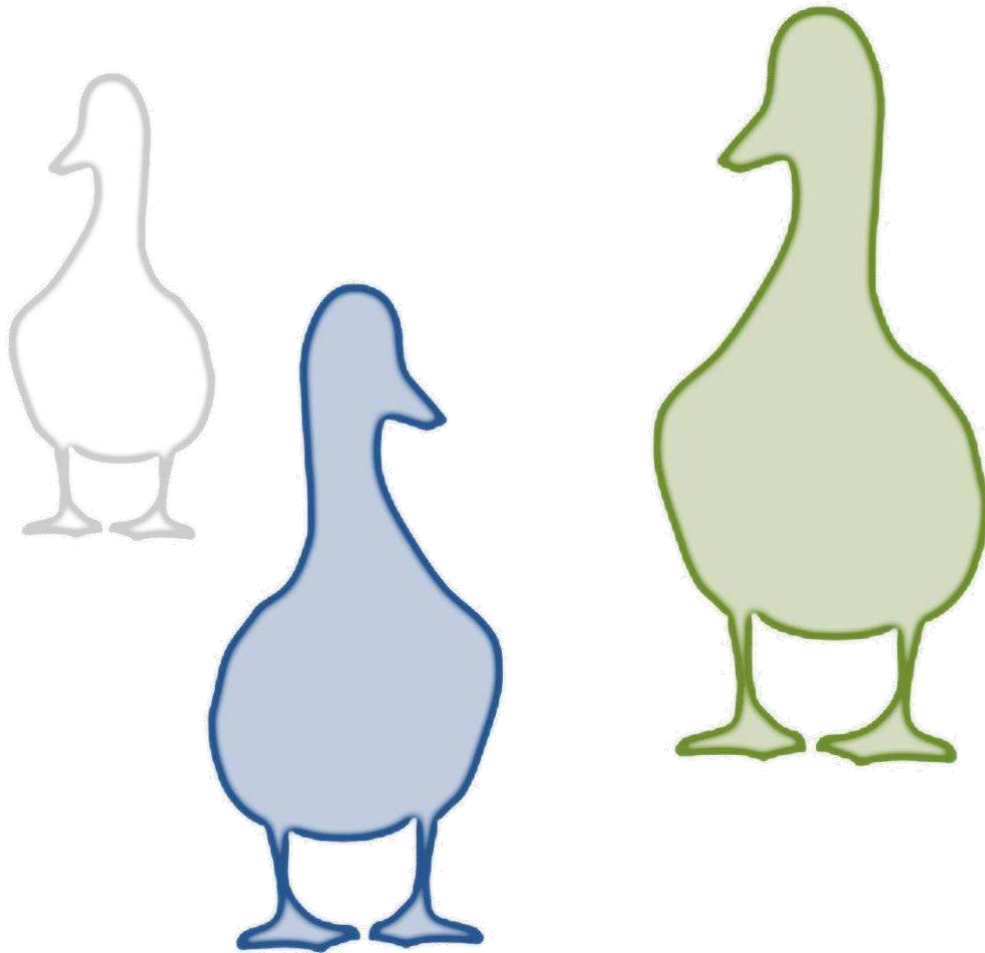


ABC Ducks of Deering Oaks Park

Learning Guide

*A Teaching Companion for Parents, Homeschool Educators,
and Classroom Teachers*

Ages 4–7



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INTRODUCTION — How to Use This Guide

Thank you for using the *ABC Ducks of Deering Oaks Park Learning Guide*.

This guide is designed to support joyful, curiosity-driven learning for children ages 4 - 7. Use it flexibly, adapt it to your environment, and let the ducks lead the way.

The activities within support early literacy, nature science, social-emotional learning, movement, and creative expression. The book's expressive illustrations and simple, rhythmic text make it ideal for young learners. **Choose a theme, follow the child's interests, or explore the book from A to Z!**

Each activity includes:

- Learning goals and extension ideas
- Materials, step-by-step instructions, and discussion prompts • A Duck Fact!
- Image placeholders from the book to support visual learning
 - Understand community and cooperation
 - Practice problem-solving

THEMES & LEARNING GOALS

Theme 1: Early Literacy

Learning Goals

- Recognize letters and sounds
- Build vocabulary
- Strengthen comprehension
- Connect letters to real-world actions

Theme 2: Nature Science

Learning Goals

- Observe animal behavior
- Understand duck biology
- Explore habitats and ecosystems
- Build early scientific reasoning

