



Children watching as a trainer interacts with a fennec fox at the launch of ZooSchool on May 16. ZooSchool is a new addition to Mandai Wildlife Group's ongoing efforts to create wildlife learning programmes for children. ST PHOTOS: TARYN NG

Source: Straits Times© SPH Media Limited. Permission required for reproduction.

# Kids can get close to animals, pick up life skills at ZooSchool

## Camp featuring survival skills and conservation among offerings at school

Emerald Lo

Starting in June, children aged three to 12 will meet animals up close and develop life skills through a new programme at Mandai Wildlife Reserve aimed at fostering a deeper appreciation for nature.

Set up by Mandai Wildlife Group together with pre-school operator NTUC First Campus, ZooSchool's 1,300 sq m campus in Mandai features indoor spaces modelled after rainforest, freshwater and savannah habitats. There is also a multi-level outdoor playground.

Children will pick up life skills such as knot-tying, map reading and first aid, aimed at building resilience, critical thinking and fine motor skills.

To complement their classroom learning, they will also venture into Mandai's five wildlife parks, which will serve as open-air classrooms. Guided by veterinarians and animal care experts, the children will have close-up animal encounters and go behind the scenes to learn about wildlife conservation and animal behaviours.

"The world is running out of time," said Ms Belina Lee, deputy chief executive (transformation and growth) at Mandai Wildlife Group, at the launch of ZooSchool on May 16.

"We need our next generation to grow up, not just thinking of the traditional sense of success, but that success also means being responsible to the environment."

ZooSchool is a new addition to Mandai Wildlife Group's ongoing efforts to create wildlife learning



Children helping to fill eggshells with mealworms and tear strips of newspaper to bury the food, as part of an enrichment activity designed to mimic how foxes dig for food in the wild, at the Fennec Fox exhibit at Singapore Zoo on May 16.

programmes for children. The group hopes to scale up ZooSchool's reach to engage 50,000 children annually by 2030.

More initiatives are in the pipeline, including an overnight camp and a Parent-Tots Programme, which will offer nature play sessions for parents and their toddlers. The latter is set to start in 2026.

At the launch, The Straits Times had a glimpse of one of ZooSchool's key offerings, Wild Rescue Rangers – a three-day camp featuring survival skills, animal interactions and conservation activities.

After finding out how the zoo cares for animals, the children at the event learnt about animal habitats and tried their hand at building an otter exhibit inside the school campus.

They later visited the Fennec Fox exhibit at Singapore Zoo, where they filled eggshells with mealworms and tore strips of newspaper to bury the food – part of an enrichment activity designed to mimic how foxes dig for

food in the wild.

Five-year-old Clarence Lin, from Little Skool-House (Alexandra Hospital Branch), rated the

day a five out of five.

"I love to prepare the food for the fox because I get to put the worms in the eggs," he said.

Ms Natalie Teng, 47, centre manager for ZooSchool, said: "We build on the children's creativity, asking them questions about how and why these things happen."

Wild Rescue Rangers is priced at \$520 per child from July onwards. The fee includes all meals and guided wildlife interactions. While June sessions are fully booked, camps for July to September are available for sign-ups via the Mandai Wildlife Reserve website.

Other programmes include Wild Wonders, two-hour add-on adventures at either the Singapore Zoo or Bird Paradise. Participants will uncover animal "superpowers" and conservation mysteries during the experience. The activity runs from June to July and costs \$70 per child.

Programmes for pre-schoolers will begin in July. These include 45-minute guided tours of the Singapore Zoo, Bird Paradise or River Wonders, which cost \$25 per child.

For a deeper dive, a 3½-hour wildlife exploration programme will take children through Rainforest Wild Asia or the Singapore Zoo, where children will learn survival skills. This is priced at \$70 per child.

Friends of Mandai and NTUC Union members can enjoy further discounts.

For more information, visit <https://zooschool.mandai.com>

[emeraldlo@sph.com.sg](mailto:emeraldlo@sph.com.sg)



SIANG HOA  
JEWELLERY

# 3-Day

## HAPPY PARENTS DAY HOT DEAL

16 - 18 May 2025 • 10am - 9pm

Valley Point Shopping Centre, Level 1 Atrium,  
491 River Valley Road, Singapore 248371

**IDEAL CUT**  
**D & E Color VVS Clarity**

1 CT	\$888 up
2 CT	\$2,888 up
3 CT	\$6,888 up
4 CT	\$10,888 up
5 CT	\$12,888 up

Last **2** Days

UP TO **70% OFF**