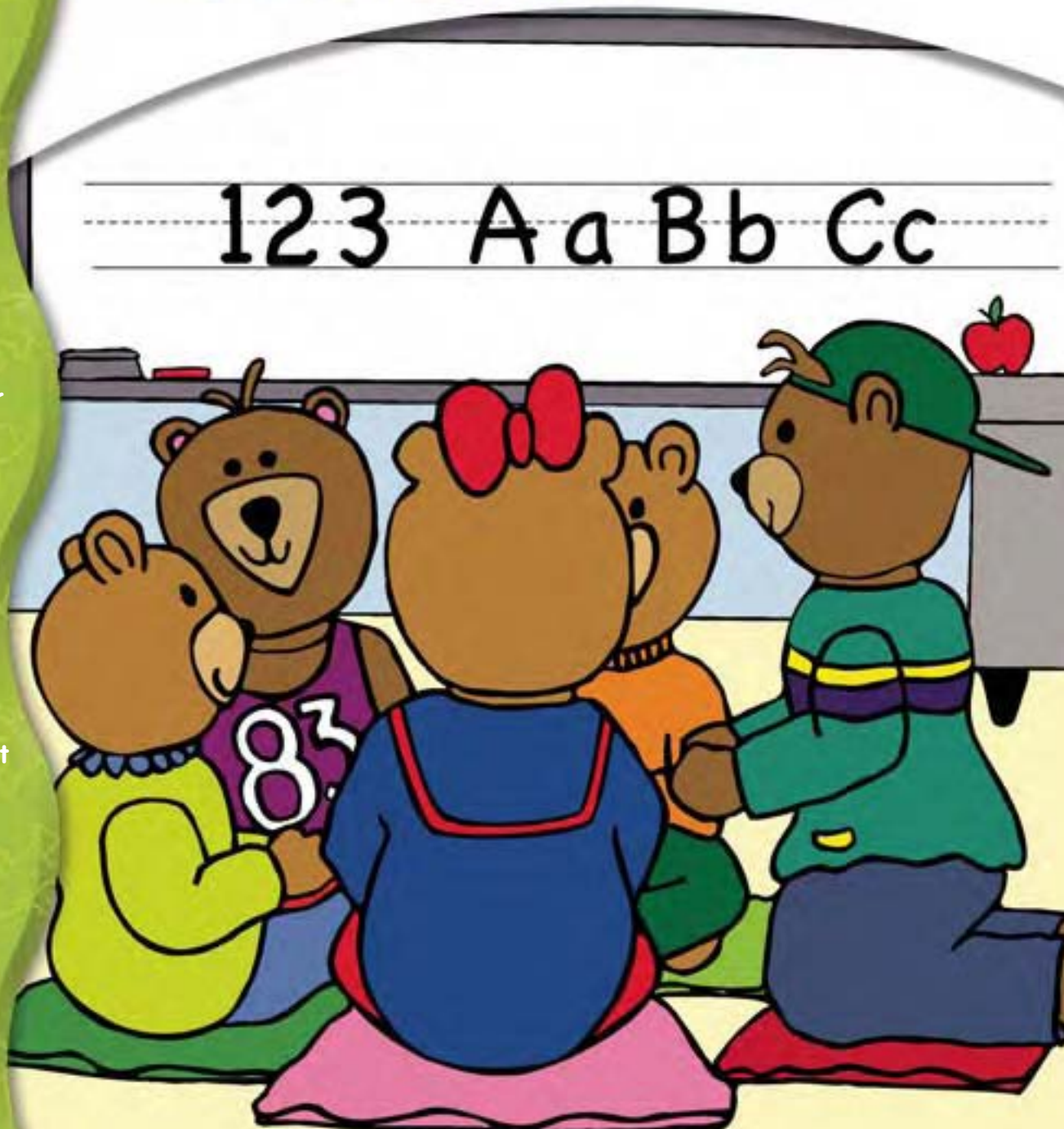


101 Circle Time Activities



- Includes 101 Terrific Ideas for Circle Time
- Spans Multiple Curriculum Areas
- Activities Individually Numbered and Titled
- Supports Current Early Childhood Standards



101

Circle Time

ACTIVITIES



Ages 3–6

By
Gayle Bittinger

Illustrations by
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Author: Gayle Bittinger



