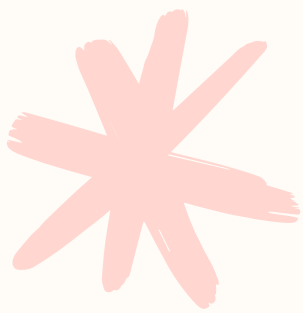




20+ activities with nesting dolls



CONTENTS



- 3 Benefits of Nesting Dolls
- 4 About our Nesting Dolls
- 5 Tips and tricks
- 6 Exploring the Dolls
- 7 Size Discrimination
- 8 Spatial Awareness
- 9 Math Activities
- 10 Storytelling
- 12 Made in Russia
- 13 Geography and Culture
- 14 Memory Games
- 15 Animals and Ecology
- 25 Printables



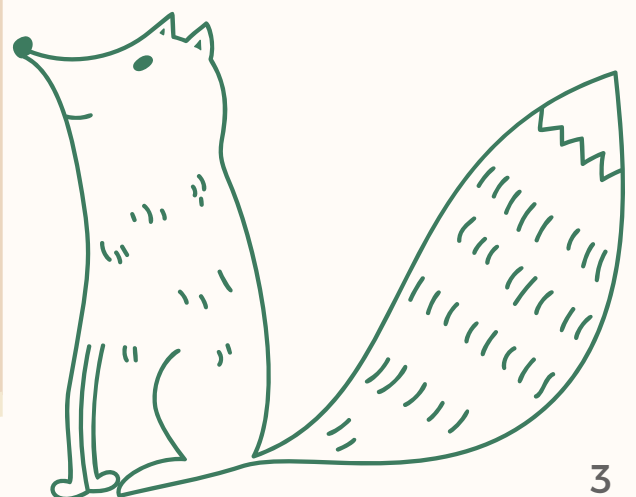
BENEFITS OF NESTING DOLLS

Nesting dolls can be used from early ages until above 6 years old, to support learning and development.

They can be used to teach spatial awareness, object permanence and to develop fine motor skills and hand strength, as well as hand-eye coordination.

Since the dolls have different sizes, they are an excellent set to learn vocabulary on comparison and spatial relationships.

Plus, playing with nesting dolls helps the children develop and keep their focus and attention.



About our Nesting Dolls

Our Woodland Nesting Dolls Set is handmade from limewood in Russia. Because of that, each set is unique!

With a unique woodland design, they were specifically designed to appeal to children and adults. The animals were carefully chosen so the toy can double as educational material for children.

The paint and lacquer used are nontoxic and were tested as safe for children. Plus, we made our smallest doll tall enough to not be a choking hazard. We still advise, however, to always supervise your child if they tend to put toys in their mouth.

How to take care of the dolls

- Store them in a dry place, at room temperature: display them or store them away!
- Clean them with a clean, dry microfiber cloth if there's dust buildup.
- Do not store the dolls near sharp/rough objects as this can scratch them.
- We advise against putting them in water, as the wood can be warped and prevent the dolls from opening and closing properly.

Curious about how they are made?

First, the squirrel is carved out of a solid piece of limewood. Then, the other outer dolls are carved, one by one.

All the pieces are oiled to retain their moisture and treated with a primer. Next, they are painted and decorated by hand.

A final outer layer of lacquer guarantees the durability of the designs and their lovely shine.



Tips and tricks

Our dolls are made to a high standard; however, they are handmade and from natural wood, which can be sensitive to humidity changes. Besides that, some wear and tear can also cause minor problems.

That's why we put together some ideas on how to fix the most common problems with nesting dolls. These are just advice and we understand that you might not feel comfortable using some materials on a toy that your child will use. Feel free to substitute them as you wish and tell us how it went!

Opening and closing the dolls

Place one hand on the top half and the other hand on the bottom half of the doll. Bring them up to chest level and pull both ends towards your chest, as if trying to break the doll in half.

We advise against twisting the halves together because this can damage the borders of the lacquer and the paint of your doll.



If the lacquer is damaged in any way and starts lifting, you can use a tiny brush with some nail polish to prevent it from peeling off. Leave it to dry completely before assembling the dolls again.

