

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Animals - Pretend & Play

There is lots of scope for including different types of pretend play with animals at playgroup. Acting as animals and making animal noises promotes active play.

Did you know?

Animals can be grouped in lots of different ways. You could use cards, pictures or toy animals to play sorting and category games. This is practicing early maths concepts and involves thinking and reasoning skills.

Questions for thinking and problem solving

Different levels of thinking questions can be matched to different ages of children. Young children can be asked to match animals e.g. "Find one like this". Older children can be asked to find animals from a specific category or by identifying features e.g. "Find all the ones that have feathers". Encouraging children to talk through why they put those animals together helps them develop more complex language skills in giving explanations.

Other development

Sets of toy animals and props give children a chance to work together to create animal homes, farms, zoos etc. This gives them a practice at sharing, planning, negotiating and solving problems with others.

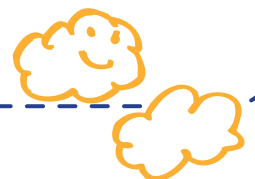


This is important for their social and emotional development.

Variations

Having a variety of toy animal sets, fluffy toy animals, lengths of fluffy or animal print material etc. available at playgroup allows children to explore different types of pretend animal play. The home corner could be transformed into a vet hospital or pet shop for a few weeks. Animal puppets are great for acting out stories. There are lots of easy animal art/craft ideas suitable for playgroups. Focus on the process of creation rather than what the final product actually looks like. This tends to stimulate more creativity, problem solving and imagination.

You could have an animal theme for a term and create a different animal each week!



- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa