

50 LARGE-GROUP ACTIVITIES

for Active Learners



Christine A. Boisvert Maier & Suzanne Gainsley



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Activities for
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Preface

The idea for this book arose as we presented workshops to audiences of enthusiastic teachers who were looking for fresh ideas and strategies for fun, engaging large-group activities. We saw the need to provide teachers with a starting point for turning “teacher-directed” large-group times into “teacher-initiated, child-directed” large-group times. Our goal is to help teachers plan and initiate participatory large-group experiences, to extend children’s individual and small-group pursuits, and to make large-group time an enjoyable and manageable part of the daily routine.

The activities in this book are based on large-group experiences that we have used successfully in the HighScope Demonstration Preschool. They are some of our favorites, and we hope that you will enjoy them also. We trust that as teachers use these ideas, they will incorporate the ingredients of active learning into their own large-group times.

We’d like to thank many people for their contributions to this book. Beth Marshall, Mary Hohmann, Ann Epstein, Shannon Lockhart, and Karen Sawyers gave us valuable feedback and support during the writing process. Kay Rush worked with us in the classroom, trying out ideas and sharing her love of sign language. We would also like to thank Tom McMahon, Nancy Brickman, and Pattie McDonald for their support throughout the editing process. Finally, we wish to thank the many teachers who attended our workshops and shared their insights from the field with us.

Guiding Principles for Successful Large-Group Experiences

Large-group time is a segment of the daily routine in which children and adults come together for companionship, information sharing, a sense of community, and the enjoyment of doing things together. The entire group of children and all of the members of the caregiving or teaching team participate in large-group time, which generally lasts 10–15 minutes.

In this communal setting, children are engaged in active learning experiences. They manipulate materials and their own bodies during movement experiences, make choices about how to use their materials and how to move their bodies, talk about their ideas and observations, and receive adult support for their initiatives and involvement. To ensure enjoyable shared activities, adults plan and lead participatory large-group experiences that are active rather than passive. They move swiftly from one experience to the next, use concise verbal introductions, and accommodate children’s interests, developmental levels, and initiatives.

Typically, large-group-time experiences include singing songs, making music, moving and dancing, exploring classroom materials, storytelling and story reenacting, participating in cooperative group games and projects, and interacting with classroom guests. Though large-group time is often planned around movement and music, it can focus on any curriculum content area and may also include whole-group projects such as washing the classroom chairs or making a banner.

No matter what activity or experience is planned, it is of utmost importance for children to use materials, ideas, and their own bodies in creative ways. They make choices about how to move, what songs to sing, what stories to reenact, and what words and actions to change in those stories. As children interact with materials and people, they initiate ideas, offer suggestions, and often generate solutions to problems. The adult plans and leads the activity, but is mindful to turn leadership roles over to the children at the earliest opportunity so that both adults and children shape what occurs.

What do preschoolers gain from large-group time? Preschool children are centered on the notions of “me” and “mine.” At this time in their lives, this preoccupation with the self is typical and part of their normal development. Children must develop a healthy sense of self before becoming part of the larger social circle. Large-group time is an opportunity for children to experience firsthand the notions of “we” and “us.” As young children and adults come together for common purposes, a feeling of togetherness develops and children gradually become comfortable functioning as group members.

Large-Group Times Provide...

- Common experiences
- A sense of community
- Group membership/leadership opportunities
- Occasions for group problem solving
- Opportunities to introduce new experiences and materials



Children and adults gather together at large-group time for companionship, sharing information, and the enjoyment of doing things together as a community.

Adult Support at Large-Group Time

During large-group time, the role of the adult is to initiate experiences and support the children's ideas. There are numerous strategies that can be used to support children in active learning settings, including planning around the children's interests, preparing for large-group time before the children arrive, setting large-group time in motion, participating on the children's level, and bringing the activity to a close.

Planning activities that appeal strongly to children helps ensure the success of large-group time. Watch, listen, and take notes as children explore, generate ideas, make comparisons, and interact throughout the day. Incorporate ideas taken from your observations of the children's likes and interests into your activity plans. Other large-group-time experiences can originate from the curriculum content areas, from cooperative play and projects, and from events that are currently meaningful to children, such as holidays. Also, invite parents to share their talents with the children. In one classroom (pictured on the back cover of this book), the father of one of the children used his engineering background to construct a device that makes rope from toilet paper.

Preparation is another key to a rewarding large-group experience. Finding ways to simplify and break down complicated tasks allows children to enjoy the experience and allows adults to concentrate on observing and assessing the children's abilities. When performing movements

accompanied by music, choose instrumental selections so that children can focus on their movements instead of the song lyrics. When the large-group-time experience calls for an action song, practice the words and motions yourself before introducing them to the children.

If you are planning to use materials or props such as recordings, scarves, or puppets, have those items organized and ready ahead of time, and make sure that any materials the children will handle are easy to distribute during the activity and easy to put away at the end of the activity.

Adults also support children by setting large-group time in motion. Beginning with an easy-to-join activity helps draw children to the group. Adults can minimize delays for children who arrive first by starting the activity immediately; the other children will join in after they finish with their previous activity. During the activity, it's important for adults to participate on the children's physical level — if they are crawling, crawl with them; if they are jumping, jump with them.

As you transition into the next large-group-time experience, keep your instructions concise and to the point. If you are using props and materials, turn them over to children as soon as possible to reduce distractions. When new materials are introduced, allow children ample time to explore with them. Often new materials can be introduced on one day, and the next day adults can plan an activity that incorporates the children's ideas and initiatives that arose from their explorations.

Adults can show support by acknowledging and commenting on what children are doing. When children provide a new idea (one that you were not expecting or had not anticipated), follow up on their suggestions, thus validating the children's initiatives. Plan for and encourage children to be leaders whenever possible, allowing them to tell a story, demon-



Large-group experiences often take place in the most spacious area of the classroom and lend themselves well to the traditional circle formation, although some activities require a different formation or location.

strate a movement, or suggest a song. You can also refer children to their peers for movement or exploration ideas.

Teachers' Attitudes and Behaviors at Large-Group Time

Adults committed to an active learning approach to educating young children have realistic expectations of young children's interests and behaviors. They realize that children need to communicate and move about and that large-group time will involve energetic action and conversation. They understand that young children *will* learn, even when adults don't instruct them in prescribed ways. They create opportunities for children to take an active part in shaping their experiences, and they accept the challenges and rewards of planning for and supporting children's initiatives at large-group time.

Though many early childhood teachers and caregivers recognize the benefits of large-group-time experiences, at times they may express anxiety regarding their ability to plan and manage this time of the day. Some teachers may feel self-conscious while leading songs and movement activities, while others may worry about children's varying levels of participation and incidents when children resist participating. Some teachers may plan elaborate activities and become disappointed when the group does not follow the plan, and others may fret about management, behavior, and logistical issues when using beanbags, streamers, scarves, foam noodles, or other materials.

Other teachers make the assumption that large-group time is the best time of the day to teach specific skills or impart curriculum information, largely because the children can all see and hear the same information. However, large-group time is clearly not a time for whole-group instruction. Instead, the group comes together for learning and exploration in a participatory manner.

Adults must examine their beliefs and notions about the purpose, procedures, and appropriateness of large-group activities in order to shed anxieties and approach large-group time eagerly. We know that children learn best when they are actively involved with materials, ideas, and other people, have opportunities for choice, and are supported as they explore and talk about their findings.

The ingredients of active learning — materials, manipulation, child choice, child language, and adult support — when present in large-group-time experiences, are not only a basis for children's learning and development. They also act as a system to prevent adult anxieties and frustrations. If adults are anxious or fearful about leading a song, movement activity, story, or game, these feelings can be dispelled as they become adept at following the children's lead, inviting children's ideas and strategies, and sharing control with the children.

Having enough materials, planning how to distribute and collect materials, and allowing for choice while using materials can greatly minimize management and behavioral issues. Allowing for and encouraging discussion from children can also help adults understand and assess chil-

dren's thinking skills and language skills. Practicing appropriate adult-child interaction and support strategies during large-group time gives children opportunities to develop a positive sense of self, take comfort and pride in providing input and ideas, and practice self-regulation and impulse control in the presence of caring and knowledgeable adults.

Children's Attitudes and Behaviors at Large-Group Time

Children approach most situations with a desire for active involvement. But just as adults may sometimes feel self-conscious or anxious during large-group time, so too may children experience some of the same emotions. Some children will join right in and find the movement, music, singing, and games stimulating and irresistible; others may feel as though everyone's attention is focused on them or feel overwhelmed by too much activity or too many people in one area. These children may become agitated and disruptive, or they might opt out of the activity altogether.

Children must be respected at their level of participation. Remember that onlookers are learners, also — listening to and watching activities unfold is an integral part of large-group time. Rather than insisting on each child's full participation in every activity you present, it may be more useful to observe and take note of your children's reactions to various types of activities. Understanding a child's feelings and thoughts can go a long way toward helping you plan effectively for future large-group times.

After working with your particular group of children for a while, you will get a sense of the types of activities that appeal to each child. Try to vary these activities, providing a balance of experiences for the entire



Many large-group times center around music and movement activities in which children play rhythm sticks, bells, or even homemade instruments.

group while ensuring successes for those who approach large groups with varying degrees of comfort. This book provides many large-group experiences that can be adjusted to fit the needs of your classroom.

Planning Large-Group Times

Successful large-group-time experiences are the result of careful planning and preparation. Planning activities requires attention to the developmental needs of the children, a knowledge of the children's interests, and an awareness of meaningful cultural and community events. With your teaching team, discuss your observations of the children in action throughout the daily routine, then plan large-group-time experiences that support their interests and levels of development.

A useful tool in the planning process is the large-group time planning sheet. A completed copy of this form is presented on the next page. Teaching teams are encouraged to adapt the form to their own program needs.

Each large-group session has a specific format that is reflected on the large-group-time planning sheet. The key elements include setting large-group time in motion (beginning); supporting the children's ideas and initiatives (middle); and bringing large-group time to a close (end):

Beginning: Use this section to record a strategy for drawing children to the group, usually with a simple, easy-to-join activity. The activity begins immediately with the children who have gathered, even if some others are still busy with the previous activity.

Middle: This section provides suggestions for the central part of the activity. Typically, adults give brief opening statements designed to catch children's attention, then pass out any materials to be used in the activity. They participate with children, watching, listening and following up on children's suggestions and ideas about different ways to interpret the experience.

End: In this section you can record ideas for encouraging children to put materials away. You can also note ideas for interesting transitions to the next large-group activity or the next part of the daily routine.

As you plan with your team, look for ways to include opportunities for children to make choices. Practice singing a song and think about how children can change the lyrics, for instance. Songs and games can also be modified to fit the children's language skills and physical capabilities. (Suggestions for modifications are included in the activity portion of this book.)

As you plan, allow for exploration time in the activity. If the group will move to music using scarves, for instance, leave time for the children to explore the scarves and the many things they can do with them before starting the music. Remember to support the children's actions by acknowledging what children say, commenting on what you see them doing, and imitating their behaviors.

Large-group-time experiences require a space that is flexible enough for vigorous activity as well as cozy togetherness. Provide an appropriate space in which children can try out their ideas about when, where, and how to move or position themselves. The most spacious area of the class-

Large-Group-Time Planning Sheet

Originating idea:

Children were kicking balls outside. New sponge balls were added to the block area.

Materials:

Sponge balls

Curriculum content areas:

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Beginning:

Sue leads “We’re Running, Running, Running” with gathering children.

Song book choice after most children gather.

Middle:

Chris introduces sponge balls with opening statement: “What kinds of things can you do with a ball?” Listen for ideas.

Give each child a sponge ball.

Give children a few minutes to use balls in different ways (toss, catch, kick, bounce).

Copy children and describe movements. Ask children to describe their movements.

Chris introduces song (use the tune for “Bingo”) and sings it while children demonstrate how they use their ball. Encourage other children to copy movements.

End:

Tell children to hold balls in their hands. Tell them that balls are in the block area to use at work time.

Put ball container in the middle of the floor so children can put balls away.

Transition to small-group time by having children bounce like a ball to their table.

Follow-up:

Try tossing the balls into buckets and hoops at another large-group time.



Children are active participants in the large-group experience, making choices about how to use materials and what songs to sing. Here a child chooses a song from a class song book.

room often serves as the large-group area. It may be necessary to make a minor adjustment in furniture placement to create a space large enough for large-group time to take place. When weather permits, consider holding the large-group time in a well-defined outside area.

Large-group time is referred to as “Circle Time” in some early childhood programs. Many experiences typically planned for large-group time lend themselves well to the traditional circle formation, but teachers should be flexible when thinking about group formation and positioning. For some movement activities, adults can use hoops or carpet squares to help define personal space for each child. In other experiences, children may move about the whole classroom and return to the designated large-group area at the end of the activity.

The group’s position and formation will vary depending on the nature of the activity and the needs of the children as they encounter the ideas and experiences presented to them. When children must hear and see important information and objects, they often draw as close as they can to the person or material of interest. Teachers can alleviate management issues and frustrations considerably if they anticipate this and do not always expect children to sit in a circle during large-group time.

Successful large-group times should include specific plans for transitions from one activity to the next within large-group time, as well as transitions into and out of large-group time. To illustrate the dynamics of large-group time, here is a sample large-group time from the HighScope Demonstration Preschool:

Chris and Sue, the preschool teachers, observe how much the children enjoy playing with rubber balls outside, especially kicking the balls.

They also notice the children's interest in the new sponge balls that were placed in the block area. Chris and Sue plan a large-group-time activity around the sponge balls, using a variation of a familiar song.

The next day, after several children finish their snacks, Sue moves to the large-group-time area and invites those children to join her in the movement song "We're Running, Running, Running." The other children join in as soon as they are ready. Once everyone has arrived at the large-group-time area, Sue asks Ben, one of the children, to select a song from the song book, and he chooses "Itsy Bitsy Spider." After the entire group sings the song and performs the fingerplay, Sue slides a container of balls to the middle of the large-group area and tells the children, "Let's move like spiders to get a spongy ball from the basket." The children each take a sponge ball and begin playing; Sue and Chris watch and support the children as they carry, toss, and bounce the balls. Sue extends the activity by asking, "I wonder if you could find ways to move your spongy ball using only your feet?" Several of the children begin kicking the balls.

After children use the balls for a while, Chris initiates a singing game about balls patterned after the familiar children's tune "Bingo." She asks one of the children, Jackie, to show the group how she moves with her ball. Jackie states, "I move it really fast," and she begins to shake the ball vigorously. Chris imitates Jackie's movement and leads the group in singing, "Jackie has a spongy ball, and this is how she moves it. Move yours, just like Jackie. Move yours, just like Jackie. Move yours, just like Jackie. And now we need another way." The other children take a turn showing their unique movements, and Chris signals that the activity is concluding by singing, "And now we put the balls away." To transition the children to the small-group area, Sue says, "Find a way to bounce like a ball to small group."



Adults can encourage children to take leadership roles during large-group time, allowing them to lead a song or demonstrate a movement.

As this experience illustrates, children's actions and ideas play a major role in shaping the content and process of large-group activities.

Considerations for Children With Special Needs

Through simple modifications to the learning environment, children with special needs can participate in large-group activities. Teacher-made materials, visual displays, sign language, and careful planning around children's strengths can all facilitate learning.

Children with physical disabilities vary widely in their abilities to perform motor tasks. For children who are able to execute some movements, it is important that they participate as independently as possible; teachers should offer assistance if asked. For instance, if a song calls for a movement that is difficult for a child to do (like throwing), the teacher can provide hands-on assistance to guide the child's body through the motion. Even children in wheelchairs can participate in large-group time if they are pushed by friends or teachers. The person doing the pushing can imitate a specified movement, such as using short bursts of movement to simulate jumping.

To assist children who are deaf or hard of hearing during a music activity, position the music source at their level to aid any hearing they may have. Use motions that are clear and easy to imitate so that the children can use you as a model. Incorporating sign language into a song is also helpful, as it provides the children with visual cues they can follow. Other visual prompts include photographs, Mayer-Johnson pictures, and line drawings that include illustrations of simple movements coupled with a song's lyrics.

There are several modifications that can assist the nonverbal child or the child with a language delay during large-group time. Many children enjoy using a song board, which uses picture symbols (made of felt or backed with Velcro) to represent the songs children learn. The board serves as a visual reminder of all the songs they know, as well as a valuable communication aid.

In summary, there are many ways to accommodate children with special needs at large-group time. A flexible, creative, and patient teacher can help the child with special needs be an active participant in all large-group activities.

Using Prerecorded Activities

There are many prerecorded activities on tapes and CDs that are available to early childhood programs. These “canned” activities, often used at large-group time, consist of a series of recorded instructions that children and adults listen to and follow. At other times, adults have children sing along with recordings of songs.

There are several reasons to avoid canned activities. In order to promote a true appreciation for the skill and practice of singing, children must be exposed to adults who are willing to sing for and with them. Adults who sing with children in a joyful, caring, and nurturing environment help children develop healthy attitudes toward the performing arts.

Often the instructions in canned activities are spoken quickly, are hard to understand, and include movements that children are asked to perform that change frequently or require an exactness that is inappropriate for young children. Also, recorded songs may contain more lyrics or verses than children can recall, and adults do not have the option to simplify or modify the song selection.

When a recording is used to lead an activity, the sense of community is diminished; the sound of the group singing together and the feel of the group moving together is no longer the focus. There is little or no opportunity for children to suggest ideas

to enhance the experience or to practice leadership roles, since the person whose voice is heard on the recording directs the activity.

It is difficult to plan activities based on children’s interests and developmental levels if canned activities are the only source of ideas. Children do not have the opportunity to discuss their thoughts or make comparisons when the recording is playing. Furthermore, if children are experiencing problems with the instructions or social situations during a canned activity, there is little the adult can do except stop the recording to address the situation. Finally, when the activity is done and the recording is shut off, it may be difficult to find a natural transition into the next large-group-time activity or the next part of the daily routine.

If you find a particular canned activity appealing and wish to use it with your children, there are alternatives to using the recorded instructions. Most simply, you can teach yourself the song or memorize the instructions and lead the activity yourself. You can also modify the activity; if a song has several verses and a refrain, for instance, consider singing the refrain only or singing the refrain and one familiar verse. When an activity has many movements, you may choose to complete just part of the activity, then add to it at subsequent large-group times.

Introduction to the Large-Group-Time Activities

The 50 activities contained in this book provide teachers with ideas for guiding large-group-time experiences. The activities are organized into five categories:

Easy-to-join activities for starting large-group times. These simple activities are used to invite children into the large-group time as they transition from other parts of the daily routine.

Singing songs, doing fingerplays, saying chants and poems. These large-group activities can involve children in learning experiences in all curriculum content areas. Many involve music and creative representation, and others may even engage children in math-related experiences such as classification and seriation.

Storytelling and reenacting stories and nursery rhymes. Children love to tell and listen to stories, and in these large-group-time experiences, they get to do both while building language and social skills.

Movement activities with or without music or objects. These large-group experiences give children the opportunity to move their bodies together and independently, and to practice coordination skills.

Cooperative games or projects. During these experiences, children learn to work with one another toward a common goal. Examples include group art work and action games in which children each have a role or take a turn.

Keep in mind that some activities fit into more than one category. For ease of use, however, in this book each activity is listed under a single category.



Planning and preparation are keys to a successful large-group experience.

The Activity Elements

Each of the 50 large-group-time activities featured in this book contains the following elements:

Originating Idea: The behaviors and events that spark an idea for a large-group experience are listed here. The idea may grow from a child's interest, a new material you want to introduce, a local event, a curriculum content area you would like to highlight, or some combination of these.

Curriculum Content Areas: The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is planned around developmentally important content areas. Those that pertain to the activity are listed here. These content areas are compatible with the standards and learning goals of most preschool curriculum approaches that have a child development focus, so whether or not your program is HighScope based, you should be able to relate the content areas listed to your program's learning goals. Those familiar with HighScope will recognize that these broad content areas include specific areas of learning described in other HighScope materials as "key experiences" or "key developmental indicators."¹

Materials: Here you will find the materials needed to prepare for the large-group time. The materials listed include items for the children to work with and additional materials needed by the teacher to introduce or carry out an idea.

Opener: In this section you will find ideas to ensure a smooth beginning to the large-group activity.

Activity: This section details ways to support the children's ideas and initiatives during singing, moving, or storytelling. You will also find suggestions for how you might interact with children during the activity.

Transition: This section will help you think through ways to bring closure to the large-group activity. You can also find strategies for clean-up and materials storage.

Variations: These are suggested ways to expand, modify, or simply the activity.

Follow-up: This section contains options for expanding on the ideas children have encountered in the large-group activity. There are also suggestions for additional large-group-time ideas that are related to the original activity.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs: Options for involving children who are physically challenged or who have communicative disorders are described in this section.

Note that the large-group activities in this book are not intended as complete large-group-time plans. See the sample plan on pages 7, 9, and 10 to see how an easy-to-join activity, songs, and one or more main activities are combined to engage children for an entire large-group time.

Hints for Success

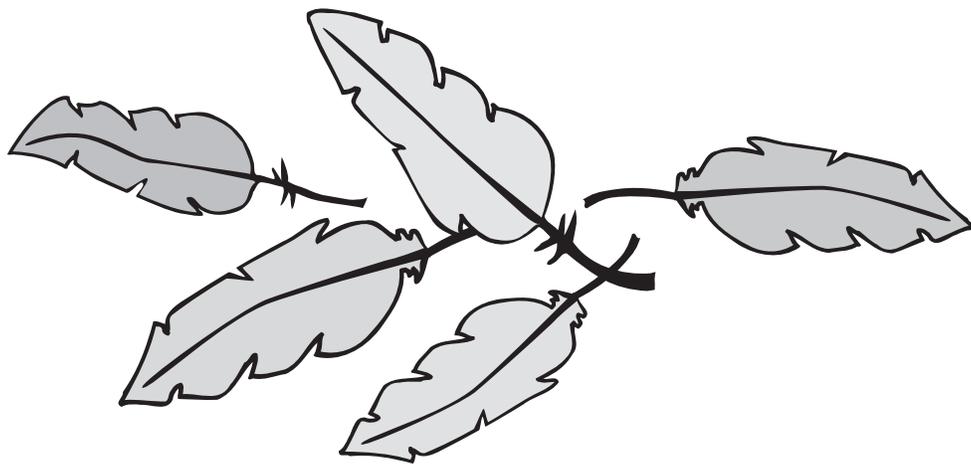
Here are some practical guidelines for implementing the large-group-time activities:

- Plan activities around the interests and needs of the children, and include time and space for vigorous, active movement.
- Keep large-group time to around 10 to 15 minutes in duration. (At the beginning of a program year, though, it may be helpful to shorten the time period, then gradually increase it as the children's comfort level grows.)
- Vary the activities during large-group time to make this portion of the day exciting, fun, and interesting.
- Participate in the activity and observe children to learn about their abilities.
- Watch for opportunities to support child-initiated learning.

When adults create opportunities for children to take an active part in shaping their experiences, it ensures that they will share rewarding and fulfilling large-group activities.

I

Easy-to-Join Activities for Starting Large- Group Times



1

Paper Plates and Feathers

Curriculum Content Areas

Science and Technology

Mathematics

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

Large paper plates, one for each child

Feathers in assorted colors and sizes

Originating Idea

Children have been using feathers in the art area, and one child found a bird feather in the outdoor play space. The child went to the highest part of the tree climber and dropped the feather and some leaves, noticing how they moved through the air. This activity was designed to support classification and movement concepts using materials children enjoy.

