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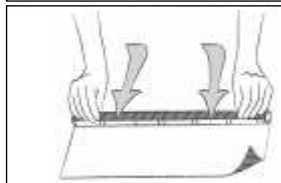
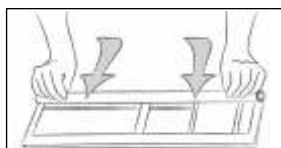
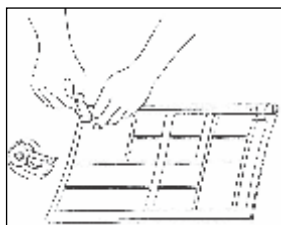
Exercise Animals

Gallop like a horse, sprint like a cheetah or hop like a bunny! Make adorable playtime animals that encourage active play. Develop exercise routines to get your students moving! Teach the importance of daily exercise to boost overall health. Physical activity increases blood flow and regulates other body systems. As a result, the important organs like the brain and the heart receive a healthy dose of nutrients and oxygen. This helps encourage bone and muscle growth and organ health while helping the immune system safeguard the body from disease.

Lead your students on an animal romp! We've designed post-consumer recycled sturdy chipboard animal heads with embossed details on one side. The Exercise Animals include the cheetah, monkey, rabbit, eagle, elephant, bear, horse, kangaroo and lion. Each active animal performs certain actions. For instance, a rabbit hops while a cheetah sprints. We'll talk more about the different kinds of active verbs you can teach your students. Get them brainstorming about a variety of action verbs that describe each animal before you start making the Exercise Animals.

Use crayon or paint to decorate both sides of the delightful heads. Use reference books or images from the web as guidelines for coloring the animals. Once the paint is dry, use a variety of textured materials to paste onto the animal skin or mane. Use materials such as tissue streamers for a horse's mane or sand for elephant's skin.

Color in the provided paper sleeves with markers or crayons. The paper sleeves will go on top of the constructed newspaper rod pole. Students can color in the barber pole design.



To make the rod, you will need one or two sheets of newspaper for each student. Take a sheet of newspaper and lay it out on a flat surface. Tip: For a more sturdy rod, overlap two sheets of newspaper. Tape one of the included connector tubes to either end of the newspaper rod. The connector tubes will help secure the animal heads to the pole.

Roll up the newspaper tightly around the tube. Once the newspaper is rolled up, wrap the special paper sleeves over top and secure with tape.

The animal head features one deep prong that fits snugly into the newspaper pole. Squeeze one of the tubes at one end of the rod to make an oval shape. Insert the prong at the bottom of the animal head into the oval all the way down. Release the tube to lock the tube in place. Securely tape the head in place.

Once complete, use the Exercise

Animals to hop, skip, jump, stroll, trot and prowl. Get creative with exercises! Research what types of activities animals perform, such as hunting, swinging from tree to tree, flying and more; then use the information to come up with your own exercise routines. We've included suggested exercises designed to get your students' hearts pumping and minds thinking.

Animals also make a wonderful eco-friendly keepsake craft that children can reuse for playtime and recess.

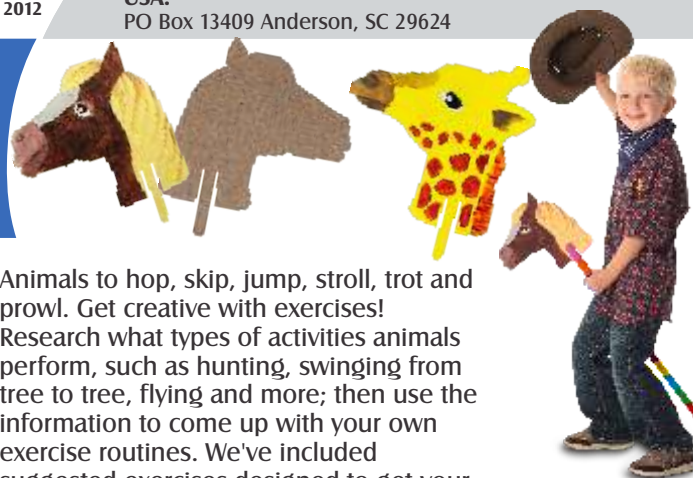
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Exercise gross motor skills
- Encourage imitative play
- Research animal biology
- Combine multiple subjects like biology, literacy and art
- Use multiple media
- Build action verbs vocabulary
- Explore fun exercise routines to maintain health
- Learn about identifying health needs
- Develop responsible health behaviors
- Identify common health problems for children
- Research the history of the hobby horse

Exercise Animals are based on the designs of the historical hobby horse. Hobby horses were a very popular toy with kids since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Hobby horses weren't only exclusive for children to use, however. Many hobby horses were (and still are!) used for important religious ceremonies throughout European and some Asian countries. Some of these rituals are performed as a parade in which the participants may dress up as horses.

