

# VIRTUAL BACKPACK





# NATURE PLAY

Nature is one of the best playgrounds for discovery, adventure and fun! In this backpack you'll explore nature with your child at the zoo.

A packing list has been provided to make sure you bring all you need to complete this backpack.

## ACTIVITIES:

- Leaf Rubbings
- Nature Names
- At Home Activity: Sorting Sheet
- Story Time
- Alphabet Hike

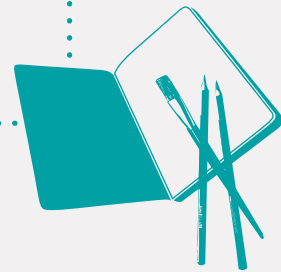
## PACKING LIST:

- Crayons
- Blank Sheet of Paper
- Story Book
- Alphabet Hike Sheet (print at home)



## AT THE ZOO: Leaf Rubbings

Create your own custom art using the fallen leaves around you.



Time: Throughout your visit • Materials: Paper, crayons, fallen leaves

### Instructions:

1. As you walk around the zoo collect 3-4 leaves from the ground.
  - a. Remind your child that leaves are making food for the plant and should not be picked.
2. On a flat surface lay your leaf down and place your paper on top of it.
3. Using the flat side of your crayon rub across the surface of the leaf and paper creating your leaf rubbing.
4. As you create your rubbings ask your child:
  - a. What does each leaf look like?
  - b. What is different about each leaf?
  - c. Do the leaves have different colors?
  - d. Which leaf made the best rubbing?
5. When finished, return the leaves back to the earth and save your rubbing to bring it home.

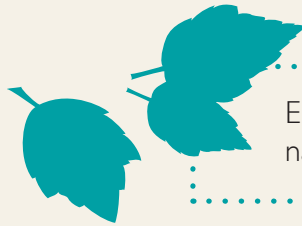


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## AT THE ZOO: Nature Names



Embrace your creativity by creating your own names with found nature items.

Time: 20 minutes • Materials: Found nature items

### Instructions:

1. As you walk around the zoo gather a few natural materials that you can use to write your names on the ground.
  - a. Encourage your child to think about appropriate materials for writing their name. For example, a large rock would take up too much space! But small seeds, pine straw or leaves could be just right.
  - b. Remember to please collect only fallen items and never pick leaves or flowers from plants.
2. Find a bare spot of ground and help your child write their name in the dirt using a stick or their finger.
3. Then use your gathered nature items to outline the letter of their name in the dirt. Be creative!
4. When you're finished, snap a picture and return the items back to nature leaving them for the next backpack explorer!





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## AT HOME: Sorting Sheets

Time: 20 minutes

Items can be big and items can be small. They can be pointy, smooth, light, dark and sorted however you like in this activity.

Materials: An item with sections such as a checkerboard, egg carton, tic tac toe board, etc.

Instructions:

1. Begin by collecting small items from your home, yard or neighborhood. Items such as small toys, shells, rocks and pinecones work well for this activity.
2. Bring out your sorting sheet. It could be an egg carton, a checkerboard, or you could even draw a box on the ground with chalk.
3. The best way to play is to let your child lead this activity and for you to be a play partner. Below are a few questions and statements that can help support their play.
  - a. Why did you put those items together?
  - b. Wow! Look how you put all of these items together!
  - c. How many items are in each pile?



## AT THE ZOO: Story Time

Pack a book from home and spend some time in a cozy corner of the zoo reading together.



Time: 10 minutes • Materials: Story Book

Instructions:

1. Find a cozy spot at the zoo to sit and pull out the story book you packed for your trip.
2. Read the story together taking turns sounding out words, reading pages and looking at the illustrations.
3. As you read ask questions such as:
  - a. What do you think is going to happen next?
  - b. How would you feel if that happened to you?
  - c. Can you find something hidden or an animal in the photo?





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## AT THE ZOO: Alphabet Hike

From A to Zoo can you and your child find all of the letters of the alphabet during your visit?



Time: Throughout your visit • Materials: Alphabet Hike sheet, crayon

### Instructions:

1. Take out the Alphabet Hike sheet and sing the alphabet with your child. You could even tap your fingers on each letter as you sing.
2. As you walk around the zoo and read the signs search for words that contain each of the letters in the alphabet.
3. Check off each letter or practice writing the word that you find on the sheet.

A		N	
B		O	
C		P	
D		Q	
E		R	
F		S	
G		T	
H		U	
I		V	
J		W	
K		X	
L		Y	
M		Z	