

# If I Were a KANGAROO

## Story Hour Kit

Celebrating the book  
**If I Were a Kangaroo**  
by Mylisa Larsen and  
Anna Raff (Penguin)



© Anna Raff

## If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit



### ABOUT THE KIT

This kit was designed for librarians, educators, and booksellers, and for families hosting playgroups, parties, or simply an engaging read aloud. Best for ages 0-8.

The rhymes in this charming picture book celebrate the sleeping behavior of nine animals. While the text can be read to the very youngest, the animal behaviors are well-researched and the back matter expands on the fascinating sleepy habits of mothers and young.

The kit offers opportunities to introduce STEM to babies and toddlers and to school-age children with a series of Sleepy STEM Cards and story time talking points.

The kit contains:

- Poster and copy to share your event
- Suggested preparation
- Interactive caregiver/child actions
- Sleep tips for older children
- STEM talking points
- STEM fact and coloring cards

### ABOUT THE BOOK

#### **If I Were a Kangaroo: A Bedtime Tale**

By Mylisa Larsen

Illustrated by Anna Raff

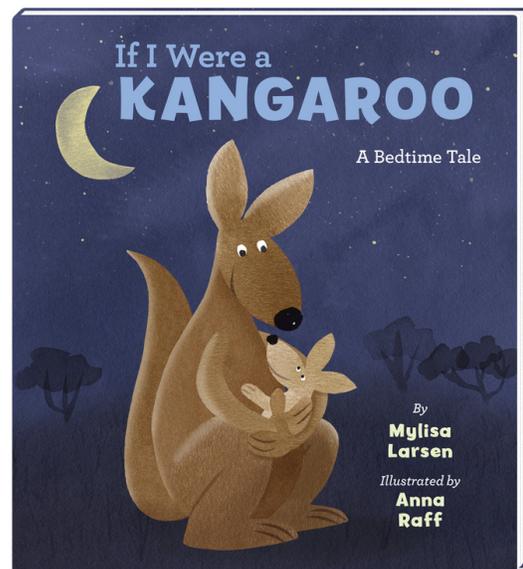
Published by Penguin Young Readers Group

ISBN-13: 9780451469588

Age Range: 3 Months to 3 Years

It's time for sleep, and this fun-to-read rhyming tale envisions the bedtime rituals of animals from whales to otters, squirrels to gorillas.

So curl up, imagine your favorite animal, and...zzzzzzzzzzzz.



## If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit

### PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

“A sweet bedtime tale about various animals drifting off to sleep with their young. In addition to the titular kangaroo, there are giraffes, chickens, squirrels, bats, sea otters, gorillas, and more. For example, “If I were a giant whale./I’d sing you songs—slow epic tales./Fin to fin, down in the deep./We’d drift together into sleep.” Readers will enjoy the gentle rhyming flow of the text. Raff’s illustrations are soothing, done in jewel tones on minimal backdrops...The animals are expressive and charming, making this selection perfect for bedtime and one-on-one sharing.”

—School Library Journal

“...Bound to appeal to young animal lovers, this brief survey of animal habits shows that chicks, squirrels, giraffes, bats, otters, spiders, and gorillas all have their own special sleep styles and habits, which are presented poetically in the text as well as in brief scientific detail at the book’s end. Digitally enhanced ink-and-pencil artwork shows young animals preparing for sleep in their own particular ways, while the gentle rhymes and rhythms of the text form a sort of lullaby...A warm, comforting tale with interesting facts appended.”

—Kirkus Reviews

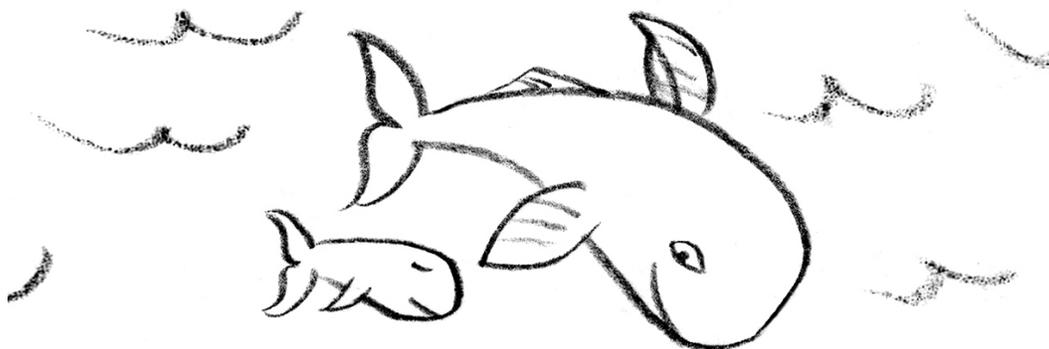
### OTHER RESOURCES

Enjoyed using this kit? Visit [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com) for other story hour kits, event kits, treasure hunts, book club guides, book giveaways, and other ways to engage in children’s literature with play, conversation, and social action.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