Hobby horses were made from a wooden or cloth cutout and sewn or filled with simple stuffing such as straw or animal fur. The head was then bound or nailed to a wooden stick. The material could be cut into the likeness of any animal and decorated with a variety of readily-available materials for realistic details such as straw for the mane. Hobby horses were used as a basic step in preparing young boys for the rigors of horseback riding later on in life since many boys would grow up to be soldiers in the Roman army.

This childhood activity continued well into the Medieval period. Hobby horses became more prominent as a children's toy during the Medieval times when jousting matches were popular. **Jousts** were a special type of sports contest between two knights on horseback. Both knights positioned themselves across from each other at a short sprinting distance. At the start of the challenge, both knights would ride their horses all the way to the center point. Each knight would hold onto a special



wooden jousting equipment called a lance. The lance would point directly at the oncoming knight and was intended to unseat the knight from his horse. Once the knight was on the ground, both knights could continue the duel at close range or declare the remaining knight the winner. Children would often imitate their favorite knight heroes and reenact the jousting match with simple hobby horses of their own.

Hobby horses were constructed more elaborately for religious ceremonies. There are three basic types of horse costumes: the tourney, the sieve and the mast. The tourney costume is made of a circular wireframe that is hung from the wearer's waist. The wireframe is draped with cloth to make it appear like the horse and is cut for the wearer to appear as if he or she is riding the horse. The sieve costume is a version of the tourney costume in which the horse structure is suspended from the wearer's shoulders. The mast costume is what the hobby horse was modeled after. This type of costume is constructed with a wooden animal head attached to a pole. The wearer is concealed beneath a black cape or blanket and will hold the pole up to draw attention to the hobby horse. These costumes are only several of many that have been modified for more recent times.

Costumes are worn by ritual-goers to celebrate such important events as May Day, Christmas, New Years and other seasonal celebrations. Most often, the image of the horse was used for these celebrations as a symbol of power, rejuvenation and fertility. All of these things could be seen regularly by the common folk as cycles of the natural world. The horse was the one kind of animal that was frequently associated with both the natural and human worlds and therefore, was considered both wild and domestic.

The hobby horse used today is a great toy for children that encourages safe, active and imaginative play. Active play is an important part of children's growth as it fosters healthy behavior and promotes a strong muscular, skeletal and cardiovascular system. Participation in sports and daily exercise also helps invigorate the nerves for proper coordination and gross and fine motor movement. Exercise also helps to healthy body weight. Simply running around or kicking a ball each day ensures that children get the best routine for maintaining and encouraging good body health.

One of the most common problems of children's health in North America alone is decreased bone health, metabolic or immune system health and injuries to delicate tissues since many children do not get the right amount of exercise each day. As a result, their muscles and bones aren't getting enough nutrients to grow stronger. The overall strength of their bodies is decreased and can lead to increased body weight, decreased stamina and even to psychological problems.

Exercise and the maintenance of a healthy body weight directly impacts a child's social environment. Many active children who regularly play on sports teams or participate in sports gatherings often score higher on standardized tests than children who aren't as active. They build great study habits and have high self-value, enabling them to express themselves through social integration and participation in a variety of community and individual endeavors. Sports participation often teaches children important values in teamwork, leadership and organization, such as building the confidence, ambition and determination to succeed.

Encourage your students to take part in responsible and healthy behaviors and help them feel comfortable with their identities. With Exercise Animals, children can practice role-

playing as an animal character. Get exercising in new and unexpected ways!

Children love to have a toy that they can play with over and over again; the Exercise Animals do just that! Explore the diverse actions of a variety of animals like those featured in the Exercise Animals! Once your students have created their Exercise Animals, use the whiteboard or a flip chart to brainstorm a list of action verbs that match each type of animal. Action verbs are words that describe a type of movement. For example, run, walk and jog are types of action verbs.

Here are some suggested action verbs for you to use. See how many your students can come up with. Is there more than one word to describe an action?

