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TEACHER GUIDE

ANIMALS NEED FOOD GRADES K-2

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- **All animals eat the same foods.**
All animals need food to live, but they have unique diets that fit with their specific needs. Some animals only eat plants, others only eat meat and some eat both plants and meat.
- **Animal features are not related to the food they eat.**
Animals have many adaptations that help them to get food in their habitats. Different shapes of their teeth match the types of food they eat. Teeth and beaks are adapted to meet the needs of animals and their specific environment.
- **The meat people buy from the store did not come from an animal.**
Meat in the store comes from farm animals. The convenience of going to a store to pick up food makes this idea confusing to young children.
- **Animals that eat other animals are mean, bad or evil.**
Some animals need to eat meat in order to live and grow. Since wild animals can't go to the grocery store to buy their food, they must hunt and kill other animals. No one likes to see a fluffy bunny get eaten by a mountain lion, but this is a natural part of living on Earth and necessary for the survival of many animals.

ANIMALS AND FOOD

Many young students have had pets and understand the need for food and water. What might be new to some young students is the idea that different animals have very different needs for food. Animals live in all different habitats and must find food in their specific habitat. Animals also have many adaptations (features) that help them find and eat food.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Expose students to a variety of animals, especially the animals they may never have heard of that are not typically found in a zoo or on a farm. When discussing the animals you introduce, be sure to point out special adaptations they have that help them get food in their specific habitats. It is less important that students remember what specific animals eat, and more important that they recognize that all animals need food. Be sure to compare and contrast the needs of plants and animals to meet the standard.