Dolls are not opening

The lacquer layer could be holding the two halves together. Hold your dolls with the heels of your hands on the seam and press; then turn the doll and repeat. Alternatively, place the dolls on a blanket or towel and press at the seam while rolling the doll forward and backwards. Be careful to press enough to break the seal but not too hard as not to squash the doll.

Halves' fitting is too tight

If you can open your doll but it feels too tight or too difficult, it could be due to the expansion of the wood when exposed to a humid environment. Try placing your doll in the fridge overnight, to draw moisture out of the wood. If this doesn't help, you can carefully sand the inside of the top half with sandpaper.

Halves are falling off

If your dolls are opening too easily and their halves are falling off, you can spread a thin coat of school glue inside the top half of the doll. Leave it to dry completely (we recommend 24 hours or more, depending on the glue) and then reassemble your dolls.



Exploring the Dolls

You can give one, some or all the dolls for your child to play with. Remove the smallest doll if your child tends to put toys in their mouth, or remove the bigger doll if your child gets frustrated trying to open it because of its size. You can reintroduce them later and it will be as if it's a completely new toy!

Tip: Make use of as many descriptors as you like when showing the dolls to the child or when playing together. Children learn by repetition so it's a great way to improve vocabulary and check if they have learned the colours!



Small toddlers love opening and closing the dolls. This strengthens their grasp and their hands, enhancing their motor skills.

Tip: Once your child masters opening and closing them, you can hide little objects inside each doll and see them getting excited everytime they open them!

Stacking the halves on the nesting dolls on top of each other is a great way of improving hand-eye coordination and making precise movements with their hands so that the tower doesn't fall off.

Tip: Explore different ways of stacking the dolls, there are various possibilities. How high can you stack them?



Aligning the design of the dolls perfectly when joining the halves is another activity for hand-eye coordination and precise movements, as well as visual discrimination.

Tip: Aligning the dolls is similar to a puzzle - we also have a paper puzzle on pages 25 and 26 of this ebook.

Let the child explore the dolls before introducing an activity. You might be surprised with what they come up on their own!

Size Discrimination

Size discrimination can be taught in various ways and can be adapted to different ages. It relates to how big and small the objects are and how the sizes compare to each other. With the different sizes of the dolls, the child can visually see the differences in size, so it is a great way to teach some vocabulary:

- 1 Initially, the dolls can be shown to the children and words such as "big" and "small" can be introduced to describe the first and last doll.
- 2 Later, comparatives such as "larger", "largest", "smaller than", "smallest" can be taught, for example asking the child: "Can you find the smallest doll?"; or "Can you find a doll that is smaller than the bear?".
- 3 Classification by size is also a great activity. For toddlers, you can outline the bottom circle of each doll on a piece of paper. This is so they can figure out alone if their sorting is correct - this is called "control of error". Once they are comfortable with the control, remove it to see them sort it out on their own.

We have prepared some resources at the end of this ebook (page 27) with vocabulary tags that could be useful for these activities. Enjoy!



Spatial Awareness

Nesting dolls can be used to introduce spatial awareness to the child. This relates to the prepositions used to describe the spatial relationship between two or more objects. With the nesting dolls, the child can visually see what each preposition represents, with no abstraction, so it's easier for them to comprehend spatial relationships. Here are some ideas on how you can explain this:

inside

One doll goes inside the other or small objects can be placed inside a doll. The dolls can be placed inside a box or inside a doll's house.

outside

A small object can be taken from one of the dolls and placed outside the doll. Or a small doll can be taken from the inside of a doll and placed outside of it. The dolls can be placed outside the house or outside a box.

over

The top halves can be put one on top of each other so they are over each other. One doll can jump over another doll or the child can jump over one of the dolls.

under

Small objects can be hidden under the halves of the dolls, or the dolls can be placed on top of a paper. The dolls can be placed under a table.



Math Activities

Math activities are appropriate for multiple ages. Don't worry if you introduce an activity and your child is not ready, just wait and introduce it at another time!

1

Counting the dolls

This is great for children who are starting to count!

2

Counting the halves

Counting the number of halves increases the amount of counting to 10. The dolls features like eyes, paws, berries, tails can also be another counting activity.

