



Science Activities

Title: **Mama Don't Allow**

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Alligator Two Step

Key Words: alligators, reptiles, dinosaurs, movement

Concept: Reptiles walk with their legs held out to the side of their body.

In this episode, alligators remind LeVar of dinosaurs. Alligators and dinosaurs are similar in many ways, but one important way in which the two are different is in how they walk. Reptiles walk with their legs held out to the side of their bodies, but dinosaurs walked with their legs directly under their bodies, similar to how dogs or cats walk. Because dinosaurs walked in this way, their legs were able to carry greater body weight.

Materials: oil-based modeling clay, toothpicks

Directions:

1. Have students roll a stick of clay into a cylinder shape that is about 4 inches long and 1 inch in diameter.
2. Ask them to imagine that the clay cylinder is the body of a dinosaur. Have them insert four toothpick legs into the clay, positioning the legs directly under the body of the dinosaur. Stand the models up on a flat surface.
3. Now ask them to imagine that the clay cylinder is the body of an alligator. To make it an alligator, the four toothpick legs must be moved to the sides of the clay cylinder. Have them stand the model up on a flat surface and describe what happens. (With the legs in this position, the model will not be able to support the weight of the clay body.) Ask students to reduce the size of the clay cylinder until the model can be supported with toothpicks in this position.
4. Extension: Have students mimic a dinosaur by walking on all fours with their legs and arms directly under their body. Then ask them to mimic an alligator walking on all fours with their arms and legs held out to the side of their body. Ask them to describe how each position feels. (It will be much easier and less awkward to support their weight with their arms and legs under their body than with them out to the side.)

The Point of Teeth

Key Words: alligators, teeth



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Concept: Alligators have cone-shaped teeth.

Alligators can replace lost teeth — some have as many as 3,000 teeth in a lifetime! One reason alligators need to replace so many teeth is that they use their teeth for grabbing and holding onto their prey. They don't use their teeth for chewing food as we do. They generally swallow their food whole or in large chunks. Their teeth are shaped like tiny cones—a great shape for grabbing and holding on.

Materials: large tube-sock, plastic bags, string, index cards cut into strips (1" x 3"), tape, scissors, gloves

Directions:

1. Have students begin by making something to grab. Fill a sock with plastic bags, and tie the end closed with string.
2. To make pointed teeth, have each group of students make 5 cone shapes.
 - Hold a strip of paper vertically.
 - Fold the strip diagonally in the middle to make an "L" shape.
 - Fold the bottom of the "L" behind and over to make a cone.
 - Tape the edge down to secure the shape.
3. Give each group two gloves and ask them to tape cones to the ends of the fingers on one glove. They should tape paper strips to the ends of the fingers on the other glove.
4. Have students compare the ability to grab the socks with pointed and flat teeth shapes.