



Wildlife Play

Vocabulary-Building with Animals

Beginner: Name animals. Talk about animals that live around us.

[Tip]: Where do they live? What do they eat? Make animal sound. Label their body parts (hooves, fins).

Intermediate: Ask “Who/What/When/Where/Why” questions about animals.

[Tip]: Talk about the different sizes of animals. Talk about predators and prey. Where do animals live in Manitoba? “Where is the owl?” and “What is a baby beluga called?” (a calf).

Experienced: Talk about different animal family characteristics.

[Tip]: For example: A wolf is ... like a dog (canine), ... a warm-blooded animal, ... a carnivore, ... a mammal, etc.

Why is this important? Talking about animals improves children's vocabulary and helps them learn about categories.

References: Lonigan, C. J., & Shanahan, T. (2009). Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel. Executive Summary. National Institute for Literacy. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508381.pdf>

Hedrick, A. M., Souci, P. S., Haden, C. A., & Ornstein, P. A. (2009). Mother-Child Joint Conversational Exchanges During Events: Linkages to Children's Memory Reports Over Time. *Journal of cognition and development* : official journal of the Cognitive Development Society, 10(3), 143–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15248370903155791>