

Animal Play

Step into just about any early childhood classroom and you're bound to witness some kind of animal play happening. Children are naturally drawn to animals and they are able to "try on" what it would be like to be an animal during imaginative play. There are endless ways we can support children in extending their interest of animals. We have put together a list of extensions based on the most observed animals represented in children's play.

Tigers/Lions/Big Cats		
<p><u>Dramatic Play</u></p> <p>Add various fabrics with big cat prints on the to the dramatic play. Children can wear these fabrics to enhance their big cat play.</p> <p>Research how big cats live. Do they create homes? What do they make them out of? How do they take care of their families?</p>	<p><u>Studio/Art</u></p> <p>Study what kind of tracks big cats leave. Offer big cat figurines with clay in the studio area and let the children explore making tracks in the clay.</p> <p>Offer images of real big cats in the studio area and allow children to create their own representations with drawing materials or clay.</p>	<p><u>Sensory</u></p> <p>Research what kinds of habitats big cats live in. Find materials that are present in their environments such as sand, grass, plants, etc. and offer those materials in the sensory table.</p>
<p><u>Construction</u></p> <p>Use the knowledge collected from researching big cat habitats and invite children to build environments for big cat figurines to live in.</p>	<p><u>Science</u></p> <p>There are lots of scientific research possibilities when it comes to investigating big cats. You can investigate what they eat, their habitats, how they function as a family, ect. Ask the children what they want to learn more about and go from there!</p>	<p><u>Math</u></p> <p>Counting- use fabric or images to count stripes or spots.</p> <p>Measuring- measure big cat paws or research how large big cats are in real life and do a measuring exercise to demonstrate that in the classroom.</p>

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Dogs/Cats		
<p><u>Dramatic Play</u></p> <p>Add various accessories and loose parts to extend dog/cat imaginary play. These can include dog bowls, bones, cat toys, loose parts to use as food/treats/bones.</p>	<p><u>Studio/Art</u></p> <p>Research what kind of toys dogs and cats enjoy playing with. Invite children to use this knowledge to create their own dog or cat toys.</p>	<p><u>Sensory</u></p> <p>Create a bathing station for cats and dogs in your sensory table. Fill the table with soapy water, rags, sponges, and brushes and invite the children to wash dog/cat figurines.</p>
<p><u>Construction</u></p> <p>Research cat climbing towers or dog agility courses. Print images of real examples and offer them in the construction area along with dog/cat figurines. Invite the children to build their own structures for the animals to interact with.</p>	<p><u>Science</u></p> <p>There are lots of scientific research possibilities when it comes to investigating cats and dogs. You can investigate what they eat, how they are trained, ect. Ask the children what they want to learn more about and go from there!</p>	<p><u>Math</u></p> <p>Counting- use cat/dog figurines, loose parts representing food or treats as counting manipulatives.</p> <p>Sort- sort figurines or images of cats/dogs by size, color, breed, ect.</p>

Flying Creatures (birds, bugs, imaginary creatures)		
<p><u>Dramatic Play</u></p> <p>Add various fabrics and clothes pins to the dramatic play area and invite children to create wings to wear as they embody a flying creature.</p> <p>Research how various flying creatures live. Do they create homes/nests? What do they make them out of? How do they take care of their families? Offer materials for children to create these</p>	<p><u>Studio/Art</u></p> <p>Depending on what kind of home/nest the flying creature of interest lives in, offer materials and images for children to create their own versions. Example: birds make nests out of mud, sticks, fluff, grasses. Offer these along with clay so children can construct their own version.</p>	<p><u>Sensory</u></p> <p>Research the environment that the flying creature inhabits. Gather similar materials found the their habitat and add them to the sensory area. Invite children to create a habitat for the flying creature to live in.</p>

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homes/nests in the dramatic play area.		
<p><u>Construction</u></p> <p>This is another area where children can use their knowledge of the animal's habitat to recreate a version of their own. Other items such as artificial grass, leaves, or sticks might also enhance this building process.</p>	<p><u>Science</u></p> <p>There are lots of scientific research possibilities when it comes to investigating flying creatures. You can investigate what they eat, their habitats, how they function as a family, ect. Ask the children what they want to learn more about and go from there!</p>	<p><u>Math</u></p> <p>Birds often fly in specific patterns do some research and print out images of birds flying patterns. Invite children to identify the patterns they see.</p>

Here are some Kodo products that would support extending animal play:

- [Wooden Loose Parts Kit](#)
- [Sorting Eggs](#)
- [Giant Silks](#)
- [Laguna Clay](#)
- [Tunnel Set](#)
- [Wooden Farm Animals](#)
- [Wooden Zoo Animals](#)
- [Building Sticks](#)