3

Counting the dolls inside one doll

This is more challenging as the child has to remember the number of dolls that are inside each doll. It is good if the child can open them and discover by themselves if they were right or wrong.

4

Measuring the dolls with a measuring tape

For older children who are already familiar with the numbers, measuring the girth of the dolls, the height and diameter is a good practice of measuring skills. You can use a piece of yarn and a marker; then, use a ruler to measure the marked yarn to figure out the dimensions.



Storytelling

Encourage your child to make up their own stories with the nesting doll characters! If your child knows how to write, they can write the story down. If not, they can make a drawing about the story. They can use a small notebook to write and illustrate their stories or an A4 (or A3) paper to make comics!

You can also take the nesting dolls on an adventure around the world!

Tips for an adventure around the world:

1. Cut out pictures of landmarks from travel magazines
2. Check out our Geography and Culture section

There is an illustrated guide on page 11 on how to make a booklet!

Did you know our woodland friends have names?

When we talk about our pets we usually use their names, right? A lot of young children or their parents also name toys and call them by their names. It's easier to talk about a specific toy if they have a name instead of "the bear doll" and children usually use names when telling stories.

That's why we carefully chose the names of each of the dolls so they would start with the same sound and letter as their correspondent animal noun. We don't want to confuse your child if they're learning their phonetics!





how to make a booklet for your child's stories



You will need:

- a few pieces of A4 paper
- a hole puncher, or scissors, or a blunt tapestry needle
- a piece of yarn or ribbon
- colourful (or thicker) A4 paper to make a cover (optional)

1



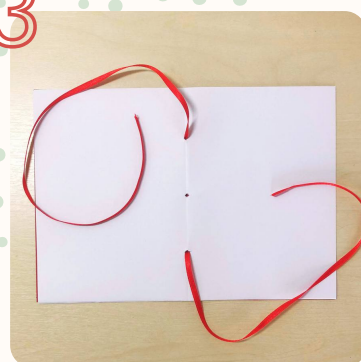
Fold the A4 pages in half

2



Make three holes where the pages fold with the hole puncher, scissors or blunt needle. A pencil might help enlarge the hole.

3



Pass the yarn from the outside to the inside of the booklet through the first and third holes

4



Pass both ends through the center hole

5



Tie a bow at the back

If your child is doing this alone, make sure they know how to use the materials safely

Made in Russia

Our dolls are handmade in Russia and most people associate nesting dolls with this country. This is a great opportunity to sharpen your child's curiosity:

- 1 Finding out about the story behind nesting dolls (see below) is a fun way of learning more about these dolls and their History
- 2 It is also a great opportunity for them to learn about Russia and their culture. You can check these websites out with your child to learn more:
NatGeo Kids US: <https://tinyurl.com/y9akuntp>
Encyclopedia Britannica Kids: <https://tinyurl.com/jp3c86>
- 3 Learning about Russia can make your child interested in other countries and their cultures - they can take the nesting dolls on an adventure around the world! Check out the Geography and Culture section (page 13) for more information.



History of Russian nesting dolls

The first wooden handmade Russian Nesting Doll set, or matryoshka (the Russian word for “little matron”), was crafted in 1890 by two artists from Abramtsevo, in Russia: Sergey Malyutin, who designed the dolls; and Vasily Zvyozdochkin, who carved them. The main doll in the set was a peasant girl holding a black rooster.

Later on, in 1900, at the World Exhibition in Paris, the nesting dolls earned a bronze medal. From then, nesting dolls started being manufactured in Russia and shipped worldwide, which might explain why we associate Russia with nesting dolls.

However, these dolls are not the first nesting set ever made. Some historical evidence points to Chinese nesting boxes from the Song dynasty around 1000 AD, and Japanese nesting dolls based on sacred icons of Japanese mythology. It is unclear whether the Russians got inspiration from the Japanese dolls since they had already come up with the Russian detachable easter eggs before their first matryoshka dolls.

Geography and Culture

Whether the dolls are leading your child to get interested in other cultures or you want to introduce them to geography by taking the dolls on a world adventure, this is a great opportunity to learn about different countries and cultures. Here are some ideas related to this subject:

1

Your child can find the different countries on a map and see how close or far away from home they are. Can they walk there or do they need a car, boat, airplane to get there?