**Myliisa Larsen** grew up on a farm in Idaho and is familiar with the bedtime rituals of many animals. She now lives with her family in a small town in upstate New York. She is the author of **How to Put Your Parents to Bed**. Please visit her at [mylislarsen.com](http://mylislarsen.com).

**Anna Raff** does not encounter many animals in New York City where she lives, but she does love drawing...and sleeping. The books she has illustrated include **You Are Not a Cat**, **World Rat Day**, **A Big Surprise for Little Card**, and **The Wrong Side of the Bed**. Please visit her at [annaraff.com](http://annaraff.com).



# If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit

## PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITIES

You will, of course, create your own grand program or lesson plan! Following are simply suggested ways to prepare for an event or classroom experience.

\_\_\_ Locate a copy of the picture book **If I Were a Kangaroo: A Bedtime Tale** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff (Penguin Young Readers Group).

## MARKETING

\_\_\_ If you are holding a story hour for families of babies and toddlers and list your events in newsletters and online calendars, here is some text that may help with those listings:

What do you and a baby giraffe have in common? You both need to nap! We will be exploring the science of sleep with the picture book **If I Were a Kangaroo: A Bedtime Tale** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff (Penguin Young Readers Group). Be prepared to snuggle like a squirrel, hang out like a bat, and collect Sleepy STEM Cards. All welcome, but best for ages 0-4.

There is also a book trailer available at: <https://youtu.be/nnpQUS3JdOc>

\_\_\_ If this event is for the public, print out the event poster (page 7), add your date, time, and location, and duplicate it to advertise the event. If you prefer to adapt the poster on your computer, you can find a JPEG of the poster design on CuriousCityDPW.com. Simply search for “kangaroo” and navigate to the Story Hour Kit listing. The font on the poster is Billy.

## SLEEPY STEM CARDS

**Kirkus Reviews** called the picture book, “a warm, comforting tale with interesting facts appended.” You can use this warm and comforting picture book as an opportunity to celebrate the caregiver-child bond, to reinforce the benefit of a good night’s sleep and to share STEM animal facts.

The picture book’s back matter profiles the sleeping behaviors of the book’s nine featured animals. We have repurposed those nature facts on a series of reproducible sheets for your story time. The companion black and white line art by illustrator Anna Raff, makes the Sleepy STEM Cards perfect for coloring.

There are two versions of the cards:

- 1) There is one set **for families of babies and toddlers** that offers ideas for **Story Time Snuggles** to celebrate the caregiver-child bond.
- 2) There is one set **for school-age children** that offers **tips for falling asleep**.

## If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit

### SLEEPY STEM CARDS for FAMILIES

If your story hour is for families with babies and toddlers, we have added a unique Story Time Snuggle to each of the nine cards. The text invites families to mimic what is happening on the page, but also to connect with the nature facts associated with each animal.

If you hand out the Sleepy STEM Cards sequentially as families arrive at story time, you can have a representation of each of the animals in the audience, ready to demonstrate to the other families how to build the parent-child bond through sleepy STEM snuggles.

The cards' snuggle prompts are:

**Kangaroo:** Tuck your child in your arms like tucking a joey in a pouch. Gently bounce.

**Whale:** Draw your child close to you and hum your love for your baby whale.

**Chick:** Spread your arms wide like hen wings and then cover your little chick.

**Squirrel:** Put one arm up in the air like a squirrel tail and then wrap it around your child like a tail blanket.

**Giraffe:** As a giraffe, you sleep standing up. Stand up with your child and sway gently back and forth.

**Bat:** Lay your child on their back and lift his feet up a little bit so he can imagine being an upside-down baby bat.

**Otter:** If there is room, lie back, and float with your baby otter on your belly.

**Spider:** Can your child go behind you and hug your back like a baby spider?

**Gorilla:** Cross your legs under you to start building a gorilla nest. Finish your nest by encircling your baby gorilla with your arms.

