

BLINK AT HOME

Animal Impressions

What tracks do animals leave behind?

Skills to Develop

- + Science content knowledge
- + Science process skills
- + Fine motor skills

Materials

- + Kinetic sand or play dough
- + Plastic bin or baking pan
- + Plastic or rubber toys to make impressions, such as animal toys, dolls, and other objects

WHAT TO DO

During the Learning Activity

1. Go on a walk and look around you for impressions in the sand, dirt, or snow. Pause to look closely at the footprints you find and guess what animals may have left them behind. Look closely at the trail of footprints to see how far apart the footprints are and if they are clustered together or spread out. This might give you an idea about the size of the animal and how the animal walks. Ask: *what kind of animal might have left this track? Why do you think that? Do you think it was a large or small animal? Which way do you think the animal was walking?*
2. After your walk, discuss that animals often leave behind footprints in the soft ground coverings, such as dirt or snow. Invite your child to help you spread the kinetic sand or play dough across the bottom of the plastic bin or baking pan. Invite your child to use their hand and fingers to create impressions in the surface. Ask: *what happens when you push your hand into the play dough? How is this like the tracks we saw outside?*
3. Invite your child to investigate the impressions they can create with the plastic or rubber toys. Encourage them to look closely at the different impressions. Ask: *are any of these shapes like the tracks we saw on our walk? What happens if you gently set the toy on the surface? What happens if you push the toy into the surface? Can you make it look like the toy is walking across the bin?*

Extend the Fun

- + Look outside your home for animal tracks over several days. Are there animals that like to stay in the area?
- + Look at tracks from [Growing Up Wild](#) and match them to the animal tracks around your home.