(30 minutes)

Outline:
- Introduction
- Felt story
- Optional K/1 activity sheet
- Conclusion

Props: Felt story board and felt pieces, air filters, two socks, K/1 activity sheet

SCRIPT

Introduction:
Hello, my name is _________, and I am here today to talk about air. I am in your class on behalf of the Northwest Clean Air Agency. It's NWCAA's job to talk to people about keeping the air clean.

What do we know about air already? We breathe it! Everybody take a deep breath in. Let's take another one! Where does the air go into your body? Through your mouth and nose into your lungs. Your lungs are inside your chest. Put your hands on top of your lungs and let's take another deep breath to feel the air entering our body.

We all need clean air in order to live and grow up big and strong. It gives us energy and helps us run and play. Plants and animals need air too.

Sometimes our air can get dirty or polluted. Have you heard the word pollution before? If the air is polluted, that means that it is dirty. Your nose does a good job stopping some of that dirty air before you breathe it into your lungs. But if the air is really dirty, it can make you sick. Today we are going to find out ways to help keep our air clean.

(FELT BOARD STORY)

Right now I am going to tell you a story about our air. I will be looking for good listeners to help me with my story. Put your hands down for now, I'll let you know when it is time for volunteers.

This is a story about a bird named ________. Raise your hand if you would like to name our bird friend. Okay, Robby sounds like a great name. Robby lives in Bellingham (or Mt. Vernon, etc.) with her family. Every spring, it is Robby’s job to find the place where they will build their new nest. One spring day, when it was just about time for the nest building, she went out searching for a good place to build their new home. She set out early one
morning, flying across town. Now, Robby is a very curious bird. Whenever she sees
something that catches her eye, she always has to fly down for a closer look. Well, on this
particular day, as she was flying over the town, Robby noticed a family in their home.
Something about this family made her very curious, so she flew down to check it out a little
closer.

As she got closer, she saw that this family was just waking up. Because it was early spring,
it was still quite chilly, so the family was getting ready to build a fire in their woodstove.
How many of you have a woodstove that you use to heat your home? In this particular
family, the youngest girl was always in charge of choosing how much wood to use in the
stove. She had two bundles of wood to choose from, one with 3 logs and one with 5 logs.
Smoke from the fire can make the air dirty. Which bundle do you think would make less
smoke? Yes, the smaller pile. With a smaller amount of wood, the fire burns hotter, so there
is less smoke. Robby really likes that. She might even consider making this the spot for
her family’s new home. Robby can tell easily how much smoke is coming out of the
chimney because she is flying around up there, but would the family know how much smoke
is coming from their chimney? What would they need to do in order to see if there was
smoke coming from their chimney? (Go outside to look at it.) So, another way they could
make less pollution is by checking their chimney to make sure it isn’t smoking.

Can anyone else think of another way to stay warm in your house without buildin
(g) energy. (Put on a sweater) does a sweater make
smoke? No Way! Sometimes what I do in the morning is put on my big fluffy bathrobe and
slippers that is a great way to keep warm without making air pollution.

Robby realized she was spending too much time at this family’s house and not enough time
looking for a home for her family. So, Robby continued on, flying up, up, high above the
town. She hadn’t gone far, when again something caught her eye. She saw a huge tree
which she thought might make a nice home. Does anyone know what trees do for our air?
They clean it! So if you plant a tree you can help clean the air.

Robby landed in the tree and looked around. She saw a family getting ready to start their
day. The mom and dad were heading off to work. The two kids were going to school and
then sports practice. They were busy getting ready and deciding how they would get to
their destinations. They have lots of choices here. There’s a school bus, a city bus, two
bikes, a red sports car and a mini van. (Point to all the pieces on the board)

How do you think the first child will get to school?
(Car, bus, bike, walk, carpool. Call on someone to choose one transportation option.) Ok.
You chose bike. Go ahead and move the bike up to the school and let’s all pretend we’re
riding a bike too. (Make silly hand motions with the kids) Great! How much smoke or air
pollution does a bike make? NONE
How is the second child going to get to school? *Call on someone* Great. You chose bus. Go ahead and drive the bus to school and we'll all make bus noises for you. Vrmmmm vrmmmm. Does a bus make air pollution? (Put a piece of felt exhaust coming from exhaust pipe). Yes it does, but there's something you should know. A bus can take up to 50 kids to school and it only makes this much air pollution (point to felt exhaust), but if those same 50 kids asked their parents to drive them, 50 cars on the road would make THIS much air pollution. (Put up the giant plume of smoke) So is a bus better than a car? You bet.

