

What Animal Would You Be? (Levels A-B)

STAY ACTIVE

To encourage early imagination, movement, and social engagement by helping students act out simple animals in playful, supported ways.



Learning Intentions

Use imagination in simple ways:



Students aim to pretend to be different animals using gesture, sound, or small movements.

Practise basic movement skills:

Students aim to explore safe, supported actions such as arm flaps, taps, or body wiggles.

Follow one-step instructions:

Students aim to listen and respond to simple cues during group play.



Success Criteria

I can copy or attempt one animal action.

I can show an animal using movement, gesture, sound, or AAC.



I can join in the group activity with support.



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Duration: 5 - 8 minutes

Objective

To encourage early imagination, movement, and social engagement by helping students act out simple animals in playful, supported ways.

What You Need

- Clear, safe space
- Simple animal visuals (bird, cat, dog, snake, lion) (found in PDF resource)
- Optional: AAC devices or boards with animal icons and related sounds

Setup

- Students sit or stand in a semicircle.
- The teacher shows or holds up one animal card at a time.
- Model each movement slowly and clearly:

..... "This is how a **bird** moves."
..... "This is how a **snake** moves."

Gameplay / Activity Steps

1. Start the Adventure

The teacher says:

"We are going to pretend to be animals together!"

Show the first animal visual card (your choice!), act out how the animal would move.

2. Students join in the fun

Students copy or attempt the movement for 5 - 10 seconds. Work your way through a few examples before moving onto the next phase of the activity (or do all of them for extra fun!).

Examples (A-B friendly versions):

- **Bird** → arm flaps, finger wiggles, or moving hands side to side
- **Snake** → gentle side-to-side body wiggle, head moving side to side or arm wave
- **Cat** → soft "meow," stretching arms forward, licking paws (hands)
- **Dog** → gentle pant sound, pat lap, barking, or small arm/hand gestures (pawing the air)
- **Lion** → big arms, open hands, open mouths, teeth showing, soft or loud "roar!"
- **Turtle** → slow hand movements or gentle head bob (think really slow!)

Ensure all movements can be done seated or standing.

The teacher presents 1-2 choices at a time.



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3. Create a class zoo! Act Like the Animal

The teacher counts down, 3-2-1-Go! On the 'Go' command, all students choose their favourite animal and act out its movement, ensuring the teachers join in the fun and create a class zoo full of different animals. Encourage movements and sounds where possible.

- **Bird** → arm flaps, finger wiggles, or moving hands side to side
- **Snake** → gentle side-to-side body wiggle, head moving side to side or arm wave
- **Cat** → soft "meow," stretching arms forward, licking paws (hands)
- **Dog** → gentle pant sound, pat lap, barking, or small arm/hand gestures (pawing the air)
- **Lion** → big arms, open hands, open mouths, teeth showing, soft or loud "roar!"
- **Turtle** → slow hand movements or gentle head bob (think really slow!)

..... For students who require assistance they or would prefer for an educator to act out their animal choice for them that is ok, students select their animal by:

- Pointing to the relevant visual card
- Picking a visual card and giving it to the educator
- Eye gaze towards the right visual card they wish to choose
- Using AAC (e.g., "lion")

4. Group Connection (optional)

After playing for a set amount of time, the teacher can prompt all students to make the same animal sound or face or action at the same time (move through them pretty quickly if possible):

"Everyone show your lion face!"

"Everyone flap like a bird together!"

Peers copy and celebrate each other's attempts.

Reflection / Debrief

Use visuals to ask:

- "Which animal did you choose?"
- "Show me your favourite animal."
- "How do you feel now?" (happy / tired / calm)

Accept gestures, pointing, sounds, or AAC as answers.



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Variations

1. Sound Only Animals

Students make the animal sound instead of movement:

- Lion roar
- Dog bark
- Bird chirp
- Perfect for learners needing low movement or sensory-friendly engagement.

2. Animal Guessing Game

The teacher acts out the animal and the students guess. Students can guess or identify by calling out the animal name, pointing to or holding up the relevant animal visual card or using their AAC.

3. Sensory Path Animals

Place animal visuals cards on the floor, scattered around the room.

Students move (or wheel) to a card and do that animal's movement or sound as they get to each one. Explain to the students they are going on an animal treasure hunt, let's see how many animals they can find around the room. When a student finds an animal, they celebrate by acting out its movements or better yet making the relevant animal sounds.

AAC-Specific Supports

Buttons to include:

- Lion
- Bird
- Dog
- Cat
- Snake
- Turtle
- happy
- again

Model AAC during each round:

"Let's be a... lion!"

Provide deliberate wait time to allow student responses.



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For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility

Animal movements can be adapted using:

- Upper-body gestures only
- Sound effects only
- Arm flaps
- Head movements and facial expressions
- Tapping hands on tray
- Students may direct an adult to hold up an animal card or demonstrate the movement.

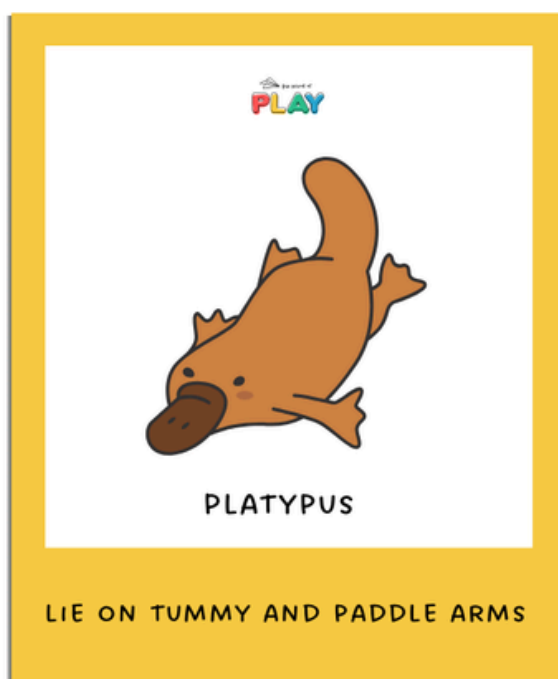
Peers are encouraged to use similar seated movements for inclusion.

Notes for Inclusion

- Provide one-step instructions paired with visuals.
- Accept *all* expressive attempts, sound, gesture, facial expression, AAC, small movement.
- Celebrate effort with positive narration:
 - "You showed the animal! Amazing!"
- Keep sensory needs in mind; allow breaks and modify intensity.
- Connect to Levels A-B SEL focus areas: imagination, simple movement exploration, participation with peers, and early social awareness.

ANIMAL CARDS

PRINT AND CUT THE ANIMAL CARDS. SHOW ONE CARD AT A TIME AND INVITE EVERYONE TO COPY THE ANIMAL'S MOVEMENT OR SOUND. ROTATE THROUGH SEVERAL ANIMALS, KEEPING ACTIONS SHORT, FUN, AND ENERGETIC.



ANIMAL CARDS

the world of
PLAY



DOG

WALK ON ALL FOURS AND BARK

the world of
PLAY



FROG

SQUAT AND JUMP FORWARD

the world of
PLAY



BIRD

FLAP ARMS LIKE WINGS

the world of
PLAY



SNAKE

SLITHER AND SWAY ARMS



ANIMAL CARDS



MONKEY

SWING ARMS AND SCRATCH HEAD



LION

STAND TALL, PRETEND CLAWS,
ROAR

