The Wild Lens at Home

A nature-led home education companion



Six connected projects for exploring a familiar place together, with room for your child’s own ideas and questions.

For families with children aged around 5 to 11

Jodie Poole and Rachel Lawrence
Where The Wild Ones Learn

www.wherethewildoneslearn.co.uk

THE WILD LENS

Making room to notice

When a child is busy with something, it can be tempting to add a question or turn it into an activity. The Wild Lens gives us a moment to notice what's already happening and think about what might help.

NOTICE

Watch what your child chooses, repeats or comes back to. Describe it simply: "You've brought all those leaves over here." Leave the explanation open for now.

WONDER

They might be sorting, carrying, making something or enjoying how the leaves feel. Their words and actions may tell you more as the play unfolds. You don't have to ask straight away.

RESPOND

Would a container help? Do they need you to hold something, write a word or make more space? Ask before joining in or changing their work. Sometimes they already have what they need.

REFLECT

Later, think about what held their interest and whether your help was useful. That might give you an idea for another day. You can also return with the same things and see what happens.

WHAT THAT COULD LOOK LIKE

For example, a child carries leaves to a bench. You offer a tub, and they tell you they're making a shop. They might want a sign, someone to buy a leaf or time to arrange everything. You can follow the play without deciding in advance where it should lead.

Repeated actions such as carrying, enclosing or connecting can be useful to notice. They don't tell us everything about a child or explain the play on their own.

R2 has short reminders you can keep in a bag. They're for you to dip into, rather than a set of questions to ask your child.

PROJECT 1

Getting to know our place

Start with a place your child can help choose. You might walk a familiar route, explore a

small corner or stay with one view. Take paper and a pencil if you'd like to make a map.

SOMETHING TO TRY

Pause somewhere comfortable. Notice what your child looks at, moves towards or talks about. You can describe something you've spotted and wait.

If they're interested, choose two or three features to remember. A tree, a puddle, a wall or a sound can all belong on your map. Draw, photograph or describe where they are in relation to one another. Near, beside and between are useful words here.

Your map can be a route with arrows, a few symbols or pictures placed in order. It doesn't need to look like a map in a book. R3 has a frame if you want one.

SEE WHERE IT GOES

Your child may want to name a place, invent symbols or build the route with sticks at home. They may be more interested in a crack in the pavement than the map. Give them time with that detail.

If a question comes up, keep it for another visit: "Do birds sit on that wall?" or "Will the puddle still be here?" You can write it down for them if they'd like.

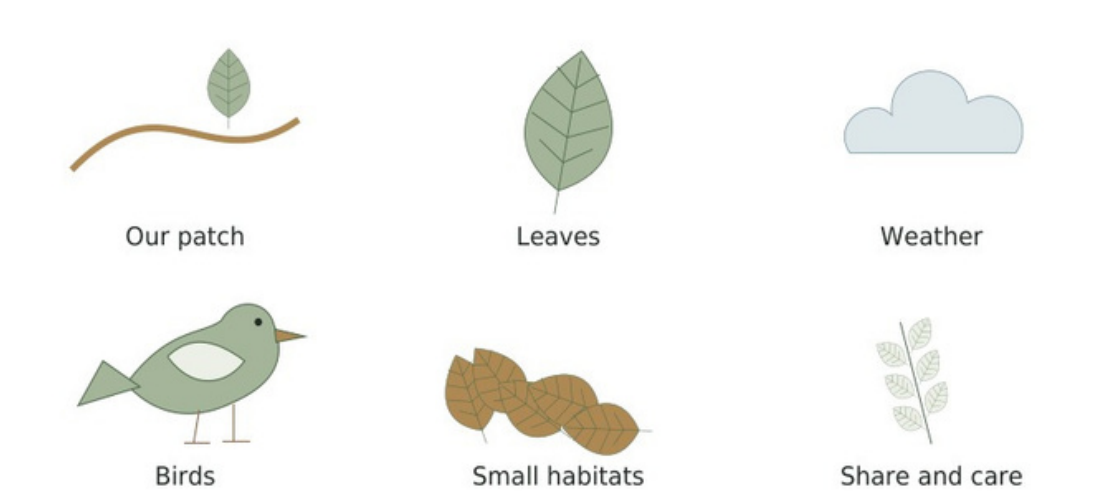
FROM A WINDOW

Choose one fixed feature and something that moves. You might draw the tree and mark where a bird appears, or photograph the same view on different days. Observe from a secure position with windows and balconies kept safe.

Resources you might use: R1 family choices, R2 Wild Lens prompts, R3 place map and R4 noticing page.

The Wild Lens at Home

Mini Nature Studies Collection



Leaves, weather, birds and small habitats, with two short guides to exploring and caring for a familiar place.

For families with children aged around 5 to 11

Jodie Poole and Rachel Lawrence
Where The Wild Ones Learn

MINI NATURE STUDY 1

The secret life of leaves

Choose a leaf or a photograph and have a closer look. You might be drawn to its shape, a hole, its colour or the lines branching across it.

WHAT DOES A LEAF DO

Many leaves are green because they contain chlorophyll. This pigment helps a plant use light energy to make sugars from water and carbon dioxide in the air. The process is called photosynthesis.

