

Zoo Troop For All



“Working to create more inclusive programming in our communities for children with developmental disabilities and their families.”

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Background

- Nationally, there are few examples of ongoing zoo programs that fit the needs of children with developmental disabilities (DD).
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides guidelines for public facilities to address accessibility for individuals with disabilities, however there are no guidelines regarding inclusive programming, classes, or camps.
- The few zoos that do have inclusive programming often do not measure their outcomes in a meaningful way.
- Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden (CZBG), located adjacent to Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC), has the largest membership of any cultural institution in the Cincinnati area (>58,000 households).
- In the surrounding areas, data indicate that 19.4% of Cincinnati Public School students receive services for a disability.¹
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 1 in 6 children in the United States have one or more developmental disabilities.²

Objectives

Zoo Troop for All (ZTFA) aims to involve more children with DD in programming at CZBG by:

- Creating training for staff to increase their confidence in working with and supporting children with DD
- Collaborating with families and staff to assess needs and effective ways to improve overall experiences at CZBG
- Implementing inclusive ZTFA classes for children with DD
- Evaluating outcomes from training and programming

Training

CZBG staff leaders from each department attended an eight-hour training session aimed to provide knowledge of DD and increase confidence in working with children with DD. Training included didactic and interactive components on a variety of topics that were applicable to the zoo setting.

Training Topics

- Disability Etiquette
- Introduction to Developmental Disabilities
- Communication Systems
- Behavior Management
- Visual Supports

Interactive Components

- Discussion Groups
- Group Presentations
- Developmental Disabilities Videos
- Caregiver Panel
- Interaction with Children with Developmental Disabilities



CZBG staff participating in interactive training module related to personal reflections of DD



CZBG staff interacting with child with DD as part of training day

Measure Development

Three measures were created to assess outcomes of the ZTFA training and programming.

Pre-and Post- Training Zoo Troop Self-Efficacy Scale

- Measures self-efficacy regarding ZTFA class, including confidence to carry out program goals, work with children with DD, and use behavior management strategies
- 15-item scale completed by staff at beginning and end of training

Zoo Troop for All Confidence Scale

This survey will help us understand your confidence in participating/leading the Zoo Troop for All program for children with disabilities.

Please rate how confident you are as of now that you can do the things below on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means Strongly Disagree and 7 means Strongly Agree:

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
1. I am confident that I can capitalize on wonder, action, and knowledge as they present in Zoo Troop for All.									
2. I am confident that I can meet objectives and goals of Zoo Troop for All.									
3. I am confident that I can interact with children with disabilities.									
4. I am confident that I can structure learning settings to meet learning needs of children with disabilities.									
5. I am confident that I can understand traits that may relate to a child's disability.									
6. I am confident that I can communicate with children with varied communication skills.									
7. I am confident that I can use clear and simple directions with children with disabilities.									
8. I am confident that I can help children with disabilities stay engaged in Zoo Troop tasks.									
9. I am confident that I can set behavior expectations for children with disabilities in the Zoo Troop learning settings.									
10. I am confident that I can use general behavior management skills with children with disabilities in the Zoo Troop learning settings.									
11. I am confident that I can recognize triggers for behavior challenges in children with disabilities.									
12. I am confident that I can manage a behavior challenge in a child with a disability if it occurs.									
13. I am confident that I can use visual supports with children with disabilities.									
14. I am confident that I can use reinforcement to build desired behavior in children with disabilities in the Zoo Troop learning settings.									
15. I am confident that I can prepare children with disabilities for transitions.									

Caregiver Satisfaction Questionnaire

- Gathers information on caregiver satisfaction of ZTFA programming for their child with DD
- 14-item survey completed by caregivers at end of program

Cincinnati Zoo Troop for All Caregiver Survey

This survey will help us make improvements to the Zoo Troop for All program. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements with 1 meaning Strongly Disagree and 5 meaning Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
1. I was satisfied with my family's overall experience at Zoo Troop for All.							
2. Based on my child's experience, I would recommend Zoo Troop for All to a friend or family member who has a child with a disability.							
3. Zoo Troop for All staff appeared knowledgeable about my child's particular needs.							
4. Zoo Troop for All staff appeared comfortable working with my child.							
5. Zoo Troop for All positively impacted my child.							
6. Zoo Troop for All staff worked to ensure that my child was included in the activities that took place at Zoo Troop for All.							
7. Zoo Troop for All staff worked to facilitate interaction between my child and other children in the group.							
8. Overall, Zoo Troop for All staff accepted my child and treated him/her with dignity.							
9. I would feel comfortable having my child participate in Zoo Troop for All in the future.							
10. After my experiences at Zoo Troop for All, I would look for another inclusive recreation program for my child in our community.							
11. As a parent or guardian, I felt welcomed in the Zoo Troop for All classroom.							
12. What was the best part of Zoo Troop for All for your child?							
13. What could be improved to make the Zoo Troop for All experience better for your child?							
14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Zoo Troop for All program?							

Measure Development, cont.

Zoo Troop Student Engagement

- Captures information on student participation, attention, disruptive behavior, and engagement during ZTFA
- 4-item instrument completed by staff observers for every student in each class

Cincinnati Zoo Troop for All Student Observation Scale

Staff observer:
Zoo Troop Camper ID #:
Date:

Attention		Independence	
1. Not attentive during activities. Child shows no interest in activities.		1. Does not complete tasks independently & requires constant physical prompts.	
2. Limited attention to activities is shown. Interest is also limited.		2. Requires several prompts to complete tasks. Child rarely responds to prompts.	
3. Shows some attention and interest in activities.		3. May require some prompts to complete tasks. Child responds to prompts.	
4. Frequently attentive to activities.		4. Child requires minimal prompts throughout the activities.	
5. Fully attentive to activities.		5. Does not need prompts to complete tasks. Child completes tasks independently.	
Observations/comments:		Observations/comments:	
Disruptive Behaviors		Participation	
1. Displays severe and frequent disruptive behavior.		1. Refuses to participate in activities.	
2. Displays severe disruptive behavior infrequently.		2. Limited participation in activities.	
3. Displays mild disruptive behavior frequently.		3. Partially participates in activities.	
4. Displays mild disruptive behavior infrequently.		4. Frequently participates in activities.	
5. Never displays disruptive behavior.		5. Fully participates in activities.	
Observations/comments:		Observations/comments:	

Total Score: Poor Engagement 4 → Optimal Engagement 20

Measure and hints for coding adapted from Autism Engagement Rating Scale by Ruble et al 2005

Next Steps

- Train all ZTFA and CZBG staff according to department needs and evaluate outcomes
- Implement and evaluate inclusive ZTFA programming for children with DD

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