This week in our centers, prekindergarteners would typically be learning about the fascinating and exciting world of wild animals! You and your child can bring wild animals from around the world to life in your very living room.

Is your child an animal aficionado? This week they can choose what wild animal they would like to be during a Language and Literacy activity or share their animal knowledge in a cognitive development activity.

You’ll also have an opportunity to create a time-lapse video together of a seed sprouting. Even if you’re not able to do the time-lapse video, their sprouting seeds will get them ready for next week’s theme: Plants and Gardening!
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
Get the Wiggles Out (Physical Development and Wellness)
Leaping Like Deer Your child will leap like a deer from one spot to the next and roll a die to make it to the end of the path.
Read with Me (Language and Literacy)
Initial Sounds Word Search How many objects can your child find around your home that start with a specific letter sound? Go on a hunt and find out!

TUESDAY
Express Yourself (Creative Expression)
Shape Animals A circle and a triangle, or is it a face and a nose? Your child will trace some shapes and let their imagination take it from there!
Get the Wheels Turning (Cognitive Development)
Kitchen Chemistry Your child will learn about the chemistry of popping grains as you prepare a healthy snack together!

WEDNESDAY
Get the Wheels Turning (Cognitive Development)
Solids, Spots, and Stripes Your child will practice patterns while learning about animals with spots, stripes, or neither.
Observing Growth with Time-Lapse Video Your child will create their own time-lapse video and watch a seed sprout into a plant!

THURSDAY
Growing Flexible Brains (Executive Function)
Mystery Box What’s inside? Your child will put their investigative skills to the test!
Express Yourself! (Creative Expression)
“Five Green and Speckled Frogs” Your child will find out what happens when five homemade frogs sit together on a log in this lively song!

FRIDAY
Write with Me (Language and Literacy)
If I Were a Wild Animal You and your child explore the wild idea of what animal you’d be.
Virtual Field Trip
Houston Zoo Webcams Your child can watch live webcams from different areas of the Houston Zoo.

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

FOCUS ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
The Center on the Developing Child from Harvard University just released an infographic titled, “What is COVID-19 and How Does it Relate to Child Development?”
Getting Ready for the Week: Materials to Gather

- Dice
- Sidewalk chalk or masking tape
- Cardboard or any material that can be traced
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Paper
- Scissors (for adult use)
- Index cards (6) or white paper
- Shoebox with lid, or similar size box that closes
- Wild animal toy or stuffed animal
- Pencil
- An example of a selected alphabet letter to show your child, such as a letter on a block, toy, or other object in your home
- A grain to pop, such as sorghum, barley, rice, quinoa, corn, or amaranth, all of which can be popped in a microwave or on the stove
- **Popped Sorghum recipe**
- Your preferred popcorn seasoning (If you made Herbs de Provence last week, you can use it again to season your popped grain.)
- Microwave (for adult use only)
- Paper lunch bag
- Measuring cups
- Two small bowls
- Small plate
- Medium pot
- Spoons
- Digital camera, iPad, tablet, or smartphone
- iMovie or other movie-making app
- Seeds (any will work, but some seeds like grass or beans grow faster, resulting in faster excitement!)
- Potting or garden soil
- Planter or space in a garden
- Garden gloves (optional)
- Playdough, green and one other color*
- **Five Frogs***
- Cardboard tube (e.g. paper towel tube)
- “Five Green and Speckled Frogs” song poster
- [Video link](#) to the song “Five Green and Speckled Frogs”

*See related activities for more details.

**Tip:** At the beginning of your week, gather materials and place them in a container so you’re ready to go!
Get the Wiggles Out: Leaping Like Deer

Your child will leap like a deer from one spot to the next and roll a die to make it to the end of the path.

**What your child is learning:**
- How to leap
- Maintaining balance while making big movements
- Counting using one-to-one correspondence

**What you do:** Create a path of 15–20 X’s approximately 18 inches apart using chalk on the sidewalk or masking tape on the floor. Depending on your space, you can make a straight line or a line with curves or turns.

Ask your child to share what they know about deer. Explain that deer have very strong legs that help them run and leap. Ask them to stand on the first X of the path you have created. Roll a die to see how many X’s they can move. Ask them to leap from one X to the next, counting up to the number they rolled. Continue until your child reaches the end of the path, or to extend the activity, ask them to go back the other way. If they’re interested, invite them to play again jumping like a frog or hopping like a rabbit—or whatever animal they like!

