



Investigations at the Zoo for 1st-2nd Grades

Theme: Characteristics and Needs of Living Things

Dear Chaperone,

Please guide your students through the following observations. As you ask them the following questions allow them to think about their answers and encourage them to come up with questions of their own. The purpose of this activity is not for them to get all the "right" answers but rather to allow them to practice questioning and observation skills.

Explore the Zoo and Find:

- ❑ **An animal to observe.**
 - Where is the animal in its habitat?
 - Is there a special feeding place for the animal?
 - Where would the animal go to find shelter?
 - Where does the animal get its water?

- ❑ **An animal that is more than one color.**
 - How many different colors do you see on this animal?
 - Why do you think it is more than one color?

- ❑ **An animal that can swim.**
 - What does this animal use to help it to swim?
 - Can this animal live on land, too?

- ❑ **An animal that doesn't have a backbone (i.e. an insect)**
 - Does this animal have arms or legs? If so, can you count them?
 - How do you think this animal eats?
 - How does it protect itself?

- ❑ **An interesting plant.**
 - What shape are the leaves on this plant?
 - Does this plant have flowers? Buds? Seeds?
 - Do you think there are animals that might eat this plant?

- ❑ **Taking care of animals:**
 - Name at least one thing that is very important to do when you are taking care of animals.
 - Possible answers: Make sure they have enough water and the right kind of food. Make sure they have a place to rest. Make sure they have a place to go (shelter) to get out of the rain, the hot sun or cold weather. Make sure that their habitat is clean.



After your Zoo visit:

1. Ask students to name two animals that they saw during their field trip. Have students compare these animals. How are they the same? How are they different?
2. Ask students to name characteristics that they saw such as fur, beaks, paws, webbed feet, fins, wings and claws. Discuss how these characteristics help animals to eat, move, or stay safe.
3. Ask students if there is anything that they wonder about the animals they saw at the Zoo. Encourage students to ask questions and discuss how they might find answers to their questions.