

# Swimmy Science: Raising Tadpoles!

First graders are learning to think like scientists as they observe animals, compare and contrast their characteristics, and discuss their development. And what better place to start, then with tadpoles? Here's a hands-on activity that helps your child explore life science in action, while building skills that can last for years to come.

## What you Need:

- tadpoles (either scooped from a pond, or ordered from a pet store or pond supply company, or online at sites like [www.livingaquatic.com](http://www.livingaquatic.com))
- container for the tadpoles (aquarium, fish bowl, plastic garbage bin)
- clean, fresh water (if you use tap water let it stand in the sunlight for 6 to 7 days to remove chlorine)
- frog and tadpole pellet food
- paper
- pencil



## What You Do:

1. Place the tadpoles in a container at home. Tadpoles like shade, so make sure you avoid sunny places like windowsills!
2. Feed the tadpoles according to the directions, usually a pinch of food every few days. If the water gets dirty fast, you're probably feeding them too much. Replace dirty water with fresh water, but do make sure you've removed chlorine first (see above).
3. Watch the tadpoles grow for the next 6 - 12 weeks. To record their growth, have your child draw a picture of them each week. Encourage him to make the drawing as detailed as possible. These critters may be small, but lots of changes are happening, and you should encourage your child to look very carefully--like a scientist! In particular, watch for when the tadpole starts getting close to developing legs; you'll need to give him a perch. It can be a branch or a pile of small stones.
4. Throughout this process, talk, talk, talk with your child about the life stages you're seeing together in the tadpoles. Using his weekly pictures of the tadpoles at different stages, you can discuss similarities and differences between stages, too...building skills in classification which will be relevant for years of science instruction ahead.

In about twelve weeks, your tadpoles will be full-fledged frogs. Congratulations! If you're not planning on keeping the adult frogs, release them into a pond...and while you're at it, you can even slip in a final lesson by talking about the food chain, and the role your frogs will play in it.