This week in our centers, our prekindergarteners would typically be learning about the fascinating and exciting world of wild animals! Even though we’re not in our centers right now, there are lots of ways you can bring the fun of wild animals to life at home. Try a few of our tips and tricks as you plan activities for the week ahead:

Our guide for prekindergarten blends active experiences with more low-key lessons. We suggest ways to incorporate independent play within a daily schedule that offers children comforting routines by alternating between family activities and solo activities. And as always, the guide makes connections between everyday tasks like cutting sandwiches and zipping up jackets and educational areas like math and motor skills.

Our activities for this age group include:
- Opportunities to work on social emotional learning.
- We’ve even included some Learning Adventures content.
- Tips on mixing it up by adding mindfulness to active activities and movement to more sedentary activities.

Developmental Domains are the areas of focus that support development of the whole child. Interested in learning more? Click here to discover the six developmental domains.
This Week’s Theme: Wild Animals

What you’ll find in this guide... We’ve organized this content the way your child would be learning it in their center, but you and your child can choose your own adventures and do the activities in any order.

MONDAY
Read with Me (Language and Literacy)
Wild Animal Read-Aloud Your child will take a walk on the wild side as they learn about wild animals through books.

My Cat Read-Aloud Your child uses homemade letter cards and a well-known children’s song to review the sounds of six letters and the word family /at/, then read-aloud to My Cat.

TUESDAY
Get the Wiggles Out (Physical Development and Wellness)
Wild Birds Your child learns about three types of birds while playing a movement game.

Express Yourself (Creative Expression)
Measuring Up Herbs de Provence Your child learns about herbs as you prepare this delicious seasoning that can be used to flavor vegetables, meats, and more!

WEDNESDAY
Get the Wheels Turning (Cognitive Development)
How Many Spots? Your child uses number cards to determine how many spots their giraffe should have.

Modern Mail Your child explores different modes of communication, then uses a movie-making app to create and share a video with a friend or loved one.

THURSDAY
Express Yourself (Creative Expression)
“The Bear Went Over the Mountain” Your child uses props and movement to act out the song “The Bear went Over the Mountain”.

Make a Shaker Your child makes a DIY musical instrument, then plays along to a beautiful song sung in English and Twe.

FRIDAY
Rhyme with Me (Language and Literacy)
What Rhymes with Bat? Your child learns about bats and explore rhyming words that end in the /at/ sound.

Virtual Field Trip: San Diego Zoo Live Cams Your child can watch live webcams in different areas of the San Diego Zoo.

EVERYDAY LEARNING EXPERIENCES
Pick an activity to weave learning experiences into your everyday routines—no preparation needed!

FOCUS ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
Teaching social and emotional skills can be intertwined in everything you do. You’ll find tips and activities to help your child continue developing these essential skills at home.
Getting Ready for the Week: Materials to Gather

- Beads or tiny pebbles in a container
- Blender (optional, for your use only)
- Camera, digital (on iPad, tablet, or smartphone)
- Cotton balls, pompoms, bingo markers, or other small items that can be used as spots (15)
- Herbs, dried (Basil, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Savory, Thyme)
- How Many Spots sheet
- "I Am a Jewel" song lyrics
- "I Am a Jewel" music with song lyrics
- Magnifying glass (optional)
- Marker
- Masking or other heavy tape
- My Cat by Lyssa Horvath, illustrated by Krista Martenson
- Measuring spoons
- Herbs de Provence recipe
- iMovie or other movie-making app
- Number Cards for 1 through 15
- Plastic egg or small cardboard tube
- Scissors (for your use)
- Sheet of paper
- Small sealable container
- Spoon
- Stapler (if using a cardboard tube)
- Video demonstrating how to make a shaker
- World map or globe (optional)

Tip: At the beginning of your week, gather materials and place them in a container so you’re ready to go!
MONDAY

Read with Me: Wild Animal Read-Aloud

Take a walk on the wild side and learn about wild animals through books.

What your child is learning: This activity helps your child understand the relationship between pictures and text, and gives them practice asking questions to learn more information and make predictions.