**If your child is ready:** Create a larger path with 25–30 X’s and use two dice. Have your child roll both dice and count the total number on both dice, then leap that many X’s.
Read with Me: Initial Sounds Word Search

How many of objects can your child find around your home that start with a specific letter sound? Go on a letter hunt together and find out!

What your child is learning:
- How to recognize a specific letter in print
- Saying a specific letter sound and hearing it at the beginning of words
- How to identify objects in the home that begin with a specific sound

What you do: Select a letter and its sound to focus on for this activity. For example, you might select a consonant, such as P. Look around your home to make sure there are easy-to-find objects that start with the chosen letter and sound. For example, for P you might have a pillow, picture, peep hole, or pan.

Show your child the example of the letter. Ask questions about the letter:
- What letter is this? This is the letter __.
- What sound does the letter __ make?

Have your child go on a search in your home, looking for objects that start with the sound of the selected letter. If needed, give them some hints about where they might find objects that start with the sound of the letter. As they find objects that start with the letter sound, talk about them. For example, you might say something like “You found a p-p-pan in the kitchen. Pan starts with the /p/ sound.”

If your child is ready for more, give them paper and a pencil to draw pictures of objects that start with the selected letter sound. They can also label their pictures with the name of each object, using what they know about letters and sounds.

Questions to ask:
- What letter is this?
- What sound does this letter make?
- What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word ____?
- What objects can you find in the kitchen that start with the ___ sound?
- What are some of the objects you found that begin with the ___ sound?
- What are some other objects you can think of that start with the ___ sound?
Express Yourself!: Shape Animals

A circle and a triangle, or is it a face and a nose? Trace some shapes and let your imagination take it from there!

What your child is learning:
- Creative use of shapes and lines to create visual art
- Fine-motor skills as they trace shapes and add details
- Flexible thinking as they come up with new ways to use shapes in their drawings

What you do:
Cut various sizes of circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles out of cardboard or traceable material. To make cutting circles easier; consider tracing around cups or lids before cutting.

Show your child the shapes you cut out and ask them to name the shapes. Then invite them to choose a shape to trace on a sheet of paper. Ask your child to think about how they could use the shape to create a drawing of an animal. Perhaps it’s an animal’s head or body, or maybe it’s part of the animal’s face like an ear or nose. Encourage your child draw their animal. Encourage them to add other shapes to their drawings, either as additional features of their animal, other animals, or objects.

If your child is ready: Invite your child to tell you a story about the animal in the picture. If possible, record a video showing the picture as they tell their story that they can share with others.
Get the Wheels Turning: Kitchen Chemistry
Learn about the chemistry of popping grains as you prepare a healthy snack!

Note: This is the same activity as in the Preschool At Home Activities Guide; however, older children will experience it at a different level. It is a great multi-age activity!

What you need:
- A grain, such as sorghum, barley, rice, quinoa, corn, or amaranth, all of which can be popped in a microwave or on the stove
- Popped Sorghum recipe
- Your preferred popcorn seasoning (If you made Herbs de Provence last week, you can use it again to season your popped grain.)
- Microwave (for adult use only)
- Paper lunch bag
- Measuring cups
- Two small bowls
- Small plate
- Medium pot
- Spoons

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

Length of activity: 20–30 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child’s interest.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High

Level of Prep Required: Medium

Duration will vary depending on your child’s interest.
What you do: Review the recipe and determine the number of servings you’ll need and adjust accordingly. Remember to always start any cooking activity with everyone washing and drying their hands.

Prepare about \(\frac{1}{4}\)-cup of boiled sorghum (or grain of your choice) according to the directions on the package and place in a small serving bowl. Give it time to cool before you bring your child into the activity.

Show your child the picture of wheat and point out that wheat is a type of grain that grows on stalks. Grains are the seeds of grasses we can eat. Tell your child that when grains stop growing and are dry, they are harvested or picked. Whole grains are grains that are less processed to make them ready to eat so they provide nutrients our bodies need to be healthy and grow strong. Processed grains like the flour used in most baked goods and pasta lose many of those nutrients when they are processed.

Give your child a plate with a spoonful of uncooked sorghum on it. Make observations together about the sorghum, including how it looks, feels, smells, and what they think it is. Tell them it is sorghum, which is a whole grain.