2

They can also look through travel magazines to find similar places to where they live or to see how different people dress or what different foods they eat. You can show them images from a quick search on the internet and maybe find some tv programmes, websites or videos that show different places on Earth. For example, "[Where in the World](#)" from the [BBC](#) or the [NatGeo Kids website](#).

3

You can try some activities or meals related to a country, for example, making origami when learning about Japan, eating pasta when studying Italy, learning about safari animals when reading about Africa.

4

Another cool activity is to learn some words in a foreign language and see how different or similar they sound to your native language and if they are easy or hard to pronounce. It's a great way to introduce them to new languages and see if there's one they are keen to learn.



If your child likes pretend-play, you can take pictures of the dolls in front of landmarks from magazines or the internet - or the child can make a drawing! Plus, they can write all about this adventure in their own booklet!

Memory Games

Memory games are great to improve focus and attention to detail, as the child has to concentrate and recognize the matching pairs. This game can also help children develop problem-solving and decision-making skills, as they have to decide and usually find by trial and error, where the objects are. However, memory games don't necessarily need matching pairs! With nesting dolls, hiding objects inside the dolls can make fun memory games:

- 1 For younger kids, put an object inside one of the dolls, close them all and mix them around. Ask your child if they can remember which one contains the object and let them open the dolls to see if they guessed right.
- 2 A more complex memory game is to hide different objects inside the dolls and mix them around. Ask your child if they can remember which objects you've hidden and what is inside each doll. If you have matching objects, you can use them as well, different objects add a level of difficulty.
- 3 There's also the classic memory game but with our cute nesting dolls! Check out page 28 of the ebook to print yours!



Animals and Ecology

Our nesting dolls are great for teaching about animals and ecology because we carefully chose animals that live in the same habitat and we added some of their favorite foods with them.

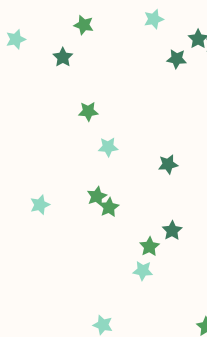
These can be a conversation starter when learning about ecology:

- A brown bear holding one of its favourite foods: a fish
- A deer standing near some plants: deers usually eat a lot of greens
- A fox next to its meal: some berries
- A racoon happily holding some grapes it'll munch soon
- A squirrel holding an acorn it is about to crack open

We have put together some resources on the woodland animals, how their habitat is and what they eat.

If your child is into drawing, they can put their learning on paper by drawing the animals, their families, places where they live and their food.





The woodland habitat

Bears, deers, foxes, racoons and squirrels are all woodland animals.

They live in a green area full of trees and other plants. The trees are close to each other, forming some areas with shadows.

In the woodlands, animals find water, food (greens, fruits and nuts from trees) and shelter (tree roots, trunks or on the tree branches).

Other animals that live in woodlands are mooses, rabbits, hedgehogs, birds and insects.

Here are some websites to learn more about woodlands:

What is a woodland habitat? (5 - 7 years old)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zx882hv/articles/zc42xnb>

Build a food chain of the woodland: (7 - 11 years old)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zx882hv/articles/zc42xnb>

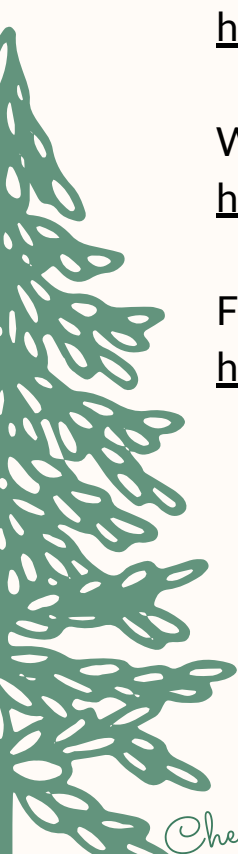
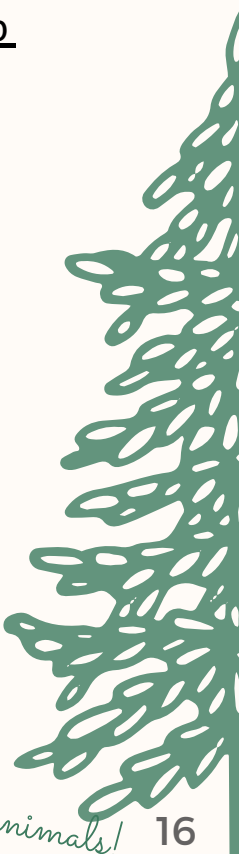
Watch a video about the woodland from Discovery Education:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLBSOKqVNcU>

