

Focus on Biodiversity in the Early Years



Biodiversity is the variety of plants and animals and the places where they live (ecosystems). Biodiversity is vital for life on earth - all plants, animals and habitats depend on one another for survival.

As early years educators you can focus on awareness of all the different kinds of plants, animals and life in your garden and explore nature wherever you are. You can also introduce quite complex themes such as threat to the survival of native animals, plants and habitat.

Set the scene – Ask children **what keeps you healthy, happy and safe?** (food, water, parents, home) **Do you have pets? what needs do they have?** they may have different needs from you ? same food?, same bed, same homes ?

Native animals who live in the bush have different needs again and they do not rely on your parents to look after them - **What do they need ?** SHOW Pictures of places to lay eggs, to make homes in trees, different food sources, and water sources.

Explore Native animals & their habitats awareness activities to create:

Resources: where do I live poster? What do I eat matching activity? parents and babies book , Meet the Locals Poster, make tracks in the sand to help you identify who lives here, camouflage – what animal can you see in this picture ?, pin the tail on the possum – or play match the tail with our native animals

Rotate around themed activities which can explore biodiversity and cross curricula themes at the same time:

1. Birds (make your own bird's nest, look at the different types of nests and match the bird to each; bird eggs and babies, identify native birds from their feathers, what's the purpose of beaks and what parrots (beaks) have [eaten these marri nuts](#) - learn their Noongar names - see LGS resource, join the dots for bird food – wildflower society, make your own paper mache bird nest. How did the birds get their colours youtube story/book - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtRHtCa6GZ8>. Go to Birds in backyards resources <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/resources/Education> and Birdlife WA for more info

2. Butterflies – 'Butterflies in my backyard' – A 12 week program for Kindy and upward from the Wa Department of Education. [The Very Hungry caterpillar yoga](#) clip. 'My oh My a Butterfly ' by Dr Seuss (upper limit of early years). [Caterpillar shoes film clip and questions](#), insect animation on youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYa6OLQHRc>. Read ' [Bindi Bindi Koondarminy](#)' by Alison Nannup –& learn how to plant butterfly gardens with [backyard buddies](#). Decorate your own butterfly files by making them out of old wire coathangers and threading wool around them.

3. Frogs (Borrow or Buy the LGSWA frog kit) – make frog masks, read the importance of frogs in Aboriginal culture through the [story of Tiddalick the frog](#) – Download the [Frog id app](#) if you are near water courses and become citizen scientists

4. Native Bees – **Make your own Bee friend Garden sign** & make your own bee homes - LGS resources on the member section of the LGSWA website.

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5. Long-necked turtles in our wetland areas – [Access The Turtle Watch education kit with ideas](#) and information about looking after turtles. Pretend to be mother turtles digging nests in the sandpit to lay your eggs (between 2-20), use scrapers, forks and scoops to simulate turtle feet digging holes.

Explore Native Plants & diversity through awareness activities:

Resources:

Sensory garden & [Common Native plants posters](#) by Kwongan kids, Buy the Sercul Noongar Six seasons poster, get a set of paint colour cards to do matching cards outside ... ie. 'match this colour to something in nature', 'Trees' picture book . Create your Own Diversity jars of different seeds, rocks, leaves, feathers off the ground etc.. create and carry a Nature's tool kit with you whenever you go outside with the children and sign up to Ready, Set, Wonder – A Canadian website of Nature play resources for all ages . Look for Patterns in Nature and lift the flap to identify what the patterns are.

Threatened environments and species protection:

Sometimes people have threatened the survival of our native animals, by destroying their homes and letting our pets hunt them – Use the **KAB marine picture cards of threats in the LGS waste members section to explore this**, teach kids why we do NOT need to feed the **ducks in our rivers as they don't eat bread** - LGS resource.