

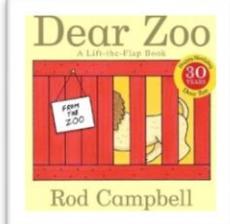


Baby Talk: Encouraging Language Development with Infants and Toddlers

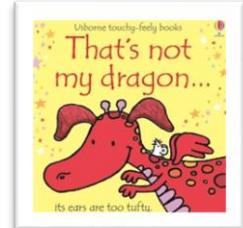
Language and Literacy Activity Ideas



INTERACTIVE BOOKS



Lift-the-flap books and touch-and-feel books are great interactive stories to have in your program. By encouraging children to touch and explore the pages, you are boosting their independence, hand-eye coordination and understanding of cause and effect.



Extension Ideas: After reading a touch-and-feel book, talk about different textures. Then try these activities to expand on that concept:

Touch and Feel Colour Cards

Create your own touch-and-feel cards. (Option to make the cards multilingual.)



Supplies:

- Cardboard or Cardstock
- Pipe cleaners (various colours)
- Pompoms (various colours)
- Felt (various colours)
- Plastic lids (various colours)
- Foam shapes (various colours)



Tactile Matching Game



Create tactile cards with materials you have around your centre such as various fabrics, sandpaper, bubble wrap, cotton balls, etc. Create 2 cards from each material. Then put the cards out for the children to explore, or play a matching game together.

Shape Themed Sensory Bins

Make a sensory bin all about shapes – in this case, all about circles. Let the children explore circles and spheres of various textures and sizes.



Nature Sensory Board

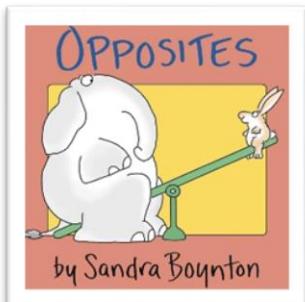


- Go outside and help gather natural materials (leaves, sticks, moss, pine cones etc.) Use this opportunity to name plants and trees and introduce new vocabulary. Alternatively, with infants, you can present them with a bucket of pre-gathered items.

- For younger toddlers, be careful to remove any items that may be a choking hazard and supervise throughout. Adults can glue down items on cardboard and let them dry completely.

NON-FICTION & CONCEPT BOOKS

These books teach young children about communication and introduces concepts such as numbers, letters, colors, and shapes in a fun way. They build listening, memory, and vocabulary skills and gives children information about the world around them.



Opposites (by Sandra Boynton)

Read this book or another one that introduces children to the concept of opposites. Teaching opposites helps children develop math, observational, creative-thinking, and language skills!

Extension Ideas:

Open & Close Basket

Gather a variety of regular objects that open and close. The types of objects and difficulty of the latches really just depend on the children's abilities and interest. Children can continue to practice their fine motor skills by opening and closing various items. To create your own "Open & Close" basket, collect old wallets, change purses, small boxes with latches, washed out makeup containers, jewelry boxes, snap lock containers, drawstring bags, pouches etc.



Pompom Soup

Explore the concepts of wet and dry with this fun activity!



Fill a bin or water table with water. Fill another container with pom-poms. Encourage children to scoop the pom-poms into the water. Ask children: Which ones are wet? Dry? How do they feel different? (Pom-poms can be left out to dry and be reused)

*Young children should be supervised at all times when using pom-poms.

Warm and Cold Sensory Bottles

Fill empty plastic bottles with various items like ice cubes, snow and warm water and let children feel and explore the different temperatures.



Touchy-Feely Bags

Put objects into a bag so they are not visible. Choose things around the house like a small ball, a teaspoon, a pencil and so on. Have children reach in and describe what they feel.

Moving in Opposites

Get active with this game inside or outside! Invite children to play and ask them:

To lift their leg HIGH and then drop it LOW

To take a BIG step and then a SMALL step

To move FAST and then move SLOW

To crawl UNDER something and then OVER something

To SIT and then STAND

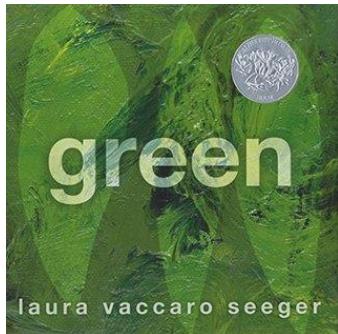
To JUMP and then FALL to the ground

To THROW a ball and then CATCH a ball

To climb IN something then OUT of something



(You can set up various items that children can safely stand on, crawl under, climb over, sit on, climb in, jump on, etc. ahead of time. Use cardboard boxes, balance beams, blankets, mats, hoops, balls and more.)



Story Basket – A story basket provides a hands-on learning opportunity for all children no matter their age. Try creating a story basket or tray based on a colour-themed book or a non-fiction book. For a book about colours gather items such as paint swatches, coloured paddles, blocks, balls, etc. Add them to the basket along with the book.



