The Melbourne Zoo Learning Experiences Team, respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, live and learn. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and wildlife and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.
Program Learning Intent
Through play-based learning, story and song, children are invited to become a Wild Explorer, a character who cares deeply for wildlife and the natural environment. The Zoo Educator is also a Wild Explorer, sharing their love, respect, excitement and passion for wildlife.

We believe in a young child’s agency – their ability to make choices and influence the world around them. Through fostering pro-conservation values from a young age, it is our hope that children grow to be deeply connected to the natural world around them.

The program also aims to connect children (and the adults) with three very special, endangered and often little-known Australian species cared for in Zoos Victoria’s breeding programs – the Corroboree Frog, Helmeted Honeyeater and Eastern Barred Bandicoot.

Core learning intent of the program:
- Pedagogically appropriate teaching and learning
- Play-based learning in an outdoor environment,
- Fostering values of Universalism* - love, care and empathy towards wildlife and the natural environment
- Encouraging an inquisitive, adventurous and curious mindset
- Fostering connection to place
- Awareness and love towards three largely unknown, critically endangered Australian species

The program openly models values of love, care and empathy towards wildlife and the natural environment.

Wild Explorers Kinder Program ‘Guiding Principles’:
- Play-based learning is a child’s work…learning is fun!
- Increased care, respect and knowledge for the natural environment
- Social responsibility
- Love, compassion and empathy towards wildlife

*Universalism is the understanding, appreciation & protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. Our focus is protecting the environment & unity with nature.
Program framework Links
Education for Conservation
Melbourne Zoo – Wild Explorers Kinder
Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Part</th>
<th>This is evident, for example, when children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 2 Community</strong>&lt;br&gt;Children are connected with and contribute to their world</td>
<td>Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment</td>
<td>- use play to investigate, project and explore new ideas&lt;br&gt;- demonstrate an increasing knowledge of and respect for natural and constructed environments&lt;br&gt;- explore, infer, predict and hypothesise in order to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants and animals&lt;br&gt;- show growing appreciation and care for natural and constructed environments&lt;br&gt;- explore relationships with other living and non-living things and observe, notice and respond to change&lt;br&gt;- develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Explorers Kinder program</td>
<td>Check your Booking Confirmation Letter for your allocated session time</td>
<td>Meet at the Fig Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children take part in in the Wild Explorers Kinder program, taught by a Zoo Educator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Early Childhood activities</td>
<td>Refer to the chalk board in the entrance to Keeper Kids for times or ask your Zoo Educator</td>
<td>Keeper Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in our Early Childhood Centre, Keeper Kids. Join in on a Zoo-themed story or music time, yoga or craft session. Whole Kinder groups are welcome to join in on the sessions. Most run for around 10-20 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop into Play-based learning in our Early Childhood Centre, Keeper Kids, where children can role-play all the important jobs at the zoo that care for animals</td>
<td>Open all day, 9am – 4pm</td>
<td>Keeper Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal experiences and presentations</td>
<td><strong>Encounter schedules</strong></td>
<td>Throughout the Zoo. Refer to the blue triangles on the next page (on map)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended for Kinder age children and upwards, located throughout the Zoo</td>
<td><strong>Meerkat encounter-</strong> 11:00am &amp;12.00 noon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Presentation schedule</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Seal Talk -</strong> 11:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Helpful Hints for your excursion

Zoo Map specific to your visit

WILD EXPLORERS

MELBOURNE ZOO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

MEET AT THE FIG TREE

FOR YOUR EDUCATOR-FACILITATED EXPERIENCE

REFER TO YOUR PRE-VISIT EMAIL FOR YOUR ALLOCATED TIME

KEY LOCATION

ANIMAL ENCOUNTER OR PRESENTATION
Helpful hints for your Kinder Zoo excursion

- **Appropriate clothing:** Please ensure your Kinder children wear weather-appropriate for a big, fun day outside e.g. Rain jacket, sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen, sun protective clothing. Wild Explorers Kinder is an outdoor program, run separate from the general public, in an outdoor ‘classroom’.

