

# Construct a Bird Nest & Examine an Egg

## BIRD NEST

### MATERIALS:

Newspaper to cover workspace

Wet towels/Paper Towels for cleaning hands (or be near sink)

Actual bird nest (optional); or photos provided (optional)

Large bowl for the mud mixture

About 2 ½ cups of dirt/soil

A little bit of water (to make mud)

A variety of authentic nesting materials, such as: twigs, dried grasses, pieces of string and/or yarn, hair or fur, feathers, moss or grass clippings, cotton balls, shredded newspaper

Paper bowl to build the nest into

Glue

Play-doh to make eggs for the nest (optional)

### DIRECTIONS:

If you have an actual bird nest, or want to use the photos provided, look at them with your child and discuss, what kind of materials can they see bird nests are made from?

Let them know they are going to build a bird nest using the actual materials real birds do.

If you want to, hide the nesting materials around the house, and make a game of them finding and collecting the items (just like real birds do!).

Bring the nesting materials to the work space.

Make a bowl of mud with dirt/soil and water.

Add the twigs and dried grasses to the mud mixture, and mix together. If too wet, add a little more dirt. If too dry, add a bit more water.

Pretend that glue is strands of spider web, and add it all over mud/twigs/grasses mixture. Blend it in.

Apply the mud mixture to the inside walls and bottom of the paper bowl.

Add a few more strands of glue (“spiderwebs”) to the nest.

Add the other nesting materials to the inside walls and bottom of the nest.

Your nest is ready for your eggs!

## CONCEPTS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD

**What are bird nests for?** Nests are shelters that provide a safe place for the eggs (and young). Nests keep the eggs camouflaged (hidden) from predators (other animals that want to eat them), and protected from bad weather.

**Who builds the nest?** The parent birds build the nest from scratch. Sometimes it's the dad-bird that builds the nest, and sometimes it's the mom-bird. Sometimes they help each other.

**What is the nest made out of?** Many nests are made out of any materials the bird can find! Things like twigs, dead leaves, dried grasses, pieces of yarn or string, hair or fur, feathers, moss, shredded paper, grass clippings, cotton balls.

**How is the nest constructed?** The parent bird uses the strongest items, like the twigs, to form a strong, outer structure. The other nesting materials are joined together in and out of in the structure. The softest materials (like the feathers, moss, and cotton) line the inside and bottom of the nest, so the eggs have a warm, fluffy cushion.

**How does the nest stay together?** Some birds use mud, their saliva (spit), and pieces of spider web silk to act like a glue and hold it all together.

**How do birds find the nesting materials?** The parent bird forages (searches) for materials to make the nest and brings the items back to the nesting site.

**How long does it take to build the nest?** A Robin building a nest from twigs, mud and dried grass can take between 2 – 6 days. Watch a time lapse of the process here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpBJ8OISSGE>

## EXPLORE THE CHICKEN EGG

### **MATERIALS:**

Chicken egg

Plate

A straw or popsicle stick or coffee stirrer – something to point at and/or poke the egg parts with (optional)

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Baby birds grow inside of eggs. Let's take a closer look at a chicken egg to investigate and discuss its parts.

Let your child gently handle the chicken egg. What part are they feeling? What does it feel like?

Crack open the egg into a plate.

Examine what you see. Can you find 3 different parts of the inside of the egg? Discuss.

## CONCEPTS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD

The shell keeps out bacteria (germs) and dust. It's covered with as many as 17,000 tiny pores (holes). Air can pass through its pores.

The yellow part is called the yolk.

The clear liquid part of the egg (albumen) is called the egg white.

The yolk is the part of the egg from which the baby chick develops. The yolk provides food for the baby chick while it is growing in the shell.

The egg white surrounds the yolk and its purpose is to protect the yolk and provide additional nutrition (food) for the growth of the embryo (baby chick).

Thick "ropes" of egg white, called the chalazae, hold the yolk in the center of the egg; they're like little anchors.