



# CARE FOR ANIMALS GRADES 3-5

## MOBILE AMBASSADOR ANIMAL PROGRAM

*Ambassador Animal Initiative*

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

An animal keeper-led, empathy-based Ambassador Animal program that will be available for off-site audiences such as after-school groups, classrooms, etc. Audience members will gain a greater understanding of how Woodland Park Zoo animal keepers provide daily care to the many individual animals at the zoo.

### MATERIALS

- Painter's Tape (to mark the "animal zone" on the floor)
- Hand Sanitizer (for use after a touch opportunity if it is made available)
- Enrichment Items for various animals to show as examples
- Cardstock printed with "I pledge to help animals by..."

### NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

#### Driving Question:

What are the ways people can satisfy the wants and needs of the animals in their care?

#### Crosscutting Concept:

- Cause and Effect

#### Disciplinary Core Ideas (Grades 3-5)

- LS4.C: Adaptation
  - For any particular environment, some kinds of organisms survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.

#### Science and Engineering Practice

- Engaging in Argument from Evidence

### PRIMARY EMPATHY OBJECTIVES

Participants should be able to...

1. Demonstrate a greater understanding of animals' needs
  - Describe what animals need to survive and also what individual animals further need to thrive on a daily basis
2. Demonstrate increased positive attitudes toward animals, such as respect and appreciation
  - Describe animals using positive terms

## INDICATORS OF EMPATHY OBJECTIVES

- Child demonstrates cognitive understanding of animal needs
  - Understands that people and animals share common, basic needs of food and water
    - *“I don’t like to feel hungry, so animals probably don’t either.”*
  - Understands the variety of needs of an animal, including biological, activity, social, psychological, and ecological
    - *“Some animals prefer to live alone and some prefer to live in groups.”*
  - Understands similarities between self and animals
    - *“I like having soft and warm places to sleep, too.”*
  - Understands differences between self and animals
    - *“My family will take care of me for many years, but lots of animals don’t need to stay with their families for very long.”*
- Child can take perspective of animals
  - Can predict or infer the state of an animal based on understanding of the animal’s needs
    - *“If a porcupine lets us see her belly, it’s because she’s not afraid of us.”*
  - Demonstrates embodied empathy by mimicking the behavior of another animal
    - *Acting out social gestures of bearded lizards*
  - Demonstrates action or behavior based on making the animal feel safe or calm
    - *Sitting quietly and respectfully in their seats*

## DEMO SCRIPT (3<sup>RD</sup>-5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE AUDIENCE)

### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

#### a. Slide One (1 minute) image of keepers providing care on zoo grounds

Hi! Thanks for having me here today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an animal keeper at Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. *Introduce how long you have wanted to work with animals at the zoo: has it been since you were a kid? Has it been since you studied in college? Was it a nearby zoo that made you want to be a keeper? Was it your pet dog?*  
*Share that journey in a few words with the group.*

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#### b. Slide Two (3 minutes) image of various people at the zoo at work

Does anybody here know what they want to be when they grow up? *Take as many responses as are volunteered. Ooh and aah over their choices!*

Those are some really exciting jobs! And you know what? There are lots of cool jobs out there. We all might change our minds a few times before we decide on what makes us the happiest. We have to try new things to find out if we like them or not. We all have different likes and dislikes because we're all unique individuals.

#### c. Slide Three (1 minute) various animal species

Animals are individuals, too. They also have different likes and dislikes. Animal keepers learn how to care for every single animal at the zoo, and we have to know what makes each animal feel happy, safe, and comfortable.

## II. How animal keepers help the animals in their care (5 minutes)

### d. Slide Four image of dog with water bowl?

Let's talk about how to care for animals. What do all animals need to stay alive? *Space, air, water, food.*

Let's imagine that you're alone on a deserted island. What would you need to stay alive? Do you need the same things that all animals need? We all need space to move around in, air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat. Can anyone tell me the difference between something we need and something we want? Needs are the things that keep us alive. Wants can help to make life more fun or interesting. Animals have wants and needs, too.

### e. Slide Five family groups

In addition to giving every animal clean water, the right nutrition for their needs, and a clean, safe, comfortable place to live, we are always trying to find ways to help each animal thrive, which means they're living their best life. Some animals need to be around their families to feel happy. What kinds of animals like to live in groups? *Flamingos, capybara, herring, etc.* Some feel happier when they are alone. Can anyone name an animal who prefers to live alone? *Albatross, jaguars, whale sharks.*

All animals need to have choices. We give them choices such as whether or not to participate in a training or choices such as where they would like to sleep at nighttime (or daytime!).

f. Slide Six enrichment montage video

Enrichment is an important way we give the animals choices. Enrichment is a change or an addition to an animal's habitat, or its home, which enhances their environment, encourages their natural behaviors, and gives them the opportunities to make choices. Wanna see some animals with their enrichment? Of course you do! I do, too. *Hit play on video*

g. Slide Seven image of today's animal??

