



THE ZANY ZOO

Learning Extensions

Age: 3 through Pre-K

Domain: SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

Content Standards: SD1, SD2

The children will:

- use processes of science to actively explore and increase understanding of the environment (SD1)
- acquire scientific knowledge related to life science (SD2)

Activity: Were You Born or Hatched?

That Puppet Guy uses his imagination to make frogs skate, dogs balance, bunnies belly-dance (or fall apart), bees that perform ballet and a music playing beetle. At this age, animals have been related mostly to fictional characters in books and movies. But preschoolers can learn a great deal of facts about life science. Gather a variety of pictures of all classes of animals from the internet or magazines. Find a deck of old playing cards and paste the animals on separate cards (laminates them to last even longer). The children, with guidance, can take turns sorting the pictures into two piles: Animals that hatched from an egg and animals born live. Discuss each animal and introduce new science vocabulary, like mammals, amphibians as well as reviewing the ones they know, like birds and bugs. Talk about where these animals would live, what they eat, and what they do to survive. You can leave these cards out in the science center, labeled with the name of the animal, for the children to explore or sort on their own. Older children can move on to sorting the cards by animal class or habitats. They may even think of their own ways of sorting them, such as color or water and land animals. Make sure to have plenty of age appropriate picture books of animal life cycles in the center for further exploration. If you have parents willing to contribute, ask for the bags of plastic animals of all kinds available at the dollar store and have the children create their own habitat in a shoebox and glue their selections in their new home.

Domain: THE ARTS (CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT)

Content Standards: CD1, CD2

The children will:

- explore and use a variety of materials to develop artistic expression (CD1)
- participate in music and movement activities (CD2)

Activity: You Make Me Feel Like Dancing

The Zany Zoo is almost entirely set to music. Young children should be exposed to a variety of musical genre and can begin to understand that different music makes you feel different ways. Gather a variety of musical cd's from parents or other teachers. Make sure you have at least 5 different types of music (i.e., jazz, reggae, classical, instrumental, country, rock, hip hop, etc). If you have the technology, you can put many songs on one CD, but it's not necessary. At music time, talk to the children about the kinds of songs they like to hear. Ask them how it makes them feel. Do they want to dance, relax, be silly, clap a rhythm? Allow them to explore a variety of musical instruments and movement props (like scarves and ribbons). Introduce one type of music and instruct the children to create movements to the song that reflect how it makes them feel, using their bodies, instruments and/or props. After a few minutes, play another type of music and let them again choose props and movements that reflect their feelings. As you go, ask the children to try to describe the music in their own language (happy, sad, slow, fast, etc.). Take their dictation and find the most popular genre of music in your classroom. You could also make a fantastic class book by taking pictures of the children while they are moving, and post them with captions of the type of music and some dictation from the child, put one type of music on each page, and keep the book in the music or listening center for reflection.

Domain: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Content Standards: LD1, LD2, LD5

The children will:

- develop skills in listening for the purpose of comprehension (LD1)
- learn to discriminate the sounds of language (phonological awareness) (LD2)
- begin to develop age-appropriate strategies that will assist them in reading (LD5)

Activity: Hooked on Phonological Awareness

To prepare to read, young children need to learn about phonics. The Zany Zoo characters (and even the show title) are brimming with alliteration. After the show, in large or small groups, title a piece of chart paper "Zany Zoo." Have the children repeat the words after you, as you extend the "Z" sound in each. Ask them what the first letter (or sound) is in both words. Think of other words that may start with that letter or sound. Review a couple of the characters with alliteration skills, like Bouncing Bones Bunny. Have the children think of other animals to list and an alliteration word that describes what they do (either factual or fantasy), like "Digging Dog," "Cuddly Cat" or "Loony Llamas." Challenge the class to use as many letters of the alphabet as possible for animal names, giving plenty of guidance along the way. If you are ready to move beyond alliteration, the children can also think of rhyming words to different animals, an additional step towards reading.