

Opossums

Introductory Facts

Watch the four-minute video "[Opossums](#)".

Activity 1

When they feel threatened, opossums flop onto their sides and pretend to be dead until they have an opportunity to escape. That's called "playing possum". Play musical opossums (statues) and freeze when the music stops!

Curriculum areas: S06a, S06b, S06c, S06e, X02c

Activity 2

Opossums are great at climbing trees by digging into their bark with their long claws. They also hang from the branches by just their tails! Just like coathangers. Practice hanging up coathangers.

For an older child, take pipecleaners and practice wrapping one end once or twice around the coathanger - does it stay on when you shake the coathanger like the wind? What about if you thread some beads onto the long end of the pipecleaner to make it heavier?

Curriculum areas: M08a, M08b, M08d

Lunch Snack

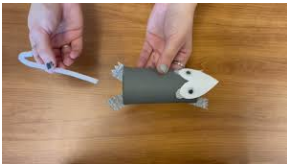
Opossums are marsupials, which means they have pouches where their babies live. They are also omnivorous scavengers, and eat anything they can find - mice, insect, birds, worms, snakes, chickens, toadkill, things found in garbage cans and dumpsters, you name it.

For lunch, fill a pita pocket with as many different sorts or colours of food as you can. Or, for a treat, go and get shawarma.

Curriculum areas: S13a, S13b, S13c

Activity 3

Make a toilet roll opossum. Paint the toilet roll grey, and add a white cone on one end for the face, black ears and legs. Cut a slit halfway across it halfway down. Punch two holes in the opposite end to the face and push through a black pipecleaner, pulling it tight and twisting it into a tail to seal up that end. The slit should open up to the inside of the toilet roll, like a pouch.



Curriculum areas: M06b, M06c, M08c

Activity 4

Opossums give birth to up to 20 live babies at a time, but they are very tiny and they have to crawl into the mother's pouch to keep growing for a while before they can move outside. Use some dry red kidney beans and practice using tweezers to move them into the pouch. Roll a die or two to decide the number. Roll again to find a number of grey pom-poms to stick on the opossum's back, to represent the joeys when they are a bit older.

Curriculum areas: M01a, M01b, M02b

Revision #3

Created 6 November 2024 23:09:34 by Anna Pardee

Updated 9 November 2024 02:09:04 by Anna Pardee