Theme 3: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Learning Goals

- Recognize emotions
- Build empathy

Theme 4: Movement & Play

Learning Goals

- Develop gross motor skills
- Build coordination and balance
- Strengthen body awareness
- Encourage imaginative, active play

Theme 5: Observation & Journaling

Learning Goals

- Strengthen attention to detail
- Build early writing and drawing skills
- Encourage curiosity and reflection
- Practice scientific observation

Theme 6: Art & Creativity

Learning Goals

- Explore color, shape, and texture
- Express creativity through visual art
- Build fine motor skills
- Represent real or imagined experiences

THEME 1: EARLY LITERACY

Learning Goals

- Recognize letters and sounds
- Build vocabulary
- Strengthen comprehension
- Connect letters to real-world actions

Activity 1: Alphabet Action Match

Materials

- The book
- Open space for movement

Instructions

- Read a page from the book and emphasize the action word.
- Invite children to act out the verb.
- Repeat with several ducks to build a sequence of actions.

Image References

- *Andy ate the oats — [Andy and Billy (Page 7)]*
- *Carmen cornered the pigeon — [Carmen (Page 10)]*
- *Gabby greeted the guests — [Gabby and Hattie (Page 18)]*
- *Nathan nabbed the crackers — [Nathan–Ollie–Peter (Page 24)]*
- *Zohran zigzagged along — [Zohran (Page 34)]*

Discussion Prompts

- What does this action mean?
- Can you think of another action that starts with this letter?
- How would you act it out differently?

Extension Ideas

- Create an "Alphabet Action Wall" with drawings or photos.
- Make a or home alphabet book using children's own action words.

Duck Fact: Ducks can see almost 340 degrees around them, helping them stay aware of movement—including yours.

Activity 2: Letter Hunt in the Park (or Playground)

Materials

- The book
- Clipboards or journals

- Writing/drawing tools

Instructions

1. Bring the book outside.
2. Choose a letter from the book.
3. Children search for objects beginning with that letter.
4. Draw or write what they find.

Image References

- *Isla inched toward the water* — [Isla and Jenny (Page 20)]
- *Kevin kept in line* — [Kevin–Lucia–Makena (Page 23)]

Discussion Prompts

- What did you find that starts with this letter?
- How is it similar or different from the duck's action?

Extension Ideas

- Create a photo alphabet using real objects from the park or playground.

Duck Fact: Ducks can see ultraviolet light, which helps them find food and navigate their environment.

Learning Goals

- Observe animal behavior
- Understand duck biology
- Explore habitats and ecosystems
- Build early scientific reasoning

Activity 1: Habitat Mapping

Materials

- The book
- Large paper
- Markers or crayons

Instructions

1. Look at pages showing the pond, trees, and ducks.
2. Children draw a simple map of Deering Oaks Pond.
3. Add ducks, plants, water, and people.
4. Label features if developmentally appropriate.

Image References

- *Duck stepping into water* — [*Duck Feet Entering Water (Page 14)*]
- *Three ducks under the sun* — [*Ducks Under Sun (Page 33)*]

Discussion Prompts

- What do ducks need in their habitat?
- Where do you think ducks feel safest?
- What would happen if part of the habitat changed?

Extension Ideas

- Build a 3D pond habitat using recycled materials.
- Compare Deering Oaks Pond to another local habitat.

🦆 Duck Fact: Ducks' feathers are waterproof because of a special oil gland near their tails.

Activity 2: Dabblers vs. Divers

Materials

- The book
- Pictures or videos of dabbling and diving ducks (optional)

Instructions

1. Show pages where ducks are feeding or interacting with water.
2. Explain the difference between dabbling ducks (tip forward to feed near the surface) and diving ducks (submerge completely underwater).
3. Children sort duck behaviors from the book into "dabblers" or "divers."
4. Act out each feeding style.

Image References

- *Ducks Eating Bread (Page 25)*
- *Duck Feet Entering Water (Page 14)*

Discussion Prompts

- What do dabbling ducks do differently from diving ducks?
- Which ducks in the book look like dabblers?
- Why might some ducks dive instead of dabble?

Extension Ideas

- Create a Venn diagram comparing dabblers and divers.
- Visit a pond and try to spot both types. Or, at home, try eating both ways.

🦆 Duck Fact: Mallards are dabbling ducks—they tip forward to eat plants and insects near the water's surface instead of diving.

