

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Willow Oaks Kindergarten students just finished up a terrific science unit with teachers from the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo. You can help solidify your child's learning, and foster a life-long love of science at the same time. Simply ask your child to talk about it! Use the class descriptions below, as well as our suggested questions and web links to guide your discussions, and have fun learning together!

Animals Study

In this unit, your child learned the primary characteristics of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and spiders, and met some representative species from the Junior Museum and Zoo.

Questions

How many creatures with hair or fur can you name? Do you think hair and fur are the same? Why or why not? Why do you think mammals have fur? Why do you think it is useful?

Would you like to fly like a bird? Why or why not? What could you do if you flew? Why are feathers important for birds? List ways that feathers help birds fly, hide, and, sometimes, get attention.

Would you like to cuddle with a reptile pet? Why or why not? Why do you think reptiles have pretty patterns on their skin? How does it help them?

What are the differences between insects and spiders? Where do you think you might look to find an insect? What about spiders? Where do you find spider webs...in hot sunny spots or dark quiet spots? Why do you think that is?

On-line Resource(s):

http://www.ndi4all.org/step_by_step/k1mammals.html

<http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/birds1.htm>

<http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/reptiles1.htm>

<http://www.sidney.ars.usda.gov/sidebar/justforkids2.html>

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The Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo (JMZ), located at 1451 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto, is a small children's museum with educational exhibits and live animals. Daily admission to the Museum is free, and they also offer many science classes for families and schools. Each year, JMZ science teachers teach approximately 180 classes in Willow Oaks Elementary School (provided at no cost). Lessons include close encounters with live animals or authentic artifacts, hands-on exploration of science concepts, and work with real scientific tools and equipment. We encourage you to take advantage of this important learning resource by visiting the JMZ often with your child.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Willow Oaks Elementary School
Kindergarten Teachers

