we’ll change that part to the name of a bird like they do in the song (chickadee, chickadee; jaybird, jaybird), or other creatures (butterfly, butterfly or banana slug, banana slug). Names, nicknames and silly words are fun too! Hear two versions of the song below:



“Fly Through
My Window”
by Pete Seeger



“Little Bird,
Little Bird”
by Elizabeth Mitchell

“Bird Feeder”

Here is the bird feeder. Here, seeds and crumbs.
Sprinkle them on and see what comes.
One cardinal, one chickadee, one junco, one jay.
Four of my bird friends are eating today!

“Early Bird”

Oh, if you’re a bird, be an early bird
And catch the worm for your breakfast plate.
If you’re a bird, be an early early bird—
But if you’re a worm, sleep late.

by *Shel Silverstein*



What's the word, hummingbird?

BIRD SOUNDS. There are some great bird sound words to play around with: chirp, cheep, chatter, caw, coo, honk, hoot, screech, trill, tweet, twitter, warble, whistle... can you think of any others? What sorts of bird sounds do you hear outside? Hear all of the birdsongs from the book *Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?* here



BIRD MOVES. Can you move like a bird? Go ahead and strut your stuff! Let these fun bird words inspire you:

- hop
- hatch
- roost
- waddle
- flutter
- glide
- perch
- fly
- preen
- flap
- soar
- flit
- peck
- hover
- swoop

BIRD GROUPS. We've all heard of a *flock of birds*, but have you ever heard of a *bouquet of hummingbirds* or a *congress of eagles*? Lots of birds have unique group names - some even have more than one. Here are just a few:

Conspiracy of Ravens

Pandemonium of Parrots

Charm of Finches

Parliament of Owls

Gaggle of Geese

Plump of Ducks

Gift of Robins

Quarrel of Sparrows

Flamboyance of Flamingos

Scoop of Pelicans

Mischief of Magpies

Shimmer of Hummingbirds

What's your favorite? It could also be fun to make up your own. How about a *gobble of turkeys* or a *tuxedo of penguins*?

Really Cool Bird Videos



"Feeding Baby Birds"
Nature on PBS
(1 minute)



"Vancouver Island Hummingbirds"
(1 minute)



"The Art of Flying"
Jan van IJken
(2 minutes)



"Piper"
Disney Pixar
(6 minutes)

Invitation to Play: Birdwatching Binoculars

Make your own binoculars and take them on a bird-watching adventure! Choose what materials you want to offer your child, then let them decorate their binoculars however they like. Some ideas to get you started:

1. Start with:

- 2 toilet paper tubes
- masking tape or washi tape
- length of yarn (optional)



Place the tubes side-by-side, and wrap with tape to secure them together. If you like, punch a hole in the end of each tube and tie on a length of yarn to make a neck strap.

2. Decorate.

Decorate to your heart's content, then take your new binos on a birding adventure! A few materials you might use for decorating:



- washi tape or stickers
- markers, crayons, or paint sticks
- yarn or pipe cleaners (to wrap around)

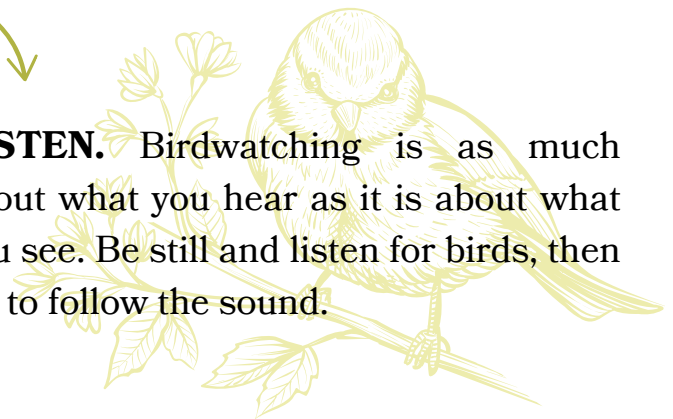
tips for birdwatching with kids:

PICK A SPOT. The great thing about birdwatching is that you can do it just about anywhere. Look out your window, hang out in your yard, go for a walk, or head to your local park.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE? Where do you see birds? What are they doing? What color are they? Are they big or little? This is a great opportunity for practicing observation skills. Model this for your child by making your own observations out loud.

LISTEN. Birdwatching is as much about what you hear as it is about what you see. Be still and listen for birds, then try to follow the sound.

MAKE IT A GAME. How many birds do you see in ten minutes. Can you figure out what kind of bird it is? Use a regional guidebook (Peterson Field Guides are a good place to start) or an app to help with identification (I like the Merlin Bird ID app).



Invitation to Play: Bird Feeder Roll

Late winter and early spring are a great time to put up a bird feeder, because food sources are more likely to be depleted. And you probably already have everything you'll need to make this super simple DIY bird feeder at home! **You'll need:**

To make your bird feeder:

1. Fill a baking dish, pie plate, or other deep-sided dish with birdseed. If you prefer not to buy birdseed just for this project, you can use any type of unflavored raw oats instead.
2. Using a spoon, butter knife, popsicle stick, or even their fingers, invite your child to spread nut butter all over the toilet paper tube. Once it is coated, ask them to roll it in the dish of birdseed.
3. Loop twine through the tube and tie the ends together to make a hanger for your bird feeder. Or, simply find a good branch and stick your bird feeder roll on the end of it!

- toilet paper roll
- nut butter (smooth or chunky)
- bird seed or uncooked oats
- ribbon, yarn, or twine (optional)



use your new binoculars to see if any birds stop by for a snack

We Tried It



- Read from the book list.
- Listened to bird calls.
- Used my beak at snack time.
- Ate “birdseed” trail mix.
- Tried to copy bird calls.
- Moved like a bird.
- Made up group names for different birds.
- Went birdwatching.
- Started a birding life list.
- Made binoculars.
- Made a bird feeder.



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