



# HOW TO MAKE AN OBSERVATION STATION



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## **Pretend like it's 1975 and send your kids outside to play**

If you're looking for a way to get your kids away from their phones and screens, how about introducing them to a magical place filled with wondrous creatures and fantastic beasts – your backyard! Take that, Fortnite!

In this fun and simple activity, you and your child can get to know the animals that share your backyard and learn about what goes on out your window and right under your nose! Your kids will become nature detectives by setting up their own observation station and taking a few minutes to slow down and notice the world around them. And they don't need an app for that.

## **GATHER THIS:**

- Paper or notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Binoculars, camera and/or colored pencils (optional)

## **THEN DO THIS:**

1. Set up your observation station: clear off a small area by a window and stock your spot with paper or a notebook and a pen or pencil. Binoculars, a camera, and colored pencils can be great additions, too!
2. Spend five to ten minutes each day for a week (or more!) at your observation station. Your child can draw, write down, or describe while you record what they notice out the window.
3. Keep a running tally chart of which animals you see – and don't forget to notice little creatures like flies, bees, spiders, songbirds, and squirrels!

## **ASK THIS:**

- What do you notice? What do you wonder?
- Why might that animal spend time in that spot?
- Did you see different things at different times of day or night?
- Which animal did we see most often throughout the week?

## **WHAT IS HAPPENING?**

Taking the time to slow down and observe the places and things you see every day is a great way to practice this most important scientific skill! When you take a closer look, you may often find surprising and fascinating details and action unfolding right before your eyes. This activity is also a great way for kids to get to know the animals that they share space with: their neighbor animals!

## **+ WHAT THIS TEACHES:**

Skills: Observation  
Themes: Backyard biology, nature