

# MEET my FAMILY!

## ANIMAL BABIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

written by Laura Purdie Salas

illustrated by Stephanie Fizer Coleman

Millbrook Press, 2018

[www.lernerbooks.com](http://www.lernerbooks.com)

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## CLASSROOM GUIDE

**Story Summary:** What kind of families do animal babies have? All different kinds! Charming text and sweet illustrations introduce a wolf pup cared for by the pack, a young orangutan snuggling with its mother high in a tree, a poison dart frog tadpole riding piggyback on its dad, and more.



Minnesota author and poet **Laura Purdie Salas** has written more than 125 books for kids, including the *Can Be...* series (Bank Street Best Books, IRA Teacher's Choice), *BookSpeak!* (Minnesota Book Award, NCTE Notable), and *If You Were the Moon*. A former teacher, Laura believes in any family where the children have someone who loves them and takes good care of them, and she hopes readers might find counterparts to their own families in the animal kingdom. "Every family's different - each family is just right!" [laurasalas.com](http://laurasalas.com)

**Stephanie Fizer Coleman** is an illustrator, designer, and generally curious girl living in lovely West Virginia. She says she was lucky to grow up in a rural area, with a babbling brook and lush forest just a few feet from her back door. She finds the love of nature she developed as a child still influences her work today. [stephaniefizercoleman.com](http://stephaniefizercoleman.com)



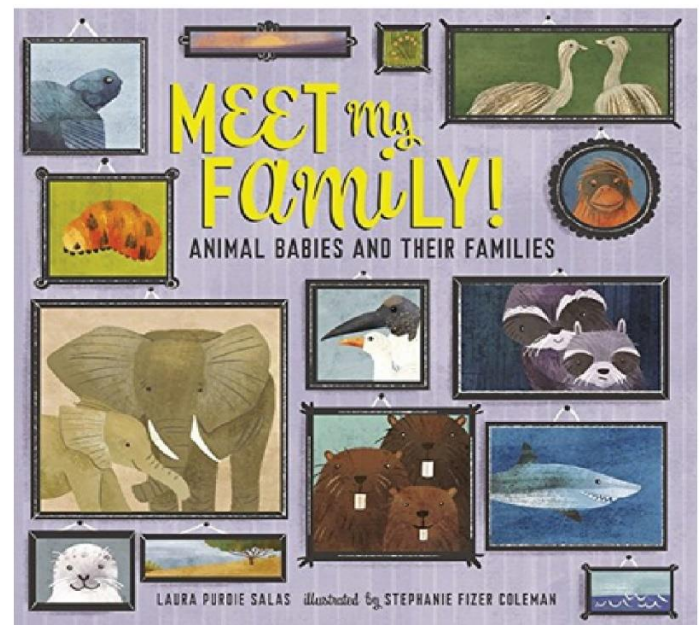
### Reviews:

*School Library Journal:* The sheer splendor of life is subtly woven throughout the text and is also strikingly on display in the final illustration--a lineup of different types of human families. VERDICT A pleasing choice for young nonfiction enthusiasts that belongs on most elementary shelves.

*Kirkus Reviews:* This information packed title not only describes varied family structures and child-rearing practices, it gives the proper names of the children for each of 23 species and, for nine, the word for "mother" or "father" rendered in the language appropriate to the animal's home.

*Meet My Family! Animal Babies and Their Families Classroom Guide* by Tami Parker, MLIS

Online: <http://laurasalas.com/family/> Book art ©2018 Stephanie Fizer Coleman



*Featuring rhyming verse and informational text, this book lets you discover just how diverse the animal kingdom really is!*



## Lots of Families Sing and Dance

Animal families love movement, such as elephants frolicking in the tall grass of Africa or wolf pups wrestling with their father in the wilds of Alaska. To introduce movement and dance to your students, sing the following song and add the following movements as well. If you would like to play an instrumental of "If You're Happy and You Know It" as you sing and dance, please visit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6PaWdhEoOI>

If you have a happy family, clap your hands.  
If you have a happy family, clap your hands.  
If you have a happy family,  
Then your face will surely show it.  
If you have a happy family, clap your hands.



*Continue to incorporate the following verses:*

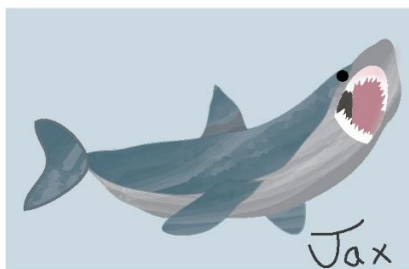
If you play with your family, jump up high.  
If you dance with your family, sway your hips.  
If you love your family, hug a friend.



## What Animal Do You Want To Be?

Have you ever dreamed of swinging from tree to tree with an orangutan on the islands of Borneo? Perhaps you have dreamed of gliding through the warm waters of the Pacific with sharks cruising by your side? If you have not imagined this, I bet your students have. With this activity, choose five different animals from the book, *Meet My Family!*, and have your students choose which animal they dream of becoming. Next, record and tally their votes on an anchor chart. With your students' help, create a bar graph of their results. Lastly, have your students draw an illustration of their fantasy animal and write a brief paragraph explaining why they would want to be this particular animal. Have fun with this one. The answers may astound you.

orangutan |||  
shark |||||  
wolf |||||  
penguin |||||  
meerkat |||||





## I Am A Writer

For this exercise, choose any illustration from the story, *Meet My Family!* Next, discuss with the students sensory words. For example, zesty, gloomy, sticky, squeaky, and bumpy. Then have the students describe the illustration using sensory words. Last, have the students write a 15-word poem describing the illustration. Give students only 5 minutes to create their poem, so they spend less time worrying and more time writing. There is only one rule for their poems: no more than 15 words. This should be an exciting adventure!

