Exploring the Adelaide Zoo with Preschoolers
Acknowledgements

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For the Teacher

General Information

Welcome to Adelaide Zoo!

The Zoo is a great place for learning. Adelaide Zoo Education aims to support student learning by providing resources to assist classes to have educational and enjoyable experiences at the Zoo.

In line with the National Early Years Learning Framework, we have designed this trail to support the following:
• holistic approach to children’s learning by exposing them to a variety of experiences
• responsiveness to children
• learning through play and exploration
• intentional teaching, offering facts and information on a variety of environmental topics
• physical and social learning environments that have a positive impact on children’s learning
• monitoring of children’s learning and support to children in achieving learning outcomes.

This booklet will provide a range of activities which may be undertaken by your students during their visit to the Zoo. A map and suggested order of activities is provided to give a logical circuit to travel during the visit.

Choose a theme for the group and let the supervisors read through the information and prompts beforehand. (On the day they will be busy counting heads, so it is they need to be prepared in advance.) This should enable them to conduct a fun and educational excursion with their group.

Animal species change from time to time, and sometimes animals are “off limits” or out of sight during visits, so a flexible approach to completion of activities is recommended.

In planning, please consider whether
♦ you would like your class to regroup for lunch, animal feeds, the Discovery Zone or at the Entrance at the end of the visit. If so, relay the times and meeting places to supervisors (in writing if possible.)
♦ you would like to use the Nocturnal House: if so, book a time when making the Zoo booking so your students are not disturbed by other school groups.
♦ you would like a Kindy Zoo program (“Aussie Animals” or “Animals Up-Close”) with a Zoo Education Officer to support your study theme. The 30 minute interactive sessions need to be booked when you make your class booking. The cost is $30 per program
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Teacher Information

The information provided over the next few pages is for preschool groups which are coming in for a Zoo visit without being involved in an Education program (ie. A Kindy Zoo).

PLACES THAT YOU  DO NOT  NEED TO BOOK PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT

Children’s Zoo contact area
Hand raised deer, goats and other animals can be patted or fed with food from the Children’s Zoo if available. Warning: these animals have no manners; if they see paper they will try to eat it – so please remove name tags for this area. Get adults to hold any food bags purchased.

Reptile House
A good location for a group visit as there is plenty of space to spread about and out of sight, whilst still staying fairly close together.

South-East Asian Rainforest:
A beautifully landscaped area with exciting viewing sites and great animal displays, linked by the common theme of the rainforest. Children enjoy the maze of steps, ramps, aviaries and viewing platforms.

Panda Forest
A great area to look at Pandas – Giant and Red, with beautiful signage and statues of a growing Giant Panda along the way.

Discovery Zone
A fun interpretive area featuring some amazing little animals and interactive activities.

THE PLACE THAT YOU MUST BOOK WITH THE EDUCATION SERVICE AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO VISIT

Nocturnal House
Contains many shy, nocturnal, native animals in dim light. It can be an exciting and challenging activity for children to proceed quietly and patiently, spotting the animals in their enclosures.
There are many other themes you may wish to use on your visit. For example, Birds, Carnivores, Aboriginal Dreaming stories, Camouflage or Animal Enclosures.
Notes for supervisors & teachers

Who’s who at the Zoo?

The prompts below are in roughly a “good walking trail order”, but with some animals (eg. the stripiest) widely spread, and children will need to recall the earlier ones. To visit all these animals will cover most of the zoo. If time or energy is limited, just map out a selection of items to focus on. If the animal is hiding, just leave that one – there are plenty of others to look at.

Brainstorm:
What animals do you expect to see when you come to the Zoo?
Some Zoo animals are very famous because they are so different to the animals that we have as pets or as farm animals. Can you think of some wild animals that are very different from other animals? How are they different?

Finding the extreme animals: Who is the “mostest?”

Tallest (Giraffe)
What is the name of these animals?
What do you think they eat in the wild? Why do you think so?
Can you see their tongues? These animals have probably got the longest tongue of any animal also (except maybe whales!)

Best laugher (Laughing Kookaburra)
Near the Giraffe area, opposite the old house, are some aviaries. Can you pick a bird out of these which is a great laugher? Have you ever heard them laugh? Can you laugh like them?

Spikiest (Echidna - in the Nocturnal House or below the Koalas)
Can you find a very spiky animal in the Nocturnal House? Do you know what it eats? (ants and termites.)
How do you think the keepers pick it up when they have to move it?
(Peccaries) Can you see the Collared peccaries that look a bit like pigs? Do they look soft to touch or not?
Do you think the Echidnas or peccaries would be the spikiest to touch.

