

BLINK AT HOME

Animal Enrichment

Can you make enrichment toys for museum animals?

Skills to Develop

- + Science content knowledge
- + Creative thinking
- + Fine motor skills

Materials

- + Animal photos [PDF]
- + Tape
- + Recycled materials such as: egg cartons, toilet paper tubes, string, scrap fabric, pipe cleaners, cardboard, yogurt containers

WHAT TO DO

During the Learning Activity

1. Look at the museum animals and read about their likes and needs. Discuss the animals with your child: *what do you notice about the animals? What colors are they? What do you think they like to eat? What do you think they like to do? Where do you think they would live if they were in the wild?*
2. Explain that animals in the wild spend all day searching for the things they need to survive, but people give the museum animals everything they need: air, water, food, and shelter. Discuss that to keep their muscles and brains happy and healthy, the museum animal caretakers use enrichment toys and challenges to keep their brains thinking and their muscles moving.
3. Discuss your pet's favorite toys or the favorite toys of a pet they know well. Ask: *do they like to chase things? Do they like toys that give them treats? Do they like to climb on things in their house?* Explain that toys are a kind of enrichment for our pets. The museum animals like to play with toys, just like your pets!
4. Ask your child to choose a museum animal. Read the information again about the animal's likes and dislikes. Ask: *what does this animal like to eat? Do they swim, walk, or climb? How could you make a toy filled with their favorite food to get them moving or thinking?*
5. Look through the recycled materials you collected. Invite your child to use them to build an enrichment toy for the museum animal they chose.

Extend the Fun

- + Create animal enrichment toys for other types of animals.
- + Create animal enrichment toys out of safe materials and test them with your pets.

BLINK: ANIMAL ENRICHMENT

Animal photos: Print and use

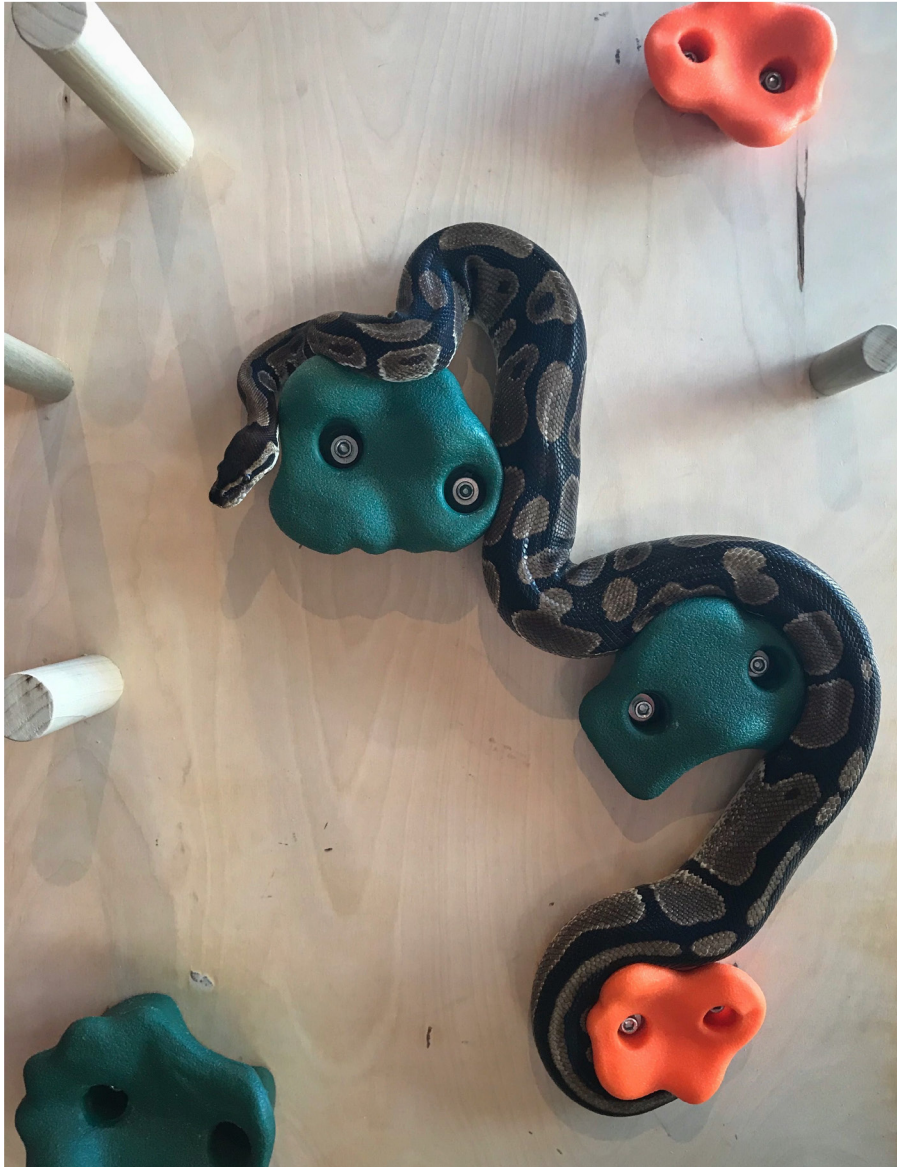


Evren is a bearded dragon that lives at the Anchorage Museum. She was born in March 2013. In the wild, bearded dragons live in the deserts of Australia and are really great climbers. To keep her moving, Evren has a lot of branches to climb in her home at the museum, as well as a hammock where she can hang out under the warm heat lamps. Evren eats salads, berries, and insects. Her favorite food is hornworms, little blue-green caterpillars.

