

Lesson Plan: A Day at the Zoo!

A Multi-Sensory Zoo Adventure for Toddlers

Learners: Oliver, Mila, Reggie (Age 2)

Materials Needed

- **For Story Time:** A zoo-themed picture book (e.g., *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell or *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann).
 - **For Animal Action Song:** A speaker or phone for music (optional).
 - **For Sensory Bin:**
 - A shallow bin or tub.
 - Sensory Base: uncooked oats, sand, or green-dyed rice.
 - Small plastic zoo animals (lions, monkeys, elephants, etc.).
 - Scoops, small cups, and spoons.
 - Natural elements like small rocks, twigs, or leaves (ensure they are child-safe).
 - Blue felt or paper for a "water" area.
 - **For Paper Plate Lion Craft:**
 - Paper plates (1 per child).
 - Yellow and orange paint or crayons.
 - Child-safe scissors (for adult use).
 - Glue sticks or non-toxic liquid glue.
 - Strips of yellow and orange construction paper for the mane.
 - Googly eyes or a black marker.
 - **For Feed the Monkey Game:**
 - An empty cardboard box (like a cereal box or shoe box).
 - A simple drawing or printout of a monkey face.
 - Craft knife or scissors (for adult use to cut a mouth hole).
 - Yellow pom-poms or scrunched-up yellow paper ("bananas").
-

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify at least three zoo animals by pointing or naming.
- Imitate the sound and/or movement of two different zoo animals.
- Practice fine motor skills by grasping, scooping, pinching, and gluing.
- Engage in imaginative play using zoo-themed props.

2. Alignment with Early Learning Frameworks

- **Language and Communication:** Building vocabulary (animal names, sounds), listening to a story.
 - **Cognition:** Recognizing and matching animals to their sounds/movements.
-

- **Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development:**
 - **Gross Motor:** Stomping like an elephant, jumping like a monkey.
 - **Fine Motor:** Using fingers to paint, glue paper strips, and post pom-poms.
- **Approaches to Learning:** Fostering curiosity and creativity through sensory exploration and art.

Lesson Activities & Procedure

Part 1: Welcome & Story Time (10 minutes)

1. **Gathering Song:** Start with a simple hello song to get everyone settled. "Hello Oliver, Hello Mila, Hello Reggie, it's time to play!"
2. **Introduce the Theme:** "Today, we are going on an adventure to the zoo! What animals do we see at the zoo?" Allow them to share ideas or look at animal figures.
3. **Read Aloud:** Read the chosen zoo-themed book. Use an enthusiastic voice and point to the pictures. Ask simple questions like, "What animal is this?" or "What sound does the lion make?" Encourage them to lift flaps if using a book like *Dear Zoo*.

Part 2: Animal Action Song & Gross Motor Play (10 minutes)

1. **Instruction:** "Let's pretend to be the zoo animals! Can you show me how a monkey moves?"
2. **Sing & Move:** Sing "Let's Go to the Zoo" (to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus"):
 - *The monkeys at the zoo swing branch to branch... (imitate swinging arms)*
 - *The elephants at the zoo stomp their big feet... (stomp feet loudly)*
 - *The lions at the zoo go ROAR, ROAR, ROAR... (cup hands and roar)*
 - *The snakes at the zoo go slither and hiss... (wiggle on the floor and hiss)*
3. **Free Movement:** Call out different animal names and encourage Oliver, Mila, and Reggie to move like them around the room.

Part 3: Creative & Sensory Exploration (15-20 minutes)

Set up two stations and let the children move between them as they wish.

- **Station A: Zoo Sensory Bin**
 1. **Setup:** A bin filled with oats, plastic animals, scoops, and other natural elements.
 2. **Guidance:** Encourage free exploration. Model actions like burying an animal in the oats, scooping "food" for the lion, or having the animals drink from the blue "water."
 3. **Language Prompt:** "Oh, Oliver found the zebra! The zebra is hiding." "Mila, can your elephant take a drink of water?"
- **Station B: Paper Plate Lion Craft**
 1. **Setup:** Provide each child with a paper plate and yellow/orange crayons or paint. Have the pre-cut paper strips and glue ready.
 2. **Process:**
 1. Let them color or paint the plate yellow.
 2. Show them how to add glue around the edge of the plate.
 3. Let them stick the paper strips on to create a mane. It's okay if it's messy—focus on the process!
 4. Help them add googly eyes or draw a simple face with a marker.

Part 4: Fine Motor Fun & Quiet Down (10 minutes)

1. Activity: Feed the Monkey

1. **Setup:** Place the prepared "monkey box" on the floor with the bowl of "bananas" (pom-poms) next to it.
2. **Instruction:** "This monkey is very hungry! Can you help feed him some bananas?"
3. **Action:** Guide Oliver, Mila, and Reggie to use their pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger) to pick up the pom-poms and post them through the monkey's mouth. This is excellent for fine motor control and hand-eye coordination.

Part 5: Closing & Goodbye (5 minutes)

1. **Recap:** "We had so much fun at our zoo today! We roared like lions with Reggie, stomped like elephants with Mila, and fed the monkey with Oliver!"
2. **Goodbye Song:** Sing a simple goodbye song, like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," or a special goodbye song you use regularly.
3. **Clean-up:** Involve the children in putting the animals back in the bin or tidying up the craft area as part of the routine.

Differentiation & Inclusivity

- **For Extra Support:**
 - **Fine Motor:** Use larger pom-poms for the "Feed the Monkey" game. Provide hand-over-hand assistance for gluing the lion's mane.
 - **Language:** Accept pointing or single sounds (like "ra" for roar) as valid communication. Focus on receptive language by asking them to "show me the elephant."
- **For Advanced Challenges:**
 - **Language:** Ask more complex questions like, "What color is the lion?" or "Where does the monkey live?"
 - **Cognitive:** Ask them to sort the sensory bin animals (e.g., "Let's put all the big animals here and all the small animals here").
- **Inclusivity:** Use each child's name frequently throughout the activities. Allow for individual expression in art and movement—there is no "right" way to roar or paint a lion.

Assessment (Informal Observation)

Use a simple checklist while observing the children at play. This is not for a grade, but to track developmental milestones.

- **Oliver:** Was he able to grasp pom-poms? Did he imitate an animal sound? Did he point to an animal in the book?
- **Mila:** Did she engage with the sensory bin? Did she attempt to glue paper strips? Did she move her body during the action song?
- **Reggie:** Did he participate in the story? Did he name any animals? Did he show interest in multiple stations?

Note any new words used, social interactions (like sharing a scoop), or problem-solving skills observed.