\_\_\_ Print the Sleepy STEM Cards for Families from pages 8-12 on regular paper or cardstock. Print enough so that each family can have a card. Consider additional cards for families to bring home. (If you don't want to print extras, no worries. Each card directs readers to the author's website to get a complete set.) The cards are two up on a page and will need to be cut.

\_\_\_ Check your supply of colored pencils and/or crayons to color the Sleepy STEM Cards before or after the read aloud.



## If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit

### SLEEPY STEM CARDS for SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Who loves baby animals? Who has trouble falling asleep now and again? Nearly every reader! If your story time is at a school or with school-age children, we have created a set of Sleepy STEM Cards with tips on falling asleep...animal style.

If you hand out the Sleepy STEM Cards sequentially as kids arrive at story time, you can have a representation of each of the animals in the audience. You might invite them to call out an animal fact or share a tip on falling asleep.

The cards' sleeping tips are:

**Kangaroo:** Have a big glass of milk before bedtime.

**Whale:** Have a nice long bath before bedtime.

**Chick:** Make a cozy tent with your blankets and crawl inside.

**Squirrel:** Make a big tail out of a blanket or pillow and hug it tight.

**Giraffe:** You are never too old to take a nap! Studies show that grown-up nappers can be better thinkers.

**Bat:** Lie on your back, carefully slide your head and shoulders off the bed, and spread your arms. Count to ten and then resume your normal sleep position.

**Otter:** Lie on your back and hug a pillow or stuffed animal to your chest.

**Spider:** Ask for a piggyback ride to bed.

**Gorilla:** Make a nest of your blankets and snuggle in.

\_\_\_ Print the Sleepy STEM Cards for School-Age Children from pages 13-17 on regular paper or cardstock. Print enough so that each child can have a card. Consider additional cards for readers to bring home. (If you don't want to print extras, no worries. Each card directs readers to the author's website to get a complete set.) The cards are two up on a page and will need to be cut.

\_\_\_ Check your supply of colored pencils and/or crayons if you want your readers to color the Sleepy STEM Cards before or after the read aloud.

### STORY TIME STEM

\_\_\_ Consider setting aside a collection of nonfiction books that readers could explore during and after the read aloud. Books that represent each of the creatures would build your readers' scientific curiosity. The creatures in the book are kangaroos, whales, chicks, squirrels, giraffes, bats, otters, spiders, and gorillas. You could use the Sleepy STEM Cards as bookmarks to mark books and pages that feature those individual creatures.

\_\_\_ Consider using each spread and the introduction of each new creature to introduce a fascinating sleepy fact about each. Look for the Story Time STEM: Talking Points on page 18-19 for suggested dialogue.

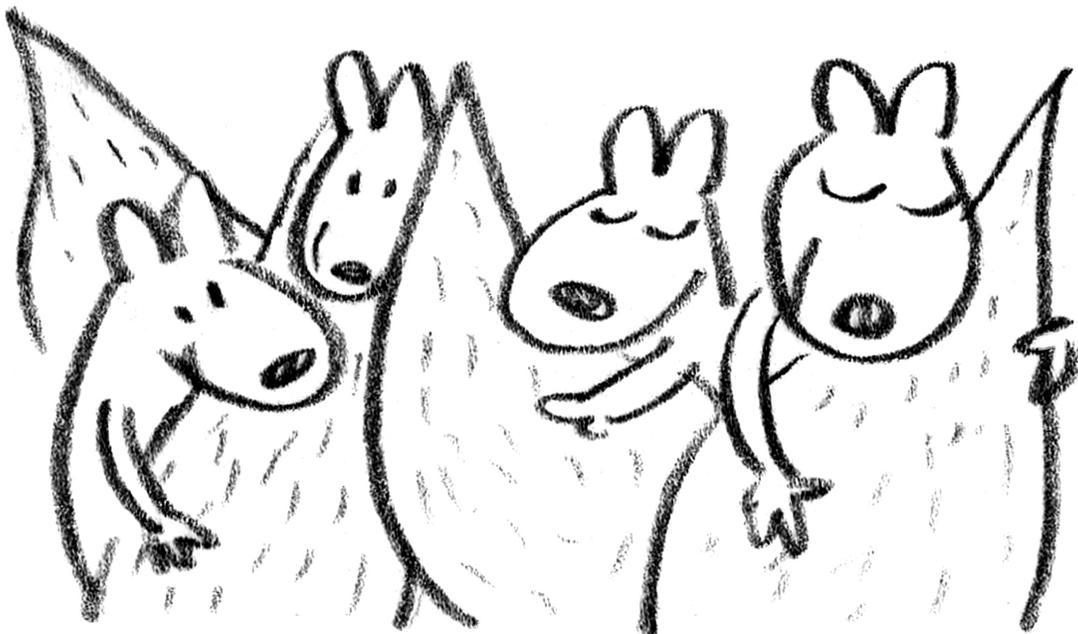
## If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit

