



# Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

Benchmark

Grade 5

Student Materials

Middle of Year

## **Animal Tools**

Humans have made and used tools for thousands of years. We have simple tools like screws, wedges, ramps, pulleys, wheels, and levers. We've gotten so good at making and using tools that we've made robots that can create and make tools! However, humans aren't the only animals to use tools.

There are some tame animals that can use tools because we teach them to do so. For example, many people use service animals to help them around the house. Most service animals are dogs, but can also be cats, birds, miniature horses, or even pigs! The owners of these animals can teach them to use tools to open doors, turn on electronic devices, or call for help.

There are other animals in the wild that learn to use natural objects as tools to meet a certain need. Although most animals don't use tools in this way, there is evidence that dolphins, otters, monkeys, apes, rodents, octopuses, elephants, and some birds can and do use tools in the wild.

Many times, wild animals use tools for food. They can use the tools to either catch the food or to open it. Dolphins have been known to use sea sponges to stir up sand at the bottom of the ocean. This helps them uncover food. Crows have been recorded dropping stones into a water pitcher to raise the water level. This makes the water level high enough for them to reach. Various monkeys have been known to use sticks to reach into logs and ant hills to get ants to eat.

Otters, on the other hand, use tools to open their food. Otters love to eat clams and mussels. But the meat of the clams and mussels is hidden inside shells. So, otters use rocks to hammer open the shells. Of course, people are still the most advanced tool users. But imagine an otter using a blender to make a clam smoothie!