

Sarah's Amazing Spider Adventure: A 4-Day Nature Study

Materials Needed

- **General:** Nature journal or notebook, crayons/markers/pencils, child-safe scissors, glue stick, liquid glue.
- **Books:** A non-fiction book about spiders (like "Spiders" by Gail Gibbons) and a storybook (like "Aaaarrgghh! Spider!" by Lydia Monks or "The Very Busy Spider" by Eric Carle).
- **Craft Supplies:** Construction paper (black, white, other colors), googly eyes, paper plates, yarn or string, hole punch, pipe cleaners, pony beads, natural items (twigs, leaves, pebbles), nontoxic paint (black or brown), play dough.
- **Math & Game Supplies:** Number cards (10-20), masking tape or chalk, cotton balls, small basket or container.

Day 1: What is a Spider?

Learning Goals:

Sarah will learn that spiders have two body parts and eight legs. She will practice counting to 8 and be introduced to the concept of spiders as helpful creatures.

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Reading Time:** Read a fun, friendly story about a spider, like "The Very Busy Spider." Ask questions as you read, such as "What is the spider making?" and "Why do you think she is so busy?"
- **Discussion:** Talk about what Sarah already knows about spiders. Emphasize that spiders are amazing animals that help us by eating pesky insects like flies and mosquitoes.

2. Hands-On Craft: Handprint Spiders (15 minutes)

- **Activity:** Paint the palm and four fingers of one of Sarah's hands with black, non-toxic paint (leave the thumb unpainted). Press her hand down on a piece of white paper. Then, do the same with the other hand, overlapping the palms slightly to create one spider body with eight legs.
- **Finishing Touches:** Once dry, Sarah can glue on googly eyes (as many as she wants!). This is a great time to count the legs together: "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8! Spiders have eight legs!"

3. Math Fun: Spider Snacks (10 minutes)

- **Activity:** Draw a large spider web on a piece of paper. Use play dough to roll small "flies." Say, "This hungry spider wants to eat 12 flies! Can you help me make 12 flies and put them on her web?" Count each one out loud as she places them. You can repeat this with other numbers between 10 and 20.

4. Nature Journal Prompt (5-10 minutes)

- **Prompt:** "Let's draw a picture of the spider we learned about today."
- **Guidance:** Help her draw a spider with two main body parts (a cephalothorax and an abdomen) and eight legs. Label the parts together if she is interested. The goal is observation and creation, not perfection.

Day 2: Wonderful Webs

Learning Goals:

Sarah will explore how spiders make webs. She will practice number recognition and counting from 10-20 through a fun game.

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Reading Time:** Read a non-fiction book about spiders, focusing on the pages about webs. Talk about the different kinds of webs (orb, funnel, tangled).
- **Movement Game:** Play "Spider on a Web." Use masking tape on the floor to create a giant spider web shape. Have Sarah pretend to be a spider, carefully walking along the lines of the web without falling off.

2. Hands-On Craft: Paper Plate Web Weaving (15-20 minutes)

- **Activity:** Use a hole punch to make an odd number of holes around the edge of a paper plate. Give Sarah a long piece of yarn and show her how to thread it back and forth across the plate through the holes to create a web.
- **Fine Motor Practice:** This is excellent for developing fine motor skills. Let her make her own pattern. She can even add a small paper spider to her finished web.

3. Math Game: Spider Web Number Toss (15 minutes)

- **Setup:** Use the masking tape web on the floor from the earlier game. Place number cards (10-20) in various sections of the web.
- **How to Play:** Give Sarah a basket of cotton balls ("flies"). Have her stand at the edge of the web and toss a "fly." Whichever number it lands closest to, she identifies the number and counts out that many more "flies" from her basket. For example, if it lands on "15," she says "Fifteen!" and then counts out 15 cotton balls.

4. Nature Journal Prompt (5-10 minutes)

- **Prompt:** "Can you draw a picture of a spider's web? What shape is it? What do you think it feels like?"
- **Guidance:** Encourage her to be creative. Her web can be any color or shape she likes.

Day 3: Spider Safari

Learning Goals:

Sarah will observe spiders and their webs in their natural habitat. She will practice creative problem-solving and use tally marks to count objects up to 20.

1. Outdoor Exploration: Spider Safari (20-30 minutes)

- **Activity:** Go on a nature walk around your yard or a local park. Your mission is to become "Spider Detectives!" Look for webs on bushes, fences, tree branches, and in corners.
- **Observation:** Look closely but do not touch. Use a magnifying glass if you have one. Talk about where you find the webs. Are they in sunny spots or shady spots? Are they big or small?

2. Hands-On Craft: Nature Spiders (15 minutes)

- **Activity:** Use the treasures you collected on your walk (or from your yard). Glue two items together for a body (like a large leaf and a small stone) and then glue on eight small twigs for legs. Add pebble eyes or draw them on.

3. Math & Creative Play: Spider Tally & Obstacle Course (15 minutes)

- **Spider Tally:** In her nature journal, help Sarah make a tally mark for every web you found on your safari. Count the tally marks together. "We found 11 webs! Let's count them."
- **Obstacle Course:** Create an indoor "web" using string or yarn zig-zagged between chair legs and furniture. Sarah must pretend to be a fly trying to get through the web without touching the string. Then, she can pretend to be the spider, moving skillfully through the strings.

4. Nature Journal Prompt (5-10 minutes)

- **Prompt:** "Draw a map of our Spider Safari! Where did we find the most webs?"
- **Guidance:** Help her draw a simple map of your yard or the park, and let her put an "X" or a small web drawing everywhere you found one.

Day 4: Spider Celebration!

Learning Goals:

Sarah will review what she has learned about spiders. She will practice fine motor skills and one-to-one counting up to 20.

1. Review and Play (10 minutes)

- **Show and Tell:** Look back at all the crafts and journal entries from the week. Ask Sarah to share her favorite fact she learned about spiders.
- **Creative Play:** Use the handprint spiders from Day 1 as puppets! Make up a story about what the spiders are doing today. Are they catching flies? Building a web?

2. Hands-On Craft: Beaded Pipe Cleaner Webs (15 minutes)

- **Activity:** Take three pipe cleaners and twist them together in the center to create a six-spoked asterisk shape. This is the frame of the web.
- **Math Integration:** Give Sarah a bowl of pony beads. Ask her to thread beads onto the pipe cleaner spokes. You can ask her to put a certain number on each spoke (e.g., "Can you put 14 beads on this one?") or let her create her own patterns. Finally, weave a piece of yarn from spoke to spoke to complete the web look.

3. Math Game: Find the Spiders! (15 minutes)

- **Setup:** Cut out or draw 20 small spiders on paper. Hide them around the room.
- **How to Play:** Tell Sarah there are 20 spiders hiding! Her job is to find all of them. As she finds each one, she can place it on a piece of paper with numbered squares from 1-20, practicing one-to-one correspondence. Count them all together at the end to make sure she found all 20!

4. Nature Journal Prompt (5-10 minutes)

- **Prompt:** "What is the most amazing thing about spiders? Draw a picture of your favorite spider activity from this week."
- **Guidance:** Let her freely express what she enjoyed most, whether it was the craft, the game,

or the safari. This helps solidify the positive experience.