### SETTING UP THE DAY OF THE EVENT

- \_\_\_ Set up a display of nonfiction books about the featured animals.
- \_\_\_ Lay out crayons and/or colored pencils for curious readers.
- \_\_\_ For after the reading, have extra Sleepy STEM Cards sorted by creature, handy for take away.
- \_\_\_ Place your sequential stack of Sleepy STEM Cards somewhere handy to give to readers or families as they arrive. If you have a single kangaroo, whale, chick, squirrel, giraffe, bat, otter, spider, and gorilla card in your “deck” and then another run of sequential cards, you will be sure to assign roles evenly.

### EVENT ACTIVITIES

- \_\_\_ If you have early birds, you can start them on coloring their Sleepy STEM Card.
- \_\_\_ Read the picture book **If I Were A Kangaroo: A Bedtime Tale** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff (Penguin Young Readers Group) with STEM talking points.
- \_\_\_ Invite readers to locate a nonfiction book that features their creature.
- \_\_\_ Invite readers to color their Sleepy STEM Cards.
- \_\_\_ Invite readers to “collect” other STEM Coloring Cards that interest them.
- \_\_\_ After everyone leaves, lean against the wall and take a well-deserved nap like a standing giraffe!



# If I Were a **KANGAROO**



★ We'll be sharing the book  
**If I Were a Kangaroo**  
by Mylisa Larsen and  
illustrated by Anna Raff

# Sleepy STEM Cards

## For Families

### Kangaroo

When a baby kangaroo is born, he's only as big as a lima bean, and he looks a little like a pink grub. He's bald. He can't see. Only his front legs are developed. But he uses those little front legs to climb up his mom's belly and into her pouch.

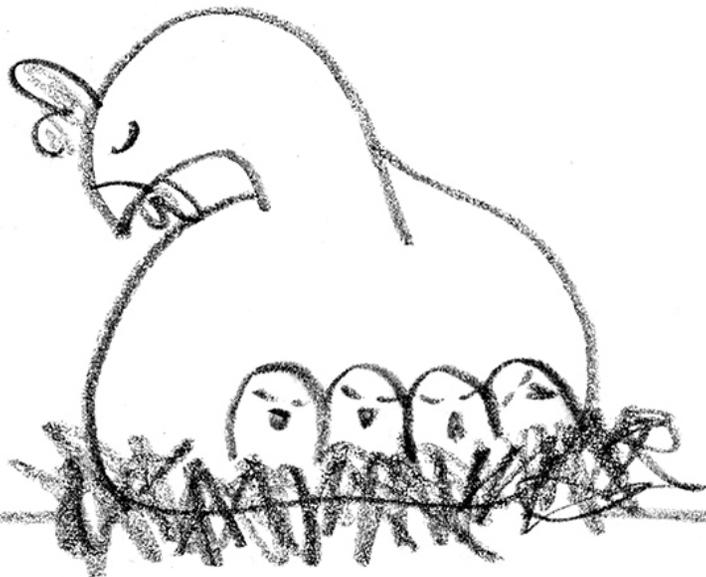


There he stays, drinking milk, growing, and sleeping until finally he's big enough to stick his head out and look around. After he grows some more, he climbs out of his mom's pouch and hops around on his own. But he often climbs back into the pouch and spends a lot of time there until he's almost a year old.

### Story Time Snuggle

Tuck your child in your arms like tucking a joey in a pouch. Gently bounce.

From the picture book **If I Were a Kangaroo** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff (Penguin). Image © 2017 Anna Raff Illustration. Visit [mylisalarsen.com](http://mylisalarsen.com) for more free animal bedtime cards.



## Chicks

Baby chicks have a cozy tent always waiting for them. Their moms have wide wings to snuggle under. At night (or in the rain or cold), chicks climb back into the nest, where their mom spreads her wings over all her babies, keeping them warm and dry.

