



"Dream Home"

AGE: Elementary

DURATION: 20-45 minutes

GOAL: To create a dream home for an animal based on their wants and needs.

RESOURCE PAGES: Aquatic Wild p. 34 "Designing a Habitat"

Description

During this activity, children will get to design a dream home for a native animal (or their favorite)! This can be done in a few ways depending on space and materials - chalk, building with natural objects, or designing on paper with art supplies. This is a creative project that focuses on what animals need (habitat - food, water, shelter, space) and want (games, toys, adventures that mimic their natural behaviors/the wild) within a captive situation. This will foster creativity as well as educate them about how we take care of our animal ambassadors at the center. It is important to educate them that all animals deserve to stay wild! Our animal ambassadors can no longer survive in the wild due to injuries or special circumstances. Our job is to make their lives the best we can and help mimic natural behaviors through enrichment (digging, ripping, climbing, sunning, swimming.) This can easily tie into another activity about habitat or an animal encounter/enrichment activity.

Key Concepts

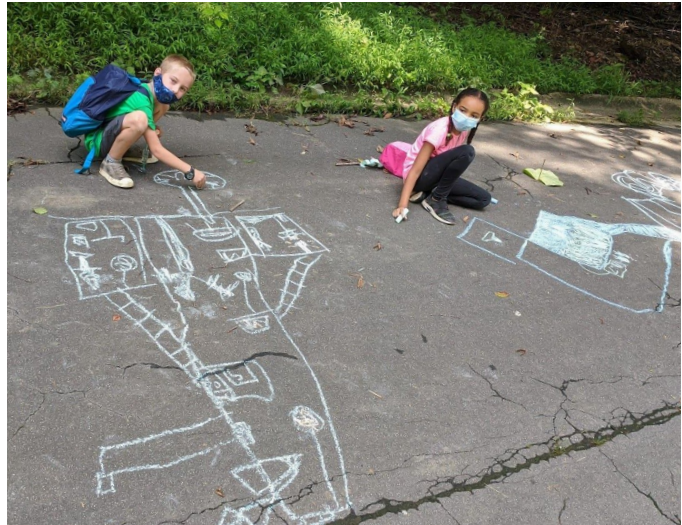
- Habitat
- Enrichment
- Captivity

Materials

- Chalk OR art materials and paper OR natural objects to design/build the home
- Animal ambassador (optional)

Preparation

- Gather art materials
- Properly transport animal



Opening Activities and Safety

Use the questions below to create a discussion and get their creative mind thinking before setting them loose with supplies. If time allows, going on a walk with the group in search of animals, their homes, nests, food sources, water, and so on is a great opener! This helps them realize that the world around them supports other life and is important in many different ways.

Questions to Pose

You can pose questions that help children form their own learning from direct observations outdoors. The purpose of these questions is not to explain or give answers, but to encourage children to listen, observe, inquire, discuss with each other, and arrive at conclusions on their own.

Questions may include:

- What do animals need to survive? (habitat - food, water, shelter, space)
- What material and daily care does it take to keep animals in captivity?
- Why would animals be captive?
- Why do wild animals deserve to stay wild?
- What makes you happy?
- What do you think makes animals happy?
- What would you include in their enclosures?

Transitions

- Creating an animal for their dream home (optional)
- Animal encounter (optional)

Closing Activities

- Have the kids present their homes. Discuss what animal it is for and how they designed it.
- Talk about what the center has and how we designed our enclosures/enrichment.