- Rabbit/Kangaroo hops
- Horse gallops
- Elephant stomps
- Monkey swings
- Eagle flies
- Cheetah sprints
- Bear lopes
- Lion roars

Verbs that sound different from each other but can mean the same thing are called synonyms. Synonyms provide a rich range of descriptive words. The list we've provided above is not comprehensive, so do not limit your students to the fact that a cheetah sprints. Think of something else the cheetah animal does, such as hunt, stalk, prowl, etc. Give reference books to your students so that they can look up a variety of facts about the biology and habitats of these animals.

Come up with as many different action verbs as possible. Narrow down the list with the best verb to represent each animal. Write the name of each animal then write the word that best describes each animal action beside its name. This chart will come in handy for the next activity.

Play a game of Animal Actions! Every child must bring his or her Exercise Animal to the center of the storytime mat. Instruct everyone to form into a circle. Have the following lyrics written out on paper. Repeat for all 9 animals. Sing while your students perform the actions. Sing the following song to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O." We've included a model that you can modify and use any way you like.

Each verse sings about a specific animal and the action verb your class has chosen. Insert each action verb into the blank space provided at the end of each line. Instruct your students to pay attention to the lyrics so that they jump in and perform the action that is being sung.

There was a zany zookeeper
Who had an active [animal]!
Clap-Clap [action verb] around!

When you call out an animal, the students with that particular Exercise Animal should jump into the circle and perform the action you sing about. For instance, if you were to sing "There was a zany zookeeper who had an active rabbit" then those students holding onto a rabbit Exercise Animal should enter the circle. When you sing "clap-clap hop around!" the students in the center of the circle should hop while holding onto their Exercise Animal. Once you have finished

singing, they must quickly exit the center and stand with the rest of the circle. The next group must jump in when their animal is called out too!

Besides researching animal activities, students can sort the animals by dietary type. There are carnivores, omnivores and herbivores in the Exercise Animals pack. Try sorting the animals by type.

A **carnivore** is a type of animal that only eats meat. These animals include the cheetah, eagle and lion. An **omnivore** is a type of animal that can sometimes eat meat and sometimes eat plants. These include the monkey and bear. An **herbivore** is a type of animal that will only eat plants, like the elephant, rabbit, horse and kangaroo.

Have an Animal Relay Race! Relay races are a great way to encourage teamwork and coordination while having fun in the sun! Set up track lanes that are parallel to each other and are about 400 yards (365.5 meters) long. Mark the tracks with pylons or use your school's existing track and field track to get your students exercising!

Provide batons for the students to pass to each other. Give everyone a brief overview of what a relay race is so that each child knows what he or she has to do during the race. A relay race takes place on a track that is divided by the number of racers in a group. Each racer has his or her own length of track that he or she must run. The first person at the starting line is given a baton or other object to carry all the way to the next person waiting at the end of that portion of the track. When the starting person reaches the next person, they must hand the baton over, then sit down when they are finished. This is called the changeover. The next person in line who receives the baton must then sprint across their portion of the track and pass it to the next person. This continues for as many players or portions of track that exist for a group until the final person reaches the finish line.

Tip: Make sure the children do some basic stretches before they run in order to loosen their muscles. Instruct your students on how to pass the batons safely and effectively. As the next person on the track is waiting for the changeover, they must face forward and extend their arm back. This will allow the approaching racer to hand the baton over without problems.

To play the Animal Relay Race, each child must bring his or her Exercise Animal to the track and must race with it. Sort your students into groups by type of animal. Have all carnivores convene on the first track, all omnivores on another track and all herbivores on the third track. Make sure that each child is spaced evenly along the track. Set up the racers into groups. Groups will take turns running the relay race. This ensures that children race with only a small amount of racers for each type of animal and have a fairer chance of winning. For example, each group of carnivores, omnivores and herbivores would have only 3 racers.

There are two versions of the Animal Relay Race that your students can try out. The first version involves children racing with their Exercise Animals. Each runner must run to the next racer with their own Exercise Animal. When the runner has met the next racer, they must tap him or her to start the changeover then sit down. The next person in line takes off with their own Exercise Animal. The process repeats until the final person in the group reaches the finish line.

Try out a challenging version of the Animal Relay Race with older students! Each group of animals (carnivores, herbivores and omnivores) has only one Exercise Animal. The Exercise Animal acts as the "baton." Each racer must ride the Exercise

Animal to the next racer. The changeover is made when the first racer dismounts from the Exercise Animal and passes it to the next person. The next racer must mount the Exercise Animal and ride it all the way to the end of their track.

Brainstorm and develop your own games to play with the Exercise Animals!