

World Gorilla Day:



Gorilla Grooming

In this activity, kids will learn about gorillas and their social behaviors.

Age: Children ages 2-6

Gather your Gear

- Stuffed animal (preferably a gorilla)
- Small clips (paper clips or hair clips will do)

Get Ready *You can help your child make connections by thinking about concepts before the activity.*

Zoo Atlanta is currently home to one of the largest populations of western lowland gorillas in North America. Most gorillas live in family groups known as troops. These troops can consist of five to 30 individuals, although the average size is 11. The group is led by a dominant silverback male and contains several adult females and their young.

While the majority of a gorilla's day is spent foraging for food and moving through the forest, they do take breaks to nap, play and groom. Play is an activity that is mostly observed with young gorillas, but gorillas of all ages have been seen engaging in play behavior. It is fun, allows individuals to test their boundaries in a safe way, and is an opportunity to get their wiggles out.

Grooming is a helpful way to keep clean and can also be a social activity, helping gorillas feel close to one another. Gorilla mothers spend time grooming their infants as a form of bonding. It also improves their health. Can you groom like a gorilla?



Activity Instructions: Groom the Gorilla

- Attach clips all over your stuffed animal
- Then have a friend, sibling, parent, or yourself carefully pick off each clip
- That's it!

Alternative: Make it a race! Time each player to see who grooms the fastest!

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Recap *Have a conversation about what you saw/did and questions your child may have.*

- What species of gorilla lives at Zoo Atlanta?
- What is a gorilla family group known as?
- What types of social behaviors do gorillas exhibit?

Relate

Gorillas have close family groups, or troops, and everyone has a special role. The silverback plays the role of protector of his troop. Adult females conduct the majority of care for offspring, with the silverback occasionally engaging in play with youngsters. Within the group, the silverback mainly breaks up disputes among the females and/or offspring. What is the role of each member of your family?

Spend some time watching gorillas play and discuss how play is important to you, your family, and friends.

Friendly Play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrSEhODwjOE>

Playing in Leaves: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-w0QJuG13I>

When we want to stay in touch with our family members, all we have to do is pick up the phone, usually a cell phone. Within our cell phones and tablets that help keep us connected to family and friends is a mineral called coltan. Coltan is mined in the same areas where gorillas live and is a leading factor in habitat loss for gorillas and other animals that also share the same home.

Recycle your cell phones! You can protect gorillas by recycling your old cell phone(s) right here at the Zoo! Recycling cell phones and other small electronic devices protects gorilla habitat by reducing the need to mine for coltan, which can be reused. We accept *any* kind of cell phone to be recycled with Eco-Cell. For each cell phone received, gorillas benefit in two ways: the threat to their habitat is reduced, and a donation is made to support the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International's gorilla conservation and research.

It takes a team.... join ours

Help us save species by joining the "Zoo Conservation Corps" and raise awareness about wild animals, their habitats and why conserving both is so important. If your family members are on social media, post to show what you have learned, and use the hashtags #OnlyZooATL and #WorldGorillaDay so that we can see all your great work!

Want to know more?

- For more on World Gorilla Day and gorilla conservation, visit <https://gorillafund.org/>

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- To learn more about cell phone recycling and Gorillas on the Line visit <https://zooatlanta.org/conservation-action/gorillas-on-the-line/>
- Visit Zoo Atlanta so see and learn more about western lowland gorillas!