



KE-804023

Reproducible

Grades  
PreK-1

# EARLY LEARNING CENTER GAMES

41

"Easy-to-Make" and "Fun-to-Play" Skill Building Games

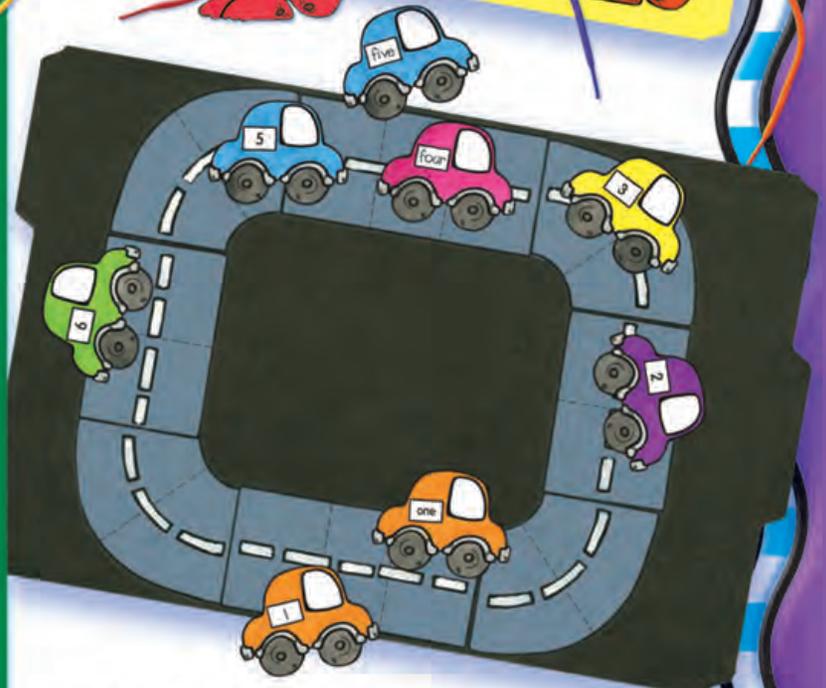
Use as independent activities in learning centers or as take-home games!



## Develop the following skills:

- following step-by-step instructions
- phonological awareness
- print awareness
- early writing skills
- alphabet knowledge
- number recognition
- geometry and spatial sense
- patterning
- scientific knowledge
- give and take in social interactions
- making independent choices
- persisting in activities
- increasing concentration
- finding more than one solution

by Marilee Woodfield



Key Education Publishing Company, LLC



# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4	Leapfrog.....	86
Alphabet Zoo.....	6	Dinosaur Sort.....	89
Toy Box.....	10	Play Ball!.....	91
Astronauts and Aliens.....	13	Swim Races.....	95
Twinkle Little Star.....	17	X-Ray ABC's.....	98
Shape Match.....	19	Special Delivery.....	104
Word Bugs.....	23	Day and Night.....	107
Build a Story.....	26	Hot or Cold.....	113
Fishbowl.....	31	Dressed for the Season.....	116
Cookie Cruncher.....	34	Snowperson.....	122
Autobahn.....	37	Flower Garden.....	124
Pet Chow.....	40	At the Beach.....	127
Birds on a Wire.....	43	Autumn.....	130
Crayon Box.....	46	Valentines.....	133
Make a Face.....	49	Lucky Leprechauns.....	137
Community Helpers.....	55	Egg Hunt.....	140
Family Portrait.....	61	Firecrackers and Flags.....	143
Safe/Not Safe.....	66	Halloween.....	147
Healthy for Me.....	69	Thanksgiving.....	153
Animal Babies.....	74	Hanukkah.....	155
Load the Train.....	80	Gifts.....	158

