Follow Your Senses: Sound Trail!

We’ve learned that snakes have many senses that they use to understand and move around their environment.

Can you name all five senses that people use?

Snakes use their eyes for seeing, their tongue for smelling and tasting, their whole bodies for sense of touch, and...what about sound?

Look closely at this picture of a corn snake. Do you see any ears?

Snakes don’t have any external ears like humans do, and they don’t have any ear holes on their head. Do you think they can still hear things?

Yes! But in a different way than humans hear sounds. Instead of hearing sounds with ears like humans do, snakes feel sounds through their jawbones. These bones are just like the tiny bones inside of our ears that help us hear things. The sounds vibrate up their jaw and get turned into “sound signals” in their brain. So they can “hear” a mouse running on the ground next to them by feeling the vibrations of the mouse’s feet on the ground with their jawbones.

Snakes follow these sound vibrations to hunt food, hide from danger, and find places to live.

Let’s design and follow our own sound trail!
**Materials:**

- Toilet paper tubes/cups/or other vessels that can be easily sealed, to make a sound shaker
- Tape, for sealing your sound shakes
- Paper and pen/pencil/crayon/marker, for making a sound trail map
- Several different types of “sounds” to fill your sound shakers, such as:
  - Loose change
  - Beads or buttons
  - Dried beans or rice
  - Aluminum foil, crinkled into balls (can also be done with scrap paper)
  - Paper clips

**Instructions:**

1. Fill several containers with the same sound materials, and seal the tops to create shakers.
2. Make a few different sets of sound materials (i.e., 3 containers of loose change, 3 containers of buttons, and 3 containers of dried beans).
   - Optional: shake all the containers to get familiar with their sounds.
3. Grown-ups: Lay out different paths with your different sound shakers to create several sound trails.
   - Optional: put a prize at the end of each sound trail! (a drawing of a mouse? A coyote? What do you want to find!)
4. Kids: Pick one sound to follow on your sound hunt by matching the sounds in the shakers. You can record your path on paper to make a map!
5. Follow/make as many sound trails as you want!

**Activity questions:**

- Which sounds were easy to follow?
- Which sounds were hard to follow?
- Can you remember your sound trail without the map?
- Did any sounds seem similar? Which ones were different?
- How do you think it would be to follow a scent trail? Or a texture trail?