Splash  
Slippery  
Salty  
Rocky  
Fishy



Slippery Seal  
Momma slips quietly away  
Baby stretches in warm sun  
Dreams of another day

## Maps and Me

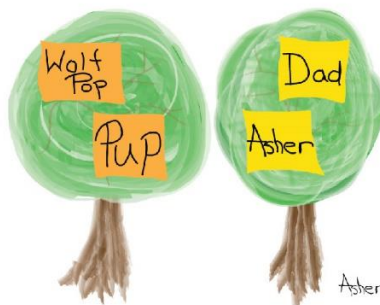
Many families, both humans and animals, have members who live far away, while others have family members who live right next door. For this assignment, give your students a map to take home and share. With their families' help, the students will place or draw stars on all the places they have lived or where they have family members living. Next, the students will tally up this information and provide it through a key on the map. For example, "North Carolina - 3" and "New York - 5." Last, the students will display the maps in the classroom for all to see.

Family Members  
USA - 18  
Ireland - 3  
Brazil - 5



## My Family Tree and Me

In the book, *Meet My Family!*, readers learn how animal families exist in many different forms. Not only does the animal kingdom have lots of different family members, but the human kingdom does as well. For this activity, have each student choose an animal family from the book that reminds them of their family. Next, have each student paint a pair of family trees side by side, showing the names of their family on one tree and the animal family they chose on the other.





# MEET my FAMILY!

ANIMAL BABIES AND THEIR FAMILIES



# STEM Activity

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

## STEM Activity: Build a Beaver's Habitat

Do your students have CHORES? Young beaver sure does. Even though he has never had to help his family move, he does have to help them repair their home frequently. According to the poem,

*"When walls need fixing, I hunt for sticks. Yippee! I paddle and nibble and gnaw.  
Then I drag a stick back and poke it in place. Soon, I'll build my own lodge."*

**Objective:** Students will use available materials to construct a beaver's habitat.

**Note:** As students work through their projects, they will document their plans on a provided worksheet. Last, they will share their final results through an oral class presentation or by creating a video of their newly constructed beaver habitat.

### Materials:

Mud: Brown playdough

Sticks: Small and large pretzel sticks

Pond: Disposable tinfoil baking pan and cup of water

Small rocks, twigs, and dried grass (optional)



**Step One:** The students will research a beaver's habitat through readings of nonfiction library books or a research website, such as Kidrex.

**Step Two:** The students will draft plans on provided grid paper, as well as estimate the number of small and large pretzels they will use to construct their habitat.

**Step Three:** Working in groups of two or three, the students will use available materials and their plans to construct a beaver's habitat. Students must remember to create a dry lodge in which water cannot penetrate the beaver's living area. Also, as an additional challenge, students may see if they can stop water from flowing past the newly constructed dam. Last, please give bonus points for any groups that include a vent hole at the top of the beaver's den.

**Step Four:** The students will present their structure to the class through a live presentation or through a video recording.

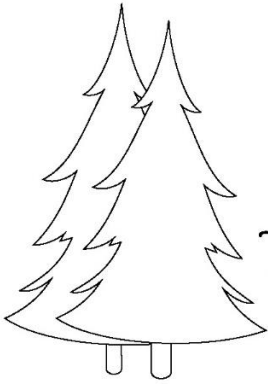


**Step Five:** Students will write about their experiences through reflective questions.

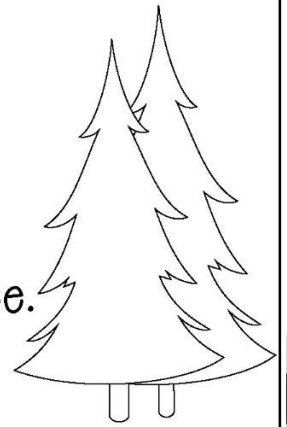


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Young Beaver's Habitat



"When walls need fixing, I hunt for sticks.  
Yippee! I paddle and nibble and gnaw.  
Then I drag a stick back and poke it in place.  
Soon, I'll build my own lodge."



**Mission:** *Create a beaver's habitat.*

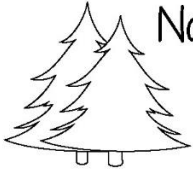
**Assignment:** *Before engineers build, they must first design their project on paper. Use the grid paper to design your beaver's habitat.*


Estimate how many  
sticks it will take:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Small Sticks

\_\_\_\_\_  
Large Sticks





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Young Beaver's Habitat



If you could build this project again, what would you do differently?

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If you could build this project again, what materials would you choose and why?

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Now that you've built a beaver's den, have your thoughts about beavers changed?

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Is there anything that we can do to help beavers better survive on our planet?

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How many sticks did  
it really take?

Small Sticks

Large Sticks

Activities to accompany *Meet My Family! Animal Babies and Their Families* by Laura Purdie Salas

<http://laurasalas.com/family/>