

Kindergarten

Our staff will meet your students at the fire circle to review a few rules before beginning your program. Kindergarteners will be encouraged to observe carefully and use all of their senses to describe what they see, smell, touch, taste and hear throughout their tour of the ranch. If you provide our staff with a copy of your KWL activity or let us know in advance if you have specific goals and objectives for your program, our staff will be happy to address them during the program. Large groups will be divided by classroom for the program but all groups will visit the same areas, in varying order.

Greenhouse: The greenhouse provides an opportunity for children to observe how plants are started and the conditions needed for them to grow and thrive. We discuss the importance of the weather in growing plants and compare the temperature in the greenhouse with the temperature outside. While transplanting a seedling to take home, children will locate the seed, roots, stem and leaves of the plant and learn their functions. Students also receive instructions on how to care for their plant at home so it will continue to grow.



Garden: In the garden students will find all kinds of plants to explore. They can see, smell, touch, and sometimes taste, seeds, roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits that may include (depending on the season) carrots, peas, celery, lettuce, broccoli, and tomatoes. They may compare the feeling of soft, fuzzy leaves with thicker, waxy leaves or large lettuce leaves with tiny rosemary leaves. The role of weather in what and when to plant will be discussed and students will learn how compost is produced and benefits the garden.

Animals: Elkus Ranch raises chickens, goats, and sheep. We also have donkeys, horses and a llama. As students visit each group of animals they will learn what they eat, how they are protected from predators and the weather, and the products they provide or the jobs they perform. Students will typically have an opportunity to brush a goat or a donkey, hold a chicken, pet a rabbit, and feed a sheep.



Lower Barn: This barn is full of wonderful artifacts to explore including bones and skulls, hides, taxidermy mounts, feathers, and nests from domestic and wild animals. Students will be introduced to the terms *predator* and *prey* and will learn how the basic needs of both wild and domestic animals are met.

Upper Barn: The upper barn houses our flock of sheep and it is here where we demonstrate the process of converting raw wool into clothing. The entire process of shearing, washing, carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving is illustrated. In the spring we may also have lambs in the barn and we will discuss how we care for and protect them as they grow.

Lunch: By the end of the tour children are ready for lunch. After washing hands, the group will head to the picnic area where we will discuss their role in keeping our environment healthy so we can continue to have places like Elkus Ranch and other farms where our food and fiber is produced. Students will discover how long it takes for some everyday items to decompose, learn to sort their trash into compost, recycle and trash bins, and learn how they can reduce the amount of trash they produce. Our program concludes here and we encourage teachers to complete the last column of the KWL activity to help children verbalize what they have learned. Your students are welcome to write to us to share a special memory when they return to school. We are always happy to provide answers to follow up questions too.