Opener

As children gradually filter into the large-group area, hold a paper plate and a feather in your hand. Show children where they can get their own plates and feathers and ask them to take one of each. Begin tossing your feather in the air and catching it on your plate. Encourage children to toss and catch their own feathers on their plates.

Activity

As more children begin to assemble, encourage the children to describe the movement of the feathers as they fall. Introduce new vocabulary words and phrases to describe the movement of the feathers, such as *drifting*, *floating*, *slowly*, and *straight down*. Challenge the children to keep the feathers from touching the floor. Ask open-ended questions such as “What keeps the feathers in the air?” and “How can you make a feather move without touching it?”

Transition

Signal an ending time to the children by saying something like, “Two more minutes and we will start another game.” When the allotted time is over, encourage children to sit with their feathers and look at them closely. Use descriptive words as you have them bring their feathers to the container. You can say, for example, “Bring your plate and feather to the bins if you have a feather that is long and grey. Bring your plate and feather to the bins if you have a feather with some black spots on it.”

Variations

- Write the children's names and letter links on a piece of paper towel or tissue, toss the paper into the air, and let it fall. The child whose name appears on the paper should retrieve it.
- In place of feathers, use small, light scarves or pieces of tissue paper.

Follow-up

- Place feathers and/or paper plates in the art area.
- At small-group time, paint with the feathers.
- At outside time, drop objects from the tree climber. Call attention to the various rates of drop speed. Discuss how wind factors into the experience.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Work as a partner with children who are physically challenged. You may hold the plate or drop the feather for a child.
- Children with speech and language disorders may have difficulty describing their feathers. Read their nonverbal cues and signals to understand what they are trying to communicate, and give them time to fully express their thoughts.

2

Dancing in the Air

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Mathematics

Materials

A CD player

A selection of lively
music

Originating Idea

In one early childhood program, large-group time follows recall time and snack time. The teachers found that after the children had been sitting at the table, they were ready to move their bodies and expend energy. This activity was developed as a way for children to transition easily into an activity after cleaning up their snack.

Opener

Turn on the music. Lie on the floor with your feet in the air and begin moving your feet to the music. Encourage the children to join you. Say something like, “I call this dancing in the air.”

Activity

As the children join in, describe their movements. Make comments like, “You’re bending your knees up and down.” Acknowledge the children’s ideas and copy their movements. If the children’s legs tire, suggest they try moving their arms in the air to the music.



After copying the teacher’s motions, children can try their own ideas for kicking, swinging, and wiggling their legs in the air.

Transition

When the music stops, have children lie on the floor with their eyes closed so they can catch their breath. As the children are lying on the floor, tell them that when they hear a special signal (like a word, a chime, or a clap) they should sit up and get ready for the next part of large-group time.

Variations

- Play the musical selection “Seven Jumps” from HighScope’s *Rhythmically Moving 2* CD. Each time the music pauses, have the children “freeze” their legs in a different position.
- Try sitting or standing during this activity. Choose a specific body part to move; for example, if you want the children to move their elbows, you could say, “Let’s make our elbows dance in the air.”

Follow-up

- Use this activity at different times of the day, whenever children need to expend energy and refocus on a task.
- Tape sheets of paper to the underside of a table. Have children lie on their backs under the table and draw on the paper.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children have limited mobility, give them a stuffed animal with long, bendable arms or legs and have them move the animal to the music.

3

Silent Moves

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Approaches to
Learning

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

Teachers observed that the children often finished their snacks and joined the large group at varying times. Because the children approach the large-group area gradually, the teachers need an activity that engaged a few children at first and accommodated a larger number of children as the transition was completed.

Opener

As children approach the large-group area, the teacher should make direct eye contact with them and motion, “Watch me.” (You can do this by mouthing or whispering those words and/or pointing to your eyes and then pointing to yourself.) Silently, perform a simple movement such as raising both arms above your head, and whisper or mouth the words, “Now you try it.” After the children raise their arms, continue the activity with a series of “silent moves,” stopping after each one so the children can imitate it. The movements could include placing your hands in your lap, rubbing your belly, or bending your knees.

Activity

Designate one child to lead the group, making sure the child stops after each movement. Other children could also serve as leaders, if time allows. Between the children’s turns, you can discuss the body parts that were moved and the ways the movements were carried out (e.g., fast, slow, smooth, jerky). Use open-ended questions and comments such as “Liam, what helped you decide where to put your hands?” or “Cole’s movements were different than Liam’s. What could we say about them?”

Transition

Once all the children arrive at large-group time, engage them in one last movement sequence. If possible, have this last sequence be a logical transition to the next activity in large-group time. If the children are kneeling, for example, have them put one foot on the floor, push off on that foot, then put their other foot on the floor. Now the group is ready for an activity that begins from a standing position.

Variations

- “Silent Moves” is a visual processing activity, but it can also serve as a verbal processing activity. The teacher should give verbal instructions for a movement (e.g., “Put your two hands in the air”), wait for the children to respond, then perform the movement for them.
- Use verbal directions only; that is, do not actually perform the movement once you say the instructions.
- Have children move with an object, such as a scarf or paper plate. Children could jump over the object or toss and catch it.

Follow-up

- Use the “Silent Moves” technique to teach personal care, dressing techniques, or any activity in which steps are performed in a sequence.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Provide hands-on assistance for children with limited vision. As one teacher performs the silent moves, another can be helping a child position his or her body.
- For children who need sensory stimulation, replace simple movements with deep pressure movements. Instead of having the children raise both arms over their heads, for example, have them put both hands on their heads and push down.



Invite children to the group by having them imitate your silent moves. Make eye contact, but don't speak.

4

Popping Bubbles

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Materials

Soap bubble solution

A dish tub or small
bucket

A fly swatter

Bubble wands

Scarves

A CD player

An instrumental music
selection

Originating Idea

This activity was designed to extend the children's interests in a small-group activity that involved blowing bubbles. After using bubble wands to blow soap bubbles, some children began popping the bubbles that others had blown. In this activity, teachers blow the bubbles for children to pop.

Opener

Use a bubble wand to blow bubbles into the large-group-time space as children gather. Then use a fly swatter as a bubble wand to make a lot of bubbles at the same time. As more children arrive, turn on the instrumental music selection, give children the scarves, and encourage them to pop the bubbles with the scarves.

Activity

As the children pop the bubbles, comment on what you observe children doing. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Micah, there's a bubble floating over your head. (Micah pops the bubble.) You had to stretch your arm high to reach that one.*

William: *I got a double!*

Teacher: *A double?*

William: *Two stuck together.*

Jessica: (Watching teacher wave the fly swatter) *Whoa! That's a hundred bubbles.*

Ian: *Try to get them before they hit the floor.*

Teacher: *What happens when they hit the floor?*

Ian: *They pop!*

Transition

Tell the children that you will wave your fly swatter three more times, and when all the bubbles have popped they should sit down. The scenario could unfold like this:

Teacher: *That's one, two, three waves. (Watching children swat at bubbles) Are all the bubbles popped?*

Children: *No.*

Teacher: (After most of the bubbles are gone) *Now are they all popped?*

Children: *No, almost.*

Teacher: *Get ready to sit down. The bubbles are almost gone. Get ready. Get ready.* (Sees last bubble popped.) *There — all gone! Time to sit down.*

Variations

- Have children take turns blowing bubbles. Use small bubble wands rather than fly swatters.
- Use paper plates to pop the bubbles.

Follow-up

- Supply bubble solution and wands at outside time.
- At planning or recall time, have children blow bubbles toward the different interest areas in the classroom.
- Add soap to the water table.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Omit the music to provide a quieter environment for children who are sensitive to sound.
- Define personal space with carpet squares or hoops for children who are impulsive or seek out sensory input by making contact with others.
- Alert children by saying their names before you blow bubbles in their direction to help those with motor planning issues, limited vision, or attention deficits.
- To help children who have difficulty holding objects, attach scarves to elastic bands and place them around the children's wrists.
- For children with limited mobility, extend their reach by attaching the scarves to a paper towel tube or wrapping paper tube.
- Allow children with limited vision to blow the bubbles.

5

Frozen Statues

Curriculum

Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Materials

A CD player

A selection of instru-
mental music that is
lively and conducive
to moving in an
energetic way

Originating Idea

During outside time, the teacher had observed and interacted with a child playing a stop-and-start game similar to Red Light, Green Light. Starting and stopping an action on a signal is part of the curriculum content involved in the understanding of time and can be a beneficial practice for increased impulse control.

Opener

Begin this activity by introducing the word “statue.” The conversation may go like this:

Teacher: *Have you ever seen a statue?*

Ella: *Like the Statue of Liberty?*

Teacher: *That’s a statue. Tell me something you know about statues.*

Ella: *It stands in the water.*

Teacher: *The Statue of Liberty stands in the water. Statues are figures of people and animals that are made out of hard material like rock. Sometimes statues are in funny poses (demonstrate a silly pose, either sitting or standing). Let’s pretend I turn you into statues. Everyone make a pose and stay still.*

Next, tell the children that they are going to play a “frozen statue” game. Explain that they will move while the music plays and then freeze like a statue when the music stops.

Activity

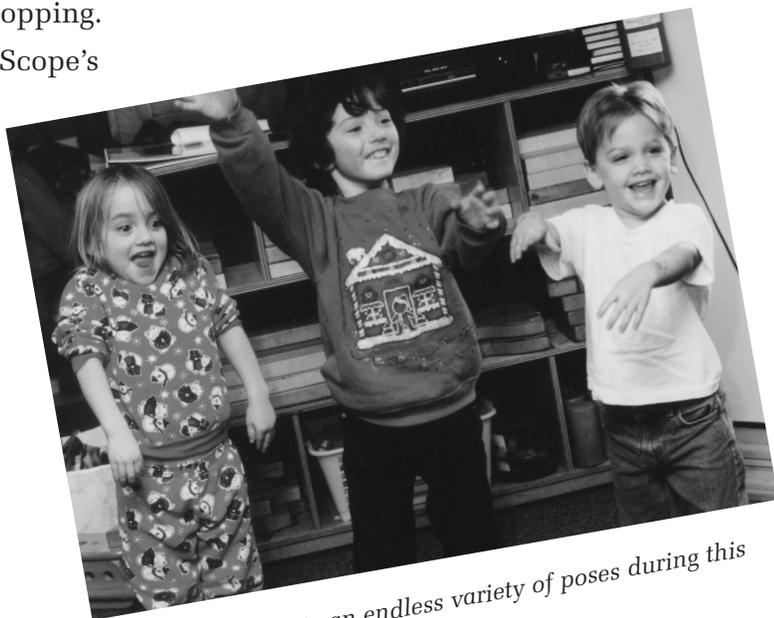
Play the musical selection on the CD player and encourage children to move to the music. Stop the music and have the children freeze their bodies. As the children hold their poses, comment on the position of their bodies. You might say, “Jamie, you have one foot on the ground and one foot off of the ground in your frozen statue.” Continue to play the musical selection, stopping at various points so the children can freeze their bodies. Encourage the children to describe their statue poses.

Transition

As the other children join the large-group time, tell them that the music will play one more time, and when it stops they should freeze into a “sitting statue” pose. This will position the group for the next activity.

Variations

- Before children begin to move to the music, ask them for suggestions on how to move, such as galloping or hopping.
- Use the song “Seven Jumps” from HighScope’s *Rhythmically Moving 2* CD. This music pauses at regular intervals, and the pauses are accompanied by a signal. (A discussion of the children’s poses and positions should be delayed until the entire selection is over.)
- If a musical selection is unavailable, use a rhythm instrument such as a triangle or a bell as the signal to stop and start the children’s movements.



Children will create an endless variety of poses during this lively, easy-to-join activity.

Follow-up

- Play a stop-and-start game at cleanup time.
- Encourage children to use starting and stopping signals at work time and outside time. If a child is playing with cars and tracks, for example, the situation could unfold like this:

Teacher: *How will I know when to make my car go?*

Brian: *When I say, “On your mark, get set, go!”*

Teacher: *Okay, so the signal is that you say, “On your mark, get set, go!” And then I can make my car go down the track.*

Brian: *Yeah, you have to wait.*

- Using American Sign Language, teach children the sign for “stop” (right hand chops down on open palm of left hand).

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Help children who are physically challenged perform movements that are comfortable for them. You can also copy their movements and acknowledge what they are doing.
- Work as a partner with children who have impulse control issues.
- Highly active games can be overwhelming for children who are overly sensitive to sound and movement. Find alternative ways for them to participate. They could operate the CD player, for example.

6

Scarf Dancing

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Mathematics

Approaches to
Learning

Materials

An assortment of
scarves, one for each
child

A CD player

A musical selection
with at least two clearly
defined sections that
repeat several times

Originating Idea

The children in the classroom have been playing with scarves at previous large-group times. They have explored various ways to use the scarves while moving, and they have responded to musical selections while using their scarves. The teachers have also noticed some children have developed an interest in identifying patterns found in classroom objects.

Opener

Pass out scarves to the children and allow for some exploration time. Explain to the children that they will be holding the scarves in their hands and finding ways to move with them.

Activity

As children discover ways to move with the scarves, acknowledge two of their ideas. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *Oh, I see that Liam is moving his scarf by holding one corner with one hand, one corner with the other hand, and raising it up and down. Let's try it Liam's way.*

Ella: *I am doing it this way!* (Ella shows that she is holding the scarf with one hand and tapping it repeatedly on the floor.)

Teacher: *Now, let's try it Ella's way.* (Teacher models what Ella has just shown.)

Teacher: *Let's try to remember Liam's way.* (The group repeats Liam's movement.) *Now, let's do Ella's way again.* (The group repeats Ella's movement.)

After the two movements are identified, the teacher plays an instrumental selection. (It is important to choose music that has clearly defined sections, preferably two sections that repeat a number of times.) As the music starts, cue the children to imitate the first movement. When the music changes, the children begin to perform the second movement. As the music plays on, repeat this pattern, cuing the children to perform each movement. (It is advisable to leave a section of music at the end for children to do any movement they want. This will satisfy those children whose ideas weren't used in the pattern.)

Transition

Let children know that they can try some other scarf dancing ideas the next day or at work time. Tell the children that you will be calling out the names of different colors. When they hear the word that describes the color of their scarf, they should bring the scarf to the storage container.

Variations

- Give children two scarves to dance with at the same time.
- Increase the number of dance movements to three or four (but no more than four).
- In place of scarves, use other objects such as paper plates, rhythm sticks, ribbon rings, foam noodles, or dusters.

Follow-up

- Place the container of scarves in an accessible spot for free play and to encourage a reenactment of the experience.
- Make note of other patterns in the classroom environment and relate them to the experience the children just had. Refer to visual patterns, such as the squares on a checkerboard or the alternating colors on a pegboard created by a child (e.g., red-red-blue-blue-red-red). Also note sound patterns, such as when children alternate making loud and soft sounds while racing a car. Make note of patterns in the children's behavior, as well. For example, if you notice children sharing during an activity, you can say, "You have decided to take turns on the computer — first Micah, then Henry, then Micah, then Henry again."

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Encourage children who are physically challenged to offer their ideas for the dance sequence. This will ensure their participation, even if the activity itself is a challenge.
- Play as a partner with children who need support controlling their impulses and understanding the sequence of the activity.
- This activity may be visually overwhelming for some children. Allow these children to work in a nearby area with assistance from another adult.

7

Two Places to Pat

Curriculum Content Areas

Approaches to Learning

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

No materials are needed.

Originating Idea

During previous large-group-time singing activities, the teachers have consistently started songs by modeling a soft patting movement in order to set the steady beat. Teachers then gave children opportunities to decide how to pat the beat. To extend these experiences, the teachers decided to introduce two movement sequences to be performed in steady beat.

Opener

As children assemble in the large-group-time area, one teacher begins the activity by putting her hands on her head. The teacher can say that she has found one place to pat the beat but she needs another place. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Do what I do.* (Teacher places two hands on head.) *I found a place to begin patting the beat, but I also need another place today.*

Ben: *You could touch your nose.*

Teacher: *So, first our heads* (teacher touches her head with two hands) *and then our noses* (touches her nose with two hands).

The children follow along, moving at their own pace.

Teacher: *Let's try it together. Head* (teacher touches head), *nose* (teacher touches nose).

The teacher continues to pat the beat using both motions in sequence as children join in. It is important for the teacher to repeat the words to label the parts of the body where the patting is done.

Activity

Give children the opportunity to choose both places to pat the beat. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *We need two new places to pat the beat. Diana, what do you suggest?* (Diana touches her shoulders and then her ears.)

Teacher: *What can we say about Diana's two places?*

Ben: *It is shoulders and ears.*

Teacher: (Chanting in a steady beat) *Shoulders, ears, shoulders, ears ...*

As the teacher chants, the children pat the beat by touching their shoulders and their ears.



Children learn to feel and express a steady beat by performing simple, repetitive movements.

Transition

As the entire group is assembled in the large-group area, encourage children to choose two more places to pat. When the selections have been made, use the words and movement to establish the steady beat. Then begin a new chant that brings closure to the activity:

*We have two places
To keep the beat.
We see all the faces
'Cause this is where we meet.
It's large-group time,
And we're all here.
It's large-group time,
Let's give a cheer — yay!*

Variations

- Use rhythm sticks to keep the beat. Encourage children to have one stick in each hand. Children can tap various body parts with the sticks, or they can sit and tap the sticks on the floor.
- Instead of using the hands to pat the beat, use a different body part such as the elbows or the knees.

- Challenge the children to find other movements that can help to keep a steady beat. The children might suggest knocking their knees together while sitting, bending down and then straightening up at the waist while standing, or marching in place.
- While doing steady beat movements you could initiate a variation of the chant that was used to conclude the activity:

*We've found a way
To keep the beat.
We see all the faces
'Cause this is where we meet.*

You can also change the last line or verse of the chant to help children transition to the next large-group activity or the next part of the daily routine:

*It's large-group time,
We're all gathered round.
It's large-group time,
Let's all sit down.*

Follow-Up

- Have children find ways to keep the beat whenever songs are sung or chants are used in activities or transitions.
- Take photos of children keeping the beat. Write a story about the choices children make during steady beat activities, and use the photos for illustrations. (Each page could highlight one child and his or her choices.) At work time, encourage children to help you choose the words to describe their actions, and write them in the book. Place the finished book on the bookshelf or near the large-group-time area.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Children with speech and language disorders may show everyone where they want to pat, but they may also be unable or hesitant to say what those places are. Support them by supplying the words for them and acknowledging their ideas; encourage other children to help by describing what the children are doing.
- Use hands-on guidance with children who need help processing the visual and verbal instructions and translating them into physical movement.
- If children have difficulty patting the beat because they are physically challenged, the teacher can provide hands-on support.

We're Running, Running, Running

8

Originating Idea

Teachers noticed that the children had a lot of energy to expend after sitting at snack time, and they typically began running around in the large-group-time area before a teacher was available. This activity was developed as a way for the teacher to join the children and turn their actions into an organized large-group experience.

Opener

Have children follow you as you run in a large circle, while you and the children sing or chant the following:

*We're running, running, running.
We're running, running, running.
We're running, running, running.
And now we stop.*

If you choose to sing the words, make up a simple melody or use a familiar tune such as “The Farmer in the Dell.”

Activity

Ask children to suggest different ways to move around the circle and have them demonstrate their movements. Imitate and describe the children's movements and acknowledge the ways they identify their movements. You may also add new vocabulary words to help them describe their movements. The exchange might go like this:

Teacher: *What is another way we can move around the circle?*

Tony: *Hopping!*

Teacher: *Show us how that looks.* (Tony demonstrates by jumping on two feet around the circle.)

Anna: *That's not hopping. This is hopping.* (Anna hops on one foot.)

Teacher: *Tony said “hopping” and used two feet, and Anna used one foot. When we use two feet like Tony, we can say “jumping.” Let's try it Tony's way first.* (Teachers and children sing, “We're jumping, jumping, jumping.”)

Teacher: *Now let's try it Anna's way.* (Teachers and children sing, “We're hopping, hopping, hopping.”)

Curriculum Content Areas

Approaches to Learning

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Mathematics

Materials

No materials are needed.



Having children run, skip, or hop around the large-group space after a sedentary activity helps them burn off excess energy.

Transition

Tell children that it is time for the last movement idea. Ask a child to give a new idea for moving around the circle. Tell children that after the last movement, they will sit down and get ready for the next large-group activity. The song might go like this:

*We're marching, marching, marching.
We're marching, marching, marching.
We're marching, marching, marching.
And now we sit down.*

Variations

- Introduce movement ideas using action words such as *slide*, *glide*, *skate*, *roll*, *creep*, *weave*, *crawl*, and *sneak*, or descriptive ideas such as *like an animal*, *like a car*, *like you have glue on your feet*, *backwards*, and *sideways*. You can also challenge the children to move in unusual ways, such as without using their feet, with their hands touching the floor, and without bending their legs.

Follow-up

- Say a form of the chant as children perform classroom tasks. As the children pass out snack materials, for instance, the teacher can sing or chant something like this:

Jurisha's passing out the napkins.

Jurisha's passing out the napkins.

Jurisha's passing out the napkins.

And now she's done.

- Use the chant when you are trying to encourage children to stop one activity and get ready for another. For instance, Geraldo's teacher notices that Geraldo is playing in the sink, watching the water go down the drain as he washes his hands for snack. The teacher could go over to Geraldo and softly sing to him:

Geraldo is washing his hands.

Geraldo is washing his hands.

Geraldo is washing his hands.

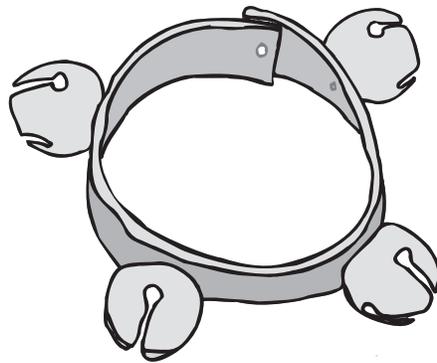
And now he stops!

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Children using wheelchairs or assistive mobility devices may move around the circle with the group. Whenever possible or appropriate, have children operate their own wheelchairs. This would ensure that the experience of stopping and starting is an active choice. Also, give these children opportunities to suggest how the other children can move with them.
- Work as a partner with children who have difficulties with impulse control. Have them plan how they will stop moving (e.g., rest and put hands on head).
- For children with limited hearing, provide a visual cue that indicates they should stop moving (e.g., waving a scarf).

II

**Singing Songs,
Doing Fingerplays,
Saying Chants and
Poems**



9

Down by the Bay

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication
Social and Emotional
Development

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

The children have shown an interest in rhyming words, an important skill in language and literacy development. The teachers used a rhyming game to designate children to perform classroom jobs. For instance, when the teacher announced, “The person who will pass out the napkins today has a name that rhymes with ‘boo,’” the children shouted, “It’s Sue!”

This activity was designed to give children additional opportunities to rhyme words.

Opener

As children gather for large-group time, offer a greeting that has a rhyme in it. You could state, “There is something I wanted to say. We all came to school today!” Point out the rhyming words and ask children to think of other rhyming words. Listen to the responses from the children and acknowledge their attempts at rhyming. (Often young children will confuse alliteration [having the same beginning sound] and rhyme; they might say, “Nya and necklace.” If this occurs, acknowledge their recognition of beginning sounds and continue asking for rhyming words. You might say, “You are noticing that both ‘Nya’ and ‘necklace’ start with the /n/ sound. Let’s think of some rhymes — words that *end* with the same sound.”)

