



PROGRAM GOALS

- Learn how kangaroos use their adapted body parts in order to move quickly

GRADES

2nd to 4th

MATERIALS

- Aquarium net
- Ping pong ball
- Chalk

STANDARDS

- SCI.2.3.1
- SCI.4.3.3

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Ensure student participation

Let's Hop Like a Kangaroo!

Practice your students' critical thinking skills as they learn about the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo kangaroos. The kangaroo sure loves to hop around the area, but have you wondered how they're able to hop long distance? The kangaroos use body adaptations such as enlarged hind feet and tail to help them hop. Ask these variety of questions to engage your students even further:

- How does a kangaroo travel?
- Can you move like a kangaroo?
- How fast do you think they can hop?
- How far can a kangaroo go in a single hop?
- Why do you think they have a large tail?

Bring your class outside and mark a start and finish line with 30 ft distance in between. Divide the class into two teams and have students practice hopping like a kangaroo. Divide the groups in half again, where the first half will stay at the start line, while the second half will remain at the finish line. Give each team a small aquarium net with a ping pong ball inside. The ping pong ball represents the joey, and the aquarium nets represent the pouch. Have two teams form a single-file line for the relay race. The goal is to see which team can hop in a given distance in the shortest time, without dropping the "joey."

How Does a Kangaroo Hop?

Kangaroo's hind legs are very powerful, and they have large hind feet to assist with hopping. Along with these features, the thick, muscular tail forms a "tripod" to carry the kangaroo's weight. The tail helps balance the kangaroo when it jumps. As they begin to hop, it tucks its hind legs forward, then pushes them back. The legs move together in motion. Kangaroos can reach top speeds up to 40 mph for short bursts. They can travel for long distances at 10-15 mph. They can cover 20 feet or more in a single hop, and they can clear a six-foot fence if they are motivated enough.

