This week your child is reading *Owen and Mzee*, a nonfiction selection about an unusual friendship between an old tortoise and a rescued hippo.

**Vocabulary on the Go**  Share the story of how you and your oldest friend met each other. Ask your child for ideas about why certain people become close friends. Try to use some of these words in your conversation.

- bond
- affection
- companion
- inseparable
- suffered

**Hard to Tell Apart**  Together, think of two animals that can be hard to tell apart, such as an alligator and a crocodile, a frog and a toad, or a moth and a butterfly. Name differences between the animals. Then use a book or website to check your ideas.

Help your child make a chart comparing the two animals you learned about. List their similarities and differences.

**Large Animals in the Wild**  Together, watch a nature program about a large wild animal. Afterward, ask each other *where*, *what*, and *why* questions about the animal. Here are some questions to get you started: Where does it live? What advantages does it have because of its large size? How does the animal’s large size hurt it?
**Animal Alphabet Verses**

Read and discuss these poems with your child.

**The Hippo**
H is for Hippo,
She lives in a herd.
Of the biggest land creatures,
She comes in third.

**The Tortoise**
T is for Tortoise,
He’s plodding and slow.
With a house on your back,
How fast would you go?

**More Verses**
Together, come up with more verses to compile in a book of animal poems.

**Book Links**
- *Lions, Tigers, and Bears: Why Are Big Predators So Rare?* by Ron Hirschi
- *Emi and the Rhino Scientist* by Mary Kay Carson **CHALLENGE**

**Internet Challenge**
Together, use the search term “interspecies friendship” to search the Internet for information about other animals that—like Owen and Mzee—form surprising bonds.