Busiest (Spinifex hopping mice - Nocturnal House)
In the Nocturnal House, once you have gone past the aquaria and entered the main room, you will see the enclosure on your right.
What are these animals? Watch how fast they move. What are they doing? Are they the busiest animals you have seen?
(Common Shrew)
On the outside wall of the Nocturnal House, opposite the bird aviaries are some glass-fronted enclosures. Can you see some very busy animals in here? Do you think they are as busy as the Hopping mice?
Did you see the little animals that live right in front of the Giraffe enclosure? Were they busy? What were they doing? Could they be the busiest animals at the Zoo?

Roundest

What about these animals? If they pulled their legs and head into their shells, would they look like a big round rock? Are they round on the bottom or flat? How do you know?

Can you see these big fat animals or are they under the water all the time? If you can see them, can you see around their middles? Is that round?

Stillest

In the Reptile House there are many animals that do not need to move very much at all. Which one do you think is the stillest?

Bumpiest

Reptiles have dry scaly skin if they are not in the water. Some have flat scales and some have bumpy scales. Which reptile do you think has the bumpiest skin?

Longest

Some reptiles are very long and thin. Which one at the Zoo do you think is the longest reptile? How long do you think it might be?

Fattest (Hippopotamus)

These animals spend most of their daytime under the water. Can you see their bodies? Have you ever seen a fatter animal? Hippos also have the longest teeth and biggest mouth in the Zoo. They don’t open their mouths to show us very often.

Skinniest legs

How would you look if you had legs that skinny? Why do you think the stilts have such long legs? (Easy to wade in water looking for food.)

Are their legs longer than the stilts’ legs? Are they thinner? How do they get their name?
**Brightest colours** *Jewels of Asia Aviaries and Pheasantry*

Many of the birds that live in rainforests have very bright colours. So do some of the mammals (furry animals) like the Golden lion tamarin. Which type of animal do you think has the brightest colours?

**Biggest beak** *(Pelican)*

Why do you think this bird has such a big beak?

**Longest Claws** *(Malayan sun bear / Giant Panda / Sloth (inside Nocturnal House))*

Bears have very long claws. Have you seen any animals with longer ones? Are they very sharp? Do they look strong?

Sloths hang upside down in trees most of the time. Can you see how their long, curved claws would help them?

**Loudest voice** *(Siamang or Lion)*

Did you hear any noisy animals at the Zoo? Which ones are noisy? If you are lucky enough to hear the Siamangs singing or yelling to each other, you will know which animals have the loudest voice. If you see them singing, look at their throat sacs – these help to make their voices loud. Did you hear any of the big cats roar? They have very loud voices too.

**Reddest bottom** *(Baboons)*

Some people think these bottoms are sore. They are not. This is just the way baboons look! They think their red bottoms are beautiful. Are their bottoms redder than the Mandrills’?

**Longest hair** *(Orangutans)*

Would you like to have hair like this? How would you brush it each day? Do the Orangutans have hair on their face?

**Fastest Swimmers** *(Sea Lions)*

Why are the legs and arms of sea lions different from most furry animals? Can you see how these help them to swim in the water? Can you see the Sea lions nostrils? Why do they close when the Sea lion is under the water?

**Best**

Now you have seen many animals in the Zoo. Different people like different things. What animal did you like the best today? Why did you like it best?
Living in Water

Brainstorm:
What animals live in water?
Could people live in water all the time?
Why is it hard for people to live in water? (Cold, wet, can’t breathe, hard to move fast, can’t get food, can’t run away from sharks, big fish, crocodiles.)

What animals live in water?
Observe and talk about them. There are plenty of animals to choose from here. You may just want to select a few.

Crocodile or Alligator
Look at the Crocodile’s teeth. What do Crocodiles eat? How do they catch their food? How do they sneak up on animals?
Crocodiles often hide in the water, but still need to breathe and to look around. Can you see how the crocodile could hide, but still have its eyes and nostrils above the water? Baby crocodiles are often doing this.
When Crocodiles swim they swish their body and tail around to move. Can you swish your arm around like a Crocodile swimming?

Western Swamp Tortoise (in Nocturnal House foyer)
These tortoises are adults – this is as big as they get.
Look at their webbed feet. This helps them to swim in the water.
What is their food? How do they breathe? See how long they can hold their breath for.