## Skills Reference Table

Animals.....	74	Number Operations.....	37, 104, 137
Beginning Sounds.....	6, 80	Number Recognition.....	17, 37, 86, 104, 122, 124, 127, 137
Building Puzzles.....	143	Number Words.....	17
Building Words.....	31	One-to-one Correspondence.....	40, 95, 130
Colors.....	89, 104	Patterning.....	46, 153, 158
Comparing Numbers.....	43	Pre-reading Skills.....	23, 26
Determining Quantity/Counting.....	19, 34, 37, 43, 46, 61, 86, 91, 95, 122, 127, 133, 137	Rhyming Words.....	13
Drawing.....	158	Seasons.....	116
Drawing Lines.....	130	Sequencing.....	147
Ending Sounds.....	10	Sets.....	17, 91, 124
Following Directions.....	133	Shapes.....	19
Graphing.....	155	Sorting/Categorizing.....	6, 10, 19, 46, 61, 66, 69, 107, 113, 140, 147
Jobs/Careers.....	55	Temperature.....	113
Letter Recognition.....	23, 31, 74, 80, 98, 104	Time.....	107
Literacy.....	26	Writing.....	98
Matching.....	17, 19, 49, 55, 74, 80, 89, 91, 104, 140		
Name Recognition.....	31		



---

# Introduction

---

Got five minutes? How about ten or fifteen? File folders are a handy resource for making the most of small moments during the day. In addition to giving busy hands something to do, file folder games are great for exercising small motor skills; for developing sorting, matching, and other critical thinking skills; as well as for building color, numbers, letter, and shape recognition.

While every file folder game develops fine motor skills, here are a few other skills that children will strengthen while playing with these file folder games:

- Following step-by-step directions
- Phonological awareness
- Print awareness
- Early writing skills
- Alphabet knowledge
- Number recognition
- Geometry and spatial sense
- Patterning
- Scientific knowledge
- Give-and-take in social interactions
- Making independent choices
- Persisting in activities
- Increasing concentration
- Finding more than one solution

Along with a few simple supplies, *Early Learning Center Games* provides everything you need to create fun learning experiences for your children. Use the file folders to focus on a specific theme or to work on a particular skill, such as one-to-one correspondence or color recognition. The Skills Reference Table on page 3 will help you locate just the right file folder game.

## Basic Assembly Tips

---

While each file folder game is unique, here are some general assembly tips that will prove helpful as you create your own collection of file folder games:

**Copying** — Each set of game instructions describes how many copies of each pattern are needed. Be sure to use high-quality paper for all copies, and use heavy card stock for any item that will be handled by the children. The items will be easier to manipulate and will last longer, too. If the pattern you are using does not have specific coloring instructions, consider copying onto colorful or patterned papers to help cut down on your preparation time.

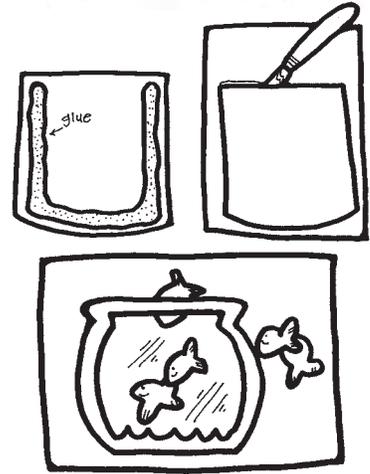
**Coloring** — Although it may seem daunting to color each little piece, take the time to make each file folder colorful and inviting. After all, if you prepare it correctly, you will be able to use each file folder game for a long time.

**Cutting** — Careful cutting will result in a more professional-looking product. When trimming lamination on card stock or the file folders themselves, leave a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " margin around the outside edges. If you trim too closely, the lamination will be prone to separate and peel apart.

**Laminating** — Although it may seem that you go through miles and miles of lamination, it is absolutely necessary to protect your file folder games. Be sure to laminate all of the pieces before you offer them to busy little hands.