What you do: Invite your child to select a book about wild animals. Begin by showing your child the pictures in the book, and ask them what they think the book is going to be about. Read the book to your child. After reading, talk with your child about the book. Did they correctly guess what the book would be about? Invite them to share what they learned from the book or any parts they liked. Tell your child that over the next several days, they will be doing activities to help them learn about wild animals.

If your child is ready: Help your child make a list of things they’d like to learn about wild animals. Over the next couple weeks, look for opportunities in the activities to help them learn about these things, or help your child research and learn more about these things on their own.
Read with Me: My Cat Read Aloud with Letter and Word Family Review
Use homemade letter cards and a well-known children’s song to review the sounds of six letters and the word family /at/, then read-aloud to My Cat.

What you need:
- Video link to the book My Cat by Lyssa Horvath, illustrated by Krista Martenson
- Marker
- Scissors (for your use)
- Sheet of paper

What your child is learning:
- Word family at and /at/ as the ending sound in consonant/vowel/consonant words
- Building words using a word family
- Beginning to read words
- Name and shapes of uppercase and lowercase M, C, A, P, S, and T
- Saying the /m/, /k/, /a/, /p/, /s/, and /t/ sounds and hearing them in words
What you do: Cut the paper into seven pieces. With your child watching, write the uppercase and lowercase versions of a letter on each piece of paper (you will have one piece of paper left over): Mm, Cc, Aa, Pp, Ss, and Tt (your child can do this, if they already know how). Ask your child to name each letter as you write it. Talk together about the sound each letter makes.

Spread the letter cards randomly on a table in front of you. As you sing the following tune about each letter and its sound, ask your child to find the corresponding letter.

Teach your child the following song verse to the tune of “Where, Oh, Where Has My Little Dog Gone?”

Where, oh, where has my letter M gone?
Where, oh, where can it be?
With an /m/-/m/-/m/-/m/-/m/-/m/-/m/,
Oh, can you find it for me?

While you are singing the song with your child, pause before saying the letter sound to give your child a chance to respond with the correct letter sound that goes with the letter. Repeat the song by inserting the appropriate letter and sound into this verse.

Offer your child encouragement throughout the process to boost their confidence. Be sure to give them enough time to find the letter sound on their own but be ready with helpful hints if they need them!

Write at on the remaining piece of paper. Explain that when the letters a and t are put together in this way, they make the /at/ sound. The /at/ sound is made up of two smaller sounds, /a/ and /t/. Show your child how to blend the two sounds together by sweeping your finger under the letters from left to right and lengthening the sounds /aaattt/.

Explain that at is a word family. “Word families are groups of words that have the same ending sound, like the ending at.” Tell your child that the book they are going to hear has lots of words with the at word family and the letters they’ve reviewed in them. Play the video and invite your child to watch along as the book is read aloud. After viewing, help your child recall the different at words they heard.

If you like, you can mute the audio while you play the video and read the book aloud yourself. Or if your child is ready, they can do the reading!

Questions to ask:
- Who is the story about?
- What does the cat do?
- How do the illustrations help tell the story?
- How do the illustrations make you feel?
- What are the at words you saw and heard?
Get the Wiggles Out: Wild Birds
Learn about three types of birds while playing a movement game

What your child is learning:
Through this activity your child will explore different types of movements involving large motor and balancing skills, while learning about how different types of birds move.

What you do:
Ask your child what they know about birds, and to name any birds they are familiar with. Tell them that you are going to play a game where they pretend to be birds. Talk with your child about the three types of birds in the game.

- **Flamingo** - Ask your child what they know about flamingos. Share that flamingos stand on one leg when they sleep. Invite your child to stand on one leg for as long as they can. Ask your child what it would be like to sleep standing on one leg.

- **Eagle** - Ask your child what they know about eagles. Share that eagles have large, strong wings that they use to soar through the sky. Invite your child to stretch out their arms and soar around like an eagle.

- **Robin** - Ask your child what they know about robins. Share that when robins are on the ground, they hop on both feet to move from place to place. Invite your child to hop around like a robin.