Hippopotamus
Hippopotamus spend most of their days in the water, and come out at night to eat their food, which is grass or hay. They are very big, heavy animals, and they probably feel much lighter when they are in the water.
Do they have to come right out of the water to see and breathe?

Little Blue Penguins
Look at the Little Blue Penguins swimming.
What do their wings look like? How do they help the penguins?
Where do the Penguins make their nests?
The Penguins colour is special. When they are swimming, hungry eagles flying in the sky can’t see them on the top of the dark blue sea. Also, hungry sharks swimming below can’t see them with the bright sunshine above them.
**Ducks**
Ducks have oily feathers that stop them from getting wet. See how their feathers stay dry when they are swimming in water? Would ducks get cold when they are swimming for a long time?

Look at the ducks’ feet. How do these help the duck in the water?
Can you hear any ducks talking to each other? What noise do they make? Can you make that noise too?

**Pelicans**
Pelicans have feet like ducks to help them in the water. In what ways are pelicans different from ducks?

**Fish** *(In Discovery Zone pond-small, or Nocturnal House-big)*
Fish spend all of their time in the water. They even breathe in the water. Do you know how they breathe? How do fish move themselves in the water?

**Sealions**
Watch the Sealions swimming around their pool. Why are they such good swimmers? Do you think that they would be good runners? Can you see the Sealions close their nostrils when they are swimming under the water?
Sealions sometimes swim in very cold water. They have a lot of fat under their skin to help them keep warm. That is why they are so smooth, instead of being bony.

**Otters**
Do you think the otters are good swimmers? How do they swim in the water?
Notice how the otters fur doesn’t get really wet when they are swimming. They have oily fur like the ducks’ feathers. Look at their feet. What do you think they could do with their feet? (Dig? Hold their food? Swim well?)
Animals in the Dark

At the entrance to the Nocturnal House, ask the children to slow down so their eyes can get used to the dark. Some water-living animals live in the entrance area.

Western Swamp Tortoise

This little tortoise comes from Western Australia. There are only about 400 left in the whole world, so Adelaide Zoo is very lucky to have some. These tortoises live in swampy land in Western Australia and in the summer time all the water dries up. So these tortoises dig into the mud and go to sleep until the winter rains wake them up. Then they swim around, eat and have fun until the water dries out again.

Murray Cod

These fish were very important food for the Aborigines that used to live near the rivers. Can you see the fish’s gills? Gills help most fish to breathe – they get air out of the water. Can you see the fins that help the fish to move and balance in the water?

Lung Fish

These are funny fish because they have gills like normal fish, but they also have lungs in their body, which is how most land animals and people breathe. So lung fish can come out of the water for a while and breathe the air! Would you like to be able to breathe in water as well as in air?

In the Nocturnal House

The Nocturnal House has dim lights, and once properly adjusted, children’s eyes will see remarkably well – better than aging adult eyes! Most of the animals in the main area are shy, so encourage the children to tip-toe and whisper. The quieter and stiller they are, the more they will see.

In the bush, the Nocturnal House animals like to run around at night. When do you think they go to sleep?

Many of them live in the very hot desert areas. Why do you think they like to run around in the night-time? (Cooler, fewer predators.)

If you can see their eyes, notice how big and “poppy” they are. This helps them to see in the dark.

These animals are mostly very shy. If you can’t see them at first, wait very quietly for a while and look carefully all around their home. If you spot them, you can point to them so your friends can see, but don’t make a noise or they might hide again.

Are the animals you see plant eaters or meat eaters or plant and meat eaters? Ask your teacher or adult helper what the signs say about their food.

How many different sorts of animals that you see are flying animals?

Near the end of the visit, look around. How well can you see in the dark now? Did you think your eyes were that good when you came in here?
Reptiles

*Most of the Zoo’s reptiles live in the Reptile House. There are some lizards and snakes in the Discovery Zone and some of the critically endangered Western Swamp Tortoises in the Nocturnal House.*

**American Alligators**

Look at the skin of the American Alligators. Notice how big their scales are. Does their skin look tough? How would that help them?

Why do you think the alligators like to lie in the sun so much? Reptiles have to soak up the sunshine to get their body warm and active. Furry animals and birds have a naturally warm body. We sometimes call them warm-blooded. Reptiles that live in cold places really need to warm up before they can move quickly to run away from predators or to catch their food. What sort of weather do you think reptiles like the best?

Can you see the alligators’ teeth? Do you think they are meat eaters or plant eaters?

See where the alligator’s eyes and nostrils are? Sometimes they like to hide in the water without moving while they look around. How can they do that?