**Pockets and Windows** — Several of the games use pockets or window for play. A pocket is a hole or cavity in the file folder into which game pieces can be inserted (e.g., a train car with a pocket for loading cargo). To make a pocket, glue only along the bottom and side edges of an object when attaching it to the file folder. After the folder has been laminated, create the pocket by carefully cutting a slit along the top of the object with a craft knife. A window is essentially a see-through pocket. To create a window, begin by cutting out the middle of an object as indicated (e.g., the center of a fishbowl) and laminate the individual piece. Then, attach the piece to the file folder and laminate the entire folder. Cut a slit along the top of the piece to create an opening where objects can be slid into the pocket and seen through the window.

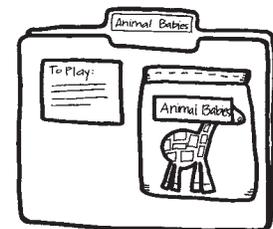


**Sticky Tack vs. Velcro®** — Sticky-tack adhesive is suggested as a way to apply pieces in several of the file folder games, but you can use whatever works best for you. If you use sticky tack, you won't have to reassemble a file folder whenever the Velcro tabs get pulled off. And, without the Velcro tabs providing a hint, children will have to think before sticking an object on the folder. For example, if an activity calls for putting five buttons on a snowperson, a child using sticky tack must actually count the five buttons. A child using Velcro might just stick five buttons on the snowperson without counting, simply because there were five Velcro tabs on the folder.

**Storage and Labeling** — Label everything. Use the file folder name tags provided on each game instruction page to label the file folder itself and any plastic storage bags. Give each file folder game a number as well, and write that number on the back of each game piece. This way when pieces from two or more games get mixed up, putting them back in the right place will be a snap. Store all of the extra pieces for games in plastic zippered bags. Staple each bag to the file folder so that everything you need to complete the activity is always with the folder.

**Organizing** — One simple idea for organizing your file folders is to color-code them. Use yellow for activities that develop literacy skills, purple for number operations, and so on.

**File Folders** — Using a colorful file folder will perk up a game's personality. Glue the file folder name tag onto the tab to identify each game. Then, add the directions for how to play the game and any other decorations desired on the outside of the file folder. For example, when creating the "Birds on a Wire" file folder, make an additional copy of the bird patterns page and add few birds to the front of the folder.



## Extending Your File Folder Experiences

- Make multiple copies of the same file folder so that more than one child can play at a time.
- As the children's skill levels increase, adjust the difficulty of the file folder concepts. For example, use higher numbers for counting or more difficult patterning sequences.
- Make copies of the pattern pages to use for individual activities.

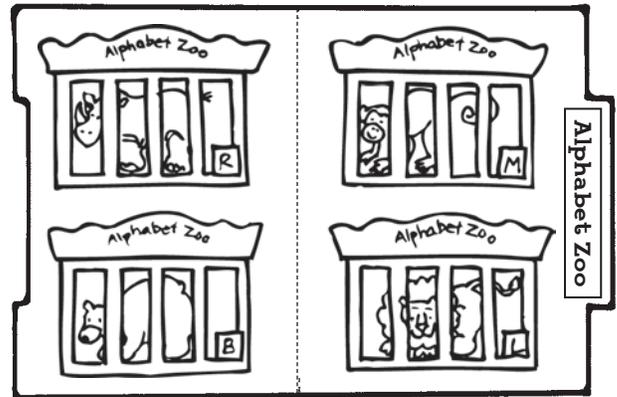
# Alphabet Zoo

**Theme:** Alphabet, Animals, Zoo

**Skills:** Sorting, Beginning sounds

## Preparation:

1. Make four copies of the zoo cage pattern (page 7). Cut out along the dashed lines and cut out the spaces between the cage bars. Laminate each cage separately and trim around the outside edges only.
2. Make one copy of the animal patterns (pages 7–9). Color the animals as desired and cut out along the dashed lines. Laminate each animal separately and trim.



