



## MetroFamily Field Guides: A Trip to the OKC Zoo

The zoo is a great place to take your family as it's filled with a variety of things to see and do.

### Before you go:

Discuss animal groups and classifications. First, make a connection. Ask "How are people different?" How could people be separated into groups? Boys/girls? Long hair, short hair? Eye color? Then, explain that animals, too, have differences. What makes animals different from one another? Feathers? Scales? Brainstorm a list of animal traits. Then, ask your child how these animals could be separated into groups.

Discuss how scientists group animals into five basic groups:

- **Amphibians:** cold-blooded vertebrates such as frogs or salamanders
- **Fish:** an aquatic animal
- **Invertebrates:** lacking a spine
- **Mammals:** warm-blooded animals that nourish their young with milk
- **Reptiles:** an animal that crawls or moves on its belly (snake) or on short legs (lizard)

Visit the library to read about the pumpkin patch. Suggested reading titles (check your local library):

- *An A-maze-ing Zoo Adventure* by Jill Kalz
- *My Heart Is Like a Zoo* by Michael Hall
- *Where's Walrus?* by Stephen Savage

### For your outing you will need:

Basic Field Guide Kit (including small notebook, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, tape measure, permanent marker, sandwich zipper bags).

Additional materials used: small clipboard, compass

### Vocabulary to use while visiting:

**Habitat:** *the place a plant or animal normally lives and grows*

**Nocturnal:** *active at night*

## **Learning in Action:**

### **Math**

Tie in the learning of animal groups. Using the notebook, have the child create a page for each animal group. After observing an exhibit, keep tally of how many animals you see for each group. Remember, tally strokes are 4 then 1 crossover (groups of five). These tally marks can be used for graphing once back at home.

### **Language Arts & Science**

While walking through the zoo, discuss the characteristics of each animal and how to identify their classification group.

### **Social Studies**

While at the zoo, be sure to hand your child the map of attractions that is generally given to you at the front gate. On the map, draw a compass rose, including cardinal and intermediate directions (N, S, E, W, NE, SE, SW, NW). Occasionally ask your child what direction to walk when moving from one exhibit to the next. For example, you're at the elephants, ask, "What direction should we walk to see the monkeys?"

## **Bring It Home:**

### **Language Arts: creative writing/ personification**

The zoo is a great place for little imaginations. While at the zoo, ask your child to pick an animal to create a fictionalized story. For younger children, this can be dictated and written by a parent.

### **Visual Arts**

Have your child illustrate a scene from their story.

### **Science: contrasting animal habitats**

Discuss animal habitats and how the needs of animals are different. Then, use a t-chart or Venn diagram (attached) to write out those differences. For example, compare Grasslands to Forest.

### **Research/Enrichment**

Have your child choose a specific animal to research habitat. Then, using household items, create a shoebox habitat for that animal.

For more resources, visit [www.metrofamilymagazine.com](http://www.metrofamilymagazine.com)