

Media Contacts:
St. Louis Zoo 314/781-0900
Janet Powell, ext. 233; Christy Childs, ext. 239

Jeffrey P. Bonner, Ph.D.
President & CEO

EMERSON CHILDREN'S ZOO

The Emerson Children's Zoo features friendly animals to see and touch, a variety of animal shows and programs, educational play activities and fun for the whole family.

Visitors can experience the joy of meeting and touching a wide variety of animals in this special setting. Through this close-up contact at an early age, the Zoo hopes children will come away with a deeper appreciation for the animal world.

Children can imitate their animal friends at the "Just Like Me" play area. Here kids can hop through water geysers as jets of water spurt randomly, cross a "river" on a rope bridge, climb on a giant spider web or dig like an aardvark in a sandbox. They can try to measure up to a llama, grizzly bear, boa constrictor or red-tailed hawk. A unique feature is the thrill of zooming down a slide through the otter pool with river otters swimming about.

Live animal shows and presentations take place at the Bank of America Amphitheater in summer. Little ones can peer into the Children's Zoo kitchen and watch keepers prepare food for the animals.

Other attractions include a large colony of meerkats of "Lion King" fame. These industrious little animals have a termite mound and an elaborate system of PVC burrows. An active family of fennec foxes, the small foxes with the huge ears, is always fun to watch. Plus a kangaroo that lives in trees? That's right! The Matschie's tree kangaroo from the mountainous forests of Papua New Guinea is well adapted to life in the trees. These marsupials can climb trees like a cat and are good jumpers just like other kangaroos.

Naked mole rats are a must-see at the Children's Zoo. These hairless rodents from Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, live under ground and have a social system much like ants, bees or termites. Visitors can see the busy colony of workers, soldiers and a queen as they travel through the large, clear plastic tunnels.

Admission to Children's Zoo is \$4.00 per person. Admission is free the first hour the Zoo is open (8-9 a.m. in summer; 9-10 a.m. in spring, fall and winter).

###