**Snakes and lizards**

Many snakes are very poisonous, and can kill people or animals if they bite them. Some of the venomous snakes you might see in the Reptile House are the Desert Death Adder, the Aruba Island Rattle Snake, the Inland Taipan and the Forest Cobra.

Pythons are not poisonous snakes, but can still give people a nasty bite if you scare them. Could you find these pythons? the Green Tree Python, the Blood Python, the Woma or the Anaconda?.

Were you able to see the Pygmy Blue Tongue lizard? These are very rare animals and are quite shy. Sometimes they just stick their noses out of their holes.

**Turtles and tortoises.**

What do the Aldabra Giant Tortoises look like when they are being very still?

Can you see any more turtles in with the Fresh Water Crocodiles? Why don’t the crocodiles eat them?
Living in a Rainforest

The South East Asian Rainforest exhibit is a great place to start. Other rainforest animals are located in nearby enclosures also.

Brainstorm:

Have you ever heard of a rainforest? This is a forest where it rains nearly every day. What grows well when there is plenty of rain?

How big do you think trees would grow in a place like that? Do you think lots of animals would live in a rainforest? Why?

Some trees grow very tall in a rainforest. Many vines grow on the trees and grow up towards the light. Some plants even grow on the side of the trees. If you were standing on the ground in a rainforest, nearly all the sky would be blocked out by trees. Would it be very light on the ground? How would the ground feel if you had bare feet? Why? At the Zoo, some of the places where rainforest animals live have been made to look and feel like a real rainforest.

SOUTH EAST ASIAN RAINFOREST

Malayan Sun Bear

Can you see the Sun Bears? They are both grown ups, but Sun Bears are the smallest type of bear in the world. Can you see their claws? This helps them to climb trees. Sometimes Sun Bears have to break apart bits of tree trunk to get honey from inside and they need very strong claws for that.

Sun Bears love fruit and vegetables. The keepers hide their food when the bears are in their bedroom at night, and they have to find it by looking and sniffing around when they come out to their day-time area. They have very good noses to help them. Why do you think the keepers do this? It would be easier just to put all the food in a bowl. (It makes eating more interesting, keeps them busy and makes them develop their skills at smelling, climbing and problem solving.)

Aviary

How many different kinds of birds can you find? Can you find all the ones on the signs? Birds in rainforest often have very bright colours. Why do you think this is? (So they can find each other easier in the dim, thick jungle.)

Platform areas / down stairs etc.

Can you see any monkeys in the tree in the Tapir enclosure? Sometimes you can find them by looking for their long tails hanging down. Have a look at their fingers and toes. Why are they so good for climbing?

Can you see the Tapirs? Look at their unusual noses. How could these noses help them? Do Tapirs remind you of any other animals? What? Why? Do you think Tapirs could climb trees? Why / why not?
Orangutans

These animals are called apes. Siamangs are apes too. Apes are very clever monkeys that are quite big, and don't have tails.

In the wild Orangutans climb trees. Why did the Zoo workers build big climbing structures instead of planting trees? (It takes a long time for really big trees to grow. The Orangutans would probably knock smaller trees down when they tried to climb them. They might even eat very small trees. It was quicker and safer for the workers to build climbing gear.)

Tigers

The tigers need to hide in the rainforest so they can sneak up on animals to eat them. How do their colours help them? If you see the teeth of the tigers or other big cats, how do they look different from peoples' teeth? Why do they have teeth like this?

TAMARIN HOUSE

Tamarins live high up in the trees in a rainforest. They must be very good climbers because if they fell off the branches they would probably die.

What can you see on the Tamarins that would help them to climb safely? (Thumbs on hands and feet to help them to hang on, claws for grip, eyes at the front of their head to see the branches better, tiny bodies so they don't weigh the branches down or snap them off.)
Animal coverings

Brainstorm

- What sort of “covering” do people have? Skin? Hair? (under the clothes!)
- Is everyone the same? Hair colour? Straight or curly? Amount?
- Do all animals have hair? Is fur the same as hair? What about wool? Examples of some animals with hair. Examples of animals that do not have hair? Eg. lizards, birds, fish, frogs.
- Do these different coverings help the animals? Keep them warm? Hide them? Protect them from predators (echidna?) Help them find each other in a forest? (tropical birds)

Good animals to include in your walking trail

Just about any animals could be used for this theme. Some obvious ones are:

Tree Kangaroo: How long did it take you to find them? Why are they hard to see?