### Story Time Snuggle

Spread your arms wide like hen wings and then cover your little chick.

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## Otter

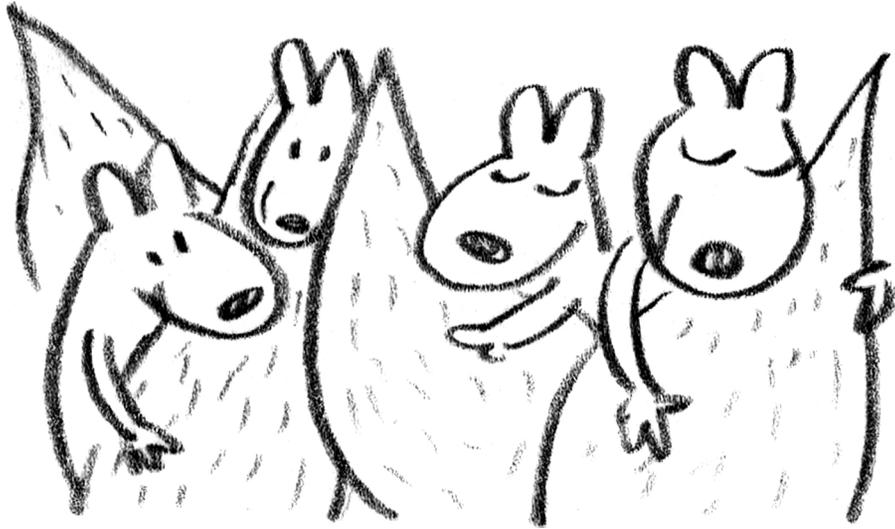


Sea otters sleep floating on their backs in the water. They often join with other otters in groups called rafts and rest together. Sometimes otters hold paws with each other to keep from floating apart while they sleep. Mom otters might wrap a strand of kelp around a baby otter's middle so the baby doesn't float away while the mom dives under the water searching for food. Baby otters often ride on their moms' tummies, floating and resting.

### Story Time Snuggle

If there is room, lie back, and float with your baby otter on your belly.

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## Squirrel

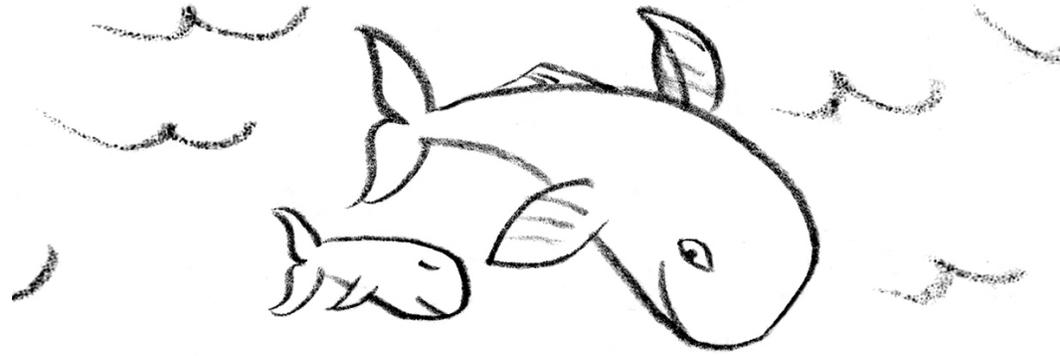
Squirrels carry a built-in blanket—their tails. They wrap their tails around their bodies when they sleep, like tucking themselves in. Their tails can even be an umbrella when it rains. Moms and babies sleep in nests called dreys. Built in a fork of a tree or a hollow place, dreys are made of sticks and twigs. Soft things like bird feathers and fur make the inside comfy.

### Story Time Snuggle

Put one arm up in the air like a squirrel tail and then wrap it around your child like a tail blanket.

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## Whale



For the first few weeks of a baby whale's life, she doesn't have enough blubber to float if she stops moving. So she naps while she swims. She'll swim a little behind her mom in the slipstream where her mom's big strokes help pull a little whale along. Since the baby is still too little to swim the long distances of their migration, she and her mom hang out for four to six weeks, swimming slowly and resting while the baby grows. There might be a whole nursery of moms and babies taking it slow together.

### Story Time Snuggle

Draw your child close to you and hum your love for your baby whale.

