

Central Park Zoo

Central Park Zoo is very busy. The zookeepers have a lot of work to do to make sure the animals are happy and well cared for. One day they notice one of the penguin eggs is not being looked after. All the other penguin couples are busy taking care of their eggs. Roy and Silo, two male penguins, have no egg to take care of. The zookeepers watch carefully to see if Roy and Silo would make good egg carers and parents. There are lots of other things happening in the zoo, the zookeepers have to build bigger enclosures, find lost children, order supplies, meet the inspector, and more.

Aims

- To create awareness of different types of families
- To encourage correct language when describing gay and lesbian headed families
- To consider gender stereotyping
- To provide challenges and present motives for asking questions
- To share knowledge about animals

Themes

- Families
- LGBT headed families
- Animals

Resources

- *And Tango makes three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, illustrated by Henry Cole
- Signs for animals
- Signs for office doors
- Clocks for feeding times
- Nests
- Paper
- Markers

Notes

Introducing the words lesbian and gay in an early years classroom should be done in an age appropriate way. Children in your class may have gay and lesbian people in their lives, but other children may not. Children may have heard these words used in a negative way and think they are “bad words”. Therefore it is important for the teacher to use the words lesbian and gay in a correct, positive and factual manner. When children hear their teacher use these words in a correct and positive way, it will empower them to talk about their own families and also give them the language to report to a teacher or parent when these words are used in a negative way. Where you decide to introduce these words in the drama is not prescriptive, rather the children may ask a leading question at any time during the drama. If they do not, one of the easiest ways is when you are discussing different types of families at the beginning of the drama and at the end.

Specific Teacher Language

<u>Gay:</u>	A man who loves another man and they can become a family together
<u>Lesbian:</u>	A woman who loves another woman and they can become a family together
<u>Bisexual:</u>	A person who can love a man or a woman and form a family with either a man or a woman
<u>Transgender:</u>	A girl who feels like they are a boy A woman who feels like they are a man A boy who feels like they are a girl A man who feels like they are a woman
<u>LGBT:</u>	A short way to say lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

Activity 1 Introducing Central Park Zoo

Teacher's intentions

- Introduce the zoo and the animals that live there
- Discuss different types of families

Teacher narration: setting the scene

As the children step into storyland, teacher narrates Oh lovely fresh air. There are some big trees over there by the arched gates. Is that an elephant's trumpet I hear? But I can see black and white penguins over there. That's strange, elephants and penguins don't usually live in the same place.

Ask the children:

Where do you think we are?

Where do penguins come from?

Where do elephants come from?

What types of animals are in the zoo?

Stand where you are and have a good look around. What can you see? Yes I can see it too, but not very clearly. Can you describe it? With your partner go and explore the zoo. Try and find out what the animals are doing/eating/playing. What have you seen?

Storytelling

Read *And Tango Makes Three* p. 1-4

Ask the children:

Did you notice any families when you were walking around the zoo?

What kinds of families go to visit the zoo?

What do you know about penguins?

How do we know which penguins are in the same family?

In the penguin house in Central Park Zoo it's very easy to see which penguins are in the same family. The penguins bow to each other and walk together and sing together and swim together.

One of the penguin keepers Mr Gramzay was watching all the penguins in the penguin house one morning. What could he see?

Ritual and still images

The children in role are in the penguin house. In a sequence of actions they follow the penguins actions. *Mr Gramzay took some photos of the penguins to show the other zookeepers later.* Teacher counts down from 3 to 1 and the penguins freeze in the photo.

Activity 2 Mapping the zoo

Teacher's intentions

- To develop a sense of place
- To provide information about the animals

Collective map of the zoo

Draw a map of the zoo on large sheets of paper. Ask the children to draw in the different areas of the zoo and what animals belong there. They can also add land features e.g. trees, pond, the gates, the offices and dining areas. As the children are drawing, elicit information from the children about the type of animal, how they move, what they eat etc. Once the main features are laid out children can continue the map in smaller groups.