Activity

Tell children that they will be singing a song that gives them a chance to create their own rhymes. Set a steady beat by patting your knees, encouraging the children to join in as they listen. Begin singing “Down By The Bay”:

*Down by the bay
Where the watermelons grow,
Back to my home
I dare not go.
For if I did
My mother would say:
“Did you ever see a spider,
Getting much wider,
Down by the bay?”*

Talk about the two rhyming words, noting that one of the words is a type of animal, and the other word rhymes with that animal's name (e.g., spider/wider). Have children suggest an animal and an action for that animal (e.g., a bear combing his hair). Support the children's ideas, even though their rhymes may not make "adult sense" (e.g., "Have you ever seen a tiger, doing a biger," or "Have you ever seen a lizard, walking on a tizard").

Transition

Transition the children to another part of the daily routine by playing a rhyming game. Tell the children that if they hear their name in the song, they should go to the planning table (or another area). Sing the last few lines of the song, incorporating the children's names into the lyrics. You might sing, for example, "Did you ever see Jimmy, doing a shimmy, down by the bay?" or "Did you ever see Michaelah, eating a whale-uh, down by the bay?"

Variations

- Each time you sing the song, ask children to find another place to pat the steady beat or another way to keep the beat.
- With older children who are beginning to write simple words, use a whiteboard or chart paper to record the rhymed word pairs.

Follow-up

- Use the song as a transition during other parts of the day. You might sing, for instance, "It's planning time, let's sing a rhyme, down by the bay," or "Outside we go, and we have snow, down by the bay."

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- For children who benefit from visual support, display photos or drawings of animals. Have the children point to a picture to designate the animal that they will use in their rhyme.
- Use carpet squares and hoops to define personal space for children who are easily distracted or who need help with impulse control while moving or singing. You can also use special chairs with high sides for children who need additional physical support.

10

Hickory Dickory Dock

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

The Arts

Mathematics

Materials

A piece of chart paper,
with the rhyme
“Hickory Dickory Dock”
written on it

Originating Idea

Children have been listing words that have the same beginning sound as their names (e.g., “Henry” and “heart”). The teachers wanted a fun way to capitalize on the children’s interest in identifying the initial sounds of words.

Opener

Tell the children that you know a rhyme about a mouse. Ask them to pretend their hands are mice, and have them demonstrate how that would look. Read the rhyme “Hickory Dickory Dock” to the children. Have the children tap a steady beat on their knees as you recite the rhyme. When you say the line “The mouse ran up the clock,” have the children wiggle their fingers toward the ceiling. When you say the line “The clock struck one,” have children hold up one finger or make a chiming sound. When you say the line “The mouse ran down,” have the children wiggle their fingers back down to their laps. Finish the last line of the rhyme while patting the beat.

Activity

After saying the rhyme and doing the fingerplays a few times, tell the children that you are going to change the title of “Hickory Dickory Dock” so the words all start with the /b/ sound. (Children can identify “B” as the letter that makes the /b/ sound.) Recite the new version of the rhyme, “Bickory Bickory Bock.” You (or the children) can then suggest other letters and letter sounds. If you say, “The next sound we are going to use is the sound the letter ‘L’ makes,” the rhyme would become “Lickory Lickory Lock.” If you say, “Let’s try the first sound in the word ‘pumpkin,’” the rhyme would become “Pickory Pickory Pock.”

Hickory dickory dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory dickory dock.

Transition

As you direct the group to the next activity, change the initial sound in the key words of your instructions and have children “correct” you. If you say, for example, “Now we are going to pick a gong from the gong gook,” the children would reply, “Pick a song from the song book.” You could also dismiss children from large-group time by saying their name using a different initial sound (e.g., “Benry” for “Henry”).

Variations

- When you say, “The clock struck one,” have the children play musical instruments like triangles or bells to represent the clock sound.
- Create a new rhyme for the line “The clock struck one” (e.g., “The clock struck three, he climbed a tree”).

Follow-up

- Post the words to “Hickory Dickory Dock” in the classroom along with pictures of the children participating in this experience.
- Add “Hickory Dickory Dock” to the class song book.
- Put a clock or timer in the classroom.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Provide hands-on guidance during the fingerplay for children with motor skill difficulties.
- Provide picture cards illustrating each line of the rhyme for children who need support following verbal instructions.
- Hold up letter cards to help visual learners attend to and process the information.
- Gently tap the steady beat of the rhyme on the back of a child who is distractable or needs extra sensory input.



At the line “The clock struck one,” children hold up one finger or make a chiming sound.

11

Itsy Bitsy Spider Revisited

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Social and Emotional Development

Physical Development

Materials

Large pieces of construction paper, each illustrated with a drawing of a spider whose face depicts a basic emotion

Originating Idea

The children enjoy listening to “Itsy Bitsy Spider” at greeting time. The teachers have also been helping children identify feelings when conflicts occur. They decided to use a familiar song character to help children label and reenact a range of emotions.

Opener

Sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider” as the children perform the fingerplay. Show one of the drawings (e.g., sad face) to the children and ask them how the spider might be feeling. Then show the other drawings (e.g., happy face, frightened face, angry face) and ask the children to identify each emotion.

Activity

Show one of the drawings a second time and ask children how they would move if they were feeling that emotion (e.g., if the drawing showed a sad face, the children could hang their heads and walk slowly). Then ask the children how their voices would sound if they were to talk while feeling that same emotion. Have the children sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider” using that tone of voice.



This activity builds on the classic song and fingerplay, a favorite of children and adults.

Transition

Have the children sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider” while creeping and crawling like a spider to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

- Ask children to suggest emotions that aren’t displayed on the drawings.
- Use other songs and rhymes that contain familiar characters (e.g., “Little Bo Peep,” “Mary Had a Little Lamb”).
- Have children pretend to move and speak like another animal or creature (e.g., monster, mouse, sheep, fairy).

Follow-up

- Add “Itsy Bitsy Spider” to the class song book.
- Place rubber spiders in the toy area.
- At planning time, give each child a picture of a spider. The teacher has a duplicate set of pictures and holds them up, one at a time. When a child’s picture matches a picture that the teacher displays, it is the child’s turn to plan.
- For recall, have the children walk with a large, stuffed spider to the area where this activity took place.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Show a picture of a spider creeping off to the planning table for children who have difficulty following verbal instructions.
- Prepare a picture card for each line of the song to support visual learners. Display the cards while you are singing.

12

Take Me for a Ride in a Car, Car

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Social Studies

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Science and Technology

Materials

No materials are needed.

Originating Idea

A few children consistently plan to play with the cars and tracks in the toy area. Often the children spend time looking at, describing, and naming the vehicles. This activity builds on those interests and provides opportunities for creative language.

Opener

Tell the children what type of vehicle you used to arrive at school and encourage them to describe how they travel to school. Your conversation might go something like this:

Teacher: *I came to school today, and I was riding in a type of car called a jeep. How do you get to school?*

Liam: *My mom takes us to school in our red van.*

Brandon: *Sometimes I ride on my dad's shoulders.*

Teacher: *You get rides on your dad's shoulders? How does that feel?*

Brandon: *At first when I was little, I was scared. Now I want him to do it all the time!*

Teacher: *You really enjoy riding like that. Today we are going to sing a song about all sorts of cars or things we can ride in or ride on.*

Sing the song "Take Me for a Ride in a Car, Car":

Take me for a ride in a car, car.

Take me for a ride in a car, car.

Take me for a ride, take me for a ride,

Take me for a ride in a car, car.

Activity

Repeat the song, changing the lyrics to reflect one of the children's ideas. You might say, "Let's sing again, but this time we'll sing about the car that belongs to Liam's mom — the red van." Begin to keep a steady beat by tapping on your knees or another part of your body and then sing:

Take me for a ride in a red van.

Take me for a ride in a red van.

Take me for a ride, take me for a ride,

Take me for a ride in a red van.

Encourage children to suggest ideas for other types of cars. Often their ideas will contain lengthy descriptions, such as “a purple polka dot kitty car” or “a rainbow doll and toy car.” Accept all suggestions, repeating them to the children before starting the song. (You may have to slow the song’s tempo to allow for the more complex descriptions. This can be beneficial, however, because it encourages wordplay and vocabulary growth. It also sounds unusual to the children, and they enjoy the novelty.)



After learning this song, a few children planned to build a car with blocks and “drive” around the room at work time.

Transition

Ask children to think of a final idea for a vehicle. Have them move to the next part of the daily routine while pretending to be that vehicle. If a child suggests a “monster truck,” for instance, you might say, “This time while we sing the song, let’s drive our monster trucks to our planning table.” The children then devise ways to depict a monster truck as you sing the song.

Variations

- Instead of a car, sing about other vehicles (e.g., boat, plane, helicopter, tricycle, bicycle).
- Discuss with children how it would look and feel to walk on different surfaces. You might sing, “Take me for a walk on an ice rink,” “Take me for a walk on a rocky road,” or “Take me for a walk on a hot, sandy beach.” Have the children walk around the large-group area as you sing the song.

Follow-up

- Place various types of toy vehicles in the toy and/or block area of the classroom.
- Have children paint with a toy vehicle by dabbing paint on its wheels and then rolling the vehicle across a piece of paper. You can sing the song as the children paint.
- Place books and pictures about cars and other vehicles in the classroom environment.
- Take a field trip to a car, train, or transportation museum.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- For children who need support with verbal instructions, display pictures of cars and trucks. Have them choose a vehicle to sing about by selecting a picture.
- To help children who are easily distracted, gently pat the steady beat of the song on their backs or shoulders.

13

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jinglyng Many Ways

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Approaches to Learning

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

Wrist bells, at least one set for each child

Originating Idea

Children have been discussing the upcoming winter holidays. They have spoken about wrapping gifts, trimming trees, and watching snow fall. The teachers decided to use a familiar holiday tune to encourage exploration with a hand-held musical instrument.

Opener

Distribute the wrist bells to the children and allow time for them to explore with the bells. Acknowledge and copy their ideas. Here's how the activity might unfold:

Evan: *I can do it like this.* (Evan twirls his bells, and the teacher copies his idea.)

Teacher: *What could you say about that?*

Evan: *I am twirling it with my finger.*

Teacher: *You are twirling it with your finger.* (Teacher addresses the rest of the group.) *What else could we say about how Evan is playing his bells?*

Donnette: *He's twirling it on the floor.*

Teacher: *He is twirling the bells with his finger on the floor.*

Activity

After a sufficient amount of exploration time, introduce the song "Jingle Bells." As you sing with the children, encourage them to play the bells using the method they devised. Then ask one of the children to demonstrate his or her way of playing the bells and tell the group to copy that idea. Change the song lyrics to highlight the child's contribution:

*Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
This is how Evan plays.
Let's all play his way.*

Repeat this part of the activity several times, incorporating ideas from different children.

Transition

Sing “Jingle Bells” a final time as you collect the children’s wrist bells and prepare them to move to the next part of the daily routine. The lyrics might go like this:

*Jingle bells, jingle bells,
(Name of teacher) will come to you.
When she does, give her your bells.
Then we have planning to do.*

Remind children that they can use the bells during work time.

Variations

- Ask children for other holiday songs they can sing as they play their bells.
- Use other rhythm instruments, such as tambourine sticks or finger cymbals, as you sing holiday songs.

Follow-up

- At planning time, ask the children to shake their bells near the toys they will be playing with during work time, and at recall time, have the children shake their bells near the toys that they played with during work time.
- Put bells in the toy area or the music area of the classroom.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Use ankle bells with children who have low muscle tone or a weak grasp.
- If children have impulse control issues, help define their personal space by providing carpet squares to sit on, hoops to sit in, or other floor markers.
- For children with noise sensitivities, provide head bands, ear muffs, or another type of ear covering.

14

Don't Let the Rain Come Down

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Science and
Technology

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

The Arts

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

For several days the weather has been rainy. The children have commented on the weather and lamented their inability to play outdoors. Teachers wanted to provide opportunities for children to discuss changes in the environment and atmosphere.

Opener

As children assemble in the large-group area, introduce the subject of the rainy weather by discussing a recent storm. Have children create a fingerplay to demonstrate how rain falls from the sky. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *What could we say about the weather today?*

Mira: *It is still raining. We can't go outside again!*

Teacher: *It is still raining. You wish it would stop so that we could go outdoors at outside time.*

Mira: *Yeah. Last night I heard thunder.*

Scott: *And there was lightning.*

Teacher: *Lightning and thunder go together when there's a big rainstorm. How could we show rain with just our hands?*

Scott: *I do it this way.* (Scott wiggles his fingers in the air.)

Vanessa: *Like this. It is raining hard.* (Vanessa puts her hands in the air and drops them quickly.)

Teacher: *Let's see if the rest of you can make up your own way to show rain.*

Activity

As children are practicing their fingerplays, begin singing "Don't Let the Rain Come Down":

Oh, no, don't let the rain come down.

Oh, no, don't let the rain come down.

Oh, no, don't let the rain come down.

My roof's got a hole in it and I might drown.

Add to the children's fingerplay by performing the following movements during the last line of the song: As you sing the word "roof," place your hands together so your fingertips form a roof's peak; as you sing the word "hole," place your hands together to form a circle; and as you sing

the phrase “I might drown,” make a swimming motion with your arms. Repeat the song one or two more times as children begin to imitate the new movements, while still using their own fingerplays to simulate rain.

Ask children about other kinds of weather conditions. Have them create fingerplays to depict those conditions:

Teacher: *We are singing about rain. What other sorts of weather do you know about?*

Mira: *It could snow.*

Teacher: *What could we do with our hands to show snow?*

Mira: *I make big snowflakes.* (Mira spreads her fingers wide apart as her hands descend in front of her.)

Teacher: *Try doing snowflake movements as we sing the song about snow instead of rain.*

Sing the song again, replacing the word “rain” with “snow” and performing the new movements. Ask for other weather ideas and have the children create new movements to depict those conditions.



As the teacher chants the word “roof,” children make a peaked roof with their hands.

Transition

Have children move to their next activity as though they are traveling through rain, snow, hail, wind, or fog. Join the children and acknowledge their movement ideas as they “contend” with various weather conditions.

Variations

- Ask children to suggest their own movement ideas for “roof,” “hole,” and “drown.”
- Have children suggest other parts of the house besides the roof and depict those using hand motions. You might sing, for example, “My door has a hole in it and I might drown” as you perform a hand movement for “door.”
- Ask children to suggest other consequences besides “I might drown.” You could sing, “My door has a hole in it and I might freeze” as your hands grasp your elbows and you begin shivering.

Follow-up

- Add “Don’t Let the Rain Come Down” to the class song book.
- As children are getting dressed for outside time, sing the song using words that describe the weather conditions they will encounter. You might sing, for example, “Oh, yes, please let the sun come out. The children are ready to play outside.”

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- To help children with attention difficulties, use dramatic vocal effects such as whispering, chanting, or speaking in a high-pitched tone of voice as you perform the song.
- To further assist children with attention difficulties, limit the number of hand motions they make during the song to one or two.

Do Wah Diddy Diddy

15

Originating Idea

The teachers have noticed that the children enjoy hearing and making up nonsense words. This chant, based on a 1960s pop song, encourages the use of nonsense sounds, rhymes, and alliteration, and it engages the children in physical activity.

Opener

Tell children that you heard a new chant that contains funny-sounding words. Introduce “Do Wah Diddy Diddy” to the children, encouraging them to say the chant with you. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *Do wah diddy diddy. (Pause.) I wonder what that means?*

Amrita: *It’s funny — do wah dibby dibby.*

Teacher: *Let’s try it Amrita’s way — do wah dibby dibby. (Children join in as you chant.) Here are more funny sounding words: Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do.*

Repeat the phrase, patting a steady beat as you chant. As the children join in by chanting or by patting the steady beat, listen to and support their efforts.

Activity

Have the children stand up and ask them for a movement idea to use during the chant. The dialogue could go like this:

Teacher: *We need someone to think of a movement so that we can play a game with the chant.*

Jamie: *This, this!* (Jamie twirls around.)

Teacher: *What could we say about Jamie’s movement idea?*

Amrita: *He is going round and round.*

Teacher: *I wonder what you have to do to go round and round like Jamie.*

Amrita: *Put our arms out.*

Ben: *Walk in a circle.*

Amrita: *Don’t fall down.*

Teacher: *There are a lot of things our body has to do to make Jamie’s round and round movement. Let’s call it “twirling.” Get ready to start twirling like Jamie.*

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Materials

No materials are needed.

Say the chant as children perform the movement, adding new phrases to highlight the children's contributions:

*Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Jamie is twirling,
And we can do it, too!*

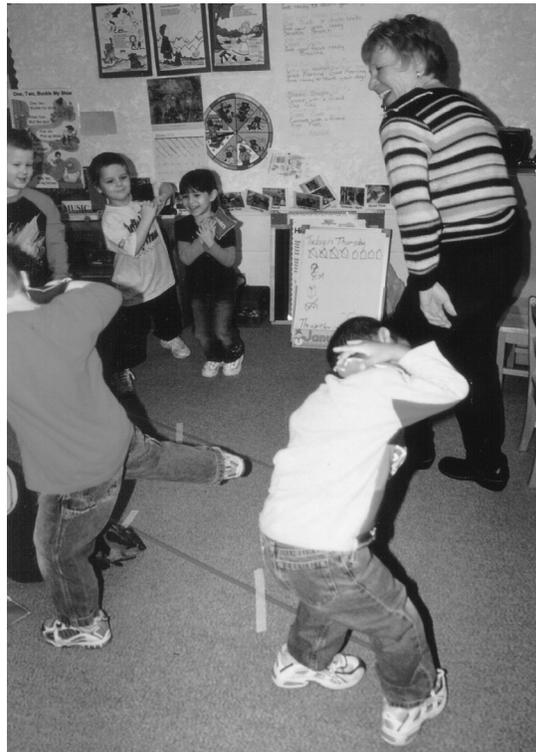
Continue to encourage movement ideas from the children, as well as descriptions of how to perform the movements. Add the chant after children have practiced the suggested movements.

Transition

Tell children you will say the chant one more time and have them perform any movement they choose. Change the words of the chant to reflect that the game is ending:

*Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Last time through,
So it's all up to you!*

Remind children that they can play the game at work time.



Add new phrases to the song to highlight the movements children suggest.

Variations

- This chant uses alliteration based on the /d/ sound heard at the beginning of “do,” “diddy,” and “dum.” Try other initial consonants at the beginning of those words (e.g., soo wah sidy sidy sum sidy soo).
- Have children move with objects such as rhythm sticks, paper plates, beanbags, or scarves during the activity. Change the words to reflect the new movement:

*Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Tasha moves her scarf,
And we can do it, too.*

Follow-up

- Use the chant at various parts of the day to describe an event or to transition to another part of the daily routine:

*Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
Do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do,
We're finished with recall.
Now what do we do?*

- Add “Do Wah Diddy Diddy” to the class song book.
- Write the first line of the chant on a dry-erase board. Ask the children to suggest a new beginning sound for the words “do,” “diddy,” and “dum.” Erase the letter “d” from those words and replace it with the letter that makes the new sound (e.g., “m” for the /m/ sound).

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- To support children with mobility issues, try the activity using only upper body movements.
- Use an abbreviated version of the chant to support children with developmental delays:

*Do wah diddy diddy,
Do wah diddy diddy,
Do wah diddy diddy,
Now what do we do?*

16

Aiken Drum

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Approaches to
Learning

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Materials

A large whiteboard

An assortment of
colored dry-erase
markers

Originating Idea

Children have been drawing people at various times in the daily routine. Some of the drawings have distinct eyes, noses, mouths, arms, and legs, while others contain few distinguishable body parts. Teachers developed this activity to further the children's awareness of body parts.

Opener

Introduce the song "Aiken Drum" by leading a discussion about the children's drawings. The following illustrates how the conversation might proceed:

Teacher: *I have noticed a lot of drawings of people these days (point out some pictures displayed on the walls). Some have eyes, and some have ears. If you were going to draw a person, what body parts would you include?*

Jonah: *Mine is there. (Jonah points to his crayon drawing on the wall.) I draw legs and feet.*

Teacher: *There are lots of parts to draw when you draw people. I have a song about someone who has some pretty strange parts to draw. It's about a man who has food for body parts!*

Tomo: *Food!?*

Teacher: *If your hair was made of food, what sort of food would it be?*

Tomo: *Spaghetti.*

Teacher: *This man has spaghetti hair, and his name is Aiken Drum.*

Being singing "Aiken Drum":

*I knew a man who lived in the moon,
In the moon, in the moon.
I knew a man who lived in the moon,
And his name was Aiken Drum.*

*And his hair was made of spaghetti,
Spaghetti, spaghetti.
His hair was made of spaghetti,
And his name was Aiken Drum.*

Activity

On the whiteboard, take a marker and make a circle to represent Aiken Drum's head. Place red squiggly lines atop the circle to represent his "spaghetti hair." Sing the first verse again with the children, then ask them to name other body parts and other foods. Add each new idea to the existing drawing on the whiteboard. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *Okay, Aiken Drum has spaghetti hair. What other body parts does he have?*

Jonah: *I know. His eyes are olives.*

Teacher: *Let's sing about Aiken Drum's olive eyes.*

Sing "Aiken Drum" again, incorporating the new idea into the second verse:

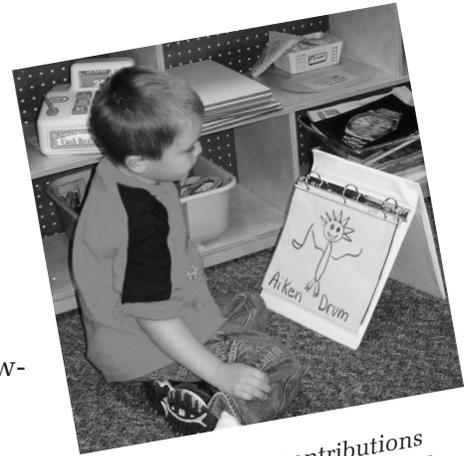
And his eyes were made of olives,

Olives, olives.

His eyes were made of olives,

And his name was Aiken Drum.

Take a green marker and add the "olive eyes" to the drawing. Continue in this fashion until you have added several body parts to the drawing.



Jonah recalls his contributions to this activity when he finds the drawing of Aiken Drum in the classroom song book.

Transition

Point to the feet you drew on Aiken Drum (or ask the children to give you an idea for his feet, if necessary). Tell children to pretend their feet are just like Aiken Drum's, and have them move to the next part of the daily routine. You might say, "We drew Aiken Drum's feet like cucumbers. If you had cucumbers for feet, how would you walk to your planning table?"

Variations

- Perform this song without drawing on the whiteboard, concentrating on the children's ideas and their use of language.
- Instead of singing about food, choose items from other categories such as toys in the classroom, things found outside, or materials in the block area.

Follow-up

- Keep the drawing of Aiken Drum on the whiteboard throughout the day. Some children may want to sing the song again, erase certain body parts and replace them with new ones, or recreate the drawing entirely.

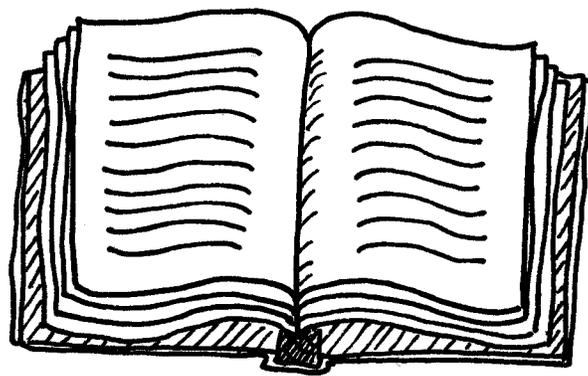
- Make a classroom book about Aiken Drum that includes the children's ideas. Each page could feature a different part of Aiken Drum's body.
- Add "Aiken Drum" to the classroom song book.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children have limited vision, give them small, individual whiteboards and markers to draw with as they sing.
- To support children who are overwhelmed by visual stimulation, add fewer parts to the "Aiken Drum" character. Limit the activity to no more than three or four choices.