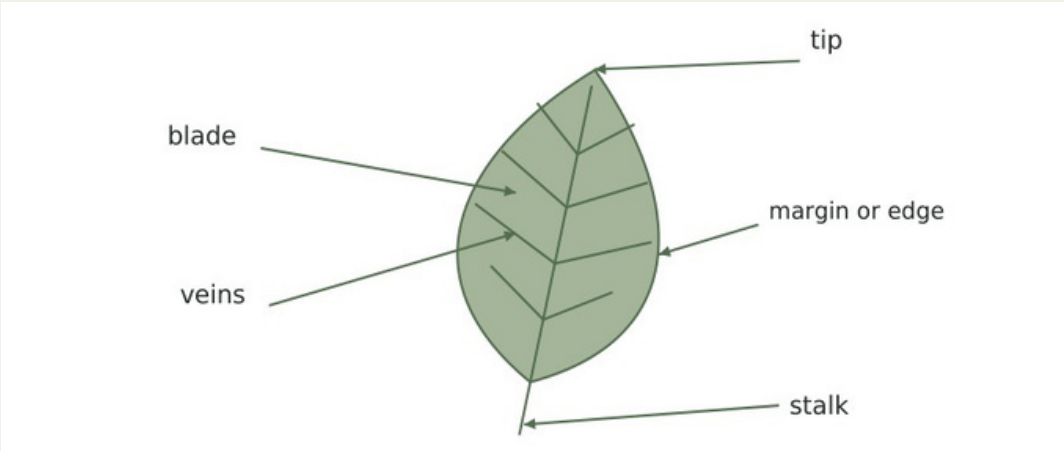
The plant uses those sugars for growth and other life processes. Roots take in water, which travels to the leaves. Oxygen is also released during photosynthesis.

A DETAIL TO FOLLOW

Look for the edge, tip or veins. Your child could trace a vein with their eyes, describe what they see or draw one part much larger.

Blade means the broad part of the leaf. Margin means its edge. The stalk attaches many leaves to a stem. Real leaves vary, so yours may look different from the diagram.

Use with Project 2 in the companion. R4 to R6 offer optional ways to record and compare.



MINI NATURE STUDY 2

Rain clouds and wind

A sky can change while you're watching. Begin at a window or a familiar outdoor spot

and see what draws your child's attention.

WATER KEEPS MOVING

Liquid water can change into an invisible gas called water vapour. This is evaporation. It happens from puddles and damp cloths without the water boiling.

When water vapour cools enough, some can change back into tiny liquid droplets. This is condensation. Clouds contain tiny water droplets, ice crystals or both.

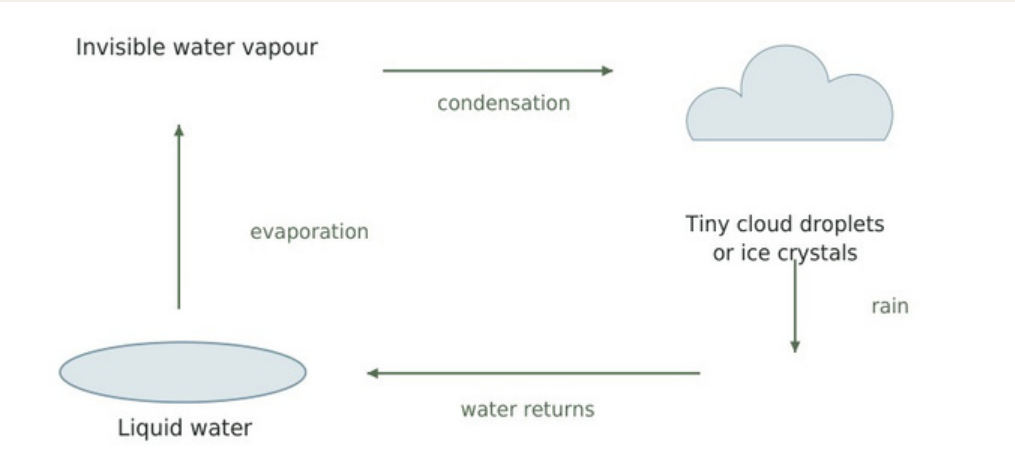
Some droplets or ice particles grow large enough to fall from a cloud. Rain is falling liquid water. On the ground, water can run away, soak into soil or evaporate again.

The diagram shows part of the water cycle. Water can also be stored as ice or move through plants.

A QUESTION FROM YOUR PATCH

If a puddle gets smaller, where might its water have gone? You can think of a few possibilities and see what else you notice on the next visit.

Use with Project 3 in the companion. R7 has a longer weather record if you'd like one.



MINI NATURE STUDY 4

Leaf litter moss and decay

Look closely at a patch of fallen leaves. You might spot whole leaves, curled edges, small fragments or something growing between them.

Leaf litter is fallen plant material on the ground, including leaves and small pieces of twigs. It provides cover and can hold moisture. Living animals, fungi and plants may share the patch with the dead material.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE LEAVES

Fungi and bacteria play important roles in decay. Animals such as woodlice and many earthworms also help process dead plant material. Different organisms do different jobs.

Soil contains mineral material as well as organic matter. Leaves breaking down become part of that wider mixture over time.

The drawing is a simplified view. Real leaf patches have materials mixed together.

Use with Project 5 in the companion. R10 and R11 offer animal clues and a habitat comparison.