## Assembly:

1. Using clear tape, tape the four laminated cages to the inside of a file folder as shown above. Tape only along the bottom and side edges of each cage, leaving the top free.
2. Place a file folder name tag and the “To Play” instruction box on the outside of the file folder as shown on page 5.
3. Laminate the entire file folder. Trim around the edges.
4. Use a craft knife to make window pockets. Carefully cut a slit through the laminate along the top edge of each cage. Be sure not to cut through the file folder itself.
5. Place all of the animals in a quart-sized plastic zippered bag. Label the bag with a name tag and attach to the front of the file folder.

## Extension:

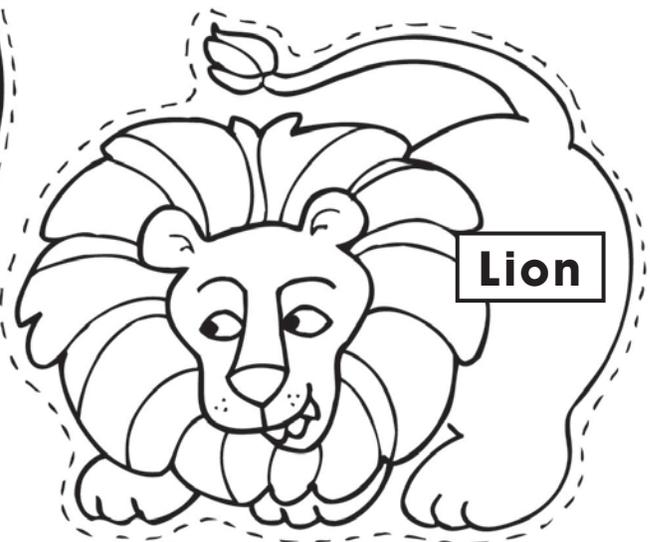
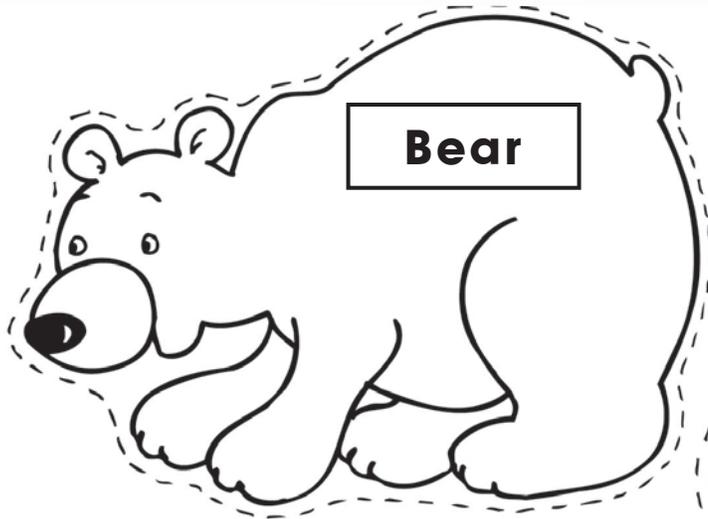
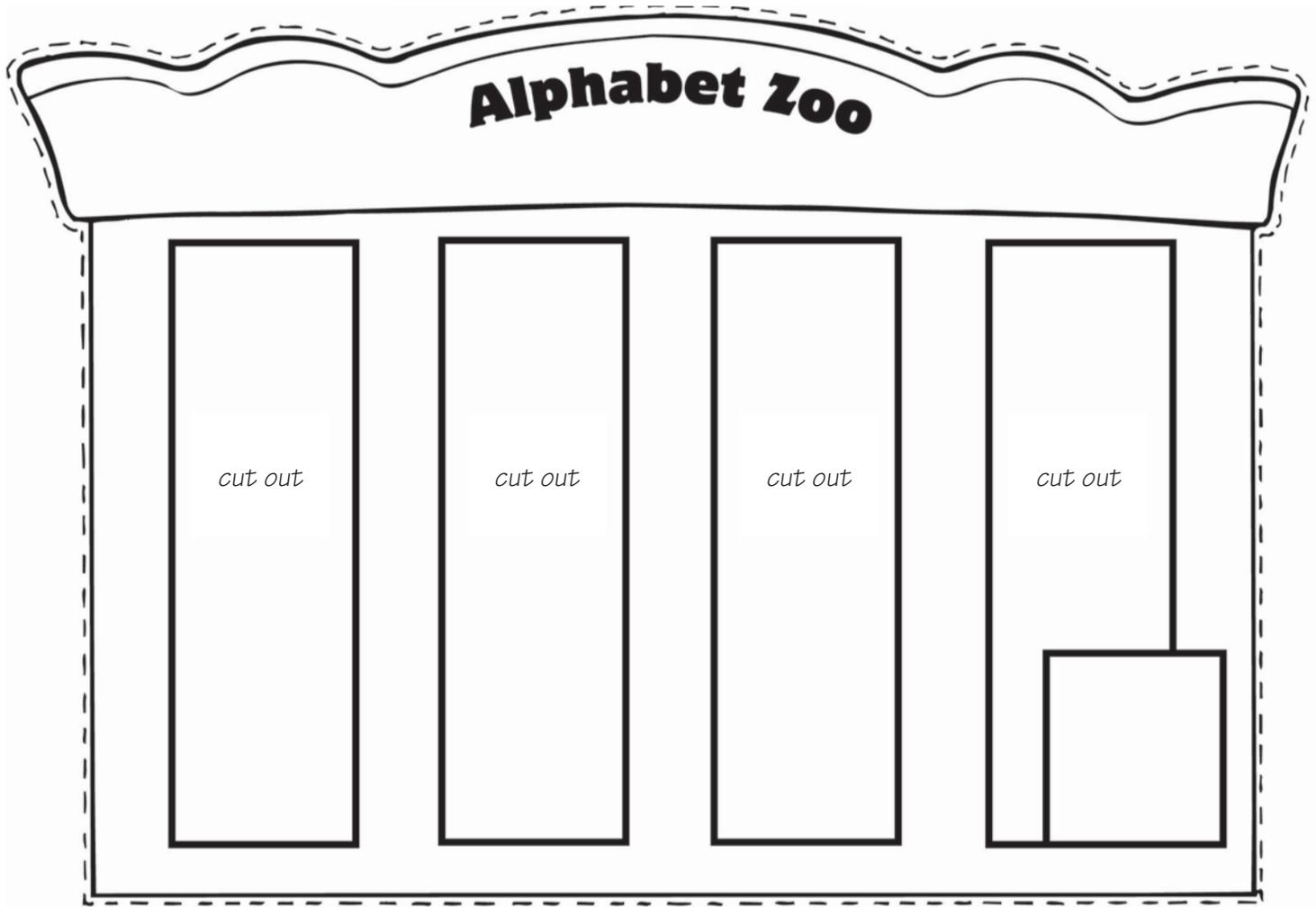
Extend the play by laminating additional pictures of other zoo animals.