III

Storytelling and Reenacting Stories and Nursery Rhymes



17

Five Little Monkeys

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Approaches to Learning

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

Children were familiar with the chant “Five Little Monkeys” and enjoyed having a picture book version of the chant read to them. This activity gives children opportunities to initiate their own movement ideas as they act out the chant.

Opener

Gather the children in the large-group area and ask them to help you act out a story about a mother monkey (teacher points to self) and her little monkeys (teacher points to children). Ask the children, “How many little monkeys are in this story?” Count the children, with their help, then begin to tell a story about putting the little monkeys to bed:

Teacher: *Once upon a time there was a mother monkey who had (state number) little monkeys to put to bed. What do you do to get ready for bed?*

Lena: *Brush my teeth.*

Teacher: *Lena brushes her teeth. Let’s all do that. (Children and teacher pretend to brush their teeth.) What else should we do?*

Eli: *I put on my pajamas.*

Teacher: *Okay, we need to put on our pajamas. Does anyone wear the kind with feet in them? (Teacher and children pretend to dress for bed.) Now the mother monkey tucks her little monkeys in their big bed (teacher motions to large-group space) under their cozy covers. (Have children lie on floor and pretend to sleep.) Then the mother blows her little monkeys a kiss, turns out the light, and goes downstairs.*

Activity

Continue the story by telling the children that the little monkeys were not a bit tired. Ask them what they think happened next. Children familiar with the chant might suggest that the monkeys jumped on the bed. Have the children pretend that they are jumping on the bed as you say the chant:

*Five (or the number of children) little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped his head.
Mama called the doctor and the doctor said,
“No more monkeys jumping on the bed.”*

Ask a child for another way that the monkeys could move on the bed (e.g., tumble, dance), and have that child demonstrate and describe the movement. Repeat the chant, incorporating the new movement idea (e.g., Five little monkeys hopping on the bed). Encourage some children to play the role of the doctor and say the line, “No more monkeys hopping on the bed.”

Transition

Say the chant a final time, but change the last line so it directs the children to the next activity. The doctor could say, for example, “All the monkeys jump to the planning table.”

Variations

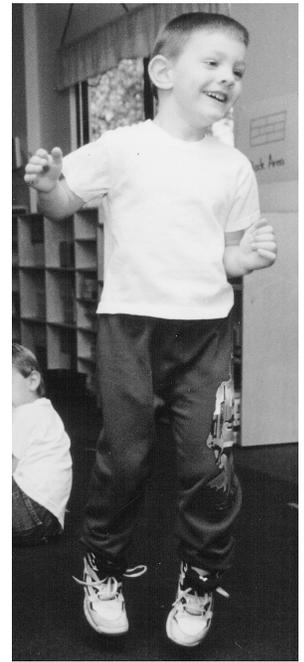
- Incorporate different animals into the story, using ideas from the children.
- Each time a monkey falls off the bed, reduce the number of monkeys in the chant by one. (Do not remove any children from the game.)
- Have children change the sound and tone of the doctor’s voice each time they say the chant (e.g., use a “monster” voice or a silly voice).
- Ask the children for suggestions of other things to jump on, and create rhymes using their ideas (e.g., Five little monkeys jumping on the couch, one fell off and he said, “Ouch!”). Accept the children’s attempts to rhyme words, even if they don’t make “adult” sense (e.g., Five little monkeys jumping on the table, one fell off and bumped her sable).
- Sing the chant without the numerical reference (e.g., all the little monkeys jumping on the bed).

Follow-up

- Add “Five Little Monkeys” to the class song book.
- Do other jumping activities at large-group time.
- Add a safety-approved mini-trampoline to the classroom.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Allow children with motor planning issues to observe the activity before joining in.
- For children who have difficulty defining their own personal space, indicate their movement space with a carpet square or a hoop.
- Give children with limited mobility a stuffed animal or doll to manipulate during the reenactment.
- To support children with limited hearing, hold up picture sequence cards as you tell the story.



After this large-group time, children enjoyed pretending to be “jumping monkeys” at work time.

18

A Trip to the Apple Orchard

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Social Studies

Materials

No materials are needed.

Originating Idea

After the class went on a field trip to the local apple orchard, the teachers developed this activity to help children recall their experiences. By reflecting on the experience, children form mental pictures that will help them reenact the trip.

Opener

Begin a conversation about the recent field trip to the apple orchard. You might say, “I really enjoyed our trip to the apple orchard. I especially liked tasting the yellow apples.” Wait for children to respond to your comment with their own recollections of the event.

Activity

As children tell what they remember about the trip, encourage them to demonstrate how they picked apples. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *Allie remembers the apples way up on the top of the tree. Let's pretend we're looking up high at apples in a tree. (Teacher and children look toward ceiling.) I see a big red one.*

Allie: *I see some green ones with worms!*

Ben: *I want to pick them.*

Teacher: *How would our bodies move if we were picking them? (Children act out their version of picking apples.) I notice that you are picking them off the tree and putting them down.*

Ben: *Yeah, I have a basket.*

Teacher: *Oh, look. (Teacher points toward ceiling.) I see one that's shiny and red, but I can't reach it. (Children may suggest that you jump or climb a ladder.)*

Transition

After the children have reenacted their trip to the apple orchard, use a transition to the next part of the daily routine that has a connection to their ideas. Tell the children, “Let's pretend that I am going to an apple orchard and that you are all apples. How would your body look if it was an apple?” Children might curl up or form a circle with their arms. Then say to them, “Now I am going to pick all of these apples. When you get picked, go to your snack table” (or to the next part of the daily routine). Walk around the circle and touch children as if you are “picking” them.

Variations

- Use this recall process when children go on other field trips, when they have had experiences like viewing a parade, or when they have participated in a special event like planting a class garden.

Follow-up

- Take pictures during the field trip and place them in a classroom book.
- Use the field trip book to tell a story. Have the children describe what is depicted in the photos, then write their descriptions under the pictures.
- Add materials to the classroom that are related to the field trip (e.g., apples, bushel baskets).

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Before the trip, go to the apple orchard (or another field trip site) and take pictures of the site and of people performing various tasks. Use these pictures to introduce the trip to children who benefit from visual support.
- Support children with speech and language disorders by encouraging nonverbal communication from them. Interpret their body language and nonverbal reenactments for the other children so they can understand what the child is trying to communicate.



During a field trip to an apple orchard, the children were able to pick apples right from the tree. The following day, this large-group activity gave the group an opportunity to reenact the experience.

19

Firefighter Story

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social Studies

Materials

A large piece of chart
paper

A marker

Originating Idea

Children have been dressing up as and pretending to be firefighters at work time. This activity increases their growing understanding of a firefighter's job. Teachers developed this activity to give children ideas to use in their play during work time.

Opener

Tell the children that you would like to tell a story about firefighters, but you need help coming up with ideas. Ask them to tell you things that they know about firefighters and write their ideas on the chart paper. (The children might mention things such as hoses, fire engines, and fire poles.) You can also ask open-ended questions such as "How do firefighters know when there is a fire?" "How do they put out the fire?" or "How do they protect themselves?" Record the children's answers on chart paper.

Activity

Have the children make up actions for some of their ideas, such as using hoses to fight a fire. You could say, "Show me how it would look if you were a firefighter squirting water on a burning building." Have the children demonstrate other actions such as chopping with an axe and driving the fire engine. Tell a simple story using some of the ideas from the children. Have the children act out the story:

Once upon a time at Firehouse Number 72, there was a group of firefighters ready for action. One day the fire alarm went off because there was a large fire at the office down the street. The firefighters had to put on their coats, hats, and heavy boots. (Children pretend to dress.) They slid down the fire pole and jumped onto the engine. (Ask children to help you make the sound of the fire engine) When they got to the office building, it was blazing and smoke was coming out the windows. The firefighters climbed up their ladders and sprayed water on the flames. (Children pretend to use fire hoses.)

Transition

Tell the children that when they hear you make a fire alarm sound, they should pretend to drive their own fire engine to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

- As you tell the story, ask the children to tell you what happens next.
- Have the children solve a problem during the story. For instance, you could say, “Oh, no, the fire hose is clogged. No water can come out. What should the firefighters do?”
- Make up stories about other community helpers that children are interested in, such as the police.

Follow-up

- Talk about fire safety and hold a fire drill.
- Schedule a trip to the local fire station.
- Add props to the classroom (e.g., boots, pieces of garden hose).

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Use hands-on support for children with developmental delays.
- Display picture cards for children who need help processing or hearing the story.
- Define personal space with hoops or carpet squares for children who are easily distracted.



After this large-group activity, the fire station play continued at outside time.

20

Goldilocks and the Rhythm Sticks

Curriculum Content Areas

Mathematics

The Arts

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

Two rhythm sticks for each child

Originating Idea

The children have asked the teachers to read the story “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” The teachers decided to use this popular tale to develop the children’s storytelling abilities, as well as their understanding of seriation and musical dynamics (loud and soft sounds).

Opener

Tell children that you noticed that they enjoy “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” and that today they will help you tell it while using rhythm sticks. Pass out two rhythm sticks to each child, encouraging the children to practice making sounds. Tell the children that you have two signals for them: one means “start making the sound” and the other means “stop making the sound.” For example, put the rhythm sticks high in the air for the “start” signal and cross the rhythm sticks against your chest for the “stop” signal. Support children’s ability to start and stop on signal by practicing with them before telling the story.

Activity

Introduce the idea of making sounds with the rhythm sticks to represent the three bears. The introduction might go like this:

Teacher: *Once upon a time there were three bears. The Papa Bear ... use your rhythm sticks to make a loud, Papa Bear sound. (Teacher signals children to start and stop.) The Mama Bear ... use your rhythm sticks to make a Mama Bear sound. (Teacher taps her sticks to make a sound that is medium loud and signals children to copy her.) And the Baby Bear. (Teacher speaks in a soft voice.) How would you make Baby Bear’s sound? (At teacher’s signal, children tap sticks together softly.) You used a very quiet sound for Baby Bear because he’s so tiny.*

Continue the story, signaling children to play their rhythm sticks when the story mentions the bears or something belonging to the bears (e.g., chairs, bowls of porridge, beds). Occasionally, ask the children to tell you what happens next.

Transition

When you finish the story, put the container for the rhythm sticks in the middle of the floor. Collect the sticks and have children move to the next part of the daily routine. You might say, “We heard about Papa Bear,

Mama Bear, Baby Bear, and Goldilocks. If you like Papa Bear the best, put your sticks in the bucket and walk like Papa Bear to your planning table.” Continue with the other characters until the sticks are put away.

Variations

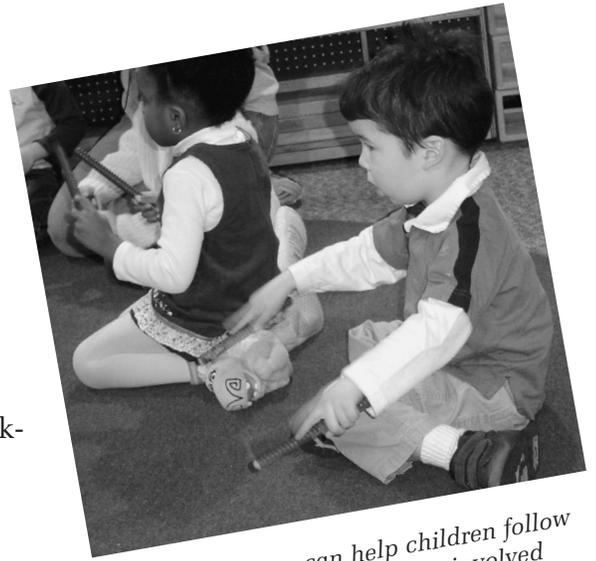
- Play rhythm sticks or other instruments while re-telling other stories (e.g., “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”).
- Use other instruments such as wrist bells or egg shakers to make loud, medium, and soft sounds.

Follow-up

- Put items that come in various sizes, such as triangles, hand drums, pots and pans, measuring cups, measuring spoons, and timers, in the classroom. Display the items in order from largest to smallest.
- At recall time, ask children what they did for a long time, a medium amount of time, or a short time at work time.
- At planning or recall, give children a choice of a large, medium, or small paper bag in which to place a toy.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children need visual support, show them pictures of the characters as a cue for the actions in the story.
- For children who are sensitive to loud sounds, use materials that produce softer sounds (e.g., straws, chop sticks, pencils). Allow these children to participate from a nearby area, with assistance from an adult.
- If children are negatively affected by noise, provide them with headphones, earmuffs, or sports headbands to cover their ears.
- Play as a partner with children who have difficulty with impulse control or with handling and gripping rhythm sticks.
- Put a carpet square or a paper plate in front of children to help them focus on where to strike their sticks.



Using visual cues can help children follow directions, even when they are involved with something as exciting as playing musical instruments.

21

Good Night, Gorilla

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

The Arts

Science and
Technology

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Materials

A copy of *Good Night, Gorilla*

A flashlight

A set of keys

Carpet squares

Originating Idea

Children have enjoyed looking at the wordless picture book *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann. This activity was developed to support interest in the characters and actions depicted in the book and to further development in language, literacy, and the arts, namely drama.

Opener

Show children the book *Good Night, Gorilla*, and ask them what they remember about the story. If children need help recalling the story, ask open-ended questions to spur their thinking. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *When I read this book the first time, I thought about how quiet the animals were when they followed the zookeeper. What did you think about?*

Ricky: *That it was dark in the night.*

Teacher: *It was nighttime and it was dark.*

Kevin: *The zookeeper locked the cages and he said good night to all the animals.*

Bethany: *The gorilla was sneaky. He took the keys.*

Teacher: *The zookeeper said good night to each animal when he locked the cages, and the gorilla was kind of sneaky.*

Tell children that they will be playing a game that is like the story in some ways.

Activity

Give each child a carpet square to sit on and tell them it will be their “cage.” Show children the flashlight and the keys and tell them that they will also use these items in the game. Choose one child to play the zookeeper and one child to play the gorilla. Tell the rest of the children to pretend to be another type of zoo animal. Give time for them to act out their own animal sounds and movements. Tell children that during the game it is important for them to be very quiet so that they can surprise the zookeeper, just like in the story. Have children sit on their carpet squares.

Give the flashlight and keys to the “zookeeper,” telling the child that he or she will have to lock all the cages before going to bed. Have the zookeeper decide where his or her bed will be located (the child may choose any part of the classroom). The zookeeper uses the key to lock the

cages and says good night to the “animals.” Then the zookeeper leaves the keys near the gorilla’s cage and goes to bed. As the zookeeper sleeps, the gorilla takes the keys and unlocks all the cages. The animals sneak over to the zookeeper’s bed and go to sleep. Then the zookeeper wakes up and walks the animals back to their cages, locking each one again.

If children notice that the game is slightly different than the story, ask them to elaborate on what is the same and what is different. This calls attention to the fact that stories can have different endings, and it leaves children open to the possibility of creating new endings for stories that they know.

Transition

Tell the children that they will play the game once more. Choose a new zookeeper and gorilla, and have the other children portray a different zoo animal. When the game is done, have the children move like a zoo animal to the next activity. Remind children that they can act out the story at work time.

Variations

- Reenact the events from another favorite story. Make sure the story (or the way you adapt it) lends itself to every child having a role or part to play.
- Change the setting of the game from the zoo to a farm and play “Good Night, Pig.”

Follow-Up

- Display a copy of *Good Night, Gorilla* in the classroom.
- Use the small-group-time experiences designed for *Good Night, Gorilla* that are found in the HighScope Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Some children have difficulty interpreting the story’s meaning because the game is active and stimulating. Offer this experience in a small-group format or even individually with children who require that level of support.
- Use the American Sign language sign for “sleep” (place right hand in front of your face, palm toward you, and move hand downward toward chin) to support children with limited hearing as well as children who need visual cues to help them attend.

22

In the Tall, Tall Grass

Curriculum Content Areas

Approaches to
Learning

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social Studies

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Materials

A copy of *In the Tall,
Tall Grass*

Originating Idea

The children repeatedly asked to hear *In the Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming at times throughout the week. The book was also used as an opener for an art activity at small-group time the previous day. These experiences helped teachers realize the children's need for responding physically to literature. The following activity was designed to fulfill that need.

Opener

Tell the children that they will be listening to and acting out the story *In the Tall, Tall Grass*. Show the book to the children and encourage them to discuss what they remember about the story. (If the book is new to the group, explain that the story describes many creatures that live in the tall grass.) Listen to and acknowledge children's responses, then say, "Today we are going to use our bodies and our voices to help us act out the story *In the Tall, Tall Grass*."

Activity

Say the first line of the story, "In the tall, tall grass." Then ask the children, "How would you move if you were walking in the tall, tall grass?" Observe the children's actions, acknowledge their ideas, and copy their movements. You might say, "Justin, you're lifting your legs up high like you're marching." Then say the next line of the text, "Crunch, munch, caterpillars lunch." Ask the children, "What would it look like and sound like if you were this caterpillar in the tall, tall grass?" Again, observe how the children respond, and acknowledge and copy their ideas. Continue with the rest of the text in this manner, stopping after each line to get movement and sound ideas. (You may have to explain words such as "skitter" and "lunge.") You can also model these actions and have the children copy your movements. (For the last line of text, which reads "Stars bright, moonlight," you may need to help children plan their movements.)

Transition

Repeat the last line of text and ask children what they do at night. Then have children demonstrate how they sleep. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: “*Stars bright, moonlight.*” *Those are the last words of the story.*

What do you do when the stars are out and the moonlight is shining?

Trey: *I have to go to bed.*

Teacher: *How does your body look when it is sleeping?*

Trey: *I like to curl up.* (Trey lies down on floor.)

Follow the children’s movements, copying and commenting on their different sleeping positions. Then say, “Now that we are rested, when I tap you on the shoulder, go to your planning table as if you were moving through tall, tall grass.”

Variations

- Have the children pretend to walk through mud or as if they’re on ice.
- Try the same activity with the picture book *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming.

Follow-up

- At small-group time, make puppets based on the animals in the book.
- Read *In the Tall, Tall Grass* at snack time on a day when crunchy foods are being eaten. Talk about the sounds different foods make when we eat them.
- Provide the children with pictures and/or photos of the animals featured in the book.
- Keep this book in the reading area or classroom library along with other books that show animals in motion and in the wild.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Play as a partner with children who have difficulty with impulse control issues.
- If children have limited mobility, give them a stuffed animal or animal puppet so they can act out the story.

23

Solving Classroom Problems Through Storytelling

Curriculum Content Areas

Approaches to Learning

Social and Emotional Development

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

Large pieces of construction paper stapled together into a book

Markers

Originating Idea

The teachers noticed that some children in the class were excluding others from playing with them at work time, causing hurt feelings. They decided to write a story with the group to make the children more aware of one another's feelings. Teachers also wanted to generate ideas for two situations: when children want to play by themselves and when children are excluded from play.

Opener

At large-group time, share your observations of specific behaviors in the classroom, mentioning that you have heard children say things like, "You can't play with us." Explain that this is a problem in the class because children are getting their feelings hurt, and that you need the children's help to solve the problem. Write the title "Left Out" on the front cover of the construction paper book. Ask the children what it means to be left out of an activity. Open the book to the first page, draw the faces for two characters, and above the faces write the words, "You can't play with us!" Draw a sad face for a third character, and above that drawing write the words, "I feel left out." (The drawings could also be completed before the activity begins.) Ask the children to describe the feelings of the characters and list their responses beneath the drawings.

Activity

Ask the children what each character might say to resolve the problem. Draw the characters' faces on the next page of the book and write the children's comments next to each drawing. Help children rehearse some responses to this situation. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: (Pointing to drawing of children who want to play alone) *Those children don't want the other child to play with them. Sometimes kids want to play by themselves. What could they say so they don't hurt the other child's feelings?*

Justin: *I'll play with you tomorrow.*

Emily: *Okay, you can play with us.*

Ella: *Maybe I can play with you at outside time.*

Remind children that sometimes problems take a lot of time to fix

and that their first idea might not solve the problem. Challenge the children to think of alternative solutions by asking, “What if someone says that there is not enough room for you?” or “What if your friends say they want to be alone?”

Transition

End the discussion by emphasizing that the children came up with many good ideas. Agree on one or two ideas for the children to try the next time the problem occurs.

Variations

- Write stories to discuss other classroom issues. If the classroom has been noisy, for example, you could write a book called “That’s Too Loud.” Anger or jealousy could be the focus of a book called “You’re Not My Friend,” and controlling behaviors could be addressed in a story called “I’m the Mom. You Have to Be the Sister.”
- Use puppets to act out a classroom conflict.
- Have two adults demonstrate how to resolve a conflict through role-playing.

Follow-up

- Put the book you wrote on the bookshelf or in the classroom library. Remind children of the story when they encounter a similar classroom situation.
- Acknowledge the children’s efforts to use the ideas generated during the activity. You might say, for example, “Celia told you she felt sad when you said she couldn’t play with you. Do you remember what to do when someone feels left out and sad?”
- Discuss with the group whether the ideas they agreed to try are working. If they are, comment on how they all solved the problem. If not, review their ideas and identify other solutions they can try.

Accommodations For Children With Special Needs

- Provide squishy balls or other small toys for children to hold and manipulate as you develop the story.
- To keep children focused, use different voices for each character in the story.
- Act out the story with puppets to keep children visually engaged.

24

The Cat Came Back

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Mathematics

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

At work time several children have been pretending to be cats and kittens. The teachers introduced this activity to help children get additional ideas for their play by listening to and making up stories about cats. This activity also involves patterning, an important aspect of early mathematics learning, by alternating a story with a short song.

Opener

Have children sit in the large-group area. Tell the children that you have watched them pretending to be cats, and it reminded you of a time when a cat ran away. Your story might go like this:

“The other night it was pretty warm in my house, so I opened up a window. I opened it very wide. I turned around for just a second and my cat, Josie, climbed up and jumped out of the window. Well, did you know that Josie never goes outside? But there she was. She didn’t know what to do, so she ran and ran and ran. I was very worried and looked for her everywhere. I had to give up because it was time for bed, so I sadly went into my house. Before I went to bed, I wished that she would be safe and you know what?”

Allow time for children to ask what happened, then begin singing or chanting the refrain to the folk song “The Cat Came Back”:

*The cat came back,
The very next day.
The cat came back,
We thought she was a goner.
But the cat came back,
She just couldn’t stay away.*

Activity

Ask children if they know any stories about cats that ran away, got lost, or hid from their owners. Encourage them to describe the people who were involved and any important events. Help children with their stories by asking open-ended questions (“What happened after that?”) or making comments (“I’ll bet you were worried”). As a child reaches the end of a story, lead the group in singing or chanting the refrain. The scenario might unfold like this:

Talia: *Once my cat jumped out the window.*

Teacher: *It jumped out the window?*

Talia: *And it ran away.*

Teacher: *I wonder where your cat went.*

Talia: *He went to Florida.*

Teacher: *Wow, that's a long way.*

Talia: *He flew on a plane.*

Teacher: *What happened next? (Talia shrugs.) Well, I heard what happened. (Begin singing.) The cat came back, the very next day ...*

Transition

Transition to the next part of the daily routine by having the children act out a simple story. It might go something like this: “Once upon a time a class of preschool children turned themselves into kittens. They liked to curl up in the large-group area. When the kittens knew that large-group time was over, they moved to their planning tables.”

Variations

- Change the subject of the story to a dog, a rabbit, a tiger, or another animal. Observe the children’s pretend play and incorporate their ideas into the story.
- As you sing “The cat came back, the very next day,” have the children crawl around the carpet and find a new place to sit.

