

Natural Illinois: Frogs and Toads



You don't have to go to exotic places to find interesting plants and animals to study at home or in the classroom! Illinois wildlife is as close as your local park or schoolyard. Look closely at a pond or damp spot under a bush or tree or listen for their calls, and you are likely to find a frog or toad. Explore the world of frogs and toads with children and at the same time meet Illinois Early Learning and Development Benchmarks 12.A.ECa, 12.A.ECb, and 12.B.ECa.



Collect classroom resources.

- Ask a librarian to help you find children's nonfiction books and nature magazines with colorful illustrations.
- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources offers beautiful posters, including *Illinois Frogs and Toads*. Find details and an order form online at <http://dnr.state.il.us/teachkids>.



Observe a frog or toad.

- Consider observing frogs or toads outdoors, at a pet store, or in a zoo or nature center. The laws related to keeping wild animals and releasing them into the wild, plus meeting the animals' needs, can make it complicated to have a live tadpole, frog, or toad in the classroom.
- Ask the children, "Can you find a tail or neck? How many legs does it have?"
- Help the children to discover that most frogs have smooth or slimy skin, long hind legs, webbed hind feet, and bulging eyes. Many toads have bumpy dry skin and stubby bodies.
- Encourage the children to sketch a frog or toad they observe.



Discuss the life cycle of a frog.

- Ask the children what they know about tadpoles.
- Use a book illustration or the drawings on the back of the *Illinois Frogs and Toads* poster to show the stages of development.
- Introduce the word *metamorphosis*. You might ask, "What changes do you see when a tadpole becomes a frog?"
- Help the children make a mural showing the sequence of the changes they observe.



Listen to different frog and toad calls.

- If your classroom has access to a computer, search the Web using the phrase "Frogs and Toads of Illinois Enhanced Pages".
- Ask your local library for a CD with frog calls. Listen together and ask the children, "Have you heard any of these calls near where you live?"



Encourage children to use books for further research.

- Introduce the term *amphibian*.
- Help them find answers to questions such as, "What do frogs and toads eat? Where do they go during the winter? Why is it sometimes hard to see a frog outside?"
- Help the children share this information by making a wall chart or a book.



For related Web resources, see "Natural Illinois: Frogs and Toads" at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



29 Children's Research Center
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386 • Fax: 217-244-7732
Toll-free: 877-275-3227
Email: iel@illinois.edu
Internet: <http://illinoisearlylearning.org>

Illinois State
Board of Education