In My Backyard

By Valarie Giogas
Illustrated by Katherine Zecca
Baby dogs are puppies and they belong to a litter, but what are baby skunks called and what is the name of their group? This clever, rhythmic story tells us just that! Counting from one to ten, the story introduces familiar backyard animals by baby and family group names.

It’s so much more than a picture book . . . this book is specifically designed to be both a fun-to-read story and a launch pad for discussions and learning. Whether read at home or in a classroom, we encourage adults to do the activities with the young children in their lives. Free online resources and support at www.ArbordalePublishing.com include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
  - Animal counting and fun fact cards:
    - Deer
    - Porcupines
    - Squirrels
    - Raccoons
    - Rabbits
    - Moles
    - Skunks
    - Snakes
    - Foxes
    - Grasshoppers
  - Animal signs all around you
  - What to do if you find an injured animal
- Teaching Activities:
  - Reading Questions
  - Mathematics
  - Language Arts
  - Geography
  - Science
  - Coloring Pages
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- English and Spanish Audiobooks
- Related Websites
- Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
- Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! Quizzes
- Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels
- eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

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In my backyard I can see groups of baby animals all around me. They creep, they crawl, they run, and hide. They munch, they crunch, they sleep outside.
In my backyard I can see one doe's fawn peeking at me. He sees me through the leaves and brush, then runs to mama in a rush.
In my backyard I can see a prickle of two pups grunting at me. They gnaw on rusty hoes and rakes, then chew on twigs and tree bark flakes.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Deer have an excellent sense of smell as well as good hearing and eyesight.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Porcupine pups are born with soft quills that become hard within an hour.</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Squirrels gather and bury nuts for winter. If the nuts are not eaten, they may grow into trees!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Raccoons are excellent climbers and can climb down a tree head first.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Rabbits “talk” to each other through smell and touch.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Moles have bad eyesight, but they can hear insects from a distance and have a good sense of smell.</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>Skunks are only born in the spring. The kits are almost blind and don’t have fur.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Snakes that are born alive are called snakelets. If they come from eggs, they are called hatchlings. They smell by flicking their tongues in and out.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>Foxes are good tree climbers. Many are good swimmers and can run up to twenty miles per hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>Grasshopper nymphs look like little adult grasshoppers without wings.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
1. A fawn is a baby deer
2. Pups are baby porcupines
3. Pups are baby squirrels
4. Cubs are baby raccoons
5. Bunnies are baby rabbits
6. Pups are baby moles
7. Kits are baby skunks
8. Hatchlings are baby snakes
9. Pups are baby foxes
10. Nymphs are baby grasshoppers
**Animal Signs All Around You**

Animals leave “signs” that show they were there. Find a nature spot: your backyard, a park, or a nature center. See how many “animal signs” you can find. Here are just a few:

- scat (poop)
- pieces of homes (bird nests, spider webs, etc.)
- broken or chewed plants
- chewed pinecones, nuts or tree bark
- tracks
- feathers, shells, or bones

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**Caring For Wildlife Around You**

Some or all of the animals mentioned in this book may live or pass through your yard, even if you never see them! What can you do to protect wild animals?

- Keep pets inside.
- Please pick up your trash—especially plastic. Wild animals may eat the trash and get sick.
- Don’t touch any wild animals; they are just that—wild!
- Don’t try to keep them or to make them pets.
- Feed and watch birds but don’t feed other wild animals.

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**What to Do If You Find an Injured Animal**

Wildlife rehabilitators are people who care for injured wild animals and nurse them back to health. It is always a good idea to look up and find a wildlife rehabilitator in your area before you need one! Check online, look in the phone book, or ask a veterinarian.

If the animal is alert and big enough to harm you, call the wildlife rehabilitator or your local animal control. Let professionals help the animal.

If the animal is small, of no danger to you, and looks like it may be nursed back to health, try to get it to a rehabilitator:

- Wear gloves or wrap the animal in a towel so that you don’t touch it. Remember that the animal, if conscious, will be scared and may try to claw or bite. An unconscious animal could wake up any time.
- If it is cold, place a heating pad on low or a ziplock bag of very warm water in part of a box (so the animal can move away from the heat if necessary) and put a towel or blanket on top of the heat source. Place the injured animal on top of the warm side, on top of the towel or blanket.
- Tightly cover the box, but please make sure that there are ventilation holes for the animal to breathe.
- Do NOT try to feed the animal.
- If you think an animal is orphaned, leave it alone until you are positive that the mother is not returning. It is normal for animal parents to leave to get food, sometimes for several hours or even all day. If, however, you know that the mother is dead, call a wildlife rehabilitator or wildlife expert to get the animal.
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