

Create a Polar Bear Habitat!

Polar bears are fascinating animals. They have many ways in which they can adapt to their habitat. Their hair is almost transparent so it appears white, which allows them to blend into the arctic surroundings where they live. The snow and ice of their arctic habitats are an essential part of their food source and how they survive. They may look cuddly and soft, but the truth is polar bears are very smart and quite the hunters!

In this activity you and your child will take some time to learn more about polar bears. And who knows? The interest you nurture may someday result in your child becoming part of the solution to help protect these great animals!



What You Need:

- Blue construction paper
- White foam paper – you can buy the sticky kind to save a step
- Crayons
- Cotton balls
- Glue

What You Do:

1. Help your child cut out shapes of snow drifts and ice caps from the foam paper and glue or stick them onto your construction paper.
2. Have your child draw a polar bear onto the paper. For this part, she'll just be drawing the outline of her polar bear. She can look at a book about arctic animals to get some inspiration!
3. Encourage your child to draw and color seals and fish near the water and on the ice. You can explain that these animals are what a polar bear eats. You can also talk about how the life cycle of predators and prey help to keep animal populations strong and healthy.
4. Have your child glue cotton balls onto the polar bear shape to make the polar bear's fur. Once she's covered the polar bear's body in fluffy cotton balls, she can draw in his black nose.
5. When she's finished, set the habitat aside to dry.

While your habitat is drying, try reading some polar bear and arctic themed books with your child. Some examples include, *Three Snow Bears* by Jan Brett and *Here is the Arctic Winter* by Madeleine Dunphy.

Did You Know?

One of the creatures most threatened by environmental changes is the polar bear. With shrinking icecaps and global warming the polar bear's habitat is melting away. Many other creatures are also dependent on the ice flows in the arctic areas. As an ecosystem changes, Nature's attempt to balance the food chain becomes as challenging as walking a tightrope. Sometimes the system can't recover its balance and animals disappear.

Some Fun Facts:

- Because their black noses give them away when they stalk an animal, polar bears cover it up with one of their paws.
- Polar bears can swim for great distances and dig through the ice.
- A thick layer of blubber (fat) protects them from the extreme temperatures of their icy environment.