Activity 3 Meeting the zookeepers

Teacher's intentions

- To share knowledge about penguins
- To build belief in the zoo

Teacher narration

It is a very busy time of year in the zoo, and Mr Gramzay is meeting the new zookeepers to show them around. They know a lot about animals - how to handle them, what they like to eat.

Teacher in role

Teacher in role as Mr Gramzay. Children in role as trainee zookeepers. Mr Gramzay welcomes the trainee zookeepers and tells them what's expected of them. Mr Gramzay tells the trainee zookeepers that some of the mammy penguins have laid an egg. He shows off the different parts of the zoo and talks about the feeding times. The lunchtime bell goes off.

Dramatic Play

The children stay in role as the trainee zookeepers. The teacher in role as Mr Gramzay checks in on their progress, points out things they may have missed, asks for help with certain jobs, praises them for good ideas, asks them what they've noticed. When they have been busy for a few minutes the lunchtime bell goes. Mr Gramzay hands out the buckets and makes comments on the penguins as they grab the fish. *Watch Silo as I throw this fish in the air, good catch Silo! Silo is a chinstrap penguin, can you see the black line of feathers under his beak. Look at Roy beside him bowing to him, he has feathers under his beak too, those two are always together. Here catch Roy! Where is Betty, she loves to search for her own food, did you hide some in that pool over there? Porkey's chasing her, they are the fastest swimmers.* Once you have finished feeding leave the buckets by the door and I'll meet you back in the office.

Activity 4 Working in the office

Teacher's intentions

- To create a place where lots of the action will happen
- To build belief in the zoo

Defining the space

Mr Gramzay finds out what the trainee zookeepers noticed. Then he introduces the different rooms – Lost & Found, Computer room, Post Office, CCTV video room, Supplies room, Planning room and tells them what each room is used for.

Dramatic Play

The children go into role as the trainee zookeepers in the office. The teacher in role as Mr Gramzay checks in on their progress, writes things they mention on his clipboard, asks for help with certain jobs, praises them for good ideas, gives tasks to children who are not engaged. Mr Gramzay brings them back together for a meeting and asks them what they have been doing. He mentions the great work that they have been doing using his clipboard notes. He congratulates them on a great day's work and says they are now full zookeepers.

Activity 5 Problem in the Penguin House

Teacher's intentions

- To insert tension
- To challenge gender stereotypes
- To introduce the idea of a gay headed family

Role on the Wall

We have to put some new pictures on the wall for the visitors to use to recognise the penguins. All the boy penguins are on this side and all the girl penguins are on this side. What do we know about Roy, Silo, Betty, Porkey, Charlie, Piwi, Nipper, Squawk and Wasabi? Add words to describe them and their activities.

Narration

The zookeepers are busy working when the lunchtime bell goes off. The zookeepers help Mr Gramzay feed the penguins. *Do you notice some of the penguins have built their nests? Some of the mummy penguins have laid an egg. If you can see a nest stand near it, but remember zookeepers don't stand too close. Do you notice that Nipper and Squawk take turns keeping the egg warm? Why do you think they take turns? I can't see Roy and Silo. They must be swimming together. The zookeeper said she heard them singing to each other yesterday. Oh there they are. It looks like they are building a nest. Look they have put a large rock on the centre, it looks like they are pretending it is an egg. Ok zookeepers back to work.*

Meeting

Mr Gramzay calls a meeting. He is very worried because an egg has been found and no one is taking care of it. *One of the penguins laid two eggs and they can't keep both eggs warm. What will we do? Most of the other penguins are already sitting on eggs. Listen to the children's ideas. Try a couple of them out. One of the children may mention Roy and Silo. If not Mr Gramzay could ponder the possibility of Roy and Silo taking care of the egg because they already have a nest. Can two boy penguins take care of an egg? Will they be able to take care of the baby penguin? What are dads really good at? Are they good at other things too? Is there any advice we might offer for how to take care of an egg? Are there any preparations that can be made for hatching? We can try it out. Thank you for all your help. Some of you have the day off tomorrow? Have you any nice plans with your families? Have a lovely day everybody. I will ask the night zookeepers to watch all the eggs closely.*