Next, give your child a bowl with a spoonful of the cooked sorghum. Invite them to taste it and share their observations. Explain that sorghum can be used in soups, salads, and side dishes similar to rice. It can also be used to make sorghum syrup, a sweet, molasses-like syrup, or it can be ground into flour and used for baking.

Show your child the recipe. Give them the paper lunch bag and help measure \(\frac{1}{4}\)-cup of uncooked sorghum into the bag. Have your child fold over the top of the bag to seal it. Microwave the bag of sorghum.

While the sorghum pops, ask your child to predict what’s happening inside the bag. Explain that there is moisture inside each kernel of sorghum. As the sorghum is heated, the moisture turns to steam and causes the kernels to pop.

When the time between pops is about 5 seconds, carefully remove the bag from the microwave, handling only the folded corners. Unfold the bag and open it by gently pulling at the corners, making sure it’s pointed away from you and your child. Set the bag aside to cool. When cooled, sprinkle a little salt or seasoning and enjoy!

*If sorghum is not available but you have another whole grain on hand, you can do a quick search online for instructions on how to pop those grains on the stove or in the microwave.

Questions to ask:

- How did the grain change as it got hotter?
- What happened to the grain after it cooled down?
- What other foods change when they are heated?
- What did you enjoy about preparing popped sorghum (or other grain)?
- What does the popped sorghum smell like? How does it taste? Does it remind you of another type of popped grain? How does it compare to popcorn?
Get the Wheels Turning: Solids, Spots, and Stripes
Your child will practice patterns while learning about animals with spots, stripes, or neither.

**What your child is learning:**
- How to identify, copy, continue, or create patterns
- How to relate what they have learned about living things to new situations
- Fine-motor skills as they decorate and manipulate their pattern strips

**What you do:** Cut each index card in half to create 2 long and narrow cards, for a total of 12 cards. If index cards are not available, cut 12 strips of the same size from a sheet of paper, making each strip at least 1 ½ inches wide.

Give your child four cards and ask them to draw spots on each. As they draw, talk to them about animals with spots like leopards, cheetahs, and giraffes. Next, give your child four cards and ask them to draw stripes on each. As they draw, talk to them about animals with stripes like tigers, zebras, and some fish.

On the last four cards, ask them to color each the same solid color. Ask them which animals are mostly one color, with no spots or stripes, like elephants, camels, and polar bears. After you have talked about animals, use the cards to create patterns. Create a pattern such as stripe, spot, stripe, spot, and ask your child to complete the pattern. You can take turns with your child starting a pattern and have the other one finish it.

**If your child is ready:** Have your child create 24 cards, eight each for spots, stripes, and solids. Create a more challenging pattern for your child to identify and complete, such as spot, spot, solid, spot, spot, solid or spot, solid, stripe, spot, solid, stripe.
WEDNESDAY
(continued)

Get the Wheels Turning: Observing Growth with Time-Lapse Video
Create your own time-lapse video to watch a seed sprout into a plant!

Don’t have seeds? You can also time lapse something simple like moving clouds or a building project.

Note: This is the same activity as in the Preschool At Home Activities Guide; however, it is also developmentally appropriate at this age. An older child may learn how to use more features of the movie app. This is a great multi-age activity!

**Length of activity:**
20–30 minutes*

*This activity can be done in short amounts over the course of the week.

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** High

**Level of Prep Required:** Medium

**What you need:**

- Digital camera, tablet, or smartphone
- Movie-making app (most smart phones have their own app included such as iMovie)
- Seeds (any will work, but some seeds like grass or beans grow faster, resulting in faster excitement!). Don’t have seeds? You can also time lapse something simple like moving clouds or a building block project.
- Potting or garden soil
- Planter or space in a garden
- Garden gloves (optional)

**What your child is learning:**

- How digital tools allow us to observe growth in different ways
- How to make time-lapse videos
- The necessary stages that seeds need to grow
**What you do:** If you aren’t already familiar with iMovie (or similar movie-making app), spend a little time exploring the app before doing this activity with your child.

Have a conversation with your child about how digital tools with cameras like laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones have made it easier to take photos and create videos to share with others. These tools have also made it easier for scientists to make observations about how things grow and change over time.