Follow-up

- Place stuffed animals or small figures of cats and kittens in the classroom.
- Add a stethoscope, bandages, and other items from a doctor’s kit to the classroom to encourage veterinary play.
- At small-group time ask children to draw a picture of a cat and then describe what is happening in the picture. Record their story on a separate piece of paper. Compile the children’s drawings and narratives into a book. Place the book on the bookshelf or in the book area.
- Ask children if they know other songs about cats. Sing the songs during large-group time and place them in the class song book.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Provide squishy balls or other small toys for children to hold and manipulate as they listen to the stories.
- Create a series of pictures to represent some familiar scenarios involving a cat (e.g., climb up a tree). Have children with speech and language disorders point to the pictures as you make up a story.

25

Caps for Sale

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

Mathematics

Materials

Paper plates (one for each child) in various colors, including gray, brown, blue, and red, as well as one with a checkered pattern (plates can be colored with crayons or markers or covered with fabric)

Originating Idea

The children have enjoyed repeated readings of *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina. This activity was developed to support their interest in the story. Children help retell the story by recalling and sequencing events from the book. They also add original movement ideas during the retelling.

Opener

Tell the children that the large-group-time activity is going to be about the book *Caps for Sale*. Ask them to tell you what they remember about the story. Listen to their responses, ask open-ended questions, and encourage them to describe the characters and actions in the story. Tell children that you need their help acting out the story: you will pretend to be the peddler, and they will pretend to be the monkeys. (Allow time for the children to practice moving and chattering like monkeys.) Show the children the paper plates and say that they are the peddler's "caps."

Activity

Stack the paper plates on your head, with the checkered plate on the bottom of the stack. Begin retelling the story in the first person. You might say, "Once I was a peddler who sold caps. I kept the caps piled high on my head. I walked up and down the streets calling out, 'Caps! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!' One day I was very tired and decided to nap under a tree." As you sit down and pretend to sleep, have the children sneak up, take one plate from your head, and "hide" in the tree. (Make sure the children leave the checkered plate on your head.)

When you open your eyes, look around for the caps until you spy the "monkeys." Have the children begin chattering at you. Say to the children, "Give me back my caps!" as you scold them in various ways (e.g., shaking your finger at them, stomping your feet). Have the children copy each of your movements. Finally, take the plate from your head and toss it on the floor. After the children imitate that action, collect the plates, place them back on your head, and call out, "Caps! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!"

Transition

As they go to the next part of the daily routine, have children call out, "Caps for sale!"

Variations

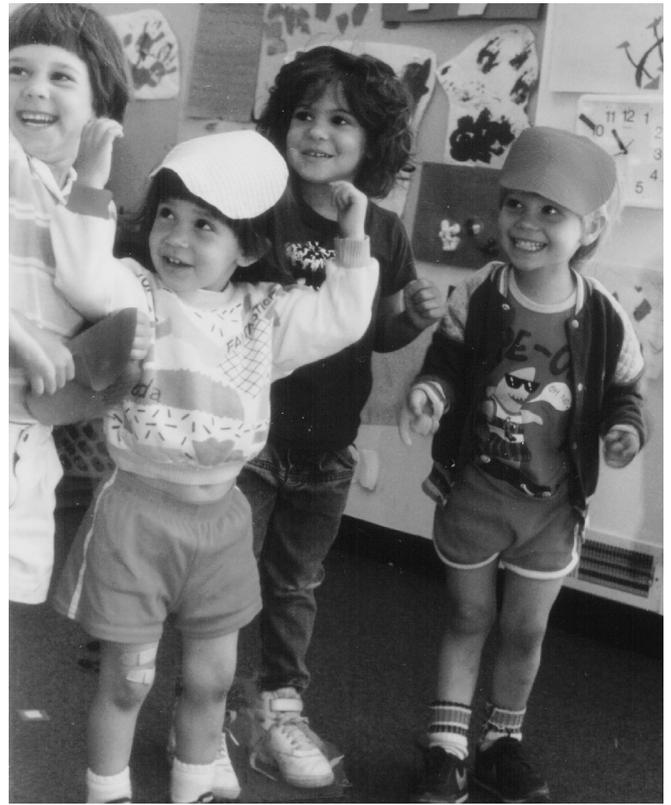
- Use real hats for the story props. (Ask parents to bring in old hats.)
- Reenact other stories that have clearly-defined characters and simple, repetitive actions, such as “The Gingerbread Man.”

Follow-up

- Place *Caps for Sale* on the bookshelf in the classroom, in take-home backpacks, or in the classroom library.
- Place paper plates or caps in the classroom so that children can act out the story at work time.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Allow children who are overstimulated to use doll figures to act out the story. A teacher should use the doll figures along with the child.
- Make caps from felt pieces for children who might rip or crush a paper plate.
- Place carpet squares or hoops on the floor to help define personal space.
- When you “scold” children during the reenactment, use a variety of upper body movements to support children who are in wheelchairs.



Cloth circles may be used for this activity instead of real hats or paper plates.

26

Sing a Song of Sixpence

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Approaches to Learning

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

A large hula hoop (or jump ropes tied together to make a large ring)

A blanket (or scarves)

A large piece of chart paper with the words to “Sing a Song of Sixpence” written on it

Originating Idea

The teachers have been reading Mother Goose nursery rhymes to the children as part of the language and literacy curriculum. This activity provides a fun, imaginative way to introduce a new rhyme.

Opener

Begin a conversation with children about pie. It might go like this:

Teacher: *Mmmm, last night after dinner I had blueberry pie. Do any of you like pie?*

Miranda: *I like brownies, and I like apple pie.*

Ben: *I like pumpkin pie with the cream on top.*

Teacher: *I have a story to tell you about a funny type of pie. It's blackbird pie!*

Children: *Ew, yuck!*

Teacher: *The pie has four and twenty blackbirds in it. Hmm, four and twenty ... that's a strange way to say a number. Another way to say that number is twenty-four.*

Miranda: *That's a lot of birds.*

Activity

Post the paper with the words to “Sing a Song of Sixpence.” Encourage children to keep a steady beat by patting their knees while you say the rhyme. Act out the story by using the hula hoop to represent the pie pan and placing it in the middle of the large-group space. Tell the children that they are going to be the blackbirds. Ask two children to sit inside the hula hoop and cover them up with the blanket, which you can call the “pie crust.” Say the rhyme with the rest of the children but change the third line to “two little blackbirds baked in a pie.” After you say the lines, “When the pie was open, the birds began to sing,” the children under the blanket pop up and “tweet.” Continue the game with two more children or ask, “How many birds should we bake this time?” Have the group determine how many children will fit in the hoop.

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye,
Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie.
When the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing.
Wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before the king?

Transition

Let children know they will say the rhyme once more. Remind them they can use the materials at work time. Ask the children to “fly” like blackbirds to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

- Have the children pretend to be other types of animals instead of blackbirds. When they pop out of the pie, they can “sing” using the sounds of those animals.
- Make the pie by standing in a circle and holding hands. Ask one child to pick the number of blackbirds to bake in the pie, then have him or her choose that many children to move to the center of the circle.
- Ask children to think of other materials in the classroom that they could use to make the pie (e.g., blocks, large pillows, carpet squares).

Follow-up

- Add “Sing A Song of Sixpence” to the classroom song book.
- Make individual pies at small-group time. Use ready-made pie crust, muffin liners, and fruit preserves or jelly.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Allow children who have difficulty maintaining their personal space to sit alone in the hoop, or create a large enough circle to accommodate carpet squares for children to sit on.
- Provide sequenced picture cards of the rhyme to support children with speech and language disorders.
- Help children who have difficulty attending by patting the steady beat on their shoulders or backs, or hold their hands and assist them in patting the beat on their bodies.

27

Little Miss Muffet

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Approaches to
Learning

Materials

A large pillow

A bowl and a spoon

Two large name tags,
labeled “Little Miss
Muffet” and “spi-
der” (made of paper
and hung on a string
around child’s neck)

A piece of chart paper,
with the rhyme “Little
Miss Muffet” written
on it

Originating Idea

Teachers have been reading Mother Goose nursery rhymes to the children as part of the language and literacy curriculum. They were looking for an active way to present the rhymes and support further understanding of their meaning.

Opener

Post the chart paper with the words to “Little Miss Muffet” where all the children can see it. Ask children to listen for rhyming words while they say “Little Miss Muffet” with you, then ask them to tell you the rhymes they heard. Discuss the meaning of “tuffet” and “curds and whey.” The conversation could go like this:

Teacher: *I heard some rhyming words.*

Carlos: *Muffet and tuffet rhyme.*

Teacher: *Yes, muffet and tuffet. Hmm ... what is a tuffet?*

Carlos: *I don’t know.*

Teacher: *Let’s listen: Little Miss Muffet **sat** on a tuffet.*

Annabel: *It’s something you sit on.*

Teacher: *A tuffet is like a little stool. In the rhyme, Miss Muffet ate curds and whey, and I’ll bet some of you do, too.*

Carlos: *Sounds yucky.*

Teacher: *Carlos, do you like cottage cheese? Curds and whey is like cottage cheese.*

Explain to children that they will be acting out the Little Miss Muffet rhyme.

Activity

Place the pillow in the middle of the large-group space to serve as the tuffet. Have a child wear the “Little Miss Muffet” name tag, sit on the pillow, and pretend to eat with the bowl and spoon. As you say the rhyme, another child, wearing the “spider” nametag, sneaks up behind Miss Muffet. Though the rhyme states that Miss Muffet runs away, the children may perform another action. The child playing Miss Muffet might stay seated on the pillow or even feed the spider.

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds
and whey.
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss
Muffet away.

Transition

After several children have taken turns as Miss Muffet and the spider, dismiss the children from large-group time by using their names in a variation of the rhyme:

*Micah and Vishnu
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating their curds and whey.
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside them,
And frightened Micah and Vishnu away.*

Variations

- Change the spider to another animal or creature, allowing the children to give suggestions for the new character and its movements.
- Ask children to change the /m/ sound in “Miss Muffet” to the initial sound of the name of the child who is playing that character. If Kelly plays Miss Muffet, for example, then the children would refer to her as “Little Kiss Kuffet.”

Follow-up

- Keep the name tags in the classroom so the children can reenact the story during work time.
- Use the rhyme to transition children into and out of activities during other times of the day.
- Use the HighScope Growing Readers Curriculum to incorporate additional rhyming activities into the classroom.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children have difficulty attending during the activity, give them their own bowl and spoon to hold.
- For children who have difficulty controlling their impulses in the large-group setting, provide a doll and a toy spider for them to play with as they participate from a distance with adult support.
- For children who have difficulty processing verbal instructions, provide picture sequence cards for each line of the rhyme.

28

Rub-a-Dub-Dub

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

The Arts

Social Studies

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Materials

Three large name tags
(8.5" x 11" paper) read-
ing "Butcher," "Baker,"
and "Candlestick
Maker" (attach string
to name tags and hang
around children's necks)

Sections of rope or
plastic (to outline the
tub)

Three long blocks or
small plastic shovels (to
represent paddles)

A large piece of chart
paper, with the words
to "Rub-a-Dub-Dub"
written on it

Originating Idea

The children have shown a great interest in the Mother Goose book of nursery rhymes in the classroom. This activity provides an opportunity for children to better understand a familiar rhyme through a reenactment.

Opener

Tell the children that you know a rhyme about three people: a butcher, a baker, and a candlestick maker. Post the chart paper with the words to "Rub-a-Dub-Dub" and point to the terms "butcher," "baker," and "candlestick maker" as you say them. Talk with the children about each of the three occupations. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Butcher, baker, candlestick maker. Have you ever heard of those jobs?*

Marijata: *A baker bakes things. You know, cakes and cookies.*

Tony: *Like a bakery.*

Teacher: *Bakers work in bakeries making cakes and cookies. What does a butcher do?*

Talia: *I don't know. (Children shrug.)*

Teacher: *A butcher works in a meat market. He cuts up meat for people to buy. You might have seen a butcher at the grocery store. They work behind a counter. Sometimes they wrap up meat in paper.*

Talia: *Oh, yeah.*

Teacher: *The last person in the tub was a candlestick maker.*

Marijata: *He makes candles.*

Teacher: *Yes. He uses hot wax to make candles. So in the tub were a butcher, a baker, and a candlestick maker, taking a ride out to sea.*

Activity

Place the ropes on the floor in an oval shape to create a "tub," a space big enough for three children. Choose children to play the butcher, baker, and candlestick maker and ask them to sit in the tub. They can pretend to row the tub with their "paddles" (blocks or shovels) as the rest of the children pat the beat and say the rhyme. Repeat the rhyme, giving other children a turn to sit in the tub. Ask for ideas on how to keep the steady beat (e.g., patting knees, tapping shoulders or head).

Rub-a-dub-dub,
Three men in a tub,
And who do you think
they be?
The butcher, the baker,
The candlestick maker,
Traveling out to sea.

Transition

Let the children know that they will say the rhyme once more. Tell the three children in the tub that it will be their job to put away their paddles, and name other children to help disassemble the tub. When the rhyme ends, have the children pretend to row to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

- Have the children name other occupations and incorporate those terms into the rhyme.
- Ask children to think of another place where the characters could be sitting and create a new rhyme using their ideas (e.g., Rox-a-dox-dox, three girls in a box).
- Have children suggest other materials they can use to construct the tub.
- Have children play on a sit-and-spin toy instead of pretending to sit in a tub.

Follow-up

- Keep the name tags in the classroom for children to use during work time.
- Incorporate children's names into the rhyme as a way to transition them from one activity to another:

*Rub-a-dub-dub,
Three kids in a tub,
And who do you think they be?
Talia, Cole, and Breanna,
Traveling to wash their hands.*

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- For children who are uncomfortable participating in the large group, provide them with dolls or toy figures so they can act out the rhyme in their personal space.
- To support children who have difficulty following verbal instructions, create a picture sequence that depicts the characters from the rhyme rowing out to sea.
- To help children who are distractible, gently pat the steady beat on their backs.

29

Out of This World

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Mathematics

Science and Technology

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Materials

Small hoops or carpet squares (one for each child)

Originating Idea

Children have been using blocks and other building toys to make spaceships for a few days. The teachers thought it would be helpful for the children to act out a story about outer space to give them ideas for extending their play at work time. Children use their imaginations to help create this adventure story.

Opener

Explain to children that they will be going on an imaginary trip. Give them clues to the destination. The conversation may go like this:

Teacher: *Today we are going on a pretend journey to a place far away. Where do you think we're going?*

Juanita: *Michigan.*

Teacher: *We live in Michigan and we're going farther than that.*

Henry: *My grandma lives in Arizona. That's far away.*

Teacher: *Arizona is far away, but we're going farther. Let me give you some clues. We'll need air tanks to help us breath because there is no air there, and we'll need special suits to protect us from the cold.*

Juanita: *Outer space.*

Teacher: *Yes, we're going on a trip to outer space. These will be our spaceships. (Teacher holds up carpet squares or hoops.)*

Give each child a carpet square to sit on or a hoop to sit in.

Activity

Tell children the spaceships are ready to "blast off." Have children help you count down to the launch:

Teacher: *Before the ships blast off, we need to do a countdown. Have you ever heard a countdown?*

Micah: *You count backwards like this: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 ... blast off!*

Teacher: *You counted backwards from 10. Let's all try counting backwards. Let's start with the number 5. (Count together) 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 ... blast off!*

“Fly” your spaceship by rocking back and forth while pretending to grip a steering wheel. Ask, “Does anyone know how to drive a spaceship?” Acknowledge children’s ideas and copy their movements (e.g., pushing buttons, stepping on the gas).

As you “journey through space,” ask children to look out their spaceships’ windows and tell you what they see (e.g., stars, the moon, aliens). If a child says, “I see a planet,” ask the child to name the planet, or you could say something like, “I think the planet is Mars. Let’s land our spaceships there.”

Pretend to land the spaceships, then suggest getting out and exploring the planet. Say “When I walk on Mars, I use light, bouncy movements.” Demonstrate your movement and encourage the children to try it, then have children demonstrate and describe their own movements. The conversation could go like this:

Teacher: *Who has another way to move on Mars?*

Wendy: *Look at this. Noodle legs.*

Teacher: *Watch Wendy’s legs.*

Thomas: *They’re wiggling.*

Teacher: *Let’s move Wendy’s way with noodle legs.*

Have children walk around the large-group area as you continue the story. Ask them to describe things they might see and do outside their ships (e.g., finding aliens, fighting bad guys). After acting out the children’s ideas, tell them you have to go back to Earth because it’s time for the next part of the daily routine.



Teachers planned this activity after they observed children building “spaceships.”

Transition

Return to the spaceships and blast off back to Earth. Thank the children for going on such an exciting adventure. Tell children they will need to count down one more time in order to blast off to their next activity. Count down with the children and have them carry their carpet square to you as they “fly” to another area of the classroom.

Variations

- Have the group act out a visit to the Land of the Dinosaurs, the Land of the Giants, or another imaginary destination. Get ideas from watching the children play at work time.
- Take a “trip” in another type of vehicle, such as a submarine or hot air balloon. Ask children to imagine what they would see if they were traveling under water or in the sky.

Follow-up

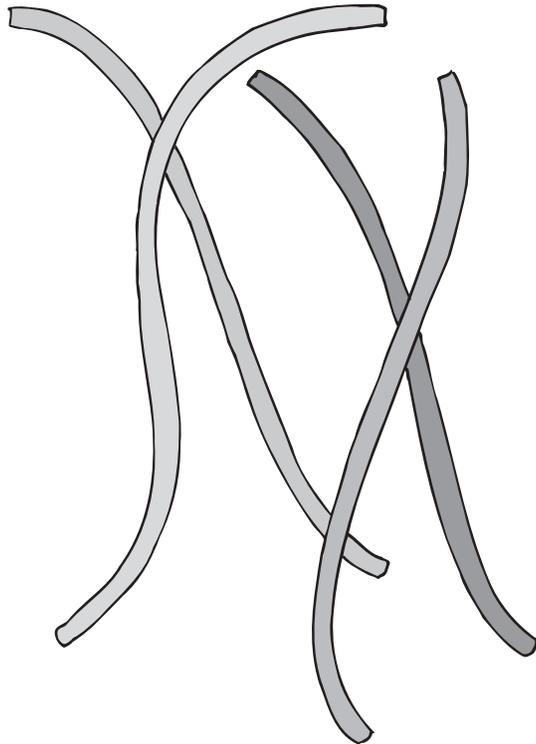
- Place books about rockets and space in the book area.
- At planning time, have children count down and blast off to where they will play at work time.
- Play as a partner with children as they build spaceships. Help them extend their play by reminding them of their large-group adventure.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Give children with limited mobility small figures or stuffed animals to pretend with during the movement sequences of the activity.
- To provide extra support for children who are easily excited, sit with them, slightly away from the group.
- Provide pictures of space objects (e.g., planet, stars, comets) to give children visual support and help them attend to the story.

IV

Movement Activities With or Without Music or Objects



30

Fandagumbo

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Approaches to
Learning

Materials

Small paper plates,
one for each child

Originating Idea

A few children have mentioned CDs that they own and have talked about their favorite songs on the CDs. The teachers followed up with the children's families to learn more about the children's musical interests. This activity incorporates a song called "Fandagumbo" by Julie Austin.

Opener

While sitting with the children in the large-group-time area, begin a discussion about lunchtime plans. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Today I feel like eating something really warm for lunch. What could be really warm to eat at lunchtime?*

Ben: *Some oatmeal.*

Micah: *Cookies from the oven.*

Erin: *Mashed potatoes and soup.*

Teacher: *Those sound good. I like a kind of soup called gumbo. Has anyone else tasted gumbo?*

Listen to find out if any child knows about gumbo. If not, tell them some information about the dish (e.g., it's thick and spicy).

Teacher: *Sometimes, I have to cool off my gumbo because it is too hot. How would you cool yours off?*

Acknowledge the children's responses. The children might suggest methods such as blowing on it, waving a hand over it, or sticking it in the freezer.

Activity

Tell children to pretend they have a bowl of hot gumbo in front of them, and that you will give them a paper plate to cool off the soup. Distribute the plates and allow exploration time. Support and interact with children as they use the plates to "fan the gumbo." When sufficient exploration time has been given, introduce the song "Fandagumbo." Begin to sing as the children are fanning:

*Fandagumbo ditty wah day,
Fandagumbo my bay bay,
Fandagumbo ditty wah day,
How is Erin going to move today?*

Have one child demonstrate a way to move the paper plate and have the children describe and copy the movements. Repeat the song, encouraging other children to demonstrate their movements.

Transition

After several children have taken a turn, tell the group that the gumbo has cooled down. Sing “Fandagumbo” a final time, changing the last line to “Now I put my plate away.” Have children bring their plates to you before they proceed to the next activity.

Variations

- Change the beginning letters of the words in the song, asking children to suggest letters to replace the “d” in the phrase “ditty wah day.” The children might suggest “sitty wah say,” “fitty wah fay,” or “bitty wah bay.”
- Ask children for other warm foods to sing about. Some examples might be “Fandapizza” and “Fandaspaghetti.”
- Use scarves or small pieces of fabric instead of paper plates.

Follow-up

- Revisit this song when children are eating a hot lunch.
- Put “Fandagumbo” in the classroom song book.
- Use the song to assist with classroom tasks. As children are cleaning up, or if they need assistance cleaning up, you can sing:

*Fandagumbo ditty wah day,
What will you put in your hands today?
Fandagumbo ditty wah day,
That is Lita’s cleanup way.*

- Play other songs that reflect the children’s musical tastes.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children become overstimulated visually and physically during this activity, they could move with an adult to a location away from the large, active group.

31

Fast and Slow Streamers

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Materials

A CD player

Any instrumental music selection that has distinct changes in tempo from slow to fast, such as “Ersko Kolo,” a selection from HighScope’s Rhythmically Moving 4 CD

Colored streamers of different materials and lengths, one or two for each child

Originating Idea

Children had been working with the concepts of fast and slow as they used toy cars on inclined ramps and when they asked to be pushed on the tire swing. This activity was developed to support these experiences with time and speed.

Opener

Tell children that they will be using a streamer for large-group time. Show them a streamer and hand out one or two to each child. Encourage children to explore different movements with the streamers, and ask them to describe what their bodies are doing, as well as how their streamers are moving. Acknowledge their movement choices, using words and phrases related to speed and direction such as *slow*, *hurried*, *over the head*, or *back and forth*.

Activity

When children have had enough time to explore with the streamers, let them know that you will be playing music that changes speed. Have the children move their streamers in time to the music. Remind the children to listen for the tempo changes (a “feeling of slow” and a “feeling of fast”) as they move with their streamers. Acknowledge and copy the children’s ideas. Notice which children follow the speed of the music and which children move to a steady beat.

After the music has ended, ask children to recall some of their movements. You might say, “What were some things you did when the music felt slow? How did you move when the music felt fast?” Encourage children to share their movements by showing them and describing them to the group.

Transition

Begin the transition to the next activity by having the children select a movement they performed. Then have the children repeat that movement as you collect the streamers. You could say, “Choose your favorite way to move with your streamers as you bring them to the streamer box. Then go to your snack table.”

Variations

- Use shakers, foam noodles, or scarves instead of streamers.
- Play music with distinct changes in volume and observe how children interpret the music. Introduce new vocabulary words related to *quiet*, *soft*, and *loud*.

Follow-up

- At small-group time, provide materials for children to make their own streamers, including cloth, ribbon, crepe paper, and scissors. The following day, try this activity using the children's creations.
- Make some streamers from durable nylon strips for the children to use at outside time.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- This activity can be overstimulating for some children. Work as a partner in close proximity with children who need support or provide a quiet area for these children to work in during this activity. You might also have the children operate the CD player during this activity.
- Provide a visual representation of the activity for children who need support following verbal directions.
- Attach streamers to rhythm sticks for children who have difficulty grasping objects.