Explain that to play the game, you will call out a bird and they will perform the action for that bird until you call out the next bird. Begin the game and continue calling out birds for as long as your child is interested. Plot twist: switch rolls and give your kiddo a turn to call out the birds while you do the actions!

If your child is ready:
Invite your children to think of other birds they are familiar with and how they move. Invite them to create movements for those birds and add them to the game.
Express Yourself: Measuring Up Herbs de Provence
Learn about herbs as you prepare this delicious seasoning that can be used to season vegetables, meats, and more!

**What you need:**
- Dried herbs* (Basil, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Savory, Thyme)
- Blender (optional, for your use only)
- Small sealable container
- Magnifying glass (optional)
- World map or globe (optional)
- Measuring spoons
- Spoon
- Herbs de Provence recipe

*Note: If you are missing some of the herbs noted in the recipe, that’s okay! You can substitute another herb or simply omit any that you don’t have on hand.

**What your child is learning:**
- Literacy and math skills such as reading, following instructions, and measuring
- Food safety
- Cooking-related vocabulary
- How foods change during the cooking process
- Increased openness to trying foods they’ve prepared
- Cultural origins of different foods
What you do: Ask your child what they know about herbs and spices. After your child shares, tell them that herbs and spices come from plants and are used to flavor the foods we eat. Herbs are the leaves of plants. Examples of herbs are mint, basil, oregano, and thyme. Spices come from other parts of plants, including the roots (ginger), bark (cinnamon), bulbs (garlic), and seeds (mustard).

Show your child the herbs and share the name of each. Explain that these are all herbs, which means they are all leaves from plants. Invite your child to examine how each herb looks and feels. Show your child how to safely smell each herb, by holding the container a few inches in front of their nose and gently waving a hand over the container, toward their nose. Which herb do they think smells the best?

Tell your child that you will be making Herbs de Provence, a seasoning from the southern region of France. If you have a world map or globe, show your child where France is. There are many different recipes for Herbs de Provence, but most recipes include rosemary, thyme, savory, and oregano.

Make the seasoning Herbs de Provence, using the recipe provided. Have your child help measure each herb and place it in the blender. While measuring the herbs, talk with your child about the math involved in cooking. Without math, we wouldn’t know how much of each ingredient to use, to make a recipe taste the way it’s supposed to! Pulse the herbs until they form a coarse powder. Pour the powder into the sealable container. (If you don’t have a blender, simply measure each herb into a bowl and stir to combine.)

Invite your child to help you use the Herbs de Provence to season meat, seafood, vegetables, or soup for an upcoming meal.

Offer your child praise throughout the process to boost their confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth. After preparing the recipe, have your child help with clean up, giving them specific jobs to complete. Thank your child for helping.

Questions to ask:
- What did you enjoy about preparing Herbs de Provence?
- Which herbs did you think smelled the best?
- What food do you think we should season with our Herbs de Provence?
**WEDNESDAY**

Get the Wheels Turning: How Many Spots?
Use number cards to determine how many spots the giraffe should have

- **Length of activity:** 10–15 minutes*
- **Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** Low
- **Level of Prep Required:** High
- **What you need:**
  - Cotton balls, pompoms, bingo markers, or other small items that can be used as spots (15)
  - How Many Spots sheet
  - Number cards for 1–15

**What your child is learning:** Through this activity your child is developing their counting skills, identifying the number of objects in a set, and improving eye-hand coordination.

**What you do:** Print one copy of the How May Spots? giraffe outline and one copy of the Number cards for 1 through 15. If you do not have a printer, draw a simple outline of a giraffe on a sheet of paper and use paper squares or index cards to create your own number cards.

Shuffle the number cards and put them in a stack face down. Give your child the giraffe outline and the collection of spots. Have your child flip over the top card and read the number or count the number of dots on the card. Then have them place the same number of spots on their giraffe. Have them count the number of spots on their giraffe to make sure it is the same number as is shown on the card. Then they can remove the spots, turn over a new card, and repeat the process until they have gone through all of the cards.