Find the woodland animals on the NatGeo for Kids website:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/>

Note: We advise an adult to check the websites and videos on their own to make sure they feel it is suitable for their child. We also recommend an adult to always be with the child when using the internet to make sure they are using it safely- turn it into a bonding time!



Check out the next pages with amazing pictures of the woodland habitat and animals!



The woodland habitat



Hedgehog



Bird



Moose

Fox



Bear



Squirrel



Bird



Hawk



Deer



Raccoon



Rabbit



Owl

The bear

Bears are mammals that love to eat different foods. They love fishing but sometimes eat berries and insects too. Climbing trees is one of their favourite activities.

Woodland bears can be black, brown or have a greyish colour.

In the winter, the bears hibernate - they sleep through the whole winter! Because of this, just before winter, they try to eat as much as possible so they don't have to hunt in the cold.

Baby bears are called cubs and they stay with their mother until about three years old learning how to survive.



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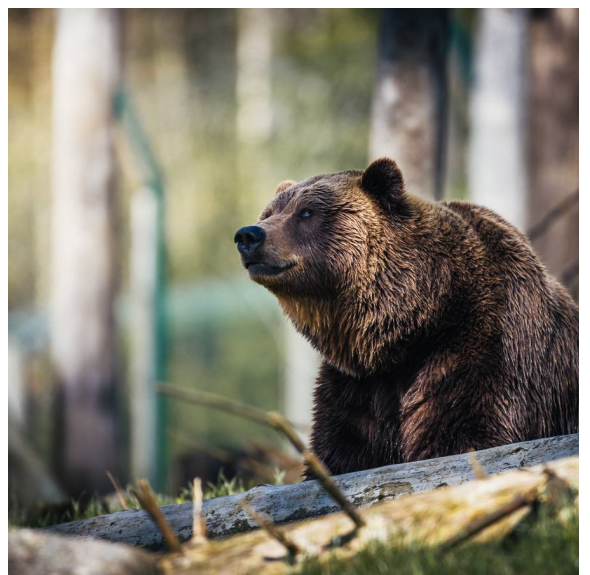
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If you like videos