Children and teachers twirl and swirl their streamers to music as they dance around the large-group space.

32

Yoga Poses

Curriculum Content Areas

The Arts

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Social and Emotional
Development

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

One of the children in the class talked about doing yoga with her mom. Some of the other children became interested in yoga and wanted to explore it further. In an effort to connect with family experiences and to be culturally supportive, the teachers devised this activity based on yoga poses.

Opener

Ask the children if anyone knows about yoga. If so, ask those children to demonstrate some poses. (If not, explain that yoga is a way of moving and stretching your body that some people do for exercise.) The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Jaliesa, you are posing your body.*

Jaliesa: *I am doing the butterfly. My sister taught me that one. (Jaliesa makes the butterfly pose.)*

Teacher: *Let's try Jaliesa's butterfly pose. I wonder what we will have to do?*

Gus: *We got to touch our knees.*

Jaliesa: *No, we make our feet go together.*

Teacher: *We make our feet go together and then we touch our knees.*

Jaliesa: *Then you flap your knees like wings.*

Encourage children to attempt different poses. (For suggestions, see figures at the end of this activity.)

Activity

After the children try one or two yoga poses together, have them invent new poses. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *We are trying lots of yoga poses. I wonder if we could make up some new ones.*

Gus: *I can do this. (Gus lies down on the floor and extends his arms and legs.) I do that in the snow to make angels.*

Teacher: *Let's try the pose Gus is showing us. We could call it the angel pose.*

Delaney: *I have one. Watch, it's the bear pose. (Delaney puts her hands and feet on the floor and lifts her head as her mouth opens wide.)*

Teacher: *We could try the bear pose like Delaney.*

Continue the activity as children provide new ideas and copy one another's poses.

Transition

Tell children to perform their favorite standing pose a final time. Have the children hold the pose (as best they can) as they take giant steps to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

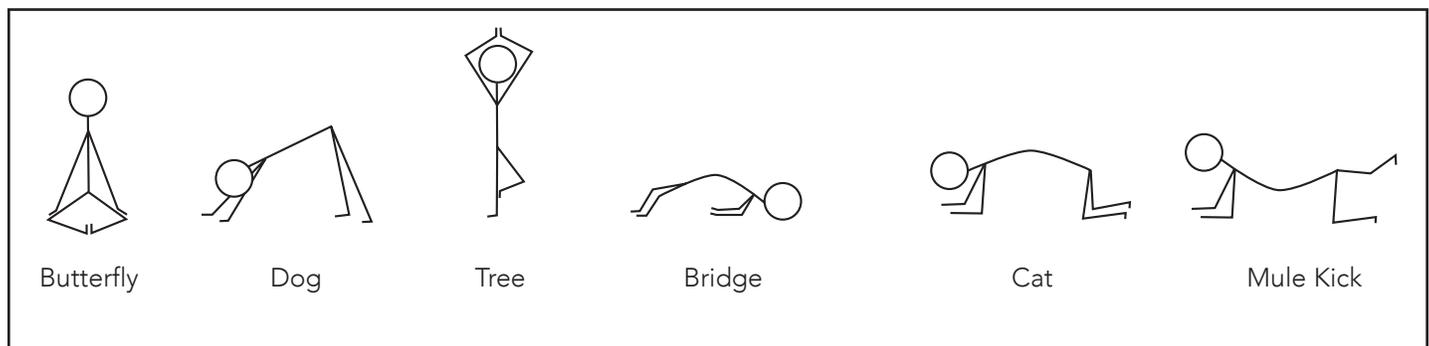
- Try this activity using movements from ballet or other dances.
- Incorporate movements from different sports that children have experienced (e.g., children pose as if they are throwing a ball).
- Use movements from Karate or Tai Chi, if someone is familiar with those martial arts.

Follow-up

- Place visual representations of the yoga poses in the large-group area of the classroom.
- Make a book of yoga poses. If possible, take photographs of children holding the poses and include them as illustrations in the book.
- Ask children to invent a yoga pose at recall time to show what area they played in and/or a material they used.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Yoga poses may be difficult for some children to hold. Accept all levels of ability in making and holding a pose.
- Provide cue cards with visual representations of the poses for children who have difficulty responding to verbal directions.
- Children who are physically challenged can attempt certain parts of a pose (e.g., children in wheelchairs can hold poses with their arms), or they can represent the pose through sounds (e.g., they can bark while attempting the dog pose).



33

Wax Paper Skating

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

Materials

One piece of wax
paper per child (ap-
proximately 8 inches
long and 6 inches wide)

A CD player

A selection of in-
strumental music
conducive to skating
movements (e.g., a me-
dium-tempo waltz such
as “The Skater’s Waltz”)

Originating Idea

Teachers heard the children talking about the ice and icicles they could see from the classroom window. Some children also discussed going ice skating with their families, and others talked about hockey and ice rinks. One child recalled seeing skating on the Olympics when she was watching television.

Opener

Recall the children’s discussions about ice and the activities you can do on ice. Introduce the words “skating” and “sliding” to the children. Your conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Yesterday we talked about the ice outside. Some children told of the fun they have had skating and sliding. What are some things that skate or slide?*

Kara: *When we use the sleds, they slide down the big hill.*

Nyah: *Sometimes you fall when you are sliding on the ice.*

Liam: *In baseball they slide.*

Shonyah: *My sister takes skating lessons.*

Teacher: *You know lots of ways to slide and skate. Today we are going to use these pieces of wax paper so that we can practice sliding and skating. When you get one, try some ways of sliding or skating.*

Allow time for exploration with the wax paper. Be sure to do this activity on a carpeted surface so the wax paper will slide easily.

Activity

As children use the wax paper to slide and skate on the carpet, join them in the activity and encourage them to describe their actions. Here’s how the discussion might unfold:

Teacher: *Liam, I want to try it your way. Can you tell me what to do?*

Liam: *You gotta put the paper under your foot.*

Teacher: *I am putting it under my foot like you. How do I slide?*

Liam: *Push with this one.* (Liam touches his other foot.)

Teacher: (Teacher slides beside Liam.) *It works. I am doing it like you, Liam.*

Shonyah: *I can skate this way.* (Shonyah pushes herself sideways across the carpet.)

Teacher: *What could we say about Shonyah’s way?*

Nyah: *She is going side to side. I wanna try that!* (Nyah copies Shonyah's movements.)

After the children have attempted several ways of skating and sliding, tell them that you will be playing music on the CD player and that they should pick their favorite way to slide or skate as they listen to the music. Observe how children move and interact, and comment on their actions. Add relevant vocabulary words to describe their movements.

Transition

As the music ends, ask the children to skate or slide to the next part of the daily routine, then throw their wax paper in a trash receptacle or give it to the teacher. Let children know that pieces of wax paper will be available in the art area.

Variations

- Challenge the children to slide on the wax paper using other parts of the body, such as the knees or elbows.

Follow-up

- Plan a field trip to a local ice rink or outdoor skating park (this works best with older children — five or six years old).
- Plan a small-group time that includes ice as one of the materials.
- At planning or recall, give children a piece of wax paper and ask them to slide or skate to where they plan to play or where they had played at work time.
- Provide sleds for sliding down hills in the outside area (when the weather is conducive to this activity).
- At small-group time, provide small, medium, and large pieces of wax paper and toys of different sizes. Ask children to choose a toy and a piece of wax paper to help the toy slide. Comment on how children match the toys and the wax paper by size.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Accommodate children who use wheelchairs by providing a flat surface, like a clipboard or tabletop, they can “skate” on with their hands.
- Children who have low muscle tone may need assistance from an adult. Work closely with these children, allowing them to lean on you for support.
- Work as a playful partner with children who have impulse control issues, acknowledging and copying their ideas.

34

Slinkys

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Science and
Technology

The Arts

Materials

Small Slinky toys, one
for each child

Originating Idea

Teachers noticed that a few children who seem reluctant to join large-group time display much greater interest when a new material is introduced and explored as a part of the activity. Teachers decided to observe these children and note the materials they enjoyed using during work time. Two of the children opened a spring-loaded ballpoint pen and explored the inner parts. They were particularly interested in the spring.

Opener

Begin a discussion about Slinkys by introducing the word “spring.” The following illustrates how the conversation might unfold:

Teacher: *Have you ever seen something called a spring?*

Matthew: *My mom says it is almost spring.*

Teacher: *Sometimes we use the word “spring” when we are talking about seasons like winter, fall, summer, and spring. What else do you know about the word “spring”?*

Pete: *I saw one in a pen I broke apart.*

Teacher: *Yes, Pete, I remember when you took the pen apart. There was something called a spring in it.*

Paulo: *I saw it, too, and it jumped.*

Teacher: *Springs jump?*

Pete: *You can make ’em jump!*

Teacher: *Here are some springs we call Slinkys. See how you can make them move.*

Distribute the Slinkys to the children. (Slinkys come in various sizes. The small Slinkys — not the miniatures — work best for this activity.)

Activity

Encourage children to manipulate the Slinkys. As children try out different ideas for moving the Slinkys, have them describe what they are doing and how the Slinkys are moving. Introduce related vocabulary words such as *coil*, *spiral*, and *bounce*. The discussion might go like this:

Matthew: *Look, I can make mine jump up and down.*

Teacher: *Matthew, yours is jumping up and down. What do you have to do to make it jump?*

Matthew: *I move my hand. Look.* (Matthew flexes his wrist several times.)

Teacher: *You are using your wrist.* (Teacher copies the movement.)

Matthew: *See, yours is jumping, too!*

Teacher: (Noticing another child) *Paulo, you're using two hands to make your Slinky move.* (Teacher and Matthew both copy Paulo's idea.)

Transition

Encourage children to find a new way to make their Slinkys move before you gather the Slinkys. As children prepare to move to the next part of the daily routine, you can say something like: "Imagine that your own legs are Slinkys. Move your Slinky legs to your planning table."

Variations

- Encourage children to move like Slinkys to a musical selection with a bouncy sounds, such as "Old Joe Clark" from HighScope's *Rhythmically Moving 1* CD.

Follow-up

- Place Slinkys in the toy area of the classroom.
- At small-group time, use Slinkys and a small tray of paint for "Slinky Painting." Children dip their Slinkys in the paint, then roll or bounce them on a piece of paper to create unusual patterns.
- Place springs of various types and sizes in the toy area or woodworking area of the classroom.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Play as a partner with children who need assistance gripping or controlling the movement of the Slinky.
- Children who are easily excited or stimulated can benefit from having extra space to work in as well as adult guidance.

35

Making Sounds With Rhythm Sticks

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Mathematics

Materials

Rhythm sticks, one
pair per child

Originating Idea

The teachers developed this activity when they saw children using sticks on the playground to drum on the bars of the climber. They wanted a way to support the children's desire to make sounds through an organized activity that encouraged creativity, language development, and math concepts.

Opener

Gather with children on the floor. Hold up a pair of rhythm sticks and explain that the group will be using them to make sounds. Give each of the children two sticks and ask them to find ways to make sounds with their sticks.

Activity

Observe and imitate the different ways that children use the sticks. Describe the ways children move their sticks, using action words such as *rub*, *strike*, *beat*, *tap*, *pound*, and *roll*, as well as descriptive words and phrases such as *softly*, *loudly*, *hard*, *fast*, *in front*, *on the side*, and *up high*. The dialogue might go like this:

Teacher: *You're striking your sticks together very hard. Listen to the sound that makes.*

Crystal: *It's really loud. Watch how fast I can go.*

Jimmy: *Watch me.* (Jimmy rubs two sticks together.)

Teacher: *I'm going to try that. Rubbing the sticks makes a different sound.*

Jimmy: *Like buzzing.*

Have children take turns demonstrating one way they used their sticks, then have the children copy each other's methods. Make up a simple song as each child takes a turn, such as the following (to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell"):

Jacob is playing his sticks.

Jacob is playing his sticks.

Heigh-ho the derry-o,

Jacob is playing his sticks.

We can play like Jacob.

We can play like Jacob.

Heigh-ho the derry-o,

We can play like Jacob.

After children have had time to explore with their sticks, ask them to use their sticks in specific ways. For example, have the children find a way to make a loud or quiet sound, create a sound with the sticks and their bodies, play the sticks behind their backs, or tap the sticks on the floor.

Transition

Give the children one more chance to use the rhythm sticks, then signal them to stop. Collect the sticks. Ask the children to stand up and pretend that they are a rhythm stick. (Some children may stretch their arms up or stand very straight.) Have children move like a rhythm stick to their next activity.

Variations

- In place of rhythm sticks, use spoons, paper plates, bells, or other rhythm instruments. You could also use a woodblock in combination with the rhythm sticks.
- Combine large motor movements with sound exploration. Children can march in place or walk around the circle as they play their rhythm sticks.

Follow-up

- Put the rhythm sticks in the classroom for the children to use at work time.
- Add drums to the music area.
- At planning or recall, have children take turns walking to different areas of the room and playing the rhythm sticks. Ask children at the table to close their eyes and guess where the sounds are coming from.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children are sensitive to loud noises, use materials that produce softer sounds (e.g., straws, chopsticks, pencils). You could also provide ear phones, earmuffs, or headbands to put over the children's ears.
- Put a carpet square or paper plate in front of the children to help them focus on where to strike their sticks.
- Play as a partner with children who have difficulty handling and gripping the rhythm sticks. Create a thick handle for the rhythm stick (so children can grasp it more easily) by wrapping cloth or foam around the stick. You can also cut rhythm sticks to a shorter length for easier handling.

36

Trampoline Jumping

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being
Social and Emotional
Development

Materials

A mini-trampoline,
suitable for classroom
use, with attached
safety bar

Paper plates, one
for each child

Small dolls or animal
figures

Originating Idea

Specialists recommended the use of a mini-trampoline as a way to help children who need sensory stimulation. As soon as the trampoline appeared in the classroom, all of the children were interested in using it. Teachers found this activity helpful to introduce the trampoline into the classroom.

Opener

Have children gather around the trampoline. Ask them about their prior experiences with trampolines. Tell the children that, if they want, they can each have a turn on the trampoline at large-group time. Ask children what they think they need to do to stay safe on a trampoline and discuss your concerns as well. Make decisions with the children about what is safe and what is not safe.

Activity

Tell children that when an activity is very exciting it can be hard to wait for your turn, so you have some things they can do to pretend they are trampoline jumping while they are waiting. Pass out the paper plates and the dolls (or animal figures). Tell children that the plate is a pretend trampoline, and the doll can “jump” on it. Have children explore ways for their doll to jump on the plate.

Call the first child to the trampoline. Ask the child how many times he or she plans to jump, then count aloud as the child begins jumping (have children choose a number between 1 and 10). Encourage the other children in the group to count along as they make their dolls jump on their plates.

Transition

After each child has had a turn, let the children know where the trampoline will be placed during work time. Remind them of any safety issues. Have children move to the next part of the daily routine by jumping as if they're on a trampoline.

Variations

- Sing a familiar song with a steady beat as the children jump on the trampoline.
- If no trampoline is available, use a large, circular piece of paper or fabric to create a pretend trampoline.
- Use a sit-and-spin movement toy in place of the trampoline. Encourage children to find ways to spin their dolls as they wait for their turn on the toy.

Follow-up

- At work time, support the children's use of the trampoline and sing songs while they jump. Place a sheet of paper and a clipboard near the trampoline and have children sign their names on the sheet in their emerging forms of writing. This will help them know when it is their turn to jump.
- Use the trampoline for planning or recall. Each child jumps a specified number of times, gets off the trampoline, and describes his or her plan or what he or she did at work time. Have all the children in the planning or recall group count the number of jumps.



A safety-approved mini-trampoline is best for this activity, but if this not available, a piece of paper or fabric can serve as a pretend trampoline.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Some children with mobility issues may be able to sit on the trampoline and bounce gently.
- Children in wheelchairs can hold the hand of another child who jumps slowly on the trampoline, or they can hold a large stuffed animal and make it jump on the trampoline.

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Planning for Fun and Fitness

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Approaches to Learning

Social and Emotional Development

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Materials

A CD player

A recording of lively music that can be used for marching, running, or moving in place

Originating Idea

Each day at outside time, the children noticed several adults jogging past the school. The teachers decided to introduce the word “exercise.”

Opener

Tell children that large-group time will start with some exercises. Here is how the scenario might unfold:

Teacher: *Do you know people who like to exercise?*

Cole: *I like to exercise.*

Jennie: *My dad has weights in our basement.*

Teacher: *Why is it important for people to get exercise?*

Cole: *To get healthy.*

Jennie: *To make muscles so we can grow.*

Teacher: *Yes, exercise keeps our bodies healthy. Our muscles get strong and our heart stays strong. Think of some things you do for exercise.*

Navella: *I do jumping jacks, like this.* (Navella does a jumping jack.)

Teacher: *Let's practice Navella's jumping jacks.* (Teacher models jumping jacks for children to practice.)

Angelo: *My mom runs on the exercise thing.*

Teacher: *Show what that is like, Angelo.* (Angelo runs in place.)

Teacher: *Let's practice Angelo's way of exercising like his mom.* (Children and adults practice Angelo's running movements.)

Curt: *I use muscles.* (Curt flexes his biceps.)

Teacher: *It's time to practice Curt's way of moving his arms.* (Children and adults imitate Curt's actions.)

Tell children that they will be doing exercises while music plays. Encourage them to help you choose two exercise movements. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Now we will exercise to music. We need two movement ideas. Let's see how many we have.*

Navella: *I did the first one.*

Teacher: *We need the jumping jacks, Navella's idea.*

Angelo: *Then we did running.*

Teacher: *First Navella's jumping jacks, then Angelo's running. Those will work for now.*

Activity

Have children practice two movements in sequence. Tell them that after completing each movement, they will get ready for the next one by marching in place. Start the music. Lead the group in marching for a count of 10, then tell the children to get ready to do their first exercise movement. Lead the group in their first exercise (do several repetitions) then have the group march again for a count of 10. Lead the group in their second exercise movement (do several repetitions), then march again for a count of 10.

Transition

Tell children that you will play the music again, and this time they can perform their own exercise movements. As the music plays, comment on and copy the children's actions, especially for those children whose ideas were not part of the activity. As the music ends, have the children continue marching to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

- Instead of exercising from a standing position, have the children exercise from a kneeling, sitting, or lying down position.
- Use recordings featuring a variety of musical styles and genres.

Follow-up

- Plan to do this activity weekly so that every child has opportunities to give movement ideas. List their names and ideas on a chart for all to see.
- Let children know that they can do exercises in the large-group area during work time.
- Make a class exercise book using simple illustrations and words. Put a copy in the large-group area and another on the bookshelf. Make a copy for each child to bring home and share with family members.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If you have a child who does not have the use of his or her legs, present the activity to the group from a sitting position. Discuss movements that can be done with the upper body.
- Play as a partner with children who have impulse control issues or attention difficulties.
- Use carpet squares or small hoops to define personal space.

38

Shooting Hoops

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

Mathematics

Materials

Basketballs or other
large balls, enough for
each child to have at
least one

Child-sized basketball
hoops and/or large,
clean wastebaskets,
round containers, or
other receptacles

Originating Idea

Two children have shown an interest in playing with the basketballs and hoops in the outdoor play space. The teachers noticed that the same two children often have difficulty becoming engaged in large-group-time activities. This activity was developed to incorporate their interests and help them get involved at large-group time.

Opener

Tell children that they will be going outside (or to an appropriate area for this activity) for large-group time. Mention that they will be using basketballs and ask them to describe what they can do with the basketballs. The discussion might go like this:

Teacher: *Today we will use large balls, like basketballs.*

Jamal: *I play basketball with my brother in the yard.*

Damone: *I can catch now.*

Teacher: *Sometimes you will throw the balls, and sometimes you will catch them.*

Jamal: *I'm gonna get it in the hoop and get a point!*

Teacher: *You will aim for the hoop. There are other things set up that you can aim for. Let's go outside and see.*

In the designated area, place a large container filled with the balls. Also, have the wastebaskets or hoops set up throughout the area. (If children are to stay in one area, remind them of the boundaries for this activity.) Tell children that they can each take one ball from the container.

Activity

Children explore bouncing, aiming, and throwing the balls. Teachers should play alongside children and acknowledge their efforts and ideas for using the balls and the receptacles. One scenario might go like this:

Teacher: *Jamal, you are bouncing the ball fast and low. I'll try that, too.*

Jamal: *My brother says I have to learn to dribble. (Jamal bounces the ball.) See, this is how you dribble.*

Teacher: *This is dribbling. (Teacher copies Jamal's movements and dribbles the ball alongside of him.)*

Damone: *I got it in four times, so I get four points.*

Teacher: *Getting it in the basket four times means four points, Damone?*

Damone: *Yep, I'm gonna get more.*

Heather: *I want points, too.*

Teacher: *Damone knows a lot about getting points. You could ask him to tell you about points.*

Transition

Give a signal (by blowing a whistle or waving your hand) to let children know that the activity is going to end soon. Let them know how much longer they have to play with the balls before they move to the next part of the daily routine. You might say, "We will play for two more minutes, and then our job is to put the balls in the containers and go to planning time inside."

Variations

- Provide squishy balls and other safe objects (e.g., beanbags, paper towel balls) so children can practice throwing indoors. Use wide-mouthed receptacles to serve as targets.

Follow-up

- At planning or recall, label buckets with signs for the various interest areas. Children toss a squishy ball into the appropriate bucket to designate where they will play or where they had played during work time.
- Observe the children's other outdoor play interests and develop large-group time activities that support those interests and address developmental goals. Some outdoor play interests that can become large-group activities include running races, tossing and catching smaller balls, and writing and drawing with sidewalk chalk.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Children with assistive mobility devices may perform just one part of the activity. For example, a child in a wheelchair may simply move around the hoops and the baskets without holding a ball (especially if the child operates the wheelchair on his or her own.) Another child who is in a wheelchair may hold a ball and ask you to push him or her to the target.
- If children use assistive mobility devices, give them a large supply of paper towel balls so they don't have to retrieve a ball after every turn.
- Provide lightweight balls for children with low muscle tone.

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The Noble Duke of York

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Approaches to
Learning

Social and Emotional
Development

The Arts

Materials

Feather dusters, one
for each child

Originating Idea

A group of children spent work time arranging and rearranging a set of blocks. As they worked, they used phrases like “above the bigger one” and “farther away from mine.” This activity was designed to expose children to spatial vocabulary and planning and executing movement ideas through song.

Opener

Tell a simple story to introduce the children’s song “The Noble Duke of York.” You might say, “There’s a song about an old soldier called the noble Duke of York. He has been lazy for a while and needs to be dusted off so he can march again with his men.” (Dust off your shoulders and encourage children to dust theirs off.) Tell children that they will be marching during the song, and as they march, they will be carrying dusters. Pass out a duster to each child, encouraging them to explore with the dusters. Have the children march around with their dusters as you sing the opening verse of the song:

*Oh, the noble Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill,
And he marched them down again.*

Activity

Call attention to the words “up” and “down” in the song by posing a series of questions. You could begin by saying, “That noble Duke of York marched his men up the hill and then he marched them ...” (pause for children to respond “down the hill”). Then ask, “What could you do with your dusters when I sing the word *up*?” (Pause as children try out their ideas.) “What could you do for *down*?” (Pause as children try out their ideas.) “What if your dusters were only *halfway up*?” (Pause as children try out their ideas.)

