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Biology/Life Sciences  
Grades 3  
Camouflage and Mimicry

Objective/Purpose:  
By the end of this activity children should understand the concepts of both camouflage and mimicry as well as their benefits in the animal kingdom. This is especially effective when followed up by discussion of how familiar animals use camouflage and mimicry to their advantage in the everyday world.

Materials/Time Required  
- 10-15 popsicle sticks  
- Markers  
- Tape  
- About 10 minutes

Background Information:  
Before this activity was performed in the classroom the children were familiar with the animal kingdom in general. They knew how to classify different animals as well as list the characteristics of an animal that put it in that classification. The activity was performed during the animal behavior and traits unit alongside the concept of migration; it is very effective before the concept of camouflage is talked about but is still effective if performed after a lecture.

Preparation:  
Take note of different colored objects in the classroom before the class period in which the activity is to be performed. The popsicle sticks need to be colored before class begins and one of them needs to be split in half.

Safety Issues:  
The children should be careful with the popsicle sticks, especially the split one, but they are relatively harmless.

Activity Outline/Teacher Procedures  
Make popsicle stick-men by drawing simple facial features using black pen on popsicle sticks, then color them different colors with markers. Use colors that can be found throughout the classroom for about eight or so popsicle men and, before class, tape them to the objects with the corresponding colors throughout the room, not necessarily in plain sight. With about five other popsicle sticks of different colors, place them on objects with starkly contrasting colors throughout the room. Color two new popsicle sticks a flamboyant color, taking one and splitting it in half so that it has a jagged edge. When the class enters the room, ask the children to find as many popsicle men as possible. Those on contrasting colors will be picked out first. The popsicle stick with the jagged edge illustrates poisonous or dangerous animals that are flamboyantly colored as a warning to predators. Its partner, the non-split, same-colored stick illustrates mimicry.
Possible Questions:
- Which popsicle sticks were easiest to pick out?
- Which popsicle sticks were hardest to pick out?
- How might this same idea as seen in the activity apply to different colored animals in the animal kingdom?
- Why is the stick with the jagged edge brightly colored against its background?
- What advantage is there for the stick that is brightly colored like the jagged stick but not jagged?
- What animals can you think of demonstrate camouflage?

Assessment/Evaluation
Because this activity demonstrates a concept it is difficult and inapplicable to assess the children.