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EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early Childhood Standards Correlation	Activity
1. Social and Emotional Development	
a. Seeks to be independent and recognizes own unique abilities. Shows perseverance and resiliency.	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
b. Shows respect for self, others, and property.	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
c. Demonstrates proper care of their body.	
d. Demonstrates an increasing awareness of and ability to control his or her emotions in age-appropriate ways.	11, 12, 13, 14
e. Is aware of own needs and is sensitive to those of others. Wants to be understood and understands others.	4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14
f. Demonstrates a desire to learn and explore. Shows interest in the world and people in his or her environment.	3, 15
g. Is interested in interacting with others and participates in activities and discussions. Expresses needs and wants appropriately.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17
2. Language and Literacy	
a. Uses language to tell stories and share information while maintaining a topic. Can retell stories and events.	16, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26
b. Develops oral language skills. Speaks understandably using most rules of grammar.	17, 20
c. Demonstrates appropriate language.	17, 19, 20
d. Uses a variety of vocabulary words to share concepts, experiences, and feelings.	16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27
e. Develops oral language by listening actively. Uses prior knowledge to make predictions and construct meaning.	18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 34
f. Demonstrates an enjoyment of and understanding of the importance of reading. Understands concept of print.	21, 26, 28
g. Becomes familiar with and identifies letters and letter names.	28, 29
h. Begins to use print concepts to write text.	21, 50
i. Begins to develop phonemic awareness.	24, 30
3. Math	
a. Develops an understanding of numerals in the environment, including matching, counting, patterning, and grouping. Understands what numbers represent.	24, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 80
b. Begins to understand simple shape concepts and can recognize and identify shapes in the environment.	36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42
c. Is able to make comparisons and understands the concept of measurement.	42, 43
d. Understands patterns and their relationships. Is able to use this information to construct meaning about the world and make predictions.	34, 35, 44, 45

STANDARDS CORRELATION

Early Childhood Standards Correlation	Activity
4. Science	
a. Communicates observations and explorations. Shares information in a variety of ways.	47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57
b. Demonstrates and develops a sense of curiosity about the world through observation and participation in activities of exploration and discovery.	47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 58, 60
c. Makes connections and comparisons, and notices patterns and processes in the environment.	22, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60
5. Music and Movement	
a. Participates in a variety of musical activities. Creates music through experimentation and improvisation with a variety of musical instruments.	63, 64, 65, 66
b. Participates in dance and creative movement.	61, 62, 67, 68, 69, 90
c. Explores own voice as musical instrument. Understands body is needed to use instruments and participate in musical creation.	65
d. Uses movement to understand new concepts.	61, 67
6. Visual Arts	
a. Recognizes forms.	71, 72, 74, 75, 78
b. Can put shapes and lines together to create a design.	70, 71, 73, 78
c. Uses a variety of art media and develops art skills through experimentation and exploration using a variety of materials and processes.	70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78
7. Dramatic Play	
a. Develops positive sense of self through participation in dramatic play activities. Explores emotions, relationships, and imagination. Acts out a variety of roles.	79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88
8. Motor Skills	
a. Develops age-appropriate gross motor skills. Demonstrates a sense of balance and progression of locomotion skills.	82, 84, 88, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 98, 99, 100, 101
b. Develops age-appropriate perceptual motor skills. Demonstrates knowledge of parts of the body, direction of movement, and understanding of directional vocabulary.	41, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 100
c. Uses age-appropriate gross manipulative skills. Develops skills in catching and throwing.	88, 89, 92, 95, 101
d. Develops fine-motor skills and eye-hand coordination.	37, 95, 96, 97
e. Listens well and follows rules.	91, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 100, 101



INTRODUCTION

Circle time is an important part of an early childhood program. Circle time gives young children an opportunity to learn how to be a part of a group, develop listening skills, experience music and movement, and play games. Circle time also can be a time for introducing new concepts and practicing language, math, and science skills that will be the building blocks for their future learning.

101 Circle Time Activities is divided into eight chapters, each one reflecting an early childhood curriculum area. The activities address many of the skills guidelines set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. You will find activities to foster children's social and emotional development, language and literacy skills, and understanding of math concepts. You will also find science activities that strengthen children's observation and reasoning skills, music and movement activities that get everyone involved, and group art activities that inspire creativity and cooperation. There are also activities for group dramatic play and activities to help children develop their fine and large motor skills.

You will find an Early Childhood Skills Correlation grid on pages 4 and 5. The skills outlined in this grid will help you identify specific activities in this book that address skills you want to focus on in your classroom.

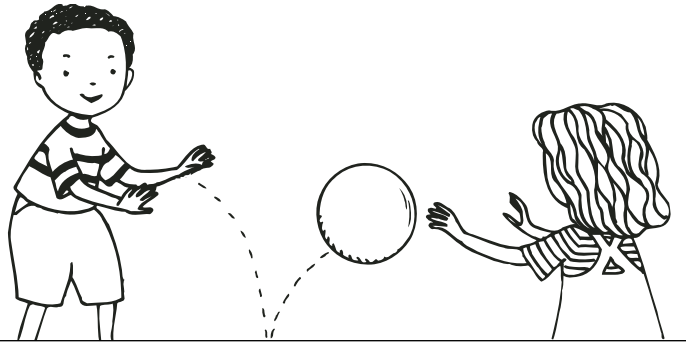
Young children love circle time—gathering together with their friends, listening to stories, and singing songs.

CHAPTER 1

Social and Emotional Development



NAME GAME





Materials


Large rubber ball


Activity

Try this circle activity at the beginning of the school year to help the children learn one another's names. Sit with the children in a large circle, making sure everyone has plenty of space. Show the children how to sit with their legs open in a V-shape. Hold a large rubber ball in your hands. Say your name and the name of one of the children, and then gently roll the ball