



Hi! Can you give me a name?

I'm a four-month-old African lion cub belonging to all of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. I've just been adopted into the family of birds and animals of America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College in California.

Right now I'm an amazing ball of energy with paws as big as a grown man's fist. My big brown eyes can already spot almost anything that moves in the dark. When I grow up, I'll weigh 265 to 400 pounds. Will you get to be that big?

My new home is the only zoo in the world that prepares students to be animal trainers, zookeepers and care-givers for animal parks. This zoo teaches young people to become animal trainers for entertainment centers and to work in the world of motion pictures, oceanariums and television, too.

Here's all you have to do to name me:

- Draw a picture of what you think I'll look like when I get to be a big lioness
- Give me a great name
- Put your own name on my picture
- Hand in your finished work to your club counselor

Thanks a million!

Now that you have had the chance to submit a name for and a drawing of the Boys and Girls Clubs' very own lion cub at America's Teaching Zoo, why not take a moment to discover the lions that live right in your own neighborhood?

LIONS RIGHT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Do you want to see a lion right where you live? Well, while most of us will never have the chance to see a lion up close, we can see a miniature version almost every day. Lions and house cats both belong to the cat family, which means they have many things in common.

Certainly a lion is much bigger than the cat that hangs around your home or school. A lion can be 10 or even 20 times bigger than your family pet. But, they have very similar features. Instead of yelling "scat," let's take a closer look at our meowing friends.

Eyes

Forward-facing eyes are important tools for hunting. These eyes let the lion and ordinary cat tell how close it has to get before pouncing on its prey. Both animals hunt mainly at night time so they have eyes which make things clearer in the dim moonlight. That's why a cat's eyes shine back at you when someone points a flash light at them, or a car's lights catch them.

Hunting

The way your pet cat stalks and attacks a moth or the end of your shoelace is the same way a lion goes after an antelope. First the cat drops down so it hugs the ground. Its ears flatten against its head. Its eyes are fixed on the prey, taking all of the cat's concentration. Next it creeps towards its victim, keeping low to avoid being seen until the last possible moment. When close enough, the cat explodes into motion, rushing at the prey, and grabs it with its front paws and mouth. Lions often run at their prey so quickly they will do a somersault as they grab it. Have you ever seen your house cat do that?

Living in a Family

Lions and house cats are the only members of the cat family which live in large groups. A group of lions living together is called a pride. The lion pride has several female lions and their babies plus two or three adult male lions. Ordinary cats that live on farms or large vacant lots, live in the same kind of groups. When the cat, that lives in your apartment or house, greets you by rubbing her head and body on your leg, she is doing the same thing lions do when they meet each other. Cats and lions have scent glands on their heads. As a lion rubs against another lion, they share each other's scent and recognize they belong to the same pride. When your cat rubs against you, she's telling you she's glad you're part of her pride!