

Bug Jar

While many adults don't like insects, kids go buggy for them. And that's great, since such small creatures are the perfect subjects for budding naturalists. Here's an easy bug lab you can make together to practice important principles of science. Scavenge the backyard for a bug, capture it, and observe. It's sure to fulfill your child's curiosity in a fun way!

What You Need:

- A large jar with a lid
- A small screwdriver
- A hammer
- Leaves, twigs, grass, etc.
- A small notebook
- Colored pencils



What You Do:

1. Hold the pointed end of the screwdriver vertically against the lid of the jar, and tap the other end with the hammer to poke small holes all over the lid. Watch your thumbs!
2. Go outside with your child and find some twigs, leaves, and grass. Stock the jar with those and sprinkle a couple drops of water inside. You might also want to add in a tiny chunk of fruit.
3. Now for the nitty-gritty fun part! Help your child search your backyard for bugs. Encourage her to look under rocks and logs, on trees and bushes, and anywhere else you think you might find a little critter to capture. When she finds one, help her catch it. Add the bug to the jar and cover it with the lid. Start with just one bug.
4. Hand her the notebook and the colored pencils. Invite her to draw a picture of the bug. Then ask her what she sees going on (the bug is on the leaf) and what she infers from that (it's hungry!). Ask her to write down her observations. If she's not writing yet, take notes for her; otherwise let her wield the pen.
5. If she wants to keep observing the bug, let her do so but be sure to set the critter free by the end of the day.
6. Over the week, try to find different bugs to observe and keep notes on the observations of them all. Just be sure you release them when you're finished!