- **Zoo Entry:** Enter at the Kinder/Schools entrance, near Royal Park Railway station, just off Poplar Road (not through the main entrance). This will allow smooth entry into the zoo for your and your Kinder children. Our School Engagement Officer will meet and greet you at the gate. Make sure you have your Kinder credit card ready to pay for entry.

- **Storing bags:** Children’s backpacks, trolleys, boxes of snack/lunch etc. can be left under the pavilions — conveniently located just inside the schools/Kindergarten entrance. You may choose to return to the pavilion area for lunch (toilets located nearby). Your items will not be supervised, so it is best to ensure that food is secure inside a bag/utensils.

- **Food:** If you choose not to store your snack/lunch under the pavilion, consider packing food in portable trolleys, wheeled by the adult helpers. This frees you and your group up to enjoy your snack/lunch, wherever and whenever you feel.

- **Before your Zoo Educator led session:** Meet your Zoo Educator at the paved area under the giant Fig Tree (on map, page 3). To ensure you make the most of the time allocated to your group, it is best that your Kinder children had their snack and have been to the toilet before the session start time (there are toilets at the Bistro, just near the Fig Tree).

- **In your Zoo Educator led session:** Choose whether you’d like your parents/teachers to come into the session. If yes, encourage parent helpers to get involved by playing alongside the children. If we all model being a ‘Wild Explorer’ (a person who loves and cares for animals and their homes), the children will have a richer experience. We’d also be very grateful if parent helpers could assist with the reset/pack up of play-based resources at the end of the session.

- **Keeper Kids:** Keeper Kids is an absolutely fantastic play-based area, designed for Early Childhood Zoo visitors, adjacent to where your Kinder program will be run. We would highly recommend finishing your Zoo Educator led session with time for play-based learning in Keeper Kids. You can find Corroboree Frogs here and in the World of Frogs, near the Reptile House.

- **Good lunch/snack spots:** The Fig Tree has a large grass area or paved area beneath it, perfect for a picnic. If this area is busy the grass under the Red Pandas is also a nice spot. Toilets and water fountains are close by, at the Bistro.

- **Toilets:** There are many toilet blocks scattered throughout the zoo. Your map (page 3) will show you your closest toilet. Please note, the Australian Animals and Baboons area has the longest walk to a toilet.

- **Recommended precincts/animals:** We would recommend the Lemur/Gorilla/Hippo/Monkey loop and Tiger/Elephant/Butterfly/Orangutan loop (depending on your children’s learning focus) as some of the most engaging for young children.

- **The Zoo is a big place:** Enjoying one of the recommended loops above, and your Zoo Educator led session, plus snacks/toilet breaks, will probably be more than enough for small legs...sounds like a great day!
Program Activities

Animal Encounter
Zoos Victoria’s highest priority is animal welfare. We endeavour to instil values of care, respect and empathy towards animals in all people who visit our Zoos – Early Childhood visitors are no exception. We believe Early Childhood to be a key developmental phase for building these caring attitudes and values towards animals.

You may meet an animal up close during your Zoo-Educator led session. In the past, your Zoos Victoria class may have centred on meeting multiple animals.

These past experiences were developed within an entertainment construct; today our animal encounters are developed within an animal welfare construct. We endeavour to provide deeply engaging experiences that role model care and empathy towards animals.

We have found that meeting one animal, rather than multiple, helps to foster the calm, unhurried and respectful environment that animals need to feel safe. For that reason, expect to enjoy meeting one animal with your group.

*Zoos Victoria follows a set of guiding principles for animal experiences.* At its core, these principles aim to protect the welfare of animals, whilst providing unique sensory experiences for our visitors. Unique sensory animal experiences may include, observation, listening, smelling and, when appropriate, touching animals or animal artefacts. To understand more about animal encounters at Melbourne Zoo visit the [Guiding Principles for Animal Experiences at Zoos Victoria](#) web page.

