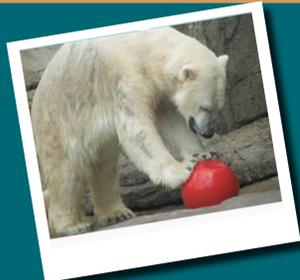




# KidSCIENCE STUDENTS CREATE ENRICHMENT ITEMS FOR THE ZOO'S ANIMALS



As part of their two year program at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium, KidScience students design and create enrichment items for the Zoo's animals. Second-year KidScience students, who are typically in 7th or 8th grade, observe and research animals for several months prior to the development of an enrichment item. They learn as much as they can about the individual animals' habits, social structure, and space usage in the exhibit. Once they have a foundation for understanding the animals' behavior, they begin to design an enrichment item. To ensure the animals' safety and enjoyment, the students share their enrichment designs with the keepers, and they receive valuable input on materials, design, and overall feasibility of their projects. Once they receive the keepers' assistance with the design, the kids build and create the items for the animals. The enrichment projects are typically

given out to the during the KidScience summer session or in the following fall.

First-year KidScience students have the opportunity to create enrichment items for the Zoo's animals, though they have been smaller in scope and have traditionally required less planning. One of the most common ways the kids have created enrichment items is through papier mache creations. Some projects have been large, such as when the kids created a "wildebeest" out of papier mache and cardboard boxes for the lions in 2008, and some have been small, like small papier mache balls covered in spices and scents, which have been given to many different animals throughout the Zoo. During their time with the KidScience program at the Pittsburgh Zoo, the students learn how important enrichment is to the animals they love, and they are given the opportunity to directly and positively affect their favorite Zoo residents through the creation and presentation of enrichment.



Students documented the process of braiding a fire hose for the big cats.

Proud students with their completed enrichment project, a fire hose 'animal.'

The lions enjoyed playing with and destroying the braided fire hose.

**Students learn** how **important** enrichment is to the animals they love, and they are given the **opportunity** to **directly and positively** affect their favorite Zoo residents through the **creation & presentation** of enrichment.

Students have created many papier mache enrichment items for a wide variety of animals.

The entire class pitched in to make fish ice treats for the polar bears.

It was lots of fun making the ice treats!

Two years ago, students made tunnels for the meerkats out of PVC pipe. The tunnels are still used and enjoyed by the meerkats today!

The lions enjoyed the papier mache and cardboard 'wildebeest' created by the students.

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