Explain that you are going to work together to create a time-lapse video showing how a seed grows into a plant. Begin by planting a few seeds in a small pot or area of your garden. Make sure the seeds are in a place where the soil will get good sunlight and can be easily photographed. Water and care for the seeds as specified on the seed packet.

Next, help your child take a picture of the pot or garden spot that shows the top of the soil. Take a new picture each day from a similar angle. Continue taking daily photos, until the seeds have sprouted, and the plant has begun to grow. Then use a video-editing app, such as iMovie, to make the pictures into a video that shows how the seeds have grown into a plant over time.

**Questions to ask:**

- How many days do you think it will take for the seeds to sprout?
- Why should we take the photo from the same position each day?
- What do seeds need to sprout and grow into plants?
- How are you feeling while waiting for the seeds to sprout? Does it feel like it’s taking a very long time? Short time? Why do you think the seeds need this time to grow?

**A note about technology today:** Your child is a native user of screen-based technology. While it is important to curb excessive exposure to screen time, you can also take this opportunity to teach your child 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 type of activity fosters critical thinking, creativity, and the skills needed for them to become an active creator with technology, rather than a passive consumer of technology.
Growing Flexible Brains: Mystery Box
What’s inside? Help your child put their investigative skills to the test!

Length of activity: 10–15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child’s interest.

What you need:
- Shoebox with lid, or a similar size box that closes
- Wild animal toy or stuffed animal

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High

Level of Prep Required: Low

What your child is learning:
- How to focus their attention on a specific task
- Using their memory to recall information from prior experiences
- How to ask questions to gather information
- How to use information they have gathered to make an educated guess

What you do: Out of your child’s sight, place the wild animal toy in the box and close the lid. Invite them to play a guessing game. Tell them you have placed a wild animal in the box, and they can ask you questions to guess which animal it is. Invite your child to start asking questions. If needed, prompt them by asking, “What would you like to know about the animal in the box?”

Continue until they have figured out what animal is in the box. If they need assistance, remind them of all the clues you’ve already given them. Encourage them to make a guess and tell you why they made that guess. Talk about the choice and why it might not be right. If your child is interested, or at other times throughout the week, place a new animal in the box and play the game again. Alternatively, change roles and have your child hide the animal and you ask the questions!

If your child is ready: Tell them they can only ask yes or no questions. For example, they can’t ask “What color is the animal?” but they can ask “Is the animal brown?”
Express Yourself!: “Five Green and Speckled Frogs”
Find out what happens when five homemade frogs sit together on a log in this lively song!

Note: This is the same activity as in the Preschool At Home Activities Guide; however, it is also developmentally appropriate at this age. An older child may experience the activity with more drama, more details, and more advanced math skills. This is a great multi-age activity!

What you need:
- Playdough, green and one other color
- Five Frogs*
- Crayons*
- Scissors* (for adult use)
- Clear tape*
- Cardboard tube (e.g. paper towel tube)
- “Five Green and Speckled Frogs” song poster
- Video link to the song “Five Green and Speckled Frogs”

*Note: No playdough? No sweat! Print the Five Frogs, invite your child to color them green, and cut them out. If you aren’t able to print the sheet, make your own simple drawing of five frogs for your child to color. After cutting them out, lightly tape them to the cardboard tube in a row.

What your child is learning:
- How to act out a song using props
- Fine motor skills while making and moving playdough or paper frogs
- Recognizing rhyme and patterns in song lyrics
- Beginning subtraction skills
What you do: Talk with your child about how frogs are one of the animals we might see—and hear—in spring. Show them the Five Frogs and explain that you are going to act out a song together about five green and speckled frogs.

If you have play dough, ask them to use it to make five little speckled frogs. If you don’t have playdough, you can use the adaptation given on the previous page.

Show your child the “Five Green and Speckled Frogs” song poster and share that the song is about five speckled frogs who sit on a log and love to eat bugs. Say the first verse of the song, pausing at the word hollow. Share that hollow means empty inside. Show your child the hollow cardboard tube that will represent the log in the song.

Play the video of the song and sing along together to “Yum, yum” after “… delicious bugs,” and “Ribbit, ribbit” at the end of the song.

Next, help your child place their five playdough frogs in front of the cardboard tube log (if using paper frogs, lightly tape them onto the cardboard tube). Play the video of the song again and this time, invite your child to take away one frog each time you sing a verse.

