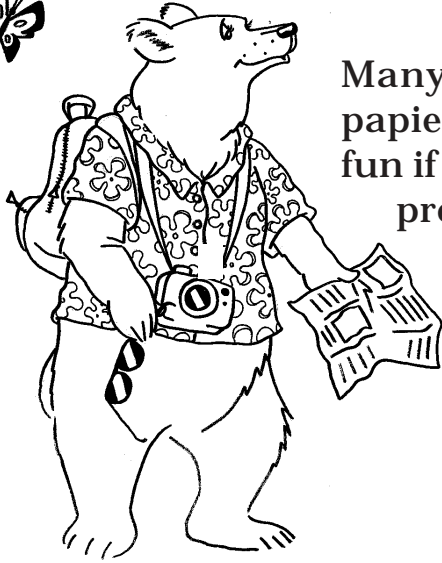


Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary

Piñatas and papier-mâché enrichment items



Many animals enjoy tearing into and destroying papier-mâché items or piñatas. It can be especially fun if you create something that looks like the natural prey of carnivores or a natural sparring partner for animals with horns or antlers. Here are safe and easy instructions on how to make these destructible toys for zoo animals! A great piñata or papier-mâché item will take several days to complete because different stages have to dry before you can begin the next stage. Plan on at least a week from start to finish.

Do not use string, tape, staples, wire, cloth or glues! These items can injure animals! All piñatas and papier-mâché items should be made of cardboard, paper, flour and water paste and nontoxic, water based paints only!

1. Let the zoo know what animal you want to “enrich” and what kind of “creation” you will be making.
2. Begin with a cardboard box that has no tape, string, plastic or staples in or on it. You can close the box by folding and tucking the flaps under each other. The box will be the “belly” of the animal you are creating.
3. Make a thick “paste” out of 1 part flour and 2 parts water.
4. Start putting layers of torn paper over the cardboard box using the thick paste to plaster the paper to the box. Additional shaping can be added by crumpling paper and securing it with torn strips of paper and the paste.
5. If the piñata is to be hung, make a cardboard handle and plaster it into the top of the animals “back”.
6. When the “belly” is thick enough, let your creation dry in a cool, dry place with low humidity (to prevent molding) before attaching other “body parts”.

7. Begin working on the neck and head. Once again, the head can begin as a small cardboard box. The neck can begin as a cardboard paper towel roll or mailing tube. Cut a small hole in the cardboard box and insert the tube “neck” into the hole. Using the paste, cover the head and neck with plenty of torn paper. Let the head and neck dry.

8. After the head, neck and belly are dry, cut four small holes where the legs should go at the bottom of the belly. Secure each roll to the body by wrapping torn paper and paste around the “joint”. Continue to add paper to the legs until they are the desired thickness.

9. Cut a hole the size of the “neck” at the proper place on your “body”. Insert the neck part way into the hole and secure with paste and turn paper.

10. To make “fur”, shred strips of paper and paste one end only to the animal. Let the whole “animal” dry.

11. Paint your creation using non-toxic water based paints.

12. Cut a small “door” in the top of the “back” of your animal. Zookeepers will fill the cardboard “belly” with acceptable treats through this door.

13. If you are going to hang your creation like a piñata, use only cotton, hemp or sisal ropes. It will be suspended from the cardboard handle you built into it’s back.

14. Make an appointment to come to the zoo if you would like to watch it being enjoyed. A zookeeper will fill the piñata or papier-mâché item with the proper treats and give it to the animal of your choice while you watch!