Narration with mimed action

The zookeepers watched all the penguins very carefully in the CCTV room. Roy and Silo were taking care of their egg in one nest and Betty and Porkey were minding their egg in another nest. All the penguin couples were busy taking care of their eggs. One penguin sat on the nest. The other penguin went and swam. Then they swapped, the other penguin sat on the nest and the other went looking for food. They swapped again. They turned the egg to one side and then they swapped and turned the egg to the other side. One penguin sat all through the morning, then they swapped and the other penguin sat all through the afternoon. All the eggs were nice and warm. Up in the offices the zookeepers were also very busy. They were drawing up plans to build a bigger penguin house because soon the penguins would hatch.

Activity 6

Hatching time

Teacher's intentions

- To prepare for new life

Drawing

The zookeepers draw maps of the penguin house, marking in all the nests to make sure there's space for all the penguins.

Narration and construction

It was quiet in the penguin house. It was after suppertime and all the penguins were sitting on their nests. The zookeepers were finishing building the wall. They were passing each other the bricks and smoothing cement on top. They were staying very quiet so as not to disturb the penguins. All of a sudden, they heard a sound "Peep peep Peep peep". The zookeepers looked around. The sound seemed to be coming from inside the eggs. The penguins called back "Squawk squawk". Suddenly a hole appeared in the egg's shell and then came a loud "CRAAAAAACK!" Teacher asks children to repeat the sounds again. Out came little baby penguins from each of the eggs with fuzzy white feathers and little black beaks. The zookeepers quickly got their notebooks and cameras.

Shared Storytelling

What happened after the eggs hatched? The children make a circle and each add one sentence to the story. *The zookeepers were building a wall in the penguin house...*

Activity 7 Little girl lost

Teacher's intentions

- To insert tension
- To challenge gender stereotypes
- To introduce the idea of a lesbian headed family
- To discuss safety

Hotseating

The zookeepers are busy working in the offices. An urgent call comes from a zookeeper. They have found a little girl lost near the Sea Lion Pool who is very upset. They are bringing her up to the offices now.

What should we do? What questions will we ask her? How will we talk to her if she is upset? The children in role as zookeepers ask the child questions to help find out who she is. Her name is Sarah and she came to the zoo with her mom, her mamma, and her brother Jake. The last time she remembers being with them was near the Grizzly Bears. Sarah knows her mamma's number and she knows her full address. The zookeepers have to figure out the best way to reunite her with her family.

Hotseating

After the zookeepers reunite Sarah with her family, Sarah's mom wants to say thank you and ask advice because Sarah keeps wandering off. The zookeepers can offer her some advice.

Still images

The post office is very busy today. Lots of happy families have sent thank you letters and photos from their recent trip to the zoo. What different types of families sent photos in? What were they doing in the photo? Were there any animals in the photo? When I count down from 5 I want you to become that photo.

Soundscape

In groups the children create a soundscape of all the sounds in the zoo. As Mr Gramzay walks through the zoo on his way home that night, as he passes each enclosure he can hear the sounds of the animals.

Other opportunities for drama:

Zoo guides

Inspector visit

Found posters – hearing aid, etc.

Safe handling of animals

Opportunities for integration

Art

Animals

Pawprints

English

Poems and rhymes

Guess the animal

List of zoo rules

Letter writing

Geography

Mapping

Countries where animals come from

Maths

Number work with animals, food

Music

Carnival of the animals

SPHE

Myself and my family

Animal yoga

Games

Fruit bowl

Keeper of the keys