Tell children to use their new movements as you sing the song again. Have children march with their dusters as you repeat the opening verse. Before singing the second verse, cue children by saying, “Here come the up and down parts”:

And when they were up, they were up (point duster toward ceiling).
And when they were down, they were down (point duster toward floor).
And when they were only halfway up (hold duster chest high),
They were neither up nor down.

Introduce directional concepts such as *in and out*, *one side to the other side*, and *back and forth*. Incorporate the concepts into the song:

And when they were in, they were in (point duster toward center of group).
And when they were out, they were out (point duster away from group).
And when they were only halfway in (hold duster chest high),
They were neither in nor out.

Transition

Tell children you will sing the song a final time, then say, “This time march around quietly with your dusters and listen to the song. It tells you what to do next.” Place a plastic tub or bucket in the large-group area. Then sing lyrics like the following:

*Oh, the royal kids of preschool,
They marched around again.
They marched right by the plastic bin,
And put their dusters in.*

*And then they went to plan.
And then they went to plan.
And then they went to planning time,
After putting their dusters in.*

Variations

- In place of the dusters, use paper plates, streamers, rhythm sticks, or paper towel tubes.
- Introduce concepts such as *fast and slow* and *near and far*.

Follow-up

- Place dusters around the classroom and comment on the ways children use them, emphasizing spatial concepts. You could say, for example, “You dusted the top of the table” or “First you dusted halfway across the shelf, then you moved over to dust the other half.”

- Use the song to highlight other actions during the day. At snack time, for instance, as children are passing out various items, you could sing:

*Oh, the noble child named Allie,
She passed the cups around.
She passed one to each one of us,
And then she sat right down.*

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- To support children who use wheelchairs, demonstrate this activity while sitting.
- Provide a visual representation of the actions in the song for children who need support following verbal instructions.
- A child who has impulse control issues may participate from a distance with adult support.

Rub and Roll

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Originating Idea

Applying deep pressure is often recommended for helping children who need sensory stimulation. This activity originated as a way to provide deep pressure in a playful way to help children who benefit from this type of sensory input.

Opener

Introduce the concepts of rubbing and rolling. Explain and demonstrate that rubbing means pressing down while making a circular motion or back-and-forth motion, while rolling means turning over and over. The introduction might go like this:

Teacher: *We were just looking at the message board, and we had to erase a mistake on it.*

Sanna: *I erased it!*

Teacher: *I noticed that you had to rub an eraser on the letter to make it go away. Can you think of other times you need to rub or things that rub together?*

Sanna: *My mom rubs my head when I bump it.*

Devon: *I used that paper to rub the wood. (Devon points to a piece of sandpaper.)*

Teacher: *So, you can rub your body, or something like wood, or other things.*

Becki: *Yeah, to clean, too.*

Teacher: *Sometimes you have to rub something to clean it. I know another word that starts with the /r/ sound. The word is “roll.” Do you know some things that roll?*

Devon: *My bike!*

Sanna: *I can roll down the hill outside.*

Becki: *We can roll Play-Doh.*

Teacher: *You are thinking of a lot of things that roll. I have something here that rubs **and** rolls. When you get yours, try to rub and roll it on your body.*

To make sure children grasp both concepts, first have them use the massagers to rub different parts of their body. Then have the children roll the massagers on different parts of their body.

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

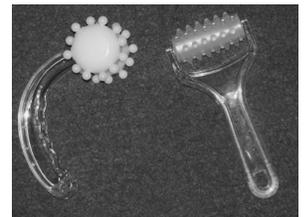
Social and Emotional Development

The Arts

Science and Technology

Materials

Hand-held wooden or plastic rolling body massagers, one for each child



With these plastic massagers, children can experience rubbing, rolling, and deep pressure.

Activity

After children have explored with the massagers, tell them that you see that they have found many ways to rub and roll. Acknowledge one child's movements. The dialogue might go like this:

Teacher: *Let's try rubbing and rolling like DaQuon. Let's watch him and see what we have to do.*

DaQuon: *You have to roll it on your leg.*

Devon: *He stops here.* (Devon points to his knee.)

Sanna: *He is going slow.*

DaQuon: *Yeah, but I am rubbing really, really hard.*

Teacher: *There is much to think about how DaQuon is doing the rubbing and rolling. Practice it DaQuon's way.*

As children practice the movement, the teacher sings the following song (to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"):

*Rub and roll and rub and roll,
DaQuon's way to rub and roll,
Rub and roll and rub and roll,
DaQuon's way to rub and roll.*

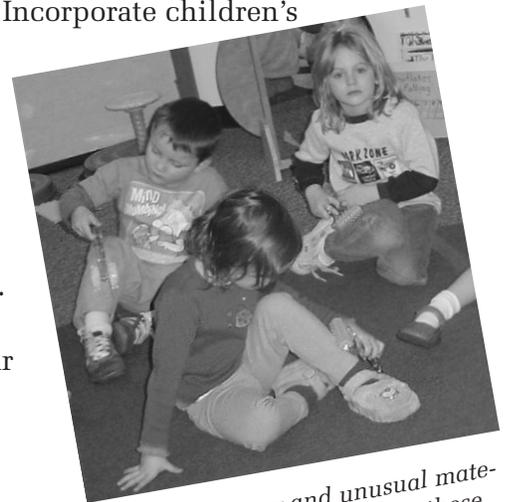
Encourage new ways to use the massagers, and ask children to describe where they are rolling the massager (e.g., on my belly) and how they are rolling it (e.g., fast, slow, zigzag). Incorporate children's names into the song as they suggest ideas.

Transition

Let children know that they will try one more idea before they stop. Remind children that they can use the massagers at work time to do more rubbing and rolling. As the children hand the massagers back to you, have them think of a way that their bodies can roll to their planning table (or an interest area).

Variations

- Use the massagers with paint at small-group time. As children rub and roll the massagers on their paper, you can sing and call attention to various ways children are moving with their massagers.



Introducing new and unusual materials into the classroom, like these handheld massagers, often creates interest and excitement.

- Use Play-Doh rollers instead of massagers.
- Provide each child with two massagers, one for each hand. (Purchase inexpensive massagers.) If children use one massager, encourage them to change hands to work their nondominant hand.

Follow-up

- Add rolling massagers to the classroom environment.
- Encourage deep-pressure play activities such as rolling Play-Doh, squeezing squishy balls, and pushing against classroom walls with the hands and feet.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- For children with impulse control issues, provide carpet squares for them to sit on to help define personal space.
- Rub and roll the massager for children who are unable to manipulate it themselves. Help children with low muscle tone apply pressure by holding the massager with them.

41

Going Through the Tunnel

Curriculum Content Areas

Social and Emotional Development

Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

Mathematics

Materials

8–10 child-sized chairs

One large blanket

Originating Idea

Several children have been engrossed in playing with the new trains and train tracks in the block area. Teachers have noticed the children using blocks to build tunnels for the trains. Also, the community has a rich railroad history.

Opener

As children sit on a carpeted area, tell them that you have noticed their interest in trains and tunnels. Encourage discussion as you model how to build a tunnel with chairs and a large blanket. Here's how the scenario might unfold:

Teacher: *Yesterday some children were building a tunnel for the trains with the small blocks. I have an idea for making a tunnel with chairs. (Teacher walks over to get several chairs from a work table.) To make a tunnel we need a lot of space in the middle. How could we get more space?*

Vishnu: *We could go like this.* (Vishnu scoots back to the carpet's edge.)

Teacher: *So, if we all did what Vishnu just did, we would have more space?*

Children: *Yeah.* (Children move with some encouragement from a second teacher.)

Teacher: (Places the chairs in a row on one side of the carpet.) *Let's count how many chairs we have in a row.*

Children: (Counting with teacher.) *1, 2, 3, 4 ... we have 5!*

Teacher: *Now we need the same number of chairs to make another row next to it.*

Cameron: *We have to get some more.*

Teacher: *How many?*

Cameron: *Five more!*

The teacher gets the chairs as the children count them. The teacher places these chairs parallel to the first row of chairs, leaving about a two-foot space between the rows for the children to crawl through. A second teacher brings out a large blanket:

Teacher 2: (To Chris, the first teacher) *Chris, this doesn't look like a tunnel yet. Tunnels are covered and dark inside.*

Vishnu: *We could put that blanket over the chairs and make it a dark tunnel.*

Teacher 2: *Chris and I will put the blanket over the chairs and make a tunnel that we can go under.*

The teachers drape the blanket over the rows of chairs so the space between the chairs is covered and the blanket is raised high enough for children to crawl under.

Activity

After the tunnel is made, it is important for the teachers to ensure the success of the activity and the safety of the children by positioning themselves properly, one at the beginning of the tunnel and one at the end:

Teacher: (To Sue, the second teacher) *Sue, will you help with the end of the tunnel? I will help with the beginning of the tunnel.* (Sue moves to the end of the tunnel.) *Olivia, will you be the first engine?* (Olivia agrees to be the leader and crawls to the tunnel entrance.)

As the first child enters the tunnel, begin singing the following song (to the tune of “The Bear Went Over the Mountain”):

*Olivia went through the tunnel,
Olivia went through the tunnel,
Olivia went through the tunnel,
And so did all the kids.
And so did all the kids,
And so did all the kids.*

You may need to sing or chant the lyrics twice to allow enough time for all the children to follow the “engine” through the tunnel. Continue in this fashion, allowing other children to be the leader.



Teachers developed this activity after noticing that children were playing with toy trains day after day.

Transition

Before the final “trip” through the tunnel, tell children that they will be moving to the next part of the daily routine. You might say, “This time, after you go through the beginning of the tunnel and come out of the end, go to your planning table.” Modify the song lyrics to reflect your instructions:

*The kids went through the tunnel,
The kids went through the tunnel,
The kids went through the tunnel,
And then they went to planning.*

Variations

- Vary the size of the tunnel by adding or subtracting chairs, and vary the shape of the tunnel by curving the row of chairs.
- Ask children to describe the sounds that trains make and incorporate those ideas into your chant. Also, modify the song to reflect the actions of the children as they go through the tunnel. The lyrics might look like this:

*Chug chugga choo choo,
Let's go round the bend.
Nya's going to lead you,
Right to the end.*

- Encourage children to move through the tunnel in different ways (e.g., backwards, slithering).

Follow-up

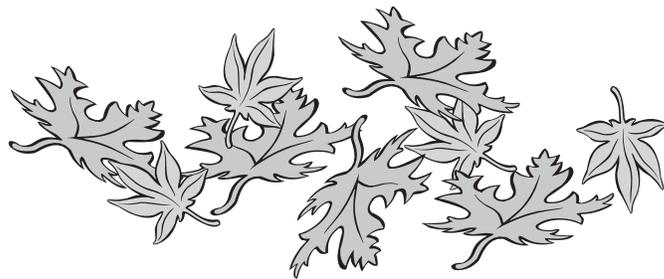
- Encourage tunnel-making at work time.
- Provide books and materials about trains in the classroom environment.
- Plan a field trip to a train station or a train museum.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Change the arrangement of the tunnel so that the children who use wheelchairs or other assistive mobility devices can participate. To do this, have two adults hold a blanket in the air so children can move beneath it.
- Children with developmental delays that affect their social skills may be reluctant to join the activity. If you have a small toy train set in the classroom, the children can use it to follow along with the game.

V

**Cooperative
Games or
Projects**



42

Parachute Popcorn

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Science and
Technology

Materials

A parachute

Paper towel balls
(wad up paper towel
and secure with
masking tape)

A CD player

The song "Popcorn,"
a selection from High-
Scope's Rhythmically
Moving 7 CD

Originating Idea

Children had the experience of making and eating popcorn for a snack. They commented on the movement of the kernels as they popped. The teachers used that experience to develop this activity, which helps children explore cause-and-effect and spatial relationships.

Opener

Ask children to describe the steps taken in making popcorn using an air popper or a domed popper. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Yesterday we made popcorn at snack time. Do you remember how we made those hard, yellow kernels turn into fluffy popcorn?*

Kerry: *Yes, we put them in the machine. Then we turned the machine on. It had to get hot.*

Teacher: *Do you remember what the popcorn was doing in the machine before it popped?*

Erin: *It was shaking. It was moving around. There was air blowing it.*

Teacher: *What happened when the popcorn got really hot?*

Erin: *Pop! It jumped up.*

Activity

Spread out the parachute and ask each child to hold onto a handle or the edge. Tell the children to pretend that the parachute is a giant popcorn popper, and you would like them to help you make popcorn. Place the paper towel balls in the middle of the parachute. Depending on the type of popcorn popper children are familiar with, pretend to add oil and/or turn on the heat. Begin playing the music selection "Popcorn."

Have the children shake the parachute — slowly at first — to represent the sizzling popcorn before it pops. Accompany the motion with descriptive words such as *rolling*, *bouncing*, and *jumping*, and words that show direction such as *over*, *under*, *in*, and *out*. As the music intensifies, have children shake faster so the paper balls pop up in the air. When the balls fly off the parachute, encourage children to put them back on.

Transition

Have the children slow their shaking as the music slows down. With children's assistance, gather the parachute. (You can leave the paper balls inside of it, or the children can put them in a separate basket.) Tell the children you will leave the materials in one of the interest areas for use at work time.

Variations

- In place of a parachute, a large sheet could be used to serve as the popper.
- Instead of paper towel balls, sponges could be used to represent the popcorn.
- Children can use a paper plate to pop their own paper towel balls.

Follow-up

- Create a "How to Make Popcorn" poster, with children describing the steps involved in making popcorn.
- Provide unpopped and popped kernels for children to compare. Provide magnifying glasses so they can examine the kernels.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Make picture cards that represent the steps to make popcorn. Refer to the cards to help children with speech and language disorders.
- If children are not able to hold or shake the parachute, give them scarves to shake.
- Give children who are overly sensitive to movement the responsibility of retrieving the paper towel balls when they fly off the parachute.



After making popcorn in class, children were fascinated with how popcorn pops, so a large-group activity was planned to follow up.

43

A Tisket, A Tasket

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Social and Emotional
Development

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Materials

A letter-size envelope, with the words “My Friend” written on it

A small basket with a handle (Cover basket with green and yellow paper or tie a green and yellow bow to the handle.)

Originating Idea

During work time, the children have been writing on greeting cards and giving the cards to one another. Teachers thought of this cooperative game based on the children’s interest in delivering their letters. This activity also reinforces the concept of taking turns.

Opener

Sit with children in a large circle. Begin patting a steady beat while introducing the song “A Tisket, A Tasket”:

*A tisket, a tasket
A green and yellow basket.
I wrote a letter to my friend
And on the way I dropped it.
I dropped it, I dropped it,
And on the way I dropped it.
I wrote a letter to my friend
And on the way I dropped it.
A little boy (girl) picked it up.
And put it in his (her) pocket.*

Activity

Place the envelope inside the basket and give the basket to a child. Ask that child to walk around the outside of the circle as the rest of the class sings “A Tisket, A Tasket.” The child takes the envelope from the basket, drops it behind another child, and begins walking quickly around the circle. The child who receives the envelope picks it up and tries to “return” it by walking quickly after the first child and tagging that child before he or she reaches the empty spot in the circle. The child with the basket then sits down in the chaser’s empty spot, and the chaser puts the envelope in the basket and takes a turn walking around the circle. (Emphasize there are no losers and that children stay in the game the whole time.)

Transition

Let the children know that they will play one final round of the game. Tell them that when the game is over, they should remain seated on the floor until they hear their name sung by the teacher. Transition children from the large group to the next activity of the day by using their names to create a simple rhyme that can be sung to the tune of “A Tisket, A Tasket.” You might say, “A tilliam, a William, come over and stand by me,” “A zay, a Kay, walk over to the planning table,” or “A deddie, an Eddie, get ready for outside time.”

Variations

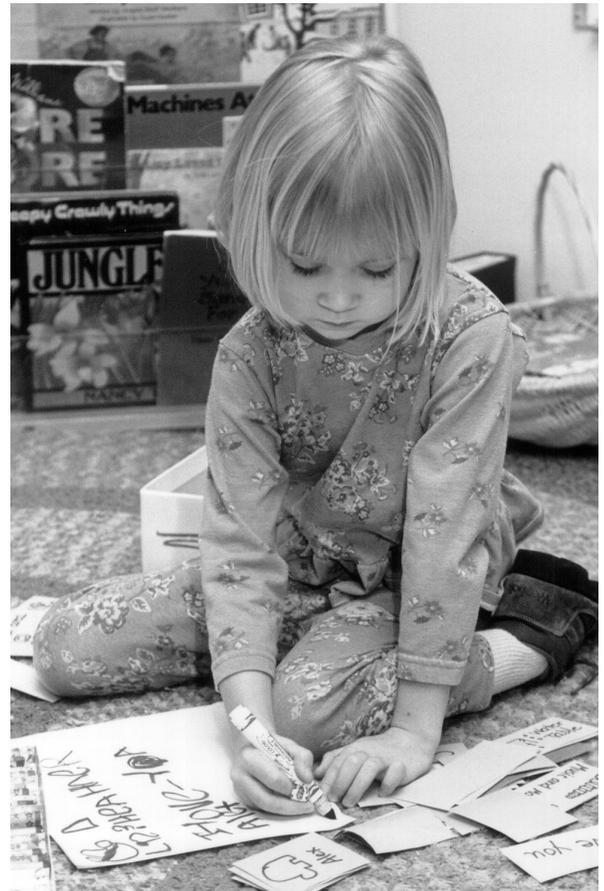
- Change the first letter of the words “tisket” and “tasket” to make new rhymes such as “misket” and “masket.” Ask children what letters to use for the alliteration.
- Mark several envelopes with lowercase or uppercase letters and place them in the basket. The child holding the basket chooses a letter and drops the envelope marked with that letter behind another child. After that turn is over, ask the children to think of a word that starts with the letter or to make the sound of that letter.

Follow-up

- Add “A Tisket, A Tasket” to your song book.
- Play the game at planning or recall time. In this situation, the child who picks up the envelope also describes his or her plan or recalls his or her experiences.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Children who use assistive devices for mobility can safely join the game if the teacher ensures that the space around the outside of the circle formation is large enough to accommodate the device.
- Children with speech and language disorders may not understand the sequence of the game, so adults as well as peers can accompany them as they move around the circle. Also, a set of cards that depict the sequence of the game can be used with these children. Adults display the card that corresponds to a specific action in the game.



Some of the children made greeting cards (or wrote on already printed cards) and gave them to classmates at work time. Teachers planned this playful large-group activity to build on their interest in sending mail.

44

Collecting Leaves

Curriculum Content Areas

Science and
Technology

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Materials

Paper bags or other
easy-to-carry contain-
ers, enough for each
child

A medium- to large-
sized empty container
(such as one typically
used in the art area for
holding materials)

Originating Idea

The program provides natural objects for children to observe, manipulate, explore, and use creatively. Since it was autumn and leaves of many colors and types had been falling, teachers decided to go on a scavenger hunt for leaves. Children have the opportunity to observe, classify, and use descriptive language as they participate in this activity.

Opener

Tell children that they will be going outside for large-group time today. Ask children what they think they will be doing for large-group time. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *For our large-group time, we are heading outside. I wonder what you think we could be doing for large-group time?*

Yolanda: *We're going to swing on the swings outside?*

Teacher: *Yolanda, you love the swings, and we can do that later at outside time. We are going to do something else.*

Troy: *Run!*

Teacher: *That could be part of it. (The teacher then shows children the bags or containers.) We are going to collect something. What does collect mean to you?*

Devon: *Get a bunch of things.*

Troy: *My dad collects stamps in a book.*

Teacher: *Collecting means gathering things. Today our job is to collect all sorts of leaves to put in our art area. Let's get our coats on and then take a bag.*

Activity

As children filter into the outside area, remind them that they are collecting leaves in their bags. Support children as they note characteristics of the leaves that they find:

Yolanda: *Look, I have one that is red over here. (Yolanda points to the middle of the leaf).*

Teacher: *You noticed the color red in the middle. I see other colors, too.*

Yolanda: *Yeah, but it's mostly green. All leaves are green.*

Troy: *Mine is all yellow.*

Teacher: *So some leaves are all yellow.*

Yolanda: *Yeah, but most of them are green.*

Teacher: *You have noticed that a lot of leaves are green. You must look at things very closely.*

Transition

Bring the activity to a close by sounding an alert, indicating the amount of time left to collect leaves. At the activity's end, have children bring their bags inside and place them in a designated area. The children can then place the leaves into the large container, or their individual bags of leaves could be saved and used for a small-group-time activity. Ask children where to place the large container of leaves and how they might use them in an activity.

Variations

- Take the group outdoors to collect other natural materials such as pebbles, stones, acorns, pine cones, or pine needles.
- Give the children clipboards and writing implements to draw or list some things they see in the outdoor play space.
- Write the children's names and letter links on the paper bags so they experience language and literacy in the natural flow of the day.

Follow-up

- Examine the leaf collections at small-group time. Give the children magnifying glasses to examine the leaves. List all of the descriptive words the children are using on a large piece of paper.
- Create a leaf collage by placing leaves on a piece of clear Con-Tact paper or gluing them to a piece of construction paper.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Children who use assistive devices for mobility can work outdoors if the terrain is safe or if they can be pulled in a wagon.
- If a child has difficulty bending over to pick up items from the ground, a special pincer tool can be used. These are often used in stores to reach items that are placed high on shelves.
- Picture cards with visual representations of the activity can be provided for children with speech and language disorders.

45

Fruit Basket Upset

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Mathematics

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Social and Emotional
Development

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

During large-group time, the children often crawled across the circle to sit with their friends. The teachers saw the children's need for movement and companionship. They designed an activity that incorporates crawling into a cooperative game while also providing a language experience.

Opener

Have the children sit on the floor in a circle. Explain that they will be playing a listening game, and when they hear a "special word" they must crawl across the floor to a new place on the circle.

Tell the children that your special word is a type of fruit. You may tell them the name of the fruit or you may give clues about it. If the special word is "banana," for instance, the clues might be given like this: "The fruit I'm thinking about is yellow. Monkeys like to eat them. The name of my fruit starts with this sound, /b/. What fruit do you suppose I'm thinking of? The fruit I'm thinking of is a banana." After you say the special word, encourage the children to crawl across the floor to a new spot.

Activity

Tell the children that you are going to try to trick them and that they should only move when they hear the special word. Begin by naming a few different kinds of fruits before saying the special word: "Is it an apple? Is it an orange? Is it a banana?" You can challenge the children by naming fruits that have the same beginning sound as the one you chose. For example, if the special word is banana, you might say, "The name of my fruit is b-b-b-blueberry!" You could also give clues that apply to similar fruits. You could say, "I know this fruit is yellow and grows on a tree. It must be a ... lemon."

After the children understand the game, allow them to act as the leader. (It is likely that some children will immediately say the name of their fruit rather than naming other fruits. Be prepared to assist children if they forget their special word while trying to think of other fruits.)

Transition

Tell the children that when they hear a new special word, they should move to their next activity. Choose a word that is associated with the activity. If the children are going to outside time, for example, you could tell them, “When I say the word ‘swings,’ walk to the door.”

Variations

- Use different categories of words, such as favorite foods, animals, or parts of the daily routine.
- After children become accustomed to the sequence of the game, ask them to substitute other movements in place of crawling (e.g., walking, running, skipping).

Follow-up

- Play a version of the game at recall time. After a child recalls his activity, ask him or her to choose a special word related to his or her play. When the word is spoken, each child moves to another chair at the table.
- Let children select a special word to signal a transition from one activity to another. For example, Jorge picks the word “tractor.” When Jorge says “tractor,” the children wash their hands before having their snack.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Allow enough space so children in wheelchairs can move across the circle. Have the children point to where they want to go before they move. A teacher can help wheel them, if necessary.
- The use of pictures or symbols during the game can help children who are hearing impaired. Show a large picture of the fruit you selected, then mix it into an assortment of other pictures. Show the pictures one by one, and have children move to a new spot when the designated picture appears.