A mother bear and its cubs:
<http://y2u.be/UfGVJMSJQDQ>

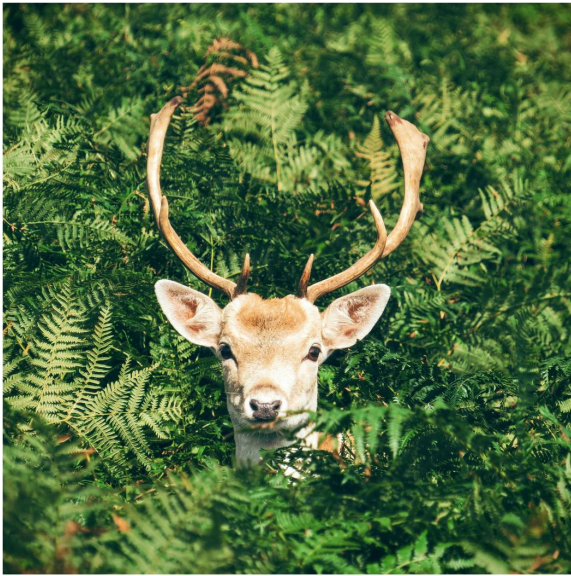
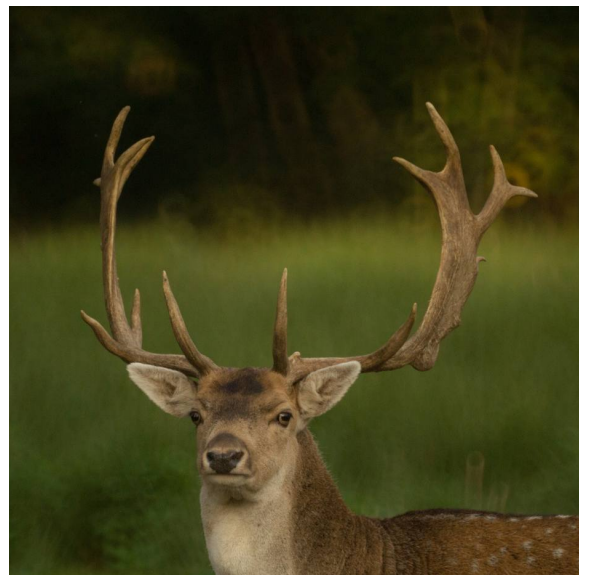
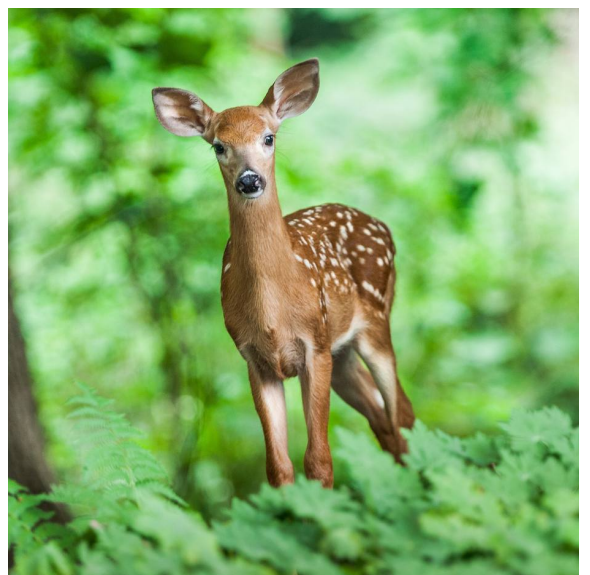
A mother bear fishing:
<http://y2u.be/i95Dsgm4k6w>

The deer

Deers are also mammals and they are herbivores, meaning they only eat plants, such as grass, berries, twigs and bark.

Usually, only the male deers can grow antlers - the bony structure near their ears. However, female reindeers can grow antlers too. The deers' antlers are shed and replaced each year.

They usually live alone or in small groups called herds. The mother leaves the babies (fawns) in a hiding place for hours while she gathers food. The babies' fur, which is spotted, helps them be camouflaged on the floor while they wait for their mom to return.



If you like videos

Watch a newborn deer:

<http://y2u.be/qrSa6vjjRHo>

Watch some deers playing with other animals, observe how they run:

<http://y2u.be/EPZWGRcoleM>

The fox

Foxes are also mammals and they are canines, relatives of dogs and wolves. Unlike wolves, though, they like to hunt alone and usually during the night, as they see well in the dark.

They eat almost anything. Foxes can eat rabbits, fruits, worms and even deers. Although they hunt mostly alone, the parents take care of their babies, since they are born with their eyes shut and deaf, plus they need their mother's milk during their first month of age.

Much like dogs, foxes love to dig. In the woodlands, if they can't find a sheltered place to live, they dig their own house, called den or earth.



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If you like videos

Some baby foxes growing up:
http://y2u.be/uIR_vSRASxM

Young red foxes playing:
<http://y2u.be/J1A8CjZWm0l>

The raccoon

Raccoons are mammals that are more active at night.