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## Bat

Bats sleep during the day, which is different from how most people sleep. And they sleep hanging upside down, which is definitely different from people. A baby bat sleeps in a nursery colony with other bat moms and babies. The baby may hang from his mom's furry tummy. While the moms are off hunting for food, the babies wait at home. When mom flies home, she can find her own little baby bat by his voice and smell, even though there are hundreds of other babies all hanging out together in a small space.

### Story Time Snuggle

Lay your child on their back and lift his feet up a little bit so he can imagine being an upside-down baby bat.

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## Giraffe

Well, giraffes don't sleep much. Grown-up giraffes sleep less than two hours a day, mostly in five-minute naps. A giraffe can sleep standing up, with its long neck twisted to rest along its back. For the first few days after it is born, a baby giraffe stays near its mom, resting and sleeping. It may lie down to sleep more often than grown giraffes do.

### Story Time Snuggle

As a giraffe, you sleep standing up. Stand up with your child and sway gently back and forth.

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# Gorilla

Every night a mama gorilla builds a brand-new nest for herself and her baby to share. The nest might be in a tree or on the ground. The gorilla bends branches of trees or bushes and weaves them into a nest shaped like a big bowl. This gives a whole new meaning to “make your bed”!

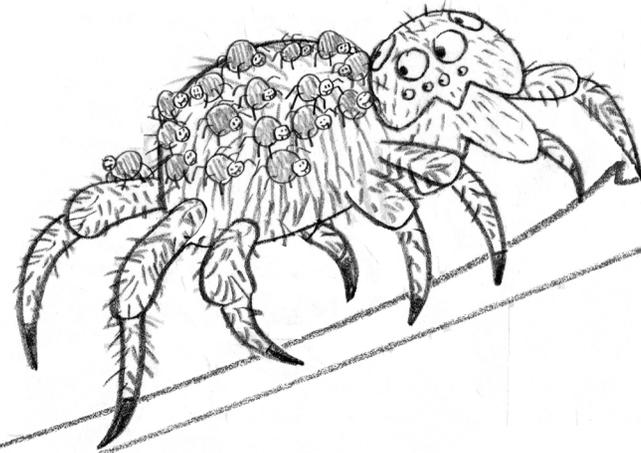


## Story Time Snuggle

Cross your legs under you to start building a gorilla nest. Finish your nest by encircling your baby gorilla with your arms.

From the picture book **If I Were a Kangaroo** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff (Viking). Image © 2017 Anna Raff Illustration. Visit [mylisalarsen.com](http://mylisalarsen.com) for more free animal bedtime cards.

# Spider



Though spiders don't sleep in quite the same way as humans, they do have alternating periods of rest and activity. And spiders that live in cold climates can go into a winter sleep like hibernation. Mommy wolf spiders carry their egg sacs with them until the baby spiders hatch. Then the babies ride around on their mom's back in a big, spidery pile.

## Story Time Snuggle

Can your child go behind you and hug your back like a baby spider?

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# Sleepy STEM Cards

## For School-Age Children

### Kangaroo

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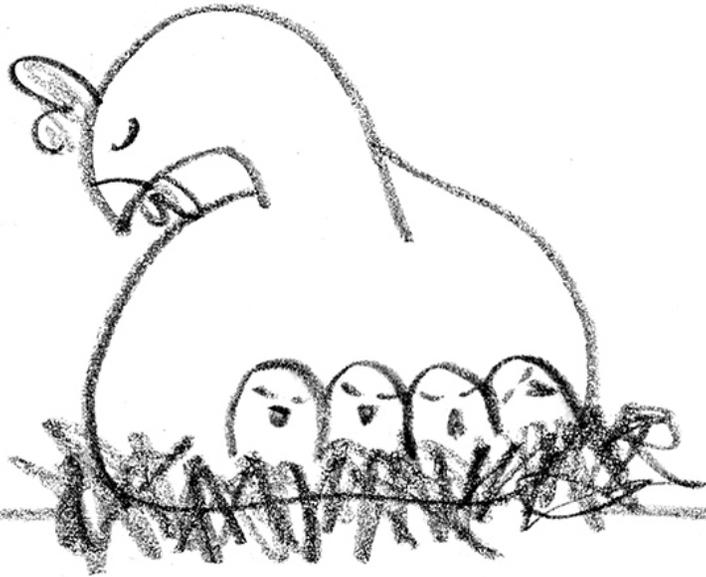


There he stays, drinking milk, growing, and sleeping until finally he's big enough to stick his head out and look around. After he grows some more, he climbs out of his mom's pouch and hops around on his own. But he often climbs back into the pouch and spends a lot of time there until he's almost a year old.