This game incorporates crawling with an opportunity to learn about words and word sounds.

46

Musical Chairs

Curriculum Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

The Arts

Social and Emotional
Development

Mathematics

Materials

Several chairs, more
than enough for each
child and adult

A CD player

A recording of instru-
mental music that is
conducive to walking,
running, skipping, and
galloping

Originating Idea

Children were talking about a birthday party they attended, at which they played Musical Chairs. The teachers adjusted the classic game to accommodate the developmental needs of young children.

Opener

Ask children to bring a chair to the large-group area. Encourage them to help you set up a circle of chairs so the chair backs are facing in and the seats are facing out. Make sure there is enough room for children to safely walk around the perimeter of the circle of chairs. Let children know that they will be playing a game called Musical Chairs. The scenario might unfold like this:

Teacher: *Today, we need the chairs to play a game called Musical Chairs. The music will play and we will move all around the chairs, going this way. (Show which direction children will move around the chairs.) Let's try walking around the chairs now, without the music.*

Give children time to practice walking around the chairs, then set the stage for the first round of the game:

Teacher: *Okay, now we are ready to play the game. When the music plays, we move. When the music stops, we find a chair to sit in.*

Joey: *This is my chair. (Joey pats the back of his chair.) No one sits in it.*

Teacher: *For this game you could sit in a different chair each time the music stops. Let's get started.*

Activity

Play Musical Chairs a number of times. (Make sure there are enough chairs for everyone; there are no losers in this game.) At the beginning of each round, ask a child for a new way of moving around the chairs. Encourage the children to describe how their bodies will move until the music stops:

Teacher: *Henry, how do you want us to move around the chairs this time?*

Henry: *Like this. (Henry performs a galloping movement.)*

Teacher: *What could we say about how Henry is moving?*

Becki: *He's moving fast.*

Teacher: *Look at what his legs are doing!*

Kenneth: *He has one in front and one in back.*

Teacher: *He keeps one foot in front and one stays in the back. What else can we say?*

Becki: *It's like a horse.*

Teacher: *It's like a horse when it is galloping. Let's gallop around until the music stops. Here we go!*

(Although it is important to encourage language from the children describing their movements, be aware that the game is highly active and stopping for too long can be frustrating to them.)

Transition

Alert the children that there will be a final round of Musical Chairs and ask for one more movement idea. Then tell the children that when the game ends, they will move to the next part of the daily routine. You might say, "This time when the music stops, it means something new! It means to take your chair and bring it back to your planning table."

Variations

- Place flat geometrical shapes on the floor and play Musical Shapes, place hoops on the floor and play Musical Hoops, or place carpet squares on the floor and play Musical Carpets.
- In place of recorded music, children can choose a song to sing as they move around the circle. When the song is over, they find a chair to sit in.

Follow-up

- Play Musical Chairs for recall or planning. Label each chair with a sign from one of the classroom interest areas. One at a time, ask children to sit on the chair that represents the area in which they will play or an area they have played in at work time.
- Bring the CD player and recording to a large outdoor area and play Musical Hoops outside.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- If children are using wheelchairs or assistive devices for mobility, play Musical Carpets. By using carpet squares instead of chairs, all children can get to a spot regardless of their abilities.
- Assign a partner to children who have difficulty hearing and responding to sound signals.
- Highly active games such as this can be challenging for children who are overly sensitive to sound and movement. Give them the option of operating the CD player or watching the game from another area. The children could also draw a scene from the game as they watch.

47

Pizza, Pizza

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

Approaches to
Learning

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

Teachers wanted an activity to use after a sedentary part of the daily routine to help the children expend energy, for example, after children have been sitting for a while at large-group time singing songs. This activity involves following movement directions and demonstrating individual movement ideas.

Opener

Ask children to form a circle by standing around the edge of the large-group area. Choose one child to stand in the middle of the circle and follow the movement directions in the chant “Pizza, Pizza.” The rest of the children and teachers stand and chant:

*Pizza, Pizza,
Her name is (fill in child’s name).
Pizza, Pizza,
She doesn’t mess around.
She turns around.
She touches the ground.
She jumps back up,
And she moves around.*

Encourage the children to pat a steady beat on their legs as they are chanting.

Activity

Have the child in the middle of the circle demonstrate a movement for everyone to copy. Describe the child’s movement to the other children or ask the child to describe the movement. You might say, “You’re swinging your arms over your head then swinging them back down,” and the child might reply, “I’m swimming.” Repeat the chant, incorporating the new movement idea into the lyrics.

Some children might perform combinations of movements that could be unsafe to do as a whole group (e.g., kicking then falling on the floor). Acknowledge the complexity of the child’s movement and voice your concerns about safety. Ask the child to choose another way of moving, possibly using part of the original idea. You might say, “Wow, you kicked your legs out then twirled down to the floor. There isn’t enough room here for us all to try that. Maybe we can try the kicking part without falling down.”

Transition

When you are ready to begin the next activity, tell the children to listen to your new chant and follow the instructions. The final phrase directs children to the next part of the daily routine. If you want children to sit after this activity ends, the chant could go like this:

*Pizza, Pizza,
They're all preschoolers.
Pizza, Pizza,
They don't mess around.
They turn around,
They touch the ground.
They jump back up,
And they sit right down.*

Variations

- Modify the chant so children move specific parts of their bodies. You might say, “She jumps back up and she wiggles her legs.”
- As each child takes a turn in the middle, change the words “Pizza, Pizza” to that child’s favorite food.

Follow-up

- Use the chant during other parts of the day to transition children from one activity to another.
- Say the chant to remind classroom helpers to do their jobs. At snack time you might say, “She jumps back up and she passes out the plates.”

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Children who are physically challenged can perform the movements with a specific part of their body, such as the hands:

*Pizza, Pizza,
His name is Juan.
Pizza, Pizza,
He doesn't mess around.
His hands turn around.
They move up and down.
They get all ready to move around.*

- Provide an alternative space and activity for children who are easily overstimulated. Using a class list, they could check off the names of the children as they take their turn in the middle. They could also draw a scene from the activity.
- If a child has impulse control issues, provide a separate space near the group for the child to perform the movements with help from a supportive adult.

48

Washing Chairs

Curriculum

Content Areas

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Science and
Technology

Materials

Small buckets

A sponge or washcloth,
one for each child

Smocks

Water

Soap

Originating Idea

Teachers have planned a family social evening, complete with a picnic. The children have been discussing the upcoming school party. They noticed paint and dirt on the tables and chairs that would be used at the party and thought they should be washed.

Opener

The teachers remind children that tonight is the family party. They say that families will be eating outside, but there is a problem — the outside furniture must be cleaned. It hasn't been used for a while, and the teachers and children must work together to get the furniture ready for the party. Ask children what they will need to do this job. The conversation might go something like this:

Teacher: *For large-group time today, our job is to go outside and clean our tables and chairs for the party tonight. What do you think we need for this job?*

Ben: *Something to make it wet.*

Alana: *We need soapy stuff.*

Teacher: *So, we need wet and soapy stuff. What could we put those in?*

Ben: *A bucket, like the ones we have inside.*

Alana: *A spray bottle.*

Teacher: *Those are things that could hold the water and soap. Today we have buckets and sponges for everyone to use. As we go outside, find a bucket to use as we work together to get our tables and chairs ready for our party.*

Activity

As children pick up their materials, assist them in finding a starting point for their work. Fill up the bucket with water and soap. Encourage children who seem to be working together, making note of the cooperative effort: "I see that you and Talia have figured out a way to clean this chair together." Listen to the children's discussions so you can acknowledge and extend their ideas:

Ben: *This chair is more dirty than that one.*

Teacher: *What would we have to do to really make it clean?*

Ben: *We could get more soap.*

Teacher: *That's one idea. Do you think we need to?*

Ben: *Maybe.*

Teacher: *Do you know where we could find more soap if we needed more?*

Alana: *We have some near the sink.*

Teacher: *That's where we could go if we run out.*

Transition

As the cleaning comes to an end, bring the activity to a close. Tell the children, "When you finish your chair or table cleaning, squeeze out your sponge and dump your water here." Show children an appropriate spot on the lawn or ground to empty their buckets. Collect the buckets and sponges.

Transition to the next part of the daily routine by saying, "As we go back inside, imagine what it might be like if your feet were made of sponges. Walk to your planning table with spongy feet."

Variations

- Clean indoor and outdoor storage areas such as cubby holes.
- Wash and dry doll clothes.
- Use spray bottles in place of buckets.
- Use buckets of water and squeegees for washing windows outdoors.

Follow-up

- Take photos of the children cleaning up to share with their families at the party.
- Provide sponges, water, and mild soap at outside time.
- Place sponges near the water table inside the classroom.
- Provide opportunities and materials for washing things that children identify as "needing to be cleaned."
- Read the book *Mrs. Wishy-Washy* by Joy Cowley.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- For children with assistive mobility devices, prepare a table where they can sit with other children. Place a chair or other item needing to be washed on the table.
- Some children who are sensitive to touch sensations may feel uncomfortable if their hands and other parts of their body become wet. For those children, provide dry cloth towels so they can dust off the chairs before others wash them.
- Provide a visual representation of the activity for children who have speech and language disorders.

49

Pop Goes the Weasel

Curriculum

Content Areas

Physical Development,
Health, and Well-Being

Language, Literacy,
and Communication

Social and Emotional
Development

The Arts

Materials

No materials are
needed.

Originating Idea

Teachers in the classroom wished to provide an opportunity for the children to participate in an organized game. This activity gives children the chance to incorporate their ideas into a game and follow the directions of other children.

Opener

After children are gathered at the large-group area, ask them to stand up. Tell children that they will be playing a game that involves moving around the area and making their bodies do a “popping” movement. The introduction might go like this:

Teacher: *Today we will be trying different ways to move around the large-group carpet.*

Jonah: *We could run!*

Teacher: *Let’s practice running around the carpet.*

After the children run around the carpet at various speeds, pose this question to them:

Teacher: *What is another way we could move around the carpet?*

Minna: *Jumping.*

Teacher: *Let’s practice jumping around the carpet.*

Have the group explore other ways to move around the carpet.

Activity

Tell children that a song will be added to the activity, and ask for their ideas for popping movements. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *We are going to use Jannelle’s idea of walking around the carpet as we sing a song. In the song, we will hear the word “pop.” How could you make your body “pop”?*

Julius: *Let’s do this!* (Julius performs a jumping jack movement.)

Teacher: *Julius, what could we call that movement?*

Julius: *Jumping out.*

Teacher: *Okay, let’s practice Julius’s idea of jumping out.*

After children practice the movement, remind them that they will walk around the carpet while the song is being sung. When they hear the word “pop,” they should perform the movement:



Teachers support the children's ideas for making their bodies "pop" by describing and imitating their actions.

*All around the cobbler's bench,
 The monkey chased the weasel.
 The monkey thought it was all in fun,
 Pop (children do the movement) goes the weasel!*

Transition

Bring the activity to an end by alerting the children that there will be one final turn. The conversation could go like this:

Teacher: *We need one more idea for moving around the carpet and one more idea for popping.*

Jonah: *Let's crawl.* (Jonah crawls around to demonstrate.)

Teacher: *For the last turn, we are going to crawl around the carpet like Jonah is showing us. What should we do for the pop?*

Vishnu: *Do this.* (Vishnu bangs both fists on the floor.)

Teacher: *What could we say you are doing?*

Vishnu: *Hitting the floor.*

Minna: *He is punching the floor.*

Teacher: *Okay, let's get ready to do the crawling around, and when you hear the word "pop," hit or punch the floor.*

When the chant ends, have children move to the next activity and say the word “pop” when they arrive.

Variations

- Give children objects such as a bean bag, squishy ball, or rhythm sticks. Ask them to find ways to move these objects when they hear the word “pop” in the song.
- The game can be played using other traditional childhood songs such as “Ring Around the Rosie.” In that song, the phrase “all fall down” can be changed to another movement idea initiated by the children (e.g., all jump around).

Follow-up

- At recall time, ask children to get something from the classroom that they played with during work time. Encourage them to hide the item under a table or out of sight and have the children sing a variation of “Pop Goes the Weasel”:

*All around the preschool class,
Jordan played at work time.
She will show the toy that she used,
Pop! Now we see it.*

When the group sings the word “pop,” have one child reveal his or her item. After the song ends, the child tells what he or she did at work time with the item.

- When children move as a group from one area of the room to another, have them think of different ways to move besides walking. Acknowledge their ideas and encourage the children to imitate one another’s movements as they move together.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Assign a partner to children who use assistive mobility devices.
- Children with impulse control issues can watch the game from a nearby area and draw what they see, use doll figures to act out the game, or use a pretend camera to “take pictures” of the other children.
- Provide a visual representation of the game, song, and actions for children with speech and language disorders.

Search and Report

50

Originating Idea

After a holiday break, a new interest area was created in the classroom, and many new materials were added to the classroom. “Search and Report” was designed to help children learn about the new environment. Teachers were also looking for an activity to support language and literacy development, particularly writing.

Opener

Children may notice differences in the environment upon entering the classroom. Tell children that they are going to do a project that will help them discover new things in the classroom. The conversation might go like this:

Teacher: *Sometimes, when I want to tell somebody about something I saw, I write it down or draw it to show them. You have noticed that some things are different in our class.*

Abby: *I saw a spinning toy.*

Jackie: *I want to see over there.* (Jackie points to new area in back of room.)

Teacher: *We are going to be investigators today. An investigator is someone who looks and tries to find things. I am going to give you each a clipboard, a piece of paper, and a marker. When you get your clipboard and marker, go on a search and investigate the new things in the room. Write down, draw, or trace those things on your paper. (Hand out materials to children.) When you hear the triangle ring, come back to report what you have found.*

Activity

Children and adults spread out through the classroom searching for new items. Throughout the search, encourage children to note what they have found on their paper. Some children may draw representations of the items, some may use scribble writing, and some may ask for help writing a word or some letters of a word. Acknowledge, support, and accept all forms and levels of writing and representation.

When children have had enough time to identify one or two new items, ring the triangle to bring children back to the large-group area. As the children assemble, discuss the items they have represented. The discussion might go like this:

Curriculum Content Areas

Language, Literacy, and Communication

Approaches to Learning

Materials

Clipboards, one for each child

Individual sheets of paper

Writing implements (markers or crayons)

A musical instrument (triangle or bells)



After discovering a new fish in the aquarium during the course of his “investigation,” a child makes note of the item in his report.

Teacher: *I can see some drawings, some writing, and some letters on your clipboards.*

Abby: *I drew the new basket for shoes. (Abby shows a square shape that she drew on her paper.)*

Jackie: *I wrote this.*

Teacher: *Help us know what it says.*

Jackie: *It says I saw the new big train, and the kitchen is over there, and the fish changed. (Jackie shows three scribble lines that she drew on her paper.)*

Teacher: *You wrote a lot!*

Erin: *Sue helped me write the word for the new book area. (Erin shows the letters “B, O, O, K” on her paper.)*

A variation of the familiar song “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” can be used to encourage participation. The lyrics incorporate the children’s names and describe the activity:

*Alyjah went into the classroom,
Alyjah went into the classroom,
Alyjah went into the classroom,
And this is what he saw.*

The child mentioned in the song then tells what he or she saw and shows what he or she represented.

Transition

After the children have reported their findings, bring the activity to a close by letting the children know that the new things they wrote about or drew could be part of their plan for work time. Collect the clipboards and markers. Tell children that sometimes investigators have to be quiet and sneaky when they look for things. Ask children to move like a sneaky investigator to the next part of the daily routine.

Variations

- Give children inexpensive, unloaded cameras to take “pictures” of the new items. The children can then verbally report their findings. (You can also make pretend cameras by taking a small wooden block and adding a round piece of tape for the lens and a square piece of tape for the flash.)
- Give children inexpensive binoculars or a magnifying glass to look for new items. (You can also make pretend binoculars by cutting a paper towel tube in half and taping the halves together.)

Follow-up

- Use the clipboards and markers for planning and/or recall. Children can look at the materials they will use or have used and then draw or write about their activity.
- Hang clipboards with markers attached to them throughout the classroom. Place the clipboards at children’s eye level so they are easy to reach. Encourage children (when appropriate) to write down ideas or the steps to a project they are creating.

Accommodations for Children With Special Needs

- Work as a partner with children who are not developmentally ready to write or represent. You may want to transcribe the children’s words for them to support their verbal language development.
- For children who have difficulty holding and gripping writing implements, give them a short, thick marker or crayon.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Singing Songs at Large-Group Time

Adults realize that music is an integral part of each child's culture. They therefore provide children with as many active musical experiences as possible so children's musical ability and understanding can develop and flourish. Here are some strategies you can use to enhance singing activities at large-group time:

- Sing a variety of songs with children, including traditional songs, folk songs, and holiday songs.
- Introduce songs that have simple melodies, short verses, and repetitive phrases, since those are easiest for children to learn.
- Children learn a new song by hearing it and singing it many times. When introducing a new song, first sing it *for* the children, then sing it *with* the children. Expect the children to gradually join in as they learn the words.
- Some songs have many verses, and it is simply too difficult for children to remember all the words. In those instances, sing only the most familiar verse and/or the chorus of the song.
- Practice singing in the children's vocal range. Children sing more comfortably in a higher range than adults do.
- If you want to present a song that you heard on a CD, use the recording to teach yourself the song first, away from the classroom. Then introduce the song to the children, tailoring the song's lyrics and tempo for your group.
- Provide opportunities for children to choose the songs the group sings. Have the children make their choices from a classroom song book. Children will often select the same songs again and again, just as they do with favorite books they want reread to them.
- Make up new songs using simple melodies that children already know. During a movement game, for example, the teacher could sing (to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb"), "Everybody follow Ruth, follow Ruth, follow Ruth. Everybody follow Ruth. She's the leader now."
- Encourage children to create their own versions of familiar songs by changing a key word or phrase in the lyrics. In the song "Little Red Wagon," for example, children might change the line "Bumpin' up and down in my little red wagon" to "Bumpin' up and down in my rainbow puppy truck."

- Have children create their own rhyming lyrics, even though the phrases may not make “adult sense.” In the song “Down by the Bay,” a child might sing, “Have you ever seen a tiger, eating a liger, down by the bay?”
- Vary the setting of a song. A version of “Old MacDonald,” for instance, could be set in a zoo, in the jungle, or on a playground.
- Change a key element of a song. The lyrics to “The Wheels on the Bus” could focus on a different mode of transportation, such as a train, boat, car, plane, or motorcycle.
- The quality of your voice can change to suit the song. You could sing loudly during a song about a giant, or you could whisper while singing a lullaby.
- Have children choose a favorite animal and incorporate the sound that animal makes into a song. If children choose to sing like cats, for instance, have them substitute the word “meow” for key words in a song.
- When you introduce an action song, have children practice the movements before they sing the song. If the group will sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” you could begin the activity by saying, “Pretend that your hands are spiders. What would it look like if the spiders were climbing up something?”

As each singing activity unfolds, remember to be receptive to the children’s initiatives, interests, and plans.

Appendix B: Strategies for Using the Song Book

The song book is a folder or binder that contains a selection of songs that are often performed in the classroom. Each page of the song book includes a song's title and a simple drawing to represent the lyrics. The song book can be used at large-group time as a way to give children the opportunity to select songs. It provides a visual reference of the children's favorite songs that they can turn to throughout the day. Here are some suggestions for using a song book effectively in your classroom:

- Use a large ring binder to hold the pages, so children can easily turn them.
- Place each page in a plastic sheet protector, laminate it, or cover it with Con-Tact paper.
- Introduce each song to the children before you place it in the song book.
- Keep the pictures simple. A single star could represent the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and a grandfather clock and a mouse could represent "Hickory Dickory Dock."
- Let one or two children choose songs each day. Write a child's name on a sticky note and place it on the cover of the song book. That child will know it is his or her turn to choose a song.
- Have a child choose a song before large-group time, so the group does not have to wait. Allow the child to flip through the song book and put a sticky note on a page so it can be easily identified at large-group time.
- Encourage children to make their own pages for the song book.
- Limit the number of songs in the book for very young children.
- Rotate songs occasionally. When you add a new song, remove one that hasn't been sung for a while. (Do not change the songs all at once, however.)
- Be flexible. If a child chooses a song that is not in the book, sing that song at large-group time.
- Keep the song book available for children to use at work time.
- To assist substitute teachers and parents, write the lyrics on the back of the song page, or type the words on a mailing label and stick it on the back of the page.
- Make copies of the song book pages and lyrics for children to use at home.

Appendix C: Using Sign Language at Large-Group Time

Sign language is a system of communication used by the deaf and hard of hearing. It consists of a series of handshapes that stand for words, concepts, phrases, and letters. The handshapes for letters are called the “manual alphabet.” Signing the alphabet to make words is called “fingerspelling.” The most common version of sign language used in the United States is American Sign Language.

Increasingly, preschool teachers have been looking at sign as a means of assisting their students in the areas of literacy and learning a second language. There are several benefits to using sign language in the preschool classroom at large-group time:

- 1. Sign language enhances brain activity and brain functioning.** Signing is a kinetic (motion-oriented) activity that stimulates activity in both the right brain, which is responsible for visual-spatial and long-term memory, and the left brain, which is responsible for processing language.
- 2. Sign language enhances fine motor coordination.** Because the hands and fingers are used to form letters and words during signing, hearing children are exercising some fine motor muscles that they might not use without signing.
- 3. Sign language raises communication awareness.** Using sign language can open the door to introducing your children to the Deaf culture.
- 4. Sign language enhances and increases children’s vocabulary and reading skills.** Research studies show hearing children who used sign language in their preschool and kindergarten classes scored better on vocabulary tests and attained higher reading levels than their non-signing peers.
- 5. Sign language helps infants and toddlers communicate their pre-verbal wants and needs.** Although babies lack the means to produce vocal speech, they have the conceptual ability to understand and use language and the physical ability to make signs.
- 6. Sign language serves as a language bridge for children with special needs and children who have English as a second language.** Signing provides a means of communication for children with various types of language delays or impairments, including Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, and learning disabilities. Signing also gives ESL students a way to communicate with the adults in the classroom as well as their peers.

Using Sign Language in the Classroom

An ideal time to begin using sign language is when you sing a song during your large-group activity. Children are used to doing fingerplays with songs and chants, and introducing signing at this time will seem natural to them. Start with songs your children already know and that are already in your classroom song book. You can introduce the sign for a key word in a song, such as the word “row” in “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” The sign acts as an important visual cue for the children. Children can also practice fingerspelling while singing alphabet songs.

Signing can be used when the children act out a story or nursery rhyme. If the story involves a bird in a tree, for example, the teacher would show students the sign for both “bird” and “tree.” During the story, each time the teacher says the word “bird” or “tree,” the children would make the appropriate sign.

You can also use signing to transition from large-group time to the next part of your daily routine. When it’s time to change activities, the teacher signs the name of a color; the children who are wearing clothing of that color go to the next part of the routine. In another example, the teacher may use the manual alphabet to fingerspell a letter; a child whose name begins with that letter moves to the next part of the daily routine. A third option is for the teacher to simply fingerspell a child’s name.

Learning Sign Language

There are a number of ways to learn sign language. In most communities, sign language classes are offered by churches, civic groups, community centers, schools for the Deaf, adult education programs, community colleges, colleges, and universities. These classes vary in cost and content. Some courses will be referred to simply as “sign language classes,” but a number of colleges and universities may list them under “ASL,” the abbreviation for American Sign Language. In addition, there are a host of resources available online.

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