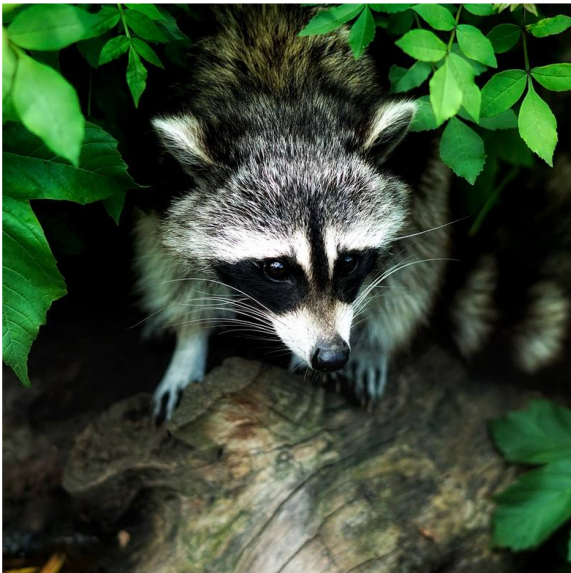
Just before the winter, like the bears, they also eat a lot to prepare for winter; however, they don't hibernate like bears, they just sleep more than usual. They love to eat fruits, seeds and plants but they also eat fish, frogs and eggs - like bears, they are omnivorous animals.

Baby raccoons (kits), like foxes, are born blind and deaf and need to be taken care for by their mom for a couple of months.

Like foxes, they prefer living alone, except when they are babies, when they live with their mother.



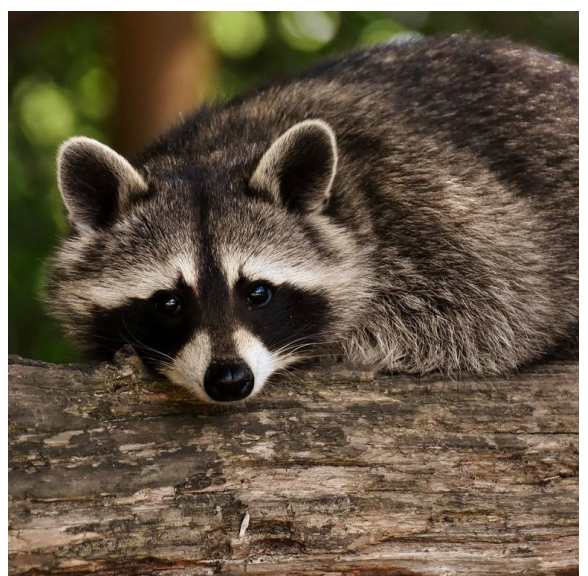
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If you like videos

Watch some raccoons in the wild:

<http://y2u.be/rp-KnTY14BQ>

Check out this raccoon demonstrating its problem solving skills - see how it uses its paws:

<http://y2u.be/M5JFeTtSS3c>

The squirrel

Squirrels are also mammals and they eat mostly seeds and nuts, although sometimes they eat small birds and eggs.

They can be red or grey and they bury their food in different places so they have food during the winter. Sometimes they pretend to bury food to fool other squirrels! During winter, they find their hidden food by its smell. However, they don't recover all the food they hide, which helps grow new trees by the sprouting of the seeds and nuts they bury.

Squirrels find shelter in tree cavities or build their own nest, called a drey, with twigs and leaves.



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If you like videos

This is how a squirrel eats acorns:

<http://y2u.be/4zyl6vn9Azg>

Squirrels stealing acorns in the wild:

<http://y2u.be/YcdSmFXdbMo>

Have Fun!

We made this ebook to gather some of our favorite activities with our Mouro Nesting Dolls.

We believe in making the most out of each toy and we hope you had some inspiration on how to use the dolls in various ways.

The next pages are all black and white so you can print them at home and use them as activities.

If you have other ways of playing and learning with nesting dolls, please share them with us using #mourobunch on instagram, we would love to hear them!

You can reach us at:



hello@mouro.co



@mouroforkids



www.mouro.co

mouro.
LEARN THROUGH PLAY

Puzzle (five pieces)

Print this page and cut at the solid lines. If you want to, you can print two copies so your child has a guide to follow.



Puzzle (ten pieces)

Print this page and cut at the solid lines. If you want to, you can print two copies so your child has a guide to follow.



Size Discrimination

Print this page and cut around the rectangle to have little cards with the comparative words!

smaller

smaller than

smallest

larger

larger than

largest

big

medium

small

bigger

bigger than

biggest

Memory game

Print this page twice and cut at the solid lines.



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LEARN THROUGH PLAY

