

Animal Homes and Habitats

(age: preschool/Kindergarten)

Before session starts, hide stuffed animals/puppets in various places around the classroom (i.e. bird on high shelf, prairie dog under a desk, bobcat on top of a desk, etc.). If outdoors, hide them in similar places (i.e. bird in tree, prairie dog in the grass, bobcat on a hill or on top of a rock, frog or turtle by the water/sink, etc.)

Intro: Animals live all around us, in all sorts of different types of homes. We have homes too, and we have neighborhoods. Animal neighborhoods are called habitats.

Have kids look around the room and see if they can spot the animals you hid. Ask them why they think the animals are there—where would you normally see birds, prairie dogs, bobcats, frogs, turtles, etc.?

Set up the four habitat boards (mountains, water, tree, plains—above & below ground). Talk about each one, and as you do, have the children do motions with you to describe the scene (water—waving arms and hands like water; trees—hold arms out like branches; mountains—make a peak with arms above your head; on or underground—get down in a crouch and tuck in head, or mimic crawling on the ground).

Here are three suggestions of how to use the four habitat scenes:

- Use stuffed animals or puppets from a variety of habitats. Have the puppets (or animals) “talk” to the children and ask where they might live. You can place the puppets on the ground in front of the scene.
- Use some of the 3-d plastic animals one at a time. Ask children where those animals might live. Then place the animals in front of the correct poster.
- Use the laminated photos of various animals. Have them decide where the animals live and then let children take turns sticking the photo on the poster with the affixed Velcro dots. *(you will need to hold the posters when they add the photos since they are not very stable.*

Conclusion: animals need homes like we do, and they need food, shelter, water, and space!

Close with Animal Habitat song if desired, and add motions as you sing. *You can also use this song as a conclusion for the whole class at the end of all the rotations.*

Deborah Price, Natural History Program Specialist, September 2019