

The  
Early Years Count  
**Literacy**  
Connection



**The Home  
Builders**

Written by Varsha Bajaj  
Illustrated by Simona  
Mulazzani

*Infant/Toddler edition*

**Overview of Book**

Animals build homes that keep their growing families safe. The lovely illustrations and lyrical words in this book demonstrate many different types of homes and home builders in the woodland and forest.

Genre: Informational/Non-fiction

**Vocabulary**

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Home Builders* to introduce in your classroom:

animal names  
trail                      mound  
ridge                     bridge  
burrow                  tunnel  
creep

Each time you read the book, highlight 2 or 3 words.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or refer to the illustrations to help children understand each word's meaning.

Use the new words throughout the day, reminding children, "That's a word from our story!"

**Connecting with  
HighScope  
Curriculum**

**COR Advantage 1.5**

Science & Technology  
Item DD  
(Natural and physical  
world)  
Item BB  
(Observing and  
classifying)

Language, Literacy  
and Communication  
Item Q  
(Book enjoyment and  
knowledge)

**Reading Tips**

This book works well with a child on your lap or as a small group read-aloud. It begs to be read with gentleness and with expression. Begin with the question: 'Do you see the home builders?' and then follow the children's lead as they point to the animals they see. Name the animals that may well be unfamiliar to them. Point out how the mommy and daddy animals create safe homes for their families.

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. During each reading the adult can introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

### **Throughout the Routine**

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Move like the animals do for **Transitions:** creep, tunnel, dig. Which animals will the children choose and how will they move? At **Outside Time** point out any 'homes' you might see—birds' nests, anthills, etc. Talk about how they were built. At **Clean Up** talk about 'gathering materials,' and use other movement vocabulary from the book. For **Group Time**, bring out animals and see if the children group them into 'families.'

### **Around the Room**

Highlight the book's content and build on the children's excitement in a variety of locations.

Provide materials for different types of home building—planks, blocks, blankets and see how the children use them.

Add 'home building tools' to the sand table.

Add photos of different types of homes—human and animal—to the BLA and HA.

Provide cardstock and art materials to create 'welcome baby' cards.

### **Active Engagement**

Reading with infants and toddlers is all about relationship, connection, and words.

As the children are ready, use some open-ended questions to draw them in:

Where do you think those turtles might be going?

What does the fox see when he peeks out of his den?

What do you want to say to that beaver who is looking at you?

Are those babies going to sleep? Night night babies...How do you go to sleep?

Infants may not be able to answer questions yet, but they will quickly appreciate the "back and forths" with books.

*For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact **The Family Connection:***

website—  
[www.famconn.org](http://www.famconn.org)

Facebook—  
@famconnsjc

phone—  
574-237-9740

### **@ Home**

Since many children in our county will have this book at home, use it to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *The Home Builders* with their children. Here's a sample message you can send:

Pull your child onto your lap to enjoy this beautiful book together. Read slowly, emphasizing the rhymes. Your child may want to linger on some pages as there is much to discover. Name the animals and describe the features of the woodland homes. Talk about how the animals are creating special and safe homes for their families, just like you are doing!