Let's move on. It's getting later and mom and dad still need to get to work. How is dad going to get to this building across town? *Call on someone*. You chose the minivan…well, big cars make more pollution than little cars. Look at these socks I have. I put each of them onto the tail pipe of a different car and started the engine for 5 minutes. This one was from the small, new car and this one was from the big, older car. So, which car makes less pollution? The little car, that's right! When Robby sees all that pollution, she flies away. She doesn’t want her family to live near all of that pollution. What other choices do they have?* (Call on someone else to choose another.) Carpool, that's a great idea. A carpool is not where your car goes swimming, what is it? A carpool is when you take a friend with you when you are going some where. There is less pollution when you carpool than when they drive alone. Where is a good place to carpool? School, soccer practice, etc.

What else could they do?* (Continue until all options are used). So, they could carpool, ride the bus, walk, or bike to work to make even less pollution. Robby likes that.

Robby decided it was time to continue on. She was still looking for that perfect spot for their new home. She decided to fly outside of town a bit and see what she could find there. Just as she got to the edge of town, once again, something caught her eye. She really is a curious bird, and even though she had work to do, she couldn’t resist getting a closer look, just for a minute.

This time, she saw a family working outside of their home, in the yard. They were busily preparing the yard for spring, pruning trees, and cleaning up from the previous winter’s storms. As they were working, they placed the branches and leaves they collected into a big pile. Robby watched all of this with a great deal of interest and curiosity. When they were done working, the family then had to decide what to do with their big pile of yard waste. Here are their choices. (Call on someone to come up and place the yard waste in a garbage can, burn barrel or compost bin.) If burn barrel: If they were to burn this pile, this much smoke (place smoke on board) would enter the air. Do you think Robby would want to make her home there, near all of that pollution?* What else could they do with it?* (If they chose to throw it away) Now it may not seem like throwing something away will make air pollution, but what happens to the trash after you put it in the can? That's right, a big truck comes and picks it up. Does that truck make air pollution? You bet it does so we're actually making this much air pollution when we toss stuff in the garbage. (Call on someone to place in compost.) If they compost this, than they aren’t causing so much pollution and
they’re making great fertilizer. How many of you have a compost pile or worm bin at your house?* (Explain what composting is.) You can compost other parts of your garbage, too, like food waste. It’s actually illegal, or against the law, to burn garbage. That’s because of all the pollution it causes. What else can you do with garbage besides burn it?* (compost, reduce, reuse, recycle, landfill/incinerator)

Robby realized she was spending way too much time being curious, and not enough time searching for a place for her family’s nest. She decided it was time to get serious about her search and took off to look for the perfect spot. (Take Robby off of felt board as she flies away!)

While she was out that day, Robby saw some people make choices that affected the quality of our air. You and I, your parents, all of us, make choices every day that affect air quality. This affects not just birds, but humans, other animals, plants, and even buildings. There are a lot of things we can do to help keep our air clean, and Robby helped us learn about some of them.

**CONCLUSION**

Thanks for being such good listeners during our story. Let’s stand up and take a minute to stretch. (Lead guided stretch)

**Show air filters:** Great. Now I would like to show you the way that we test the air to see how it’s doing. If it is clean we give it a thumbs up! Can everyone give me a thumbs up? If it’s dirty thumbs down. If it is just okay - like this, (thumb sideways). To test the air we set up machines like a vacuum that suck the air across it. If there is anything dirty (pollution) in the air it gets caught on this piece of paper (called a filter). See here is a clean filter. It is nice and white. I have a filter from Bellingham. See what is in our air? Now let’s compare our air to the air in a big city like Seattle. Has anyone ever been to Seattle? It is a really big city. Here is the air filter from Seattle. Wow. Thumbs down! It is very black. There are a lot more people and cars in Seattle and the air is much dirtier there. Let’s talk about how to keep our air in Bellingham nice and clean! Raise your hand and tell me if there is something we could do! Have students brainstorm a list.

**Activity:** If time allows do activity. Color the choices for clean air and have the students cut them out and put them in the right places.

**Packet:** Show students the take home materials. When they go home they can talk with their families and share what they have learned today about keeping our air clean.