

It's a Zoo!

Early Learning Museum PopUps – Birth to 5



DESCRIPTION

While traveling to your location, we heard a noise in the back of the van...All our animals had escaped their enclosures! Help us return our animals to the zoo by building structures, large and small, while exploring concepts of spatial reasoning and motor planning

Student Learning Goals

- IELG: Children demonstrate an awareness of how objects and people move and fit in space
- IELDS: Demonstrate an understanding of location and ordinal position, using appropriate vocabulary.

Intended Outcome

The intended outcome of this PopUp is to give children chances to develop their gross motor and fine motor skills.

Materials

Table Top

- Wooden puzzles
- Squigz
- Six bricks

- Felt board
- Books:
 - “Good Night, Gorilla”
 - “Animal Strike at the Zoo, It’s true”

Floor

- Balancing owls
- Stacking cups
- Imagination Playground
- Big Rig
- Rigamajig jr.
- Fort building tiles
- Animals (13)

Facilitation

There are no specific activities associated with any of the PopUp materials. DCM’s model of play encourages free exploration, without predetermined boundaries or schemas. The “theme” of the PopUp is a loose suggestion of play ideas to get kids started. It is NOT required that the kids build a fence, collect all the animals, or even play with any of the animals, but if a child is having trouble getting started in their play, those are good suggestions to offer. The overall goal for this PopUp is to explore motor development, but the bigger goal is to have FUN!

Ways to Play–Infants <2

- Practice stacking and knocking over the Owl Stackers and Stacking Cups
- Create a fence of Squigz and enclose animals in it and encourage kids to pull off/apart Squigz to free the animals.
- Encourage children to pick up Imagination Playground blocks and lift them up over their heads, and put them back down. Help them set up blocks in a line, in a box, etc.
- Retell stories using felt board pieces. Encourage children to put on and pull off pieces while you tell the story

Ways to Play–Toddlers 2-3

- Toddlers will have the dexterity to start connecting some Rigamajig Jr pieces but will most likely need help holding pieces together, or attaching the bolts. Encourage them to make simple shapes with straight pieces—rectangle, squares, and then just in and out of the shapes. Hop like different animals in and out of the shapes!
- Explore spatial reasoning by counting how many animals can fit inside the shapes you made.
- Do different animal walks as you make your way through the tunnel—crab, bear, snake, turtle, etc. Move fast, most slow!
- Build in 3d using the Imagination Playground and Fort Tiles. Use positional language (on top, next to, behind, underneath, etc.) when creating and when describing the child's movements.

Ways to Play–Big Kids 3+

- All of the above +
- Big structures tall and wide using the Big Rigamajig pieces. Challenge children to different tasks—making a bridge to hold animals, creating the strongest structure, creating the biggest cage for the most animals, etc.
- Utilize Imagination Playground in the same way. Try to help children create dynamic structures that move.

Ways to Play–Caregivers

- Invite adults to help stabilize large structures. This ensures that the child is able to keep playing when you move elsewhere.
- Hop, jump, crawl through the tunnel with your child—the tunnel is big enough for both of you!
- Encourage adults to use their imaginations and create dramatic play scenarios involving the animals. Model using positional language as they play with their children.

Tips and Tricks

- Model positive interactions by using specific praise. Ex. “I see you thinking and planning!” or “I see you wondering!” Praise the effort!
- Utilize caregiver help for cleaning up/resetting by modeling how to put pieces back where they came from. Ask the child for help too!
- Be forgiving when you see a caregiver who might seem “disengaged.” This is a sign that you have created a safe environment for their child to play in, and they can relax for a few minutes. However, DO make sure that each child has a grownup they are with.