**If your child is ready:** Using only the number cards for 1 through 6, have your child flip over two cards at a time, count the total number of dots on both cards, and place that many spots on their giraffe.
Get the Wheels Turning: Modern Mail
Explore different modes of communication, then use a movie-making app to create and share a video with a friend or loved one.

What your child is learning:
- How a variety of digital tools allow us to communicate in different ways
- How to make videos to share with families and friends
- Digital citizenship

What you do: If you aren’t already familiar with the iMovie app, spend a little time exploring it before doing this activity with your child. If you have a different movie-making app on your device, feel free to use that app instead of iMovie.

Have a conversation with your child about how technology tools like computers, tablets, and smartphones have made staying in touch with family and friends easier, especially now. Ask your child whether they have ever sent or received something in the mail. Talk about how letters and packages are sent through the mail or through another delivery system. Tell your child that sending mail digitally (by email, the internet, or text) is like regular mail. The biggest difference is how quickly the mail arrives. Regular mail is sent by trucks, planes, and boats, and can take days or even weeks to reach its destination. With email, people can type their messages on a phone, tablet, or computer, send it, and deliver it almost immediately.

Talk with your child about what kind of video message they want to make, to share with a family member or friend. What do they want the video to be about? Some ideas might include making a video to share interesting objects seen on a walk, things your family has been doing while at home together, or art pieces your child has made. If your video will include still photos in addition to video footage, show your child how to take the photos using your device. For footage you are going to film, talk with your child first to plan what they want to say, where they want to stand, and what they want to be doing on the video.

The final step – edit and share your child’s video and invite the person you are sharing with to create and send a video back!
Questions to ask your digital citizen:

- How does our family use technology tools to communicate?
- What would you like your video to be about?
- Who do you want to share your video with?
- What do you want to say in your video?
- What pictures do you want to include in the video?
- How does it make you feel sending something to a loved one?
- How do you feel when you receive something from another person?

A note about technology today: Your child is a native user of screen-based technology. While there are risks associated with inappropriate or excessive exposure to screen time, there are also many benefits to helping your child learn how to be a responsible, creative, and effective user of technology. Digital communication tools allow us to text, email, video conference, share photos, and post to social media, among other things. These tools have become even more important to us for keeping in touch with one another during this time of social distancing. This Modern Mail activity is an example of the type of activity that fosters critical thinking, digital citizenship, community, and the skills needed for your child to become an active creator in their experience with technology, rather than a passive consumer of technology.
Express Yourself: “The Bear Went Over the Mountain”
Use props and movement to act out the song “The Bear went Over the Mountain”

What your child is learning: Through this activity your child will explore expressing ideas through creative movement and use their imaginations as they select props and create their own movements.

What you do: Familiarize yourself with the song “The Bear Went Over the Mountain.” Sing the song for your child, and if they know it, invite them to sing along. After singing the song a couple of times, invite your child to think about ways they can act out what is happening in the song and if there are household items they can use as props. Allow time for your child to gather any items they would like to use as props and to figure out what parts of the song they want to act out. Sing the song again, using the props and actions your child has selected.

“The Bear Went Over the Mountain”
(sung to the tune of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”)

The bear went over the mountain,
The bear went over the mountain,
The bear went over the mountain,
To see what he could see.
To see what he could see.
To see what he could see.
The other side of the mountain,
The other side of the mountain,
The other side of the mountain,
Was all that he could see.
Was all that he could see.
Was all that he could see.
The other side of the mountain,
Was all that he could see!

If your child is ready: Ask your child to share some things that the bear might see on the other side of the mountain, then work together to create additional verses to the song using your child’s ideas. Ask your child how the bear might feel when they see different things: a person, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, or a giant lake, for example.
Express Yourself: Make a Shaker
Make a DIY musical instrument, then play along to a beautiful song sung in English and Twe.

What you need:

- Beads or tiny pebbles in a container (Note: Monitor closely until beads or pebbles are enclosed in container tightly. Choose objects that won’t create a choking hazard)
- Masking or other heavy tape
- Music video with “I Am a Jewel” song lyrics
- Plastic egg or small cardboard tube
- Song lyrics for “I Am a Jewel”
- Spoon
- Stapler (only if using a cardboard tube)
- Video demonstrating how to make a shaker.

