

ZOO ZEN

What is Zoo Zen?

Zoo Zen is a creative and engaging approach designed to support self-regulation, sensory integration, and gross motor development in students. By using animal-inspired movements, students can explore physical activities that enhance focus, emotional regulation, and overall participation in their learning environment.

When choosing an activity for a student, consider their sensory profile, regulation needs, and physical capabilities. Each animal and its associated movement offers unique benefits:

Monkey (Swinging): For students needing vestibular input to enhance balance and reduce overstimulation.

Tortoise (Weighted Blankets): Ideal for students seeking deep pressure for calming and grounding.

Dolphin (Spinning): Beneficial for students who require vestibular stimulation to improve focus and coordination.

Kangaroo (Jumping): Suitable for students needing proprioceptive input to increase body awareness and muscle strength.

Crab (Crawling): Best for students requiring cross-body coordination and neural integration activities.

Flamingo (Balancing): Great for students who need to develop core strength, stability, and focus.

Cat (Stretching): Perfect for students needing flexibility and relaxation activities to reduce stress.



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Created by **Beatbotz Music & Computing**
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MONKEY

Action Description:

"Swing like a monkey to improve balance and coordination. Swinging promotes vestibular development, enhancing spatial awareness and providing calming effects."

Resources:

- Therapy swings
- Rope attachments
- Scarves or lightweight fabric for simulated swinging
- Balance Boards

Student Profile:

Ideal for students seeking vestibular input or calming movement.

Movements to Try:

Encourage students to sway side-to-side or front-to-back while holding onto a secure object.
Use a therapy swing for longer rhythmic movements.



Support for Teachers/TAs:

Guide students on how to hold securely and gently encourage them to experiment with different swinging directions.
Create a jungle-themed sensory break station to enhance engagement.

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TORTOISE

Action Description:

"Curl up like a tortoise under its shell. Weighted blankets provide deep pressure, soothing the sensory system and promoting relaxation."

Resources:

- Weighted blankets
- Soft floor mats
- Calming visuals

Student Profile:

Useful for students needing grounding and deep pressure input.

Movements to Try:

Allow students to lie under a weighted blanket during quiet times or while listening to calming music.

Pair with deep breathing exercises.

Support for Teachers/TAs:

Create a calm corner with blankets and sensory items.

Model relaxation techniques to encourage participation.



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DOLPHIN

Spinning

Action Description:

"Spin like a dolphin in water. Spinning activates the vestibular system, enhancing balance and coordination."

Resources:

- Sit-and-spin toys
- Rotating chairs
- Water-themed visuals and sounds
- Balance Boards

Student Profile:

Beneficial for students needing vestibular input to focus or calm down.

Movements to Try:

Guide students to spin safely on one foot or while holding a lightweight object.

Use rotating chairs/spinning apparatus for short spinning sessions.

Support for Teachers/TAs:

Monitor the speed and duration to ensure it's calming, not overstimulating.

Incorporate water-themed visuals for added immersion.



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KANGAROO

Action Description:

"Hop like a kangaroo to build body awareness and muscle strength. Jumping provides proprioceptive input and enhances motor planning."

Resources:

Mini trampolines

Foam blocks

Jump mats

Student Profile:

Great for students needing proprioceptive input or active breaks.

Movements to Try:

Set up hopping challenges using mats or foam blocks.

Create a hopping relay game to encourage participation.



Support for Teachers/TAs:

Use verbal prompts or visuals to guide hopping patterns.

Encourage counting or singing to make it more interactive.

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CRAB

Action Description:

"Crawl sideways like a crab. Crawling enhances cross-body coordination, crucial for neural integration and motor planning."

Resources:

Tunnels

Cones

Beach-themed visuals

Student Profile:

Ideal for students needing cross-body coordination activities.

Movements to Try:

Guide students to crawl sideways using hands and feet.

Incorporate tunnels or cones for obstacle navigation.



Support for Teachers/TAs:

Use encouraging phrases to keep students engaged.

Pair with a beach-themed story or activity for added fun.

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CAT

Action Description:

""Stretch like a cat to improve flexibility and relaxation. Stretching reduces stress and promotes muscle relaxation."

Resources:

- Yoga mats
- Stretch posters
- Toy animals and puppets for modeling

Student Profile:

IBeneficial for students needing relaxation or transition activities.

Movements to Try:

Lead students in arching and releasing their backs on all fours.

Incorporate stretches into morning routines or transitions.

Support for Teachers/TAs:

Model the movements and provide verbal encouragement.

Use visuals or props to demonstrate each stretch.



Stretching

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FLAMINGO

Action Description:

"Stand tall like a flamingo on one leg. Balancing activities build core strength and stability, supporting posture and focus."

Resources:

Balance boards

Stepping stones

Visual timers

Student Profile:

Ideal for students needing core strength or focus-building activities.

Movements to Try:

Challenge students to balance on one leg and time their efforts.

Use stepping stones for dynamic balancing.

Support for Teachers/TAs:

Encourage mindfulness by pairing balance activities with calming music.

Use visual prompts to help students focus.



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How to assess the impact?

Assessment is vital to ensure the activities meet the students' needs effectively. Use the following tools and strategies:

Observation:

Monitor the student's engagement during the activity.

Look for signs of increased focus, calmness, or enjoyment.

Feedback:

Speak with the student and staff about their experiences. Note preferences and any challenges encountered.

Formal Tools:

Use frameworks like Zones of Regulation to track improvements in emotional and sensory regulation.

Log behaviours or responses in tracking systems such as CPOMS or behaviour charts.

Individual Plans:

Integrate Zoo Zen activities into Personalised Education Plans (PEPs) or Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs).

Adjust activities based on progress or changing needs.

By selecting appropriate activities and continuously assessing their impact, Zoo Zen provides an adaptable framework to support diverse student needs effectively. The cards guide teachers and TAs in choosing and implementing the right activity for each student, ensuring an engaging and therapeutic experience.



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