### Can't sleep?

Have a big glass of milk before bedtime.

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## Chicks

Baby chicks have a cozy tent always waiting for them. Their moms have wide wings to snuggle under. At night (or in the rain or cold), chicks climb back into the nest, where their mom spreads her wings over all her babies, keeping them warm and dry.

### Can't sleep?

Make a cozy tent of your blankets and crawl inside.

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## Otter

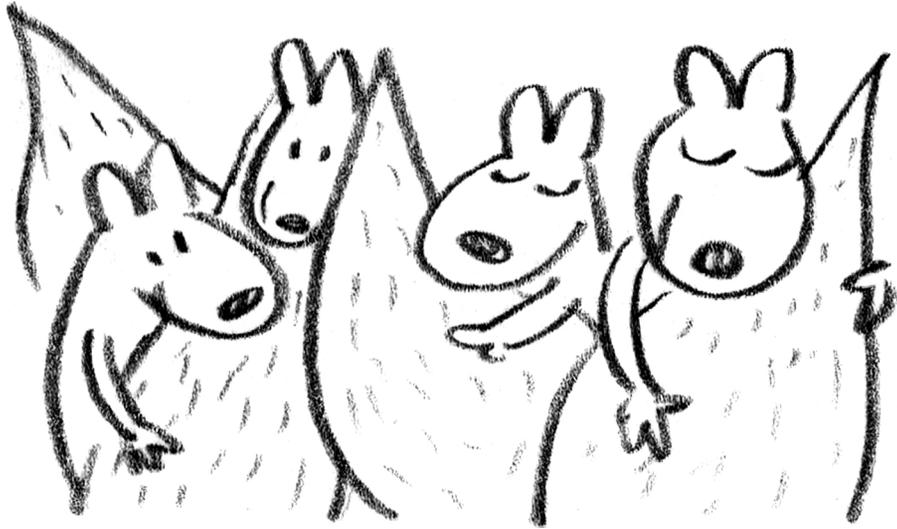


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### Can't sleep?

Lie on your back and hug a pillow or stuffed animal to your chest.

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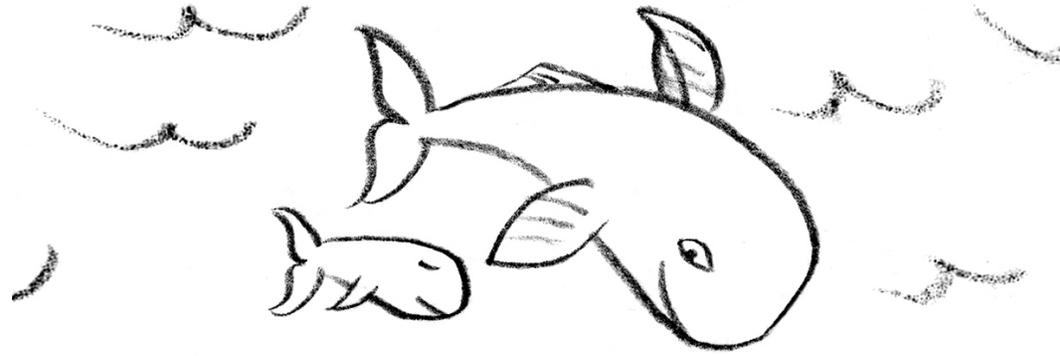
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### Can't sleep?

Lie on your back, carefully slide your head and shoulders over the edge of the bed, and spread your arms. Count to 10 and then resume your normal sleep position.

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You are never too old to take a nap! Studies show grown-up nappers are often better thinkers.

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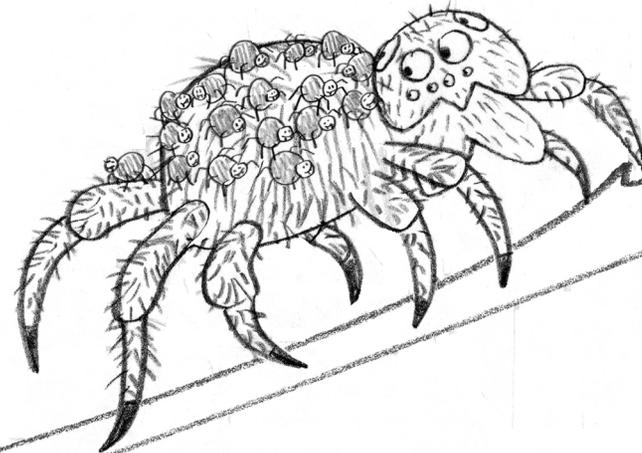


## Can't sleep?

Make a nest of your blankets and snuggle in.

