Activity 9: Caring for a Family of Elephants Living in the Circus

In Brief: The circus is “baby sitting” a small elephant family of 4. They need to plan for food and water and special care to keep them healthy and happy.

Objectives: Discover what elephants need to keep them healthy in captivity. What are their unique needs?

Tip: Use the information from your research in activity 8 to help you.

Materials: websites and books on wild elephants.

With/for Your Child: Engage!

Get Ready! Read letter from the circus owner of Cats & Dogs Spectacular (below). Review the Brainstorming Packet for Wild Elephants.

Step 1. With your previous research notes, list the kind of foods that elephants eat and what they drink. How much per day for adult and young elephants?

Step 2. What kind of activities do elephants like? Research and make a list. What do they do for fun? Do elephants play games?

Step 3. Use your research notes and visuals to write a letter back to the circus owner of Cats & Dogs Spectacular. Remember, the owner needs to know: 1. How much food and water the elephants need everyday. 2. Give the animal care team a few advice on how to take care of them.

Step 4. Make your final report (a letter or story) so it is factual and sounds interesting and persuasive. Consider the limits of what the circus can provide.

Follow up and Extensions: Do you think that elephants add something of interest for the circus audiences? In your own words, explain why. You can record your thoughts or write them down.
Dear Animal Care Team Member,

We are planning to “baby sit” a family of elephants who have been rescued from a zoo that is threatened by fire. We need to know what to feed them and how much food and water they will need everyday.

In addition, I want to be sure that our care team is well informed and trained to take care of the elephants. There are three adult elephants (a mother, father and an uncle) and one juvenile who is about 6 months old.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
The Owner, *Dogs and Cats Spectacular Circus*

**Guiding questions for activity 9:**

1-What do captive elephants eat? Are adult needs different from young elephants? If yes, how?

2-How much water do elephants need everyday? How much food do they eat everyday?

3-What sort of special training will the staff need to care for elephants?