

**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.**

## Activity: Reindeer snack station

**Learning the importance of caring for wildlife, reindeers included, will impact children's response to the natural world, not only now but in the future too.**

This activity provides a creative, hands-on experience that fosters empathy and gives children an opportunity to contribute positively to the environment by caring for wildlife.



### Learning aims

- Environmental responsibility – caring for wildlife and making a positive contribution to their health
- Fine motor skills – mixing and handling the ingredients
- Vocabulary extension - names of ingredients, wildlife, descriptions of the sensory experience.

### Resources

- Wild bird seed
- Rolled oats
- Dried fruit – If you're planning to send any home with the children, cranberries or chopped apricots are best as raisins/sultanas can be poisonous for dogs
- Grated cheese (small handful)
- Mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon
- Scoop (such as a cup)
- Small containers/tray or a bird feeding table.
- Mixture: 2 parts oats to 1 part birdseed and a handful of dried fruit/cheese.

### Activity outline

1. Start the activity by asking if they know how winter affects wildlife/birds, asking questions to ascertain what the children already know e.g. "What do you think happens to birds and other wildlife when it gets cold?", "What is different for birds in winter compared to in the summer?" Explain how it can be difficult for wildlife to find food and how we can help by making food and leaving it in a convenient place for them to eat
2. Follow usual hygiene rules for handwashing as you would with any food handling activity

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3. Explain that they are going to make some food for the reindeer that will be good for birds too. Ask the children why they think the reindeers might need food. Expand the question to why all living things, including us, need food
4. Explore the ingredients. Touch, feel and smell them. Discuss the textures, colours and aromas. Encourage children to describe what they are sensing, model this and provide suitable words e.g. fruity, sweet, nutty
5. Scoop and pour the ingredients into the bowl (see above for ratios) and combine the rolled oats, bird seed, dried fruit and grated cheese
6. Encourage the children to mix thoroughly using a spoon or their hands. Continue to discuss the colours, textures, smell and shapes as it changes
7. Mould the mixture into shapes with hands (optional)
8. Place the mixture into the small containers/tray or bird feeding table (place the mixture off the ground and explain that this is necessary because it isn't safe for hedgehogs to eat if they wake up from hibernation, but the reindeer will still be able to reach it)
9. Continue discussing the birds, reindeer and other wildlife and how they get food in the winter months. Ask children to consider why it is important to help them.

## Extension ideas

- Make a bird seed fat ball to attract birds all year round and keep them well nourished
- Invest in a nature watch camera to find out which animals come to eat the food; watch it with the children.

## NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- Online course - [Little Scientists Leading the Way](#)