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Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Feeding birds in winter

Feeding birds in winter can be a rewarding and enjoyable activity that provides lots of learning opportunities for children.

Making bird feeders is a great way to attract birds to your outdoor area, whilst teaching the children about different species of birds and how to look after them.

Learning aims

- Communication and Language skills through learning new words
- Mathematical skills through counting the birds
- Physical Development skills through mixing the bird food
- Expressive Arts and Design skills through drawing and painting what they see
- Understanding the world.



Resources

Create a bird feeder, here are a few ideas from RSPB:

- [Assemble an apple bird feeder](#)
- [Produce a pine cone feeder](#)
- [Make a recycled bird feeder](#)
- [Make a bird kebab.](#)

You can also make feeders from empty water bottles with wooden spoons/sturdy sticks inserted for the birds to rest on whilst feeding or purchase a bird feeder bottle top.

Bird food

You can use unsalted nuts, [seed cakes](#), [fat balls](#). You can also use leftover food like apple and pear slices and mild cheese. This in turn will reduce your food waste which you can explore with the children as part of reinforcing 'reduce, reuse, recycle'.



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Activity Outline

- Look at pictures of birds, perhaps you could use a book or find some images on the internet (incorporating ICT), use binoculars to watch them and look up at the sky
- Talk about what the children think birds eat and let the children make suggestions:
 - Is their winter food different from their summer food?
 - Why is it harder for birds in winter? e.g. less food available on the ground, frozen ground, need more energy because it is cold etc.
 - How can we help to feed the birds?
- Try to find images of birds feeding from seed or feeders and discuss some ideas for making their own bird feeders
- Make your chosen feeder with the children
- Discuss where to put your bird feeder and why e.g. not on ground level, away from cats but sheltered if possible
- Encourage the children to check the feeders from time to time and fill them up or make fresh 'cakes' to replenish your feeders
- Remember to clean your feeders too - birds can catch diseases just as we can and reinforce handwashing while doing so.

Water

- Consider some water for the birds too – especially if the weather is cold and the ground is frozen
- You can provide a water dish from an upturned lid, plant saucer, or shallow dish
- Remember to clean your water dish too and replenish it often.

Extending the activity

1. Talk to the children about migration
 2. Take photos of the birds that visit your feeder
- Research the names of the birds that visit
 - Print your photos and make a poster to display in your setting.