Questions to ask:

- Where have you seen frogs before? Where do frogs live?
- What can you tell me about the place where you have seen frogs?
- What sound do frogs make?
- How do frogs move? Show me how.
- What does it mean for something to be speckled?
- How could you make speckles on your playdough frogs?
- If we start with five frogs on the log and one frog hops away, how many frogs are left?
FRIDAY

Let’s Chat: If I Were a Wild Animal
You and your child explore the wild idea of what animal you’d be.

What your child is learning:
- How to participate in conversations
- How to add details to supports their ideas
- How to recall information from prior experiences and relate those ideas to current experiences

What you do: Begin by talking with your child about the different things they have learned about wild animals over the last two weeks. Then ask them if they were a wild animal, what animal would they like to be? Why would they like to be that animal?

Take some time to talk with your child about their choice and share what animal you would be and why. Then invite your child to draw a picture of the animal they chose and write the name of the animal.

If your child is ready: Invite your child to draw the picture on the top half of the paper and use the bottom half to write about why they chose to be that animal. Remember, your child is just beginning to learn how to combine letters to make words, using the sounds they hear. It’s appropriate at this age for their spelling to be creative.
Virtual Field Trip: Houston Zoo Webcams

Would you and your child like to see some amazing animals in action? Check out live webcams at the Houston Zoo! Which animals are they 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.

Did you take a virtual field trip to the San Diego Zoo last week? Which animals are different? Which animals are the same?
Everyday Learning Experiences

1. Explore moving in different ways around the house or yard. You can use these movements to help set the tone for what’s next. Need your child to get out some energy before lunch? Jump to the sink to wash your hands, then jump to the table to have a seat. Have a little extra energy? Take a lap around the table before getting settled. Time to get ready for bed? Walk on your tiptoes. Or take slow steps, inhaling with one step and exhaling with the other.

2. Counting with your child can happen anywhere, any time! Look for opportunities throughout your day to count objects with them. From counting the number of crackers on their snack plate to the number of buttons on their shirt, practicing counting helps to build foundational math skills in a way that is relevant to what they are experiencing every day.

3. Name that shape! While accomplishing a task around the house, look for opportunities to talk about shapes with your child. Try asking them the shape of their plate at mealtime. Or help them clean up their blocks by calling out which one to find next. You can help your child build and reinforce their knowledge of shapes.

4. Patterns, patterns, everywhere! Finding patterns in your surroundings is easier than you think. Maybe it’s the stripes on your child’s shirt, the design of the floor tiles in your kitchen, or the repetition of colored dots on a favorite blanket. Point out the patterns you find to your child and help them identify the pattern.

5. Curiosity is a key component of developing a STEM state of mind. You can help your child develop their curiosity by modeling and encouraging “I wonder” statements. I wonder what will happen to the bread when I put it in the toaster. I wonder why the zipper on this jacket doesn’t work. I wonder why the bubbles in the tub disappear.
Focus on Social and Emotional Learning: The Power of Play

Social and emotional learning isn’t just for children. It’s also important that adults understand and take care of their own needs and stressors so that we are at our best for our children. For this week, we wanted to refer you to an infographic developed by the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University that gives some quick pointers on how you can take care of yourself through this time. You can also go to their website for some great resources on child development in general that you might find interesting including, among so many other topics, brain development, play, helping your child deal with stress and build resilience, and self-regulation. Next week we’ll have some targeted resources for you and your family on not just how to cope with the challenges that so many are facing, but how to use this time to build strong family bonds and help your child flourish!
Five Green and Speckled Frogs

Five green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
    Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are four green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!

Four green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
    Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are three green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!

Three green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
    Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are two green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!

Two green and speckled frogs
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
    Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there is one green speckled frog. Glub! Glub!

One green and speckled frog
Sat on a hollow log
Eating some most delicious bugs.
    Yum! Yum!
It jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are no green speckled frogs. Glub! Glub!
GROOVY GRAINS

Popped Sorghum

**Ingredients:**
(makes 1 cup popped)

- ¼ cup whole-grain sorghum
- Salt (optional)

**Instructions:**

1. **Pour ¼ cup into a small bag.** Fold top of bag to close.

2. **Place in microwave with folded side down.**

3. **Microwave on High 2-3 minutes.** Remove after popping has slowed to 5 seconds between pops.

4. **Open bag carefully - away from face.** Pour into a bowl. Add salt, if desired.