Echidna: (Nocturnal House). Would you like to pick up an echidna? How do you think Zoo keepers pick them up when they need to move them somewhere else? How does the Echidna’s body covering help it?

Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby: When they sit still on the rocks are they easy to see? What animals might eat little Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies? (eg. foxes, cats, eagles, dingoes) Where would the babies go when they are being chased? (mother’s pouch)

Reptiles: Which reptiles are well camouflaged and hard to see when they lie still? Did you find the Green Tree Python? Can you guess why the Gila Monster is very easy to see with its bright colours? (Warning to predators that “I am venomous-so leave me alone.”)

Look at the shells of the Mata Mata and the giant tortoise. How tough do you think they are? What would the tortoises do if a predator was coming towards them?

Penguin: The Penguin has oily feathers. Oil stops the feathers from getting wet when it swims, so it stays warmer swimming, and dries off quickly when it is out of the water. Is this a good idea? Could you swim all day in very cold water? The Penguins are dark blue on the back and whitish on the front. Watch them swimming. If a big shark was swimming below the Penguin, and looked up with the bright daylight sky above the top of the water, do you think the light tummy of the penguin would make it harder to see? If a big Sea Eagle was flying over the dark blue sea and looked down to where the Penguins were swimming, do you think the dark back of the Penguin would make it harder to see? Do you know that many fish and seals have dark backs and light fronts for this reason too?

Blue and Gold Macaw. See these flying around the Central Lawns at 1pm.

These Macaws have very bright colours. They live in thick, dark rainforests. Sometimes they get lost and cannot find their friends and family. How do you think their coloured feathers could help them when they are looking for other macaws? Many of the other brightly coloured birds at the Zoo come from rainforests too, eg. the big Cassowary, Red Conure, Siamese Fireback Pheasant etc.

African Painted Hunting Dogs. See how each one has a different pattern on its body. These animals live in a pack. They need to stay with the group to be happy. When they are running around in tall grass in Africa, they wag their tails in the air. Why would this help them?
How do animals MOVE at the Zoo?

Brainstorm:
How do people move?
Is everyone the same?
(Opportunity to discuss Ability / Skill / Disability / Age / Aids or equipment)
How do different animals move?
Does having 2 legs/ 4 legs/ no legs affect the way the animal moves?

Below are listed some good animals to include in the walking trail. Some of these animals are found in the Nocturnal House and these have the symbol “N” next to them.

Encourage children to be patient if animals are pausing in their activities, and to use good observation skills when they are talking about the animals moving.

Climbers – Barbary Sheep, Koalas, Possums
Runners – Meerkats, Otters
Waddlers – Echidna N, Penguins
Sliders – Snakes
Hoppers – Hopping mice N, Wallabies, Kangaroos
Swimmers – Fish, Penguins, Otters, Ducks, Sea lions, Hippos
Fliers – Bats N, Parrots,
Walkers – Hippos, Cassowaries, Giraffes, Emus
Swinging – Siamangs
Giant Pandas and their Friends

The Panda Forest includes a lot of signage, statues of life-size baby pandas, starting from just before birth near the start of the trail.

**Bamboo and other plants.** What do Pandas eat? (99% bamboo in the wild). At Adelaide Zoo, they eat lots of fresh bamboo, and also Panda cake, which has bamboo flour, vegetable oil, eggs, salt and other ingredients in it. There are many different types of bamboo plants; can you see some of them on your walk around?

**Panda statues** Can you see the white stone pillars with statues of Pandas as you walk along the Panda Forest trail? Each one has a statue of a baby Panda, a little bit older than the one before. What are the baby Pandas doing?

**Bridge across the creek.** Look carefully around here. You might see some other animals that come from the same parts of China as the Pandas. Can you see goldfish in the water? What about some Mandarin Ducks?

**Funi and Wang Wang.** Funi is the girl Giant Panda and Wang Wang is the boy. Can you see them? They don’t live together, as Panda’s like to live on their own after they leave their mothers. Do you like their colours? What are they doing? Can you see their teeth and claws? Are they outside or inside? They don’t like really hot days, but they have specially cool rocks, shade, water and a cave, so mostly they stay outside during the day. Are they bigger than you? Look how big their heads are. See if the adults can find out from the signs how old they are.

**Red Pandas** Red Pandas are not bears, but they are a bit like Giant Pandas; they mostly eat bamboo, they have a special hand that can grip bamboo easily and they live in the same parts of China. They are also very good climbers like Giant Pandas. What are the Red Pandas doing?

What else did you see in the Panda Forest that you liked?