Colourful Ice Art Activity

1. Ice Cube Painting



Supplies: Ice cube tray, food colouring, water and popsicle sticks. Fill up ice trays with water, add different coloured food colouring to each cube, add popsicle sticks and then freeze overnight. Remove cubes from tray, set out paper and let children create.

2. Painting Ice Cubes

Supplies: Lots of ice cubes, a bucket, paint, and paintbrushes.

Fill a bucket with ice cubes, set out washable paint and paintbrushes, then watch the children have fun with this sensory based process art activity.





Share with the children a non-fiction book about cars, trains, airplanes, boats, tractors, and things that go! After try these literacy extension ideas:

CAR CREATIONS

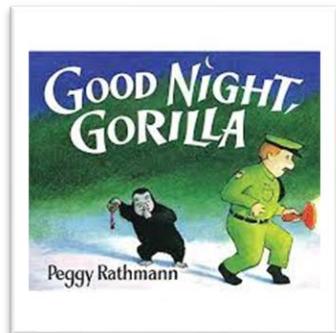
- Mess-free Car Painting – Supplies: Large Ziploc bag, paper, paint, and toy cars. Place a piece of paper inside the plastic bag, cover the paper with dollops of paint. Seal the bag. Invite children to drive the toy cars over the bag to create a unique painting.



- Drawing with Cars – Supplies: Paper, toy cars, markers, and tape. Tape a marker to each toy car, set them up on a large piece of paper, and invite the children to drive the cars around.



- Vroom.... Vehicle Painting – Supplies: Toy car, paper, plastic slide, and paint. Dip the Toy Car wheels in paint. Lay down a roll of paper on the slide. Let the paint car slide. Children will enjoy the impression the car wheels make while they slide.



Good Night Gorilla (by Peggy Rathmann)

Read this story to the children, then try one of these activities to expand on children's learning!

Animal Tape Rescue



TAPE RESCUE
A FINE MOTOR SKILLS ACTIVITY

Another fun activity that's great for practicing fine motor skills.

Supplies:

- Toy animals
- Masking or painters' tape

Tape down small plastic or wooden animals to a table, baking sheet, or even on the floor. Children can then "rescue" the toys by freeing them from the tape.

Playful Storytelling



Set up a scene like the one pictured here, alongside the book *Goodnight Gorilla*. Then invite children to retell the story in their own way using the props or simply just leave it out for the children to explore on their own.

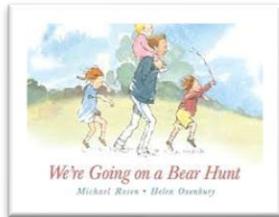
Supplies: Variety of boxes or containers, animals, toy people, playhouse, play keys, and any other props you'd like to add.

Goodnight Gorilla - Dramatic Play

Set up a dramatic play area based on this story.

Supplies: Streamers or paper cut into long strips, tape, stuffed animals, play keys, animal costumes, etc.

Tape the streamers to a table to create the animal enclosures. Children can pretend to be the animals or the zookeeper using the props available.



We're Going on a Bear Hunt (by Michael Rosen)

Sensory Storytelling Spoons

Create sensory spoons to give to the children while you read the story! Find materials that represent grass, mud, a forest, a snowstorm and a cave. These spoons are simple to make and they help engage the children in the story, they can also use them to retell the story after.



We're Going on a Bear Hunt
sensory
STORY TELLING SPOONS

Discovery Bottles



Make sensory bottles that connect with the book *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Put the book and bottles together for the children to discover.

Storytelling

Storytelling in any of its forms is a perfect activity for language development, while fostering attachment, creativity, imagination and brain building! Storytelling can be very simple, occurring organically while playing with toys, eating a meal or snack, or while out for a walk.

Put together a series of pictures - cut out from magazines or old calendars, a series of photos on a camera phone, or drawn images.

Use these pictures to help build stories and vocabulary:

- For a child that isn't talking, have them begin by pointing out items in the pictures as you describe them. Hearing a story, hearing connected speech is important for children who aren't yet talking.
- For those with a growing vocabulary, have them name the subject of the picture or describe the pictures or what the character is doing.
- A task that is a bit more advanced cognitively, is to ask the child to caption the photograph or to describe what a character within the picture is thinking
- Follow your child's lead and have fun!



Alphabet sticker wall



Stickers are always a hit and naturally work on fine motor skills as well as patience. Peeling stickers off a sheet and putting them on a paper mural isn't easy.



Tape up some paper and let the children go for it! When children are ready they can spell with the stickers, group them, and use the already stuck stickers for games like eye spy.

Add other art materials like paint, markers and bingo dabbers to encourage even more creativity and learning!

Musical Games

Music supports whole body learning experiences as children process information through rhythm and movement and is a wonderful way to encourage language development.

- Play songs to dance to and clap hands to the rhythm
- Create your own percussion instruments by banging on pots and pans
- Make your own shakers with beans in a container
- Learn about sound – loud and soft, fast or slow and happy or sad songs