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## Can't sleep?

Ask for a piggyback ride to your bed.

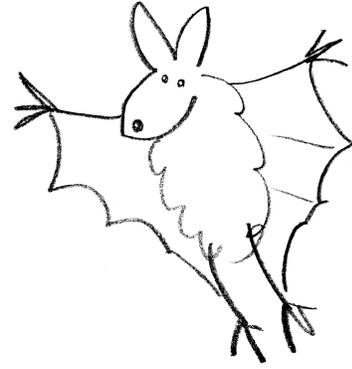
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# If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit

## STORY TIME STEM

### STORY TIME STEM: Intro for Families

Welcome! Today we are going to read **If I Were a Kangaroo: A Bedtime Tale** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff. The book shows us that it is not just humans who need to help their babies and children fall asleep or rest. Animals from every habitat in the world take care of their babies much like you do.



Each family will play the role of one of the animals in the book. Together we will learn some sleepy STEM or science facts about each of these animals and then snuggle “animal style.”

Watch for your animal to be featured in the story, and we will ask you to demonstrate for others the Sleepy STEM Snuggle on your card.

### STORY TIME STEM: Intro for School-Age Children

Welcome! Today we are going to read **If I Were a Kangaroo: A Bedtime Tale** by Mylisa Larsen and illustrated by Anna Raff. There are nine animals featured in the book from habitats all over the world. Each animal featured in the book has a short poem about their sleep behavior and some facts about how and where they sleep.

You are each holding a Sleepy STEM Card. What does STEM stand for? Yes, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Today, we will mostly be talking about science. The cards feature facts about animals discovered by scientists.

The science of sleep is fascinating! There is so much more for scientists to discover about animal and human sleep. Maybe you will study sleep one day.

Why do we sleep? According to Kids Health, “Sleep gives your brain a chance to sort things out. Scientists aren’t exactly sure what kinds of organizing your brain does while you sleep, but they think that sleep might be the time when the brain sorts and stores information, replaces chemicals, and solves problems.”

It is important for you to get lots of sleep. How much? If you are 3-5 years old, you should get 10-13 hours. If you are 6-13 years old, you should get 9-11 hours of sleep. Why? Because your brain is working VERY hard every day and you need to sort and store all that you have learned.

Does anyone have trouble falling asleep? If you do, your Sleepy STEM Card offers some animal-like tricks to fall asleep fast!

## **If I Were a KANGAROO: STEM Story Hour Kit**

### **STORY TIME STEM (cont.)**

#### **STORY TIME STEM: Talking Points**

Below are shortened versions of facts from the back of the book and from the Sleepy STEM Cards. Use these shortened versions or alternatively, have families or school-age children read their cards aloud.

##### **Kangaroo:**

How long does a mother kangaroo carry her joey in her pouch? She carries her baby for nearly a year!

##### **Whale:**

When a whale is born, it does not have enough blubber to float. Because of this, a baby whale cannot stop moving even when it is napping!

##### **Chick:**

A hen's wings act like a tent to keep chicks warm and dry. The chicks go "inside" their mother's "tent" to sleep.

##### **Squirrel:**

A squirrel's tail is like a built-in blanket. They wrap their tail around themselves when they sleep. A mama squirrel's tail can wrap around several babies.

##### **Giraffe:**

Giraffes only need to sleep 2 hours a day. They construct those 2 hours of sleep with 5 minute naps. And how do they nap? Mostly standing up!

##### **Bat:**

A baby bat sleeps in a nursery with other bat mamas and babies. A mom can find her baby by his smell and by his voice in a nursery of hundreds of other babies.

##### **Otter:**

As you see, the babies often ride on their mother's chest. If the mother has to dive for food, she may wrap her baby in kelp so the baby will not float away!

##### **Spider:**

This is a wolf spider. She carries her egg sac under her abdomen. When the eggs hatch, she then carries the babies on her back.

##### **Gorilla:**

Gorillas "make their bed" by bending the branches of trees or bushes and weaving them into a bowl-shaped nest.