Science Moments for Families

Six ways to turn playtime into discovery

These conversation starters work for all kinds of learners. If your child has a deep focus on animals, likes predictable rules, or prefers to observe before engaging — this game was made for them too. There are no wrong answers here. Just questions worth asking.

01 When your child picks a background

"Which time of day did you pick? Do you think the animals are doing the same things right now as they were at noon?"

Animals run on a clock just like we do. Some feed at dawn, rest at midday, and hunt at night. When your child chooses morning or night, they're setting the environmental conditions for their session — that's a scientist's first move.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

"What animals do you hear at night in our neighborhood that you don't hear at noon? What do you think they're doing?" A cricket, an owl, a coyote — the same circadian biology playing out right outside your door.

02 When your child picks a region

"Why did you pick that one? What do you think is different about playing there?"

Each region is a real place with its own climate, landscape, and wildlife. The number of antelope species isn't random — it follows the water, the grass, and the temperature. Wetter, greener regions support more species. Drier, harsher ones support fewer but highly specialized ones.

Why fewer species in some regions? Less water means less grass means fewer grazers. It's a chain — and your child is playing inside it.

Amboseli · Kenya/Tanzania
Wet/dry seasons, lush plains at foot of Kilimanjaro. Africa's most species-rich.

Dinder · Sudan
Seasonal floodplains. Fewer species, built for heat and scarcity — survival specialists.

Fairy Circles · Namibia
One of earth's driest. Mysterious bare circles still debated by scientists.

Benoue · Cameroon
Forest meets savanna. Surprising species variety from mixed habitats.

Kainji · Nigeria
Rocky plateau and waterfalls. Transitional zone between forest and savanna.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

"Look around where we live. Is it wet or dry? Green or brown? How many wild animals can you spot nearby — and how does that compare to the region you just played?" The same rules apply everywhere. Water drives life.

03 When your child matches male to female

"Did those two look the same to you, or completely different? How did you know they were the same animal?"

When they look alike — "What made you sure they matched? What were you comparing?" That's classification by shared traits, the foundation of taxonomy. When they look completely different — "Why do you think the male and female look so different? What advantage might that give them?" That opens the door to natural selection, camouflage, mate choice, and predator avoidance — questions scientists still debate in some species.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

"Look at the birds near us — do the males and females look the same or different? Why do you think that is?" Cardinals, mallards, peacocks — dimorphism is everywhere once you start looking.

04 When a lion takes an antelope

"Which one did the lion go for? Why do you think it picked that one?"

Predators don't hunt randomly — they read the herd, target the vulnerable, and change their behavior based on time of day and terrain. Lion Mode isn't a penalty. It's a food web. Losing an antelope is ecology in action.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

"What eats what in our neighborhood? Is there a predator near us — even a small one?" A hawk circling the park, a cat watching birds, a spider in the garden. Every community has a food web. Help your child find the thread.

05 When your child checks the stats page

"Look at the map — where does this one live? Is it endangered? How big is it compared to a person?"

The stats page is a real scientific profile. Range maps, IUCN conservation status, scale comparison — these are the same tools a field biologist uses. And the size on screen isn't decoration — the game draws every species as close to its real scale as possible. A giant eland really is that much bigger than a steenbok. Did the size help you find the match? Were you using it without realizing? That's a scientist noticing their own thinking.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

"Is anything endangered near where we live? What do you think it needs to survive?" Every region has a story — a bird, a fish, a plant on the edge. Looking it up together is the lesson.

06 When your child spots horns or markings to make a match

"How did you know those two went together? What were you looking at?"

Horn shape, coat pattern, leg markings, body size — every visual detail in the game is biologically accurate and to scale. When your child learns to read those details, they're building the same observational skills naturalists spend years developing. Ask them to teach you what they noticed.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

"Next time we see an animal — even a dog or a bird — let's describe it like a scientist. What color, what size, what shape?" Observation is a skill. The game is practice. The world is the field.

The same science happening in the game is happening right outside your door.

Water drives life. Time shapes behavior. Size carries information. Dimorphism tells a story. Every community has a food web. Your child already knows this — Antelope UP just gave them the words.

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