What your child is learning:

- How to play an instrument while listening to a song
- How to move their body to a beat
- Fine motor skills while making, holding, and playing an instrument
- Hearing a song with lyrics in two different languages
What you do: Help your child make their own instrument – a shaker! This video demonstrates how. If you’re using a plastic egg, take the egg apart and invite your child to use the spoon to scoop up some beads or pebbles and place them inside half the egg. Put the egg back together and reinforce the seam with masking tape.

If you’re using a cardboard tube, pinch the edges of one end of the tube together and staple it shut. Place tape over the staples to make sure the seal is secure. Invite your child to use the spoon to scoop up some beads or tiny pebbles and place them in the open end of the cardboard tube. Pinch the edges of the open end of the tube together and staple it shut. Place tape over the staples at this end, too, to fully secure the opening. Voila!

If you have enough materials, make your own shaker so you can play along too!

Play the music video, starting from where the song begins to play. Ask your child to listen to the words and the sounds of the instruments. After playing the song once, give your child their shaker. Play the song portion of the video again, encouraging your child to play their shaker and sing along with the chorus. Use the song poster for help with the lyrics.

If your child is ready: Play the song a few times, asking them to create a different sound or perform a different action each time, such as stand and clap the beat, or spin around when the last line of the song is sung.

Questions to ask:
- What do you think the beads (or pebbles) will do inside the shaker?
- What are some different ways you can play your shaker?
- What does this music make you think of?
- How does this music make you feel?
- What words in the song sound different from the words you know?

About the Song
The lyrics in this song are in English and Twi (pronounced CHWEE). Twi is a language that is spoken most commonly in southern Ghana, Africa. The lyrics, melody, and instrumentation celebrate the brilliant colors of planet Earth, the sea, the sun, the moon, and each and every person! Each person is colorful like a precious jewel, shining in the light.
Rhyme with Me: What Rhymes with Bat?
Learn about bats and explore rhyming works that end in the /at/ sound

What your child is learning: This activity helps your child practice listening to the ending sounds of words and how to recognize and make rhymes in one-syllable words.

What you do: Ask your child what they know about bats. Explain that bats are nocturnal animals, which means they sleep during the day and are active at night. The bumblebee bat is the smallest bat. Its body is about one inch long and its wings stretch about six and a half inches. Larger bats, like the flying fox, have wings that can stretch up to six feet wide!

Next, ask your child what they know about rhyming words. Explain that rhyming words are words that have the same ending sound, such as can and pan, and hot and dot. Ask your child what sound they hear at the end of the word bat. Tell them “Words that rhyme with bat have the /at/ sound at the end of the word.” Invite your child to share words that rhyme with bat, real or invented. For each rhyming word, reinforce the rhyming sound, “Bat, cat, bat and cat rhyme. If your child suggests a word that does not rhyme, invite them to listen to the ending sounds of both words and ask if they sound the same. “Bat ends with /at/, car ends with /ar/, /at/, /ar/, do /at/ and /ar/ sound the same? What if we changed it to cat? Do cat and bat sound the same?” Continue creating rhyming words for as long as your child shows interest.

If your child is ready: Select a word with a different ending sound for your child to share rhymes for, such pan or hot.
Virtual Field Trip: San Diego Zoo Live Cam
Would you and your child like to see some amazing animals in action? Check out all the live cams at the San Diego Zoo! Which animals are your child interested in seeing? As you watch the live cams, ask your child questions about what the animals are doing, what they notice about the animals, and what they wonder about the animals.
Everyday Learning Experiences

1. While doing something with your child like eating or bathing, pick a short, **simple word** to talk about like “plate” or “tub.” Talk to your child about the sounds at the beginning and end of the word and ask them to think of other words with those sounds.

2. While accomplishing a task around the house, like making dinner or fixing the bed, invite your child to help you by **describing** what you need to do and **mimicking** the action with their body. Repeat their actions until the task is completed.