How did the animals in the video look to you? How do you think they felt? We spend a lot of time with animals, watching them to see if they are enjoying themselves, and we spend a lot of time talking to them and getting them comfortable with us. One of the most important ways that we help our animals thrive is by spending a lot of time with them. Keepers are experts on animals in general, but it is still important that we know about the personalities of each animal in our care so that we can learn how to help each animal live their best life. Today, I brought an animal I have been working with and getting to know for a while now. She/he likes to meet new people, too. Would you like to meet (INSERT ANIMAL'S NAME HERE)?

**III. Meet an individual! (15 minutes)**

**A.** First, we need to know a few really important things.

1. We can help our guest feel more comfortable if we respect her space. See this line on the floor? That means that this side of the line is her space and that side of the line is your space.
2. Animals, just like a lot of people, prefer to be in a room with people who are calm and use quiet voices.

*Model what that looks like with "silent applause" or reminding them to raise their hands if they have questions.*

3. I am also going to ask all of you to try to watch her the way a keeper needs to watch the animals they care for. We use our eyes to watch for changes in their behavior, to check their moods, and to find out if they are comfortable or not.

*B. Introduce the animal and give personal information about what kind of animal they are, what the species eats, their personal favorite foods, etc.*

*C. Discuss how training is participatory. Today's animal guest is choosing to participate. They can choose to wander around instead, and that is okay, too. We will simply ask them again. We want the animals to always have positive experiences with us.*

*D. Where appropriate, incorporate the Five Opportunities you provide this animal. Nutrition: fresh, clean water, and a well-balanced diet. Environment: how you've made it appropriate. Optimal health: how they have been trained to actively participate in their own care. Species-specific behavior: how their social groupings have been determined. Opportunities for choice and control, etc.*

*E. Respond to questions as you are able*

#### **IV. Wrap up! (10 minutes)**

**A.** Thank you all for meeting our special guest (INSERT ANIMAL'S NAME HERE). I would like everyone to share with their group how they feel about meeting (INSERT ANIMAL'S NAME HERE).

*Give everyone a minute or two to share with their groupmates their reflections from the experience.*

**B.** Who would like to share their feelings about meeting (INSERT ANIMAL'S NAME HERE)?

*Call on a few and really listen to their responses. Respond appropriately*

- C. Animals also have feelings. They can feel happy, worried, excited. I would now like everyone to think about how they think (INSERT ANIMAL'S NAME HERE) felt about meeting all of you.
- D. Who would like to share? How do you think she felt today?
- a. *Follow up their statements with further appropriate questions about why they think that. What kind of signals did they pick up from the animal ambassador? Ask them to explain their thinking. If you saw signals that the animal was comfortable or even happy, share those observations. You know the animal best because you have spent so much time with them. Share your knowledge of this individual's personality.*
- E. As a keeper, it's important that I try to understand how the animals feel. I want to help them live happy lives. What are some ways that we can help the animals who live with us, like our dogs and cats, or the animals who live near us, like pigeons and raccoons? Take a moment to think about it, and then I would like everyone to write down how they will help animals.
- F. *If time allows, have each student state their pledge and discuss their ideas.*
- G. Thank you all for helping all of us at the zoo care for animals! It was so nice to meet you all today! I hope that you enjoyed learning about how we care for each individual animal at the zoo. Thanks for letting (INSERT ANIMAL'S NAME HERE) and me visit your classroom today! It felt great to meet all of you!

## Outline

### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Introduce Self as an Animal Keeper and why you're a keeper.
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- b. Ask others what they would like to be/do someday. We should all try new things to find out what we like/dislike. We're all different because we're all individuals.
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- c. Animals are individuals, too
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### II. How animal keepers help the animals in their care thrive on a daily basis (10 minutes)

- a. What do all living things, including us, need to survive? What are the differences between wants and needs?
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- b. How we find ways to help all animals thrive... Animals need choices to thrive.
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- c. Enrichment
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- d. How we get to know animals as individuals
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**III. Meet an individual! (15 minutes)**

- a. Ground Rules, Empathy Guidelines, Request to watch the animal closely

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- b. Share facts about the species and the individual

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- c. Training is participatory. Note if an animal chooses not to participate and explain how you are responding to that choice.

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**IV. Wrap up! (10 minutes)**

- a. Have everyone share how they felt about meeting the animal

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- b. How do you think the animal felt about meeting all of you?

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- c. Take a pledge! How can you help animals?

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- d. It felt great to meet all of you!