Play-based Activities
If you would like to see a snapshot of the play-based activity areas that your children will enjoy in the Wild Explorers Kinder session, there are photos of the set-up here. Please note that the activities may change and develop over time and therefore may not look exactly the same on the day of your excursion.
Pre-excursion Learning Ideas

Wild Explorers Story

Read the Wild Explorers Story to your Kinder children. The story is a fun way to introduce your children to the concept of being a ‘Wild Explorer’ and to the three special Australian animals the program focusses on. This story will also be read at the beginning of the Educator-led session.

Suggested prompting questions after reading the story:

- What is a Wild Explorer?
- Why do animals need our love and care?
- Do wild animals need different care than pets?
- Where do wild animals live?
- What does endangered mean?
- What is similar about the Corroboree Frog, Eastern Barred Bandicoot and Helmeted Honeyeater? What is different?
- What do you love about animals and wildlife?

Animal Groove

Watch these short video clips of the three very special, critically endangered animals that the children will be focussing on in the Zoo Educator led session; invite children to try moving their body like the animal in the video clip.

Helmeted Honeyeater
Eastern Barred Bandicoot
Corroboree Frog

Post-excursion Learning Ideas

Adopt a Plush

Adopt a plush toy mascot for your Kinder room

Bring the care and compassion for wildlife fostered during your excursion back into your centre by adopting a Kinder room plush toy mascot. Choose from one of the three very special, critically endangered Australian species focussed on in the Zoo Educator led session – Corroboree Frog, Eastern Barred Bandicoot or Helmeted Honeyeater.

Ideas for your plush toy

- Read the letter written by the animal to your Kinder children
- Children have the opportunity to take their mascot home for adventures
- Your mascot scaffolds children’s investigations into endangered animals and human impacts
The plush toy animals can be purchased through our online shop at or in person on the day of your excursion. If supplies are running low, or a plush animal has run out, additional plush are ordered twice a year.

The Helmeted Honeyeater plush toy can be ordered for free through Zoos Victoria’s Conservation Campaign Supporter Packs (limit of one plush per school/kinder). Currently the packs provide informational support relevant to teaching primary and secondary students but can certainly modified for Kinder age level.

Wild Explorer dress ups
Encourage children to continue the fun of roleplaying a Wild Explorer by setting up play areas within your Kinder in the Wild Explorer theme.

Wild Explorer Song with actions
Repeat the song we sang at the end of the Zoo-educator led session.
To the tune of ‘Frere Jacques’

**Helmeted Honeyeater, Helmeted Honeyeater** (flap wings quickly like a HH)
**Corroboree Frog, Corroboree Frog** (crawl like a CF)
**Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Eastern Barred Bandicoot** (make big ears with your fingers like a EBB)
We love them all, we love them all (give yourself a big hug)

**Repeat verse**

Common Cents Challenge
**A new born Eastern Barred Bandicoot is almost the same size as 5 cent or $2 coin…**
Collect 5 cent coins or $2 coins in your Kinder community to support the Zoos Victoria’s Eastern Barred Bandicoot threatened species program. As your community donates the coins, your children can lay the coins out over the poster, practicing their numeracy skills:

**The Common Cents Silver Challenge**
Collecting 300 five cent coins is all it takes to support Zoos Victoria’s Eastern Barred Bandicoot threatened species program. Mark your coins off on the Common Cents posters as you collect them.

On completion of the challenge you will receive:
- a certificate of appreciation
- a tax deductible receipt

**The Common Cents Gold Challenge**
Collecting 90 two dollar coins is all it takes to adopt an Eastern Barred Bandicoot for a year. Mark your coins off on the Common Cents posters as you collect them.

On completion of the challenge you will receive:
- an Eastern Barred Bandicoot Animal Adoption Pack
- a certificate of appreciation
- a tax deductible receipt
Questions and Assistance

If you have any questions about the Wild Explorers Kinder program or would like to arrange a free visit for the Kinder Educator to the Zoo before your excursion (to assist in your planning), please feel free to contact the program coordinator:

Jess Brown
Education Officer – Learning Experiences
Melbourne Zoo – Elliott Avenue Parkville VIC 3052
92859352
jbrown@zoo.org.au