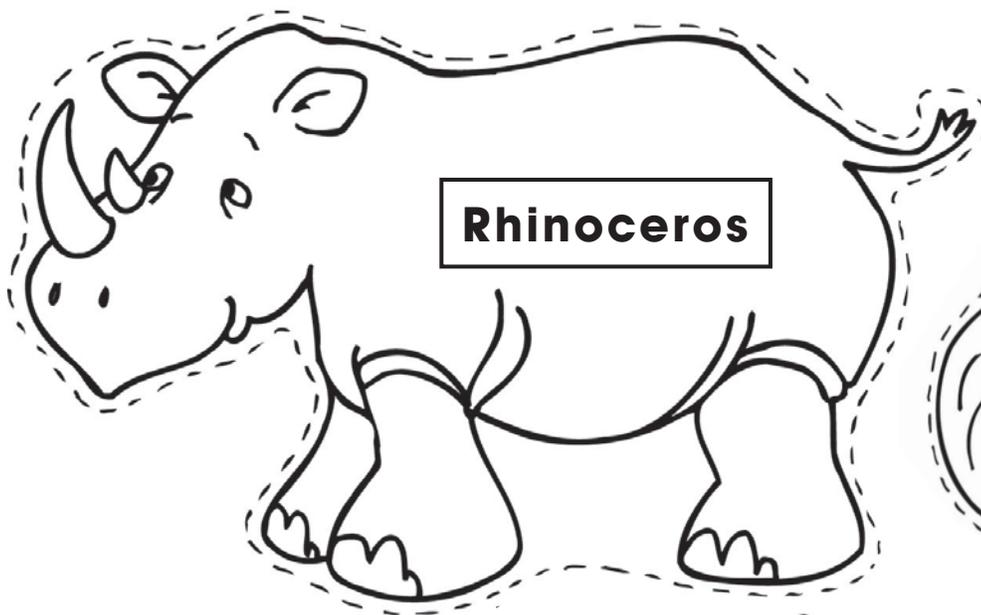
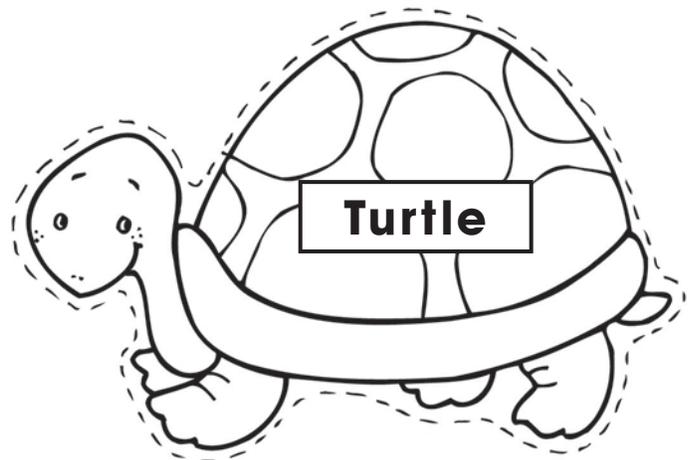
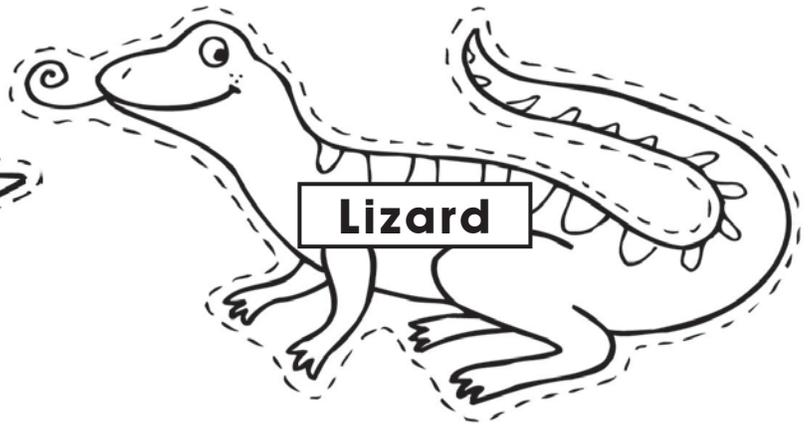
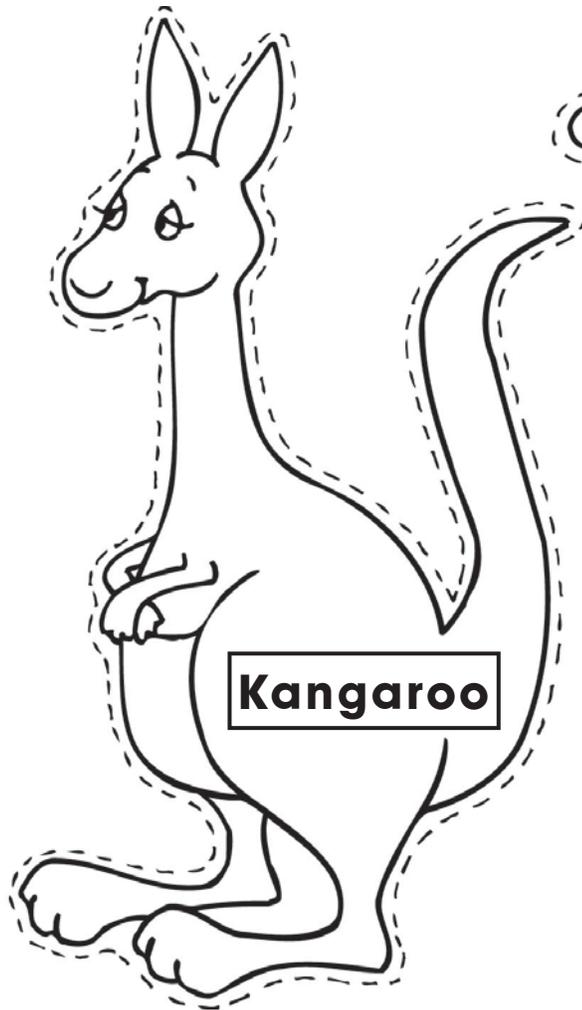
### To Play:

- Sort the animals by the beginning letter sounds of their names. Use a separate cage for each sound.
- Use a washable or a dry-erase marker to write the beginning letter of each animal’s name in the small box on the cage.
- Once all of the cages are filled, erase the letters in the boxes and put new animals in the cages.

Alphabet Zoo

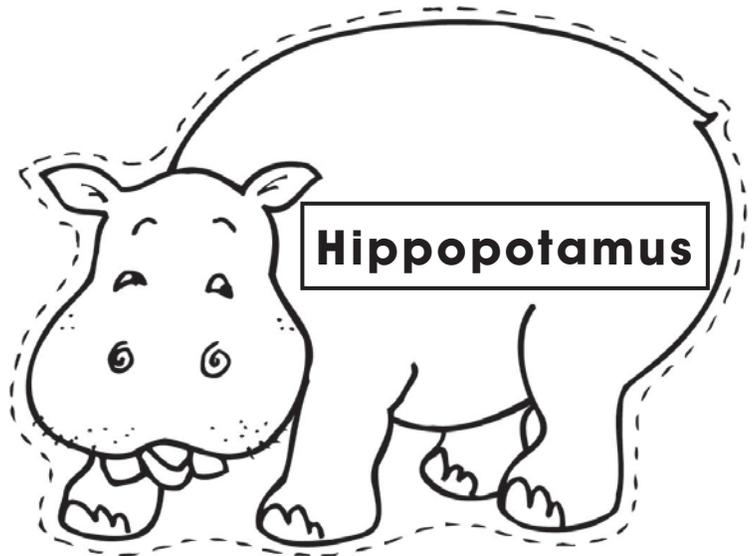
Alphabet Zoo



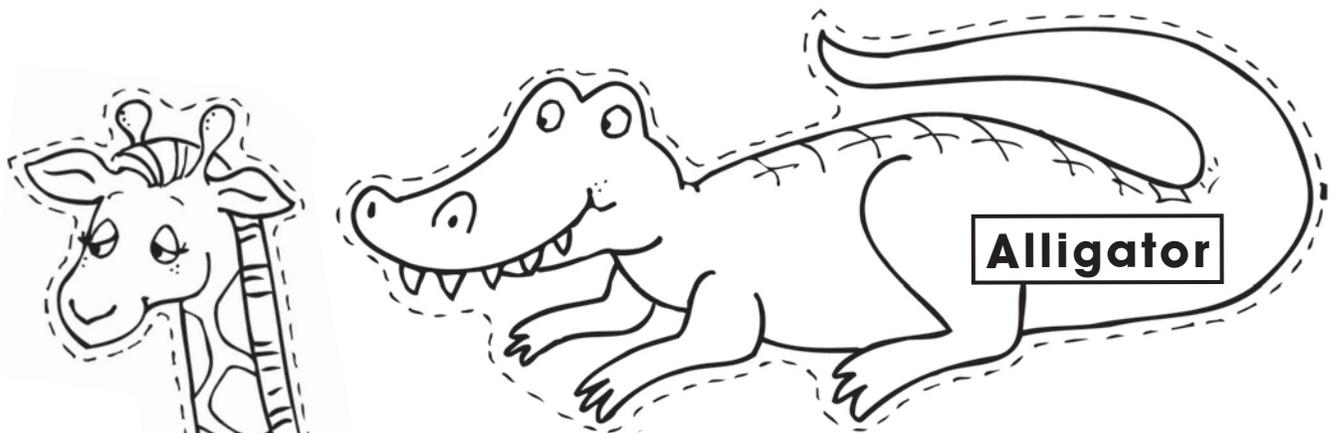




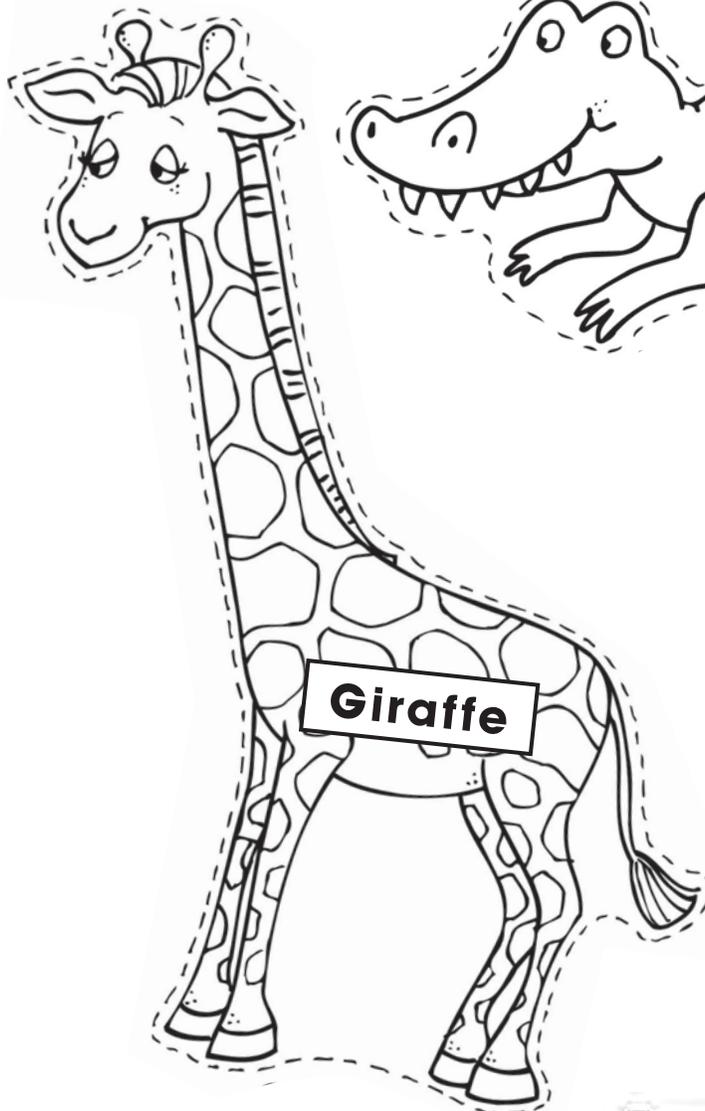
**Tiger**



**Hippopotamus**



**Alligator**



**Giraffe**



**Gorilla**