



Traveling Exhibit Overview

In partnership with WTTW and Spiffy Pictures, Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago created *Nature Cat: Backyard and Beyond*, an exhibit highlighting the messages of the popular Nature Cat television show. The target audience for the exhibit is children ages 2 to 10 and their families.

Just like the show, this exhibit exposes children to nature in its broadest definition, including natural wonders as large as caves and as small as weeds growing in the cracks of a city sidewalk. It focuses on STEAM while encouraging cooperation and problem solving as children explore different natural settings, gaining new vocabulary words along the way. This exhibit inspires children to understand that discovery can happen anywhere, even in their own back yards!

Exhibit Goals and Objectives

Goals

- Foster an appreciation for the natural world.
- Nurture the emotional connection children have with nature.
- Provide opportunities for children to use clues in the natural environment to solve problems.

Objectives

1. Children will learn about nature by moving through habitats and using their senses.
2. Children will use tools to investigate the exhibit's environment.
3. Children will use early math skills such as counting, comparing, and sorting to explore the natural world.
4. Children will learn and use new vocabulary words to explore and describe the natural environment.
5. Children will work together to accomplish tasks.
6. Children will make connections between the exhibit and their own experiences with nature.

Exhibit Components

Entry

The main entry of the exhibit is a theatrical flat scene of the interior of Fred the Cat's house. Our young visitors can walk through Fred's scratching post and transform themselves into Nature Cat or any other of his friends like Hal, Daisy, or Squeeks by wearing a vest to enhance their role play. A puzzle table of Nature Cat and his friends help develop fine motor skills.



The Backyard

In the Backyard, kids help Daisy design a container garden by putting plants in various containers. Pushing a button here will let visitors smell different types of flowers. Inside Hal's doghouse, kids can learn about the water cycle and thunderstorm safety. This area shows children how to estimate how far away a storm is by counting the time difference between a lightning flash and hearing the roll of thunder.



Marsh

Activities in the Marsh promote environmental stewardship by helping Squeeks clean up the area by picking up items like tires and water bottles and then sorting them in to the trash and recycling containers. Kids can pretend to navigate the swamp by floating on the raft and then go down Ronald's water slide.



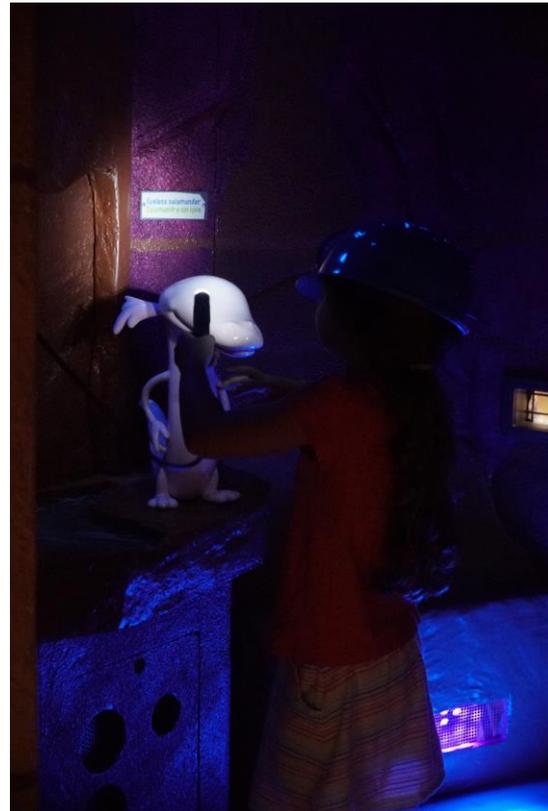
Forest

In the Forest, kids are able to play with puppets while learning about the diversity of critters living in a rotting log. They can look for and collect acorns and stash them in the cavity of a tree. Children hear ambient bird calls while they play with plush birds that visit a vernal pond. Children hear ambient bird calls while they play with plush birds that visit a vernal pond.



Cave

Based on the episode, Cave Conundrum, Nature Cat and his friends learn about caves while searching for Hal's flying disk. Just like in the episode, the entrance includes safety rules for cave exploration. While in the cave, children learn about unique rock formations, bioluminescence, and creatures that live inside a cave.



Curriculum Connections and Programs

Exhibit components expand on key messages embedded within episodes and are based on Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards. The Nature Cat logo, characters, and the other branding are used to ensure the connection between the television show and the exhibit. The exhibit components are open-ended, hands-on, and allow for ample pretend play, exploration, and problem solving. Visitors of all ages are able to interact with the exhibit in meaningful and new ways with each visit. As with all exhibits created by Kohl Children's Museum, Nature Cat exhibit design and fabrication is based on the Principles of Universal Design, ensuring visitors of all ability levels will be able to engage in meaningful play in the exhibit.

Included in the exhibit rental are activities curated by Kohl Children's Museum Education Specialists that highlight key educational messages in Nature Cat episodes. These Nature Cat branded activities can be used for in-exhibit programming or combined together to create a field trip or special event aligned with the exhibit.

WTTW will help your museum connect with your local PBS station for potential promotion, character appearances, and additional programming.



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