



Active in Winter!

Animals on the Move

Materials

- *Mammal Tracks and Scat: Life-Size Tracking Guide* by Lynn Levine and Martha Mitchell
- *Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints* by Millicent Selsam
- "Track Patterns" (Appendix, p.221)
- "Animal Track Templates" (Appendix, p.224)

WHAT'S THE Big Idea?

Interdependence Community

Enduring Understandings

- All animals are unique, but there are similarities in some of their behaviors.
- Animals move in different ways.
- Animals that are active in winter are actively looking for food.

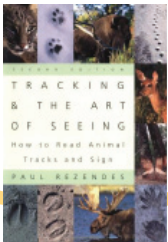
Objectives

- Children demonstrate an understanding of animal signs they find in their school and back yards.
- Children explore the different ways animals move.
- Children practice their gross motor skills as they role play different animal gaits.

Directions

1. Read *Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints* by Millicent Selsam. Discuss the book with children.
2. Show the children the animal "Track Patterns" handout. Ask the children to notice the pattern of the footprints and share what they see. Explain that a deer, dog, or cat leave a straight walker pattern, while the rabbit, squirrel, or chipmunk leave a hopper pattern. Some of the slower, fatter animals, such as the skunk, raccoon, or porcupine leave a waddler track. As you describe each gait, show the "Track Patterns" again to illustrate the gait for children. You could also lay down

Great Teacher Resource!



Tracking and the Art of Seeing by Paul Rezendes. Collins Reference, New York, NY, 1999





practicing the “hopper” walk!

several track cards of an individual animal to illustrate the gait (ie. place deer tracks in a straight line.) Use the “Animal Track Templates” to make these track cards.

3. Give students the opportunity to try these gaits, reassuring them that humans are experts at walking on two legs and these gaits will be challenging for most of them. First, ask students to get on all fours and try to walk like a straight walker: in a straight line with one “foot” in front of the other. It’s not easy for humans, but our four-legged friends—a cat or dog—do it easily!

4. Next, have children try the hopper walk by bringing both hands in between their knees and bringing their legs forward. Rather than hopping up, they hop forward with their legs sliding in front of their hands. This is easier said than done!

5. The waddler walk is slow and easy. Waddler animals have defenses other than speed. The skunk has its spray, the porcupine has quills, and raccoons can be very aggressive. Have children get on their hands and knees. Starting with their right side, move both right hand and leg forward at the same time. Now do the same thing using their left side. Continue shifting back and forth moving one side forward at a time.
6. Encourage children to use their knowledge of the patterns in which animals move to help them identify what animals are active in winter. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- What was similar about the ways the animals moved? What was different?
- Which was the hardest gait for you to imitate? Easiest?
- Can you think of any other animals that waddle? Walk straight? Bound? Hop?
- Can you think of any ways that animals move that we haven’t talked about today? (Slither, swim)

Extensions

- “Print Partners”: Make two or three copies of each animal print, using the “Animal Track Templates,” so that everyone in your class has one. Cut out each print without the animal label. Pass out a print to each student. They must find the other children who have the same print pattern(s). Once they have found their print partner, give each group a copy of the “Track Pattern” handout so they can try to identify their prints.
- “Track Stories:” Children create a bulletin board with animal tracks and homes they have spotted around their school and home.
- Make enough cards of each animal’s track to help create animal “stories” in your classroom.