For enrichment, Evren plays with balls, chases live crickets, and eats her greens out of a puzzle feeder. Evren likes to laze around, so anything that can get her moving is the perfect kind of enrichment.

BLINK: ANIMAL ENRICHMENT

Animal photos: Print and use



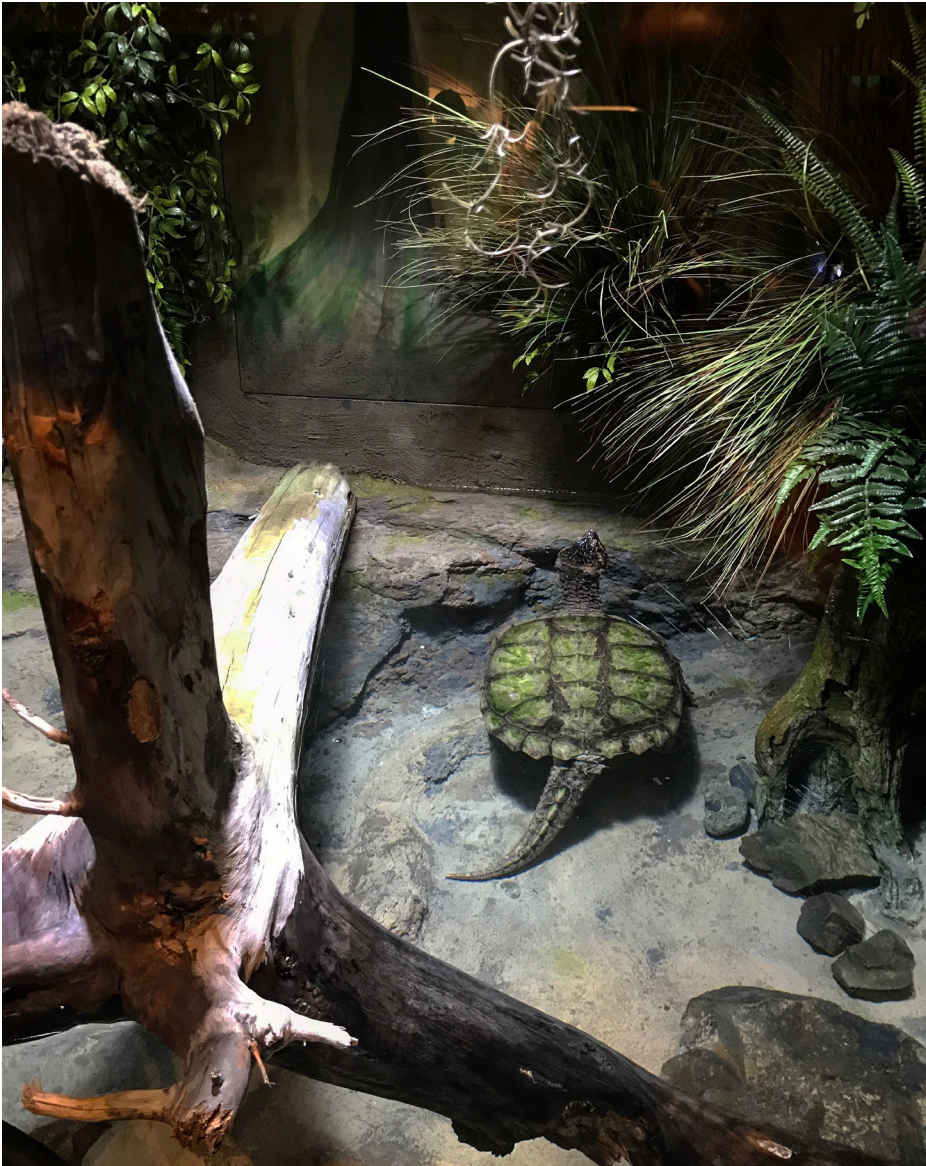
**SAVANNAH AND EGGBERT
THE BALL PYTHONS**

Savannah and Eggbert are the ball pythons that live at the Anchorage Museum. Savannah is a female born in 1999 and Eggbert is a male born in 2004. In the wild, ball pythons live in the grasslands of western and central Africa and are strong climbers. Eggbert and Savannah like to hang out together in the little shelter in their home at the museum. Ball pythons are carnivores, and Eggbert and Savannah each eat 2-3 mice once every week or two.

For enrichment, Eggbert and Savannah have a climbing wall to help them flex their climbing muscles.

BLINK: ANIMAL ENRICHMENT

Animal photos: Print and use



CHOMPER THE SNAPPING TURTLE

Chomper is the snapping turtle who lives at the Anchorage Museum. He was born around 1987 and weighs about 20 pounds. In the wild, snapping turtles are found in the eastern parts of North America. They live most of their lives in the water, and are found in slow moving water such as bogs, marshes, lakes, and rivers. Chomper can be seen swimming around his tank in the Discovery Center. He likes to eat quail, blueberries, shrimp, and earthworms. Chomper also eats greens.

For enrichment, Chomper has a floating ball that holds his food. He has to swim after the ball and pull greens out of the ball as it floats away. Chomper sometimes gets to walk around the Discovery Center for exercise when the museum is closed.