

Inspector Robin Grackle's **Top 10** Tips for Birding with Kids



1. **Share your passion for birds!** It makes a huge difference to kids if parents, teachers, grandparents, or other adults share their interest and enthusiasm for birds and nature. Talk about why you like birds so much and how important they are.
2. **Start in your backyard.** Make your own bird feeder from a milk bottle or a mesh onion sack. Hang it up in the yard filled with black-oil sunflower seeds and see how long it takes for the birds to find it.
3. **Learn with your kids!** Relax—you don't have to be an expert to enjoy birding. You and your kids can write down questions about the birds you see and investigate the answers together later in books and online.
4. **Keep a journal.** Mark down details about where, when, and what kind of birds you see. It can really focus your effort. It's fun to make your own journal too, decorated just the way you like it.
5. **Make it a game.** One way to make birding fun is to use the BirdSleuth Focus Cards. They help kids identify common birds and include games and cool facts.
6. **Explore a field guide.** Show kids how a field guide is laid out and organized by bird groups, such as hawks, hummingbirds, and songbirds. Ask them to point out birds they've seen and can identify.
7. **Watch birds for science.** It's really motivating for kids to know they can contribute to real scientific studies by watching birds for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's citizen science projects. They'll be helping scientists to better understand and protect birds.
8. **Take a walk.** Get the kids unplugged from the computer or the TV and get outside to enjoy nature. A birding hike is a great way to get exercise and spend some quality time together.
9. **Observe nature ethics.** Teach children to leave things in as good (or better) condition than they found them. Observe birds without distressing them—use low voices, don't chase them, and avoid disturbing nests.
10. **Go with the flow.** Some children may be most interested in identifying birds and seeing new species. Some may focus on specific bird behaviors. Others may prefer sketching or photographing birds. It's all good!

