

Going on a safari is an adventure full of new and wonderful creatures. On a mini safari the creatures are small but the adventures are full-sized. Hunt for insects, tiny plants and other wee treasures to observe.

Ask your children to share their thoughts about insects. Ask questions that prompt them to think in greater detail. If they mention that insects have legs, for example, ask them how many and, perhaps, a description. Have your children list what they know about insects.

Supplies:

- ◇ Paper, Pencils, Clipboards or cardboard pieces
- ◇ Insect ID book or website
<https://www.insectidentification.org/bugfinder-start.asp>
- ◇ rope or string to form a circle at least a metre across or a hula hoop
- ◇ Optional: magnifying glasses



Procedure:

Lay out the circle of rope on a lawn, garden, field, beach or any suitable area. Inside the circle is the safari area where you will be hunting for wee things. Before going out on the safari, explain that the children's job is to observe, draw, and gather information about whatever they find. Encourage your children to look under leaves, on flowers, and in the air. After all, many creatures live their lives out of sight. What is the largest insect they find? The smallest? The most interesting? Have your children tell or write about and draw pictures of their findings. Encourage them to include as much detail as possible. Be sure to leave the insects where you found them.

After their safari, reflect on your children's observations. Did they find any differences between what they first thought about insects and what they observed in real life? What original ideas were correct and which ones were not? What new things did they learn?

Your children could group their finds about insects based on similarities and differences. Follow up by researching how scientists classify insects, then compare those categories with their own. (Insects are grouped into orders according to physical characteristics and life cycles.) You could take it one step further and determine whether the insects they found are beneficial, harmful, or neither to plants or people.

Tip: Start a Neighbourhood Safari! Set out a stuffed animal, or two, in your yard, visible (but not too visible) to passersby. Invite your friends and neighbours to do the same. Daily walks become safari adventures as you spot all sorts of creatures "hiding" in the neighbourhood. Change them up to keep it fresh and interesting.

So many legs!

Millipedes - 36 - 400 tiny legs, moves slowly, curls into a spiral when frightened
Centipedes - 20 - 300 long legs, runs very fast when frightened
All those feet, yet they never trip!

