

## Animal Moves

**Materials:** none

**Procedure: (Awaken Enthusiasm/Direct Experience)** Before this activity make sure you have done some preliminary research on a specific mammal so that you know a bit about their adaptations and movements. Animal Moves is a wonderful time for theatrics and we often use it to kick off a lesson on mammals.

1) **Gather the students together.** I like to sit on the grass with them and discuss different species of mammals they know - any species will do. Before the talk - do a little background research into one specific native species. For example, let's think about snowshoe hare. "What does it eat? It's a plant eater. What makes it successful... teeth designed for chewing and a great sense of smell. Good! What challenges do hares face... they are also a favoured prey! How do they deal with this challenge? They have huge ears for detecting the approach of predators! Great insight, but did you know that their eyes situated on the sides of their head, provide them with an almost 360° view of their surroundings? And did you know that hares rely on camouflage? In the winter their coat turns white and brown during the summer. What would it be like to be here? Vigilance would be pretty important right!"

2) **At this point, ask, "Who can demonstrate what a hare looks like in the woods... excellent.** See how alert the hare is with its head upright listening for predators. Now let's all imagine we are a hare." Let them get into being a hare for a moment. "It's a beautiful sunny morning, just like this, we've emerged from under the balsam fir we were resting under for the night and are eating a nice crisp blue-bead lily leaf. We love mornings, there are lots of shadows to conceal our movements, the sun is warm and predators are resting. Listen to the birds! They are special friends to us because any change in their song or call will alert us to the presence of danger. Let's hop around and find more food - remember our forefeet stay put while our hind legs swing around them."

3) **Let the children hop around and join in,** pretend to eat and listen for predators. Finally, "What's that, I think a fox is approaching - remember our first line of defence is to remain perfectly still but be ready because if the fox catches our scent our best chance for survival will be to escape using our fantastic speed. We can leap over 3m in distance and reach speeds of 45km/h." During the hopping around fazes, make sure to have moved yourself to the outside of the group and begin to transform yourself into a fox. "The fox is getting closer. RUN!"

**Hints, tips and tricks:** With explanation and preparation you can get a group of children completely into the moment. You can add as much info as you like. It's a great way to set up a whole discussion about predators and prey. Follow up with the Game 'Stalker' for a one-two punch.