



# HOW DO ANIMALS MOVE?

### Materials you need:

- A selection of fast and slow music on CD or YouTube if you have access (*The Pink Panther* and *Hey Hey We're the Monkees* theme songs are good ones!)
- A few soft toy animals or similar
- A sheet (large or small depending on size of your group)

### Setup for play:

- Spread the sheet out and show children how to hold the edge so you have it lifted up off the ground in a rough circle (like parachute play). Add the soft toy animals to the middle (or 5 monkey's if you have them!)
- Sing the song 'Five Little Monkey's and move the sheet up and down to try and make an animal fall off onto the floor.
- Talk about how different animals move, put on some music and let children explore and show off their version of moves for different animals.
- Introduce movements for them to try like lions crouching low and stalking then pouncing, turtles on all fours crawling slowly with necks stretched out, kangaroos jumping then rolling on their sides, monkey's jumping and swinging arms.
- Now sit down in a circle and ask the children to come into the middle one by one to demonstrate their own animal move. See if everyone can guess the animal.

### What are they learning with this activity?

As the children move, dance and use their imagination they are learning to:

- Cross their midline and move in different directions
- Use their upper body dexterity as well as balance and coordination skills
- Work together in a group with others
- Listen to and follow directions
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and demonstrate spatial awareness
- Express their ideas creatively
- Repeat & practice the actions of others
- Coordinate, strengthen and balance their large muscles as they bend, stretch, turn and swing
- Engage in dramatic play
- Strengthen fine motor muscles and control
- Use descriptive language and become independent communicators
- Listen and respond to sounds and patterns in music and speech
- Re-enact well known stories and songs
- Use language and sound to communicate their thinking
- Express emotions and use gestures.

### Extending the play:

- Play musical chairs but with an animal theme. Set chairs up back to back (1 for each child playing) and invite children to dance in a circle around the chairs. When the music stops they need to find a chair to sit on. Next round take away a chair and the child that is left standing can choose an animal sound and movement that the others must copy as they move around the chairs. Each time another child misses out on a chair they get to choose the animal sound and movement for others to make.