3. Find an object in your space that has **multiple numbers** on it, like a calendar or a clock. Point to one of the numbers and ask your child if they can find that many items of a certain type around your house, such as spoons or socks. Repeat the game with a variety of numbers and objects.

4. When it’s time for your child to participate in a task like getting dressed or putting their toys away make it **interesting** by asking them to complete the task the way a certain animal might. Can they move like an animal and accomplish their task? Try naming a few different animals until your child is done with what they need to do.

5. Ask your child to pick a book that you have at home or one they remember reading in the past. Invite them to **tell you about the book**, including the plot and the characters. What happened in the book? What does your child like about the book?
Focus on Social and Emotional Learning: The Power of Play
Play might look random or disorganized, but it’s actually the most meaningful and natural way for young children to learn. During play, children are engaged in active learning and developing skills from head to toe. Check out the information and resources below to understand the power of play and what you can do to guide it.

Play-Based Learning for School Readiness
Play is more than just fun and games. Check out this podcast, featuring KinderCare’s Chief Academic Officer Dr. Elanna Yalow, about how play builds skills that help children succeed in school and in life.

Active Learning: What’s Really Happening During Play
Children love to play, and for good reason. Play is powerful! During play, children are active learners — they make choices, create meaning, and form connections.

Making Choices
Red paint or blue? A bike or the slide? A tall tower or a long tunnel? Children are naturally curious, and letting them follow their curiosity by making choices means they’re guaranteed to be interested in what they’re doing.

Making Meaning
Children are natural-born scientists! They experiment, form theories, and test those theories during play. Even if they can’t explain the science behind things, children are constantly paying attention to what happens during play and fitting it into what they know about the world.

Making Connections
The more children play, the more they learn. Can I make this tower as tall today as I did yesterday? Does this ball bounce the same as that one? Children make meaning from their play experiences, and they also make connections between them. These connections aren’t just passing thoughts—they are real neural pathways in the architecture of a child’s brain that help them build skills and knowledge over time.

For more on the importance of play, check out this article from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
How To Encourage Active Learning During Play:

**Offer choices** like where to play and what to play with.

**Make comparisons** between different materials and experiences.

**Ask open-ended questions** (not “yes” or “no”) to encourage curiosity about what’s happening during play.
**I Am a Jewel**

Sun is gold.
Moon is silver.
Me yɛ, me yɛ aboɔdene. (*I am, I am precious.*)

**Chorus:**
I am a jewel.
I catch the light.
Spinning, spinning,
Me kanae. (*My light.*)

Me shrine, me shrine, (*I shine, I shine,*)
Te s3 agude. (*Like a jewel.*)
Me shrine, me shrine,
Te s3 agude.
Me shrine, me shrine,
Te s3 agude.
Me shrine, me shrine,
Te s3 agude.

Earth is green.
Sea is blue.
Me yɛ, me yɛ aboɔdene.

**Chorus**
How Many Spots?
Herbs de Provence is a spice blend for seasoning foods. Mixing up your own spice blends is not only fun, but it allows you to control how much salt and sugar is added. We tried Herbs de Provence seasoning on popcorn today. Then we talked about what other foods might taste good with this seasoning.

______________ would like to try Herbs de Provence seasoning on ______________.

EXTEND THE LEARNING
Cooking is a great way for children to learn about measurements and proportions. As you prepare recipes at home, use measurement concepts to discuss ingredients: “We’ll use less rosemary than thyme in this recipe.” “Look, as we put the spices in the bowl, you can see that 2 tablespoons of thyme is more than 1 teaspoon of sage.”

Herbs de Provence

Ingredients:
(makes ½ cup seasoning)

- 2 ½ tablespoons dried oregano
- 2 ½ tablespoons dried thyme
- 2 tablespoons dried savory
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary

Instructions:

1. Measure herbs into a ___________ or ___________.
2. Cover and pulse until ___________ are ground into a coarse powder.
3. Store ___________ in a ___________.

Herbs de Provence can be used to season ___________, ___________, ___________, or to make a seasoning ___________.

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