THEME 3: Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Learning Goals

- Recognize emotions
- Build empathy
- Understand community and cooperation
- Practice problem-solving

Activity 1: Feelings in the Flock

Materials

- The book
- Emotion cards (optional)

Instructions

1. Turn to a page showing expressive ducks.
2. Ask children to identify how each duck might be feeling.
3. Discuss clues such as posture, eyes, and movement.
4. Invite children to act out the emotion.

Image References


- *Duck teasing another duck* — [*Ducks Teasing (Page 29)*]
- *Duck slipping and falling* — [*Roger–Susan–Trevor (Page 28)*]
- *Duck yawning with headphones* — [*Ducks Under Sun (Page 33)*]

Discussion Prompts

- What emotion do you see here?
- How can you tell?
- What could we do to help a friend who feels this way?

Extension Ideas

- Create a "Duck Feelings Chart." • Draw a duck showing a new emotion.

 ***Duck Fact: Ducks are highly social and often form friendships.***

Activity 2: Problem-Solving Scenarios

Materials

- The book
- Scenario cards (optional)

Instructions

1. Choose pages where ducks face challenges.
2. Ask children how they would help the duck.

3. Role-play solutions.

Image References


- *Finn fell into the pond — [Esther and Finn (Page 13)]*
- *Lucia lost his way — [Kevin–Lucia–Makena (Page 23)]*
- *Susan slipped and fell — [Roger–Susan–Trevor (Page 28)]*

Discussion Prompts

- What happened to this duck?
- How could we help?
- What might the duck do next?

Extension Ideas

- Children create their own duck problem and solution.
- Build a "Duck Safety Guide" for school or home.

 ***Duck Fact: Ducks can sleep with one eye open to stay safe—they look out for each other.***

Theme 4: Movement & Play

Learning Goals

- Develop gross motor skills
- Build coordination and balance
- Strengthen body awareness
- Encourage imaginative, active play

Activity 1: Waddle Relay

Materials

- Open space
- The book

Instructions

1. Read a page featuring a duck in motion.
2. Invite children to "waddle like a duck" from one point to another.
3. Add variations: fast waddles, slow waddles, zigzags, or waddling while balancing an object.
4. Celebrate effort, not speed.

Image References

- *Zohran zigzagged along* — [Zohran (Page 34)]
- *Whitney waddled by* — [Whitney–Xylo–Yvonne (Page 32)]

Discussion Prompts

- How does your body feel when you waddle?
- What makes duck movement different from ours?
- Which duck moved the most like you?

Extension Ideas

- Create an obstacle course inspired by the book.
- Add music and try "freeze waddling."

🦆 Duck Fact: Ducks' webbed feet help them move efficiently in water—but waddling on land is part of their charm.

Activity 2: "X-Marks the Spot" Treasure Hunt

Materials

- Alphabet cards
- Small objects to hide
- The book

Instructions

1. Show the page where Xylo "x-ed his spot."
2. Hide alphabet cards around the room or outdoors.
3. Children search for the card that matches the letter you call out.
4. When they find it, they shout "X marks the spot!"

Image Reference

- *Xylo x-ed his spot — [Whitney–Xylo–Yvonne (Page 32)]*

Discussion Prompts

- What helped you find the letter?
- What other things could "mark a spot"?
- How do ducks find their way?

Extension Ideas

- Create a treasure map of the classroom, home yard, or a local playground.
- Use natural materials (sticks, stones) to make letters.

🦆 Duck Fact: Migrating ducks can fly up to 60 miles per hour.

Learning Goals

- Strengthen attention to detail
- Build early writing and drawing skills
- Encourage curiosity and reflection
- Practice scientific observation

Activity 1: Duck Detective Journals

Materials

- The book
- Journals or paper

- Pencils, crayons, or markers

Instructions

1. Choose a duck from the book.
2. Children draw the duck and describe (or draw) what it is doing.
3. Encourage them to add details from the illustration.
4. Invite children to share their detective findings.

Image References

- *Carmen cornered the pigeon* — [*Carmen (Page 10)*]
- *Makena managed to find him* — [*Kevin–Lucia–Makena (Page 23)*]
- *Trevor teased his sister* — [*Roger–Susan–Trevor (Page 28)*]

Discussion Prompts

- What details did you notice?
- What might happen next in the duck's story?
- How is your duck similar to or different from real ducks?

Extension Ideas

- Create a class "Duck Detective Notebook." Or, at home, make a family journal.
- Add speech bubbles to the drawings.

 **Duck Fact:** Ducks can have different accents depending on where they live.

Activity 2: Nature Noticing Walk

Materials

- The book
- Journals
- Pencils or crayons

Instructions

1. Take a short walk outdoors.
2. Children look for colors, shapes, plants, animals, or water features.
3. Draw or write about what they notice (for younger children -drawing is perfect).
4. Compare their observations to scenes in the book.

Image References

- *Flower between two ducks* — [*Birds and Flower (Page 30)*]
- *Duck stepping into water* — [*Duck Feet Entering Water (Page 14)*]

Discussion Prompts

- What did you notice first?
- What surprised you?

- How is our environment similar to the park in the book?

Extension Ideas

- Create a "Noticing Wall" with children's drawings.

- Repeat the walk in different seasons.

🦆 Duck Fact: Ducks weigh about 2 pounds on average.

Theme 6: Art & Creativity

Learning Goals

- Explore color, shape, and texture
- Express creativity through visual art
- Build fine motor skills
- Represent real or imagined experiences

Activity 1: Create Your Own Duck

Materials

- Paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- The book

Instructions

1. Read a few pages from the book to show how each duck has a unique look and personality.
2. Invite children to create their own duck character.
3. Encourage them to choose a name beginning with any letter of the alphabet.
4. Ask them to draw the duck doing an action, just like in the book.

Image References

- *Billy basked in the sun* — [Andy and Billy (Page 7)]
- *Trevor teased his sister* — [Roger–Susan–Trevor (Page 28)]
- *Yvonne yielded a yawn* — [Whitney–Xylo–Yvonne (Page 32)]

Discussion Prompts

- What makes your duck unique?
- What action is your duck doing?
- How does your duck fit into the community?

Extension Ideas

- Create a class alphabet book of original ducks. Or, at home, make a duck phot album.
- Add speech bubbles or labels to the drawings.

🦆 Duck Fact: *Male ducks (drakes) are often more colorful than females.*

Activity 2: Alphabet Mural

Materials

- Large roll of paper
- Markers, crayons, or paint

- The book

Instructions

1. Unroll a long sheet of paper on the floor or wall.
2. Assign each child a letter or duck from the book.
3. Children draw their duck and its action on the mural.
4. Add labels, speech bubbles, or environmental details.

Image References

- A–F: [*Andy and Billy (Pg 7), Carmen (Pg 10), Esther and Finn (Pg 13)*]
- G–L: [*Gabby and Hattie (Pg 18), Isla and Jenny (Pg 20), Kevin, Lucia, Makena (Pg 23)*]
- M–R: [*Nathan, Ollie, Peter (Pg 24), Ducks Eating Bread (Pg 25), Roger, Susan, Trevor (Pg 28)*]
- S–Z: [*Ducks Teasing (Pg 29), Birds and Flower (Pg 30), Whitney, Xylo, Yvonne (Pg 32), Zohran (Pg 34)*]

Discussion Prompts

- How do the ducks work together in the mural?
- What details did you add to show the environment?
- How does your part connect to someone else's?

Extension Ideas

- Display the mural in a hallway or classroom. Or, at home, frame a “duck family photo” •
Turn the mural into a class book.

 ***Duck Fact: Ducks often return to the same pond year after year***

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: Across Themes

Extension Activity 1: Alphabet Scavenger Hunt

Materials

- Alphabet cards
- The book

Instructions

1. Hide alphabet cards around the room or outdoors.
2. Children search for letters and match them to ducks in the book.
3. Encourage them to name the duck and action.

Image Reference

- *Use any duck page as a match point.*

🦆 Duck Fact: Ducks are highly sociable and often move in groups.

Extension Activity 2: Duck-Themed Yoga

Materials

- Open space
- The book

Instructions

1. Choose ducks with expressive poses.
2. Children create yoga poses inspired by the ducks.
3. Hold each pose for a few breaths.

Image References

- *Duck stretching upward — [Quacking Duck (Page 26)]*
- *Duck leaning forward — [Duck Feet Entering Water (Page 14)]*

🦆 Duck Fact: Ducks stretch their wings and legs to stay flexible and balanced.

LIFE IN THE PARK

Deering Oaks Park is full of life! From the tallest oak trees to the tiniest bugs in the grass, from the ducks on the pond to the families on the playground — the park is a place where many different kinds of living things share the same home.

People in the Park

People are an important part of life in the park! Families, friends, and neighbors of all ages come together to play, explore, and enjoy nature. Every person who visits helps make the park a special place.



Playing Together

The park is a place where people play together — swinging, running, and laughing under the trees. When we share the playground and take turns, we help everyone feel welcome. Playing outside is one of the best ways to enjoy the park!



Animals and Birds

Many animals call Deering Oaks Park their home. Canada Geese wade by the pond, Mallard ducks paddle through the water, Blue Jays call from the treetops, and Black-capped Chickadees hop along the branches. If you look closely, you might also spot an American Robin, a Downy Woodpecker, or even a Red-tailed Hawk soaring overhead!

Sharing the Space

The big green fields of Deering Oaks Park are shared by everyone — people playing games, birds searching for food, squirrels climbing the tall oak and maple trees, and wildflowers growing in the sunshine. The park has over a thousand trees, and some are more than 150 years old! When so many different living things share the same place, that is called diversity — and it makes the park wonderful.



DUCK FACTS REFERENCE SHEET

1. Ducks can see almost 340 degrees around them, helping them stay aware of movement—including yours.
2. Ducks can see ultraviolet light, which helps them find food and navigate their environment.
3. Duck feathers are waterproof because of a special oil gland near their tails.
4. Mallards are dabbling ducks—they tip forward to eat plants and insects near the water's surface instead of diving
5. Ducks are highly social and often form friendships.
6. Ducks often travel in groups called flocks, paddlings, or rafts.
7. Ducks can sleep with one eye open to stay safe—they look out for each other.
8. Ducks' webbed feet help them move efficiently in water—but waddling on land is part of their charm.
9. Migrating ducks can fly up to 60 miles per hour.
10. Ducks can have different accents depending on where they live.
11. Male ducks (drakes) are often more colorful than females.
12. Ducks weigh about two pounds on average.
13. Ducks often return to the same pond year after year.
14. Ducks stretch their wings and legs to stay flexible and balanced.

STANDARDS CROSSWALK TABLE

Theme	Activities	MELDS Alignment	National Standards Alignment	Book Page Examples
1. Early Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet Action Match Letter Hunt in the Park 	Letter recognition; print carries meaning; vocabulary use; comprehension	NAEYC early literacy; Head Start alphabet knowledge and vocabulary	p.7 Andy p.10 Carmen p.18 Gabby p.24 Nathan p.34 Zohran
2. Nature Science	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat Mapping Dabblers vs. Divers 	Inquiry and prediction; animal characteristics; habitat awareness; comparing and classifying	NAEYC natural world observation; Head Start scientific inquiry and life science	p.14 Duck Feet p.21 Pond Ducks p.25 Oats Ducks p.33 Sun Ducks
3. SocialEmotional Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Feelings in the Flock ProblemSolving Scenarios 	Identifying feelings; recognizing emotions in others; problemsolving; perspective-taking	NAEYC emotional understanding and social interaction; Head Start emotional functioning and relationships	p.28 Roger, Susan, Trevor p.29 Teasing Ducks p.18 Gabby p.23 Makena
4. Movement & Play	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Waddle Relay X-Marks the Spot Treasure Hunt 	Balance and coordination; active play; spatial awareness; exploration	NAEYC large motor skills and spatial reasoning; Head Start gross motor development	p.32 Whitney, Xylo, Yvonne p.34 Zohran p.21 Pond Ducks
5. Observation & Journaling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Duck Detective Journals Nature Noticing Walk 	Drawing/writing to express ideas; describing visual details; curiosity; recording observations	NAEYC emergent writing and documentation; Head Start emergent writing and observation	p.10 Carmen p.23 Lucia p.30 Flower Ducks p.14 Duck Feet

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Learn more about DUCKS (ABC and otherwise):

- **State of Maine website - Waterfowl Species**
<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/speciesinformation/birds/waterfowl.html>
- **Origins of Maine's Ducks: Ducks Unlimited**
<https://www.ducks.org/maine/where-maine-ducks-come-from>
- **27 Types of Ducks found in Maine (ID Guide) - Bird Watching HQ**
<https://birdwatchinghq.com/ducks-in-maine/>
- **Maine Audubon - Maine Birding Guide**
<https://maineaudubon.org/birding/maine-birding-guide/>
- **VIDEO: (YouTube - 5 mins) 15 Duck Facts for Kids**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIqh1-JuxrU>
- **Kiddle - Duck Facts for Kids <https://kids.kiddle.co/Duck>**