



OHIO 4-H CLOVERBUDS
CLICK AND DO

A Long Winter's Nap

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Background

Yaawwnnn! These cold winter days make me feel lazy and sleepy. I just want to hibernate.

Hibernate? What's hibernate?

Hibernation is how animals save energy to survive harsh weather conditions or lack of food. When hibernating, an animal's heartbeat and breathing slows down and its body temperature drops.

We usually think of bears when we think of hibernation. They eat up during the summer, putting on the extra pounds that they will need for their winter nap. They prepare a special place to hibernate — a bed lined with leaves and twigs. When winter sets in, the bears curl up in their dens and go without eating, drinking or exercising for as long as 100 days!

While we probably are not going to hibernate for 100 days, we can have some hibernation fun. We can “bear-ly” wait for you to try!

Activity

First, we must prepare a snack to store some energy for our body. Let's make some energy balls. You will need:

3 cups quick oats
1 cup creamy peanut butter
1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
1/2 cup honey

Combine all ingredients into a mixing bowl and stir together. Place the bowl (covered with lid or plastic wrap) in the refrigerator for 20-30 minutes. When chilled, roll into balls (slightly smaller than a golf ball). Eat right away, store covered in the refrigerator or freeze.

Those energy balls have honey in them, what bear wouldn't love them as a treat? Be sure to enjoy a few before you go into hibernation.

Next step, we need to make our den. Grab some blankets and cover a table that you can fit under. Bears like cozy little spots that are not too big. Make sure the inside is dark for excellent sleeping.

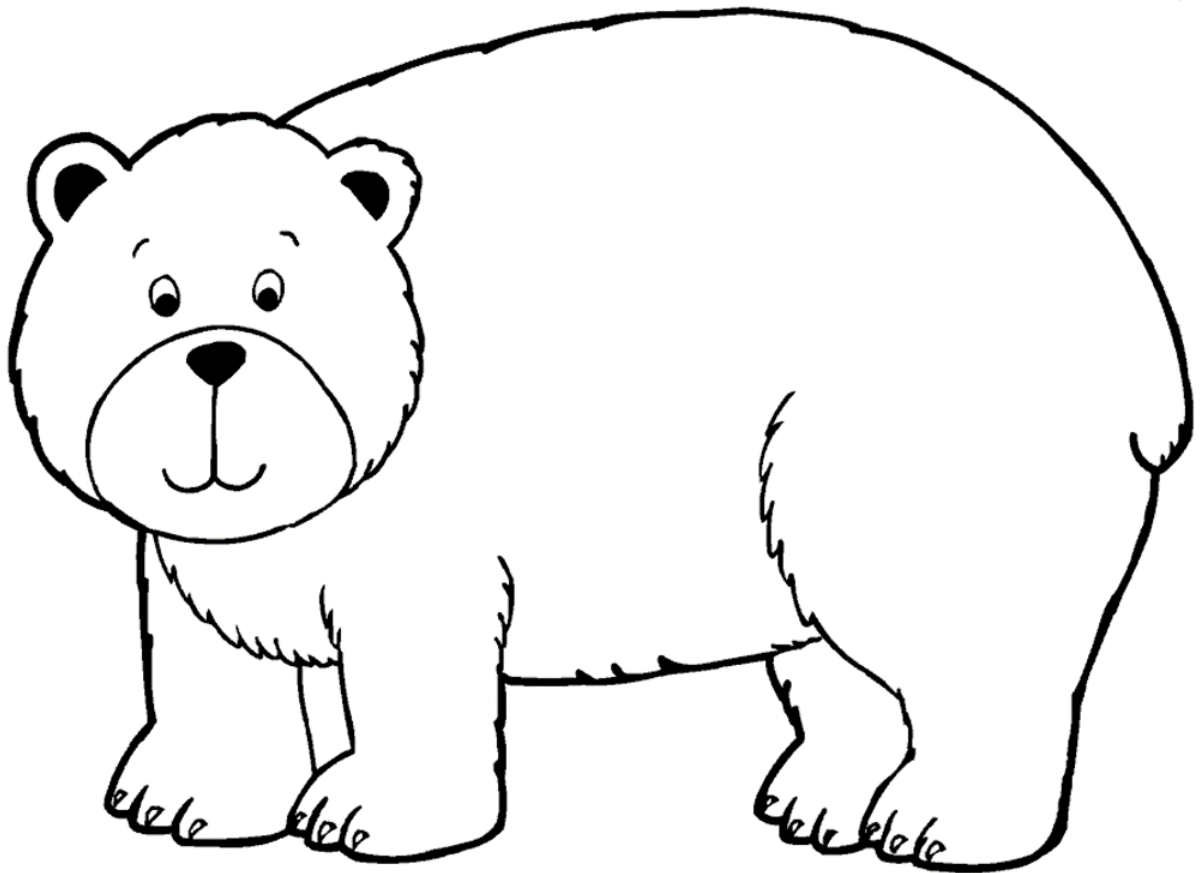
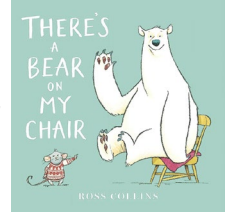
If you make a den at home, you might want to put your favorite pillow and blanket in your den. You might want to bring along a teddy bear to share the fun!

We probably should do a little exercise before we go into our den. Let's do 10 toe touches, reach up to the sky as high as you can 5 times and of course we must do a quick bear walk!

Although most of the time you may be sleeping, you might want to bring along something fun if you are not ready to sleep. You can even put a flashlight in your den to help you see better. Here is a coloring page for you. Can you find a book about bears to read in your den?

Are you feeling sleepy yet? If not, grab a piece of paper and write the word "HIBERNATION". Can you find the letters inside that word to make these words - bear, ate, ran, ton, not, hear, near? Can you find any other words from those letters?

Yaawwnnn! Time for that winter nap. See you this spring!



Follow up Questions

1. Why do bears hibernate?
2. Can you go 100 days without eating or drinking?
3. What are some other places that animals live to stay warm?
4. What are some other animals you would like to learn about?

Application Learning about hibernation is a fun way to learn about animals and their habitats. This lesson also allows children to learn about some fun activities they can do with friends or at home during the cold winter months. The energy balls are a great protein snack that can be eaten any time, it might be a good way to discuss when and why we need energy to stay healthy and active. Building a fort can teach creativity and some basics of engineering to make your fort sturdy for that long winter's nap. Making the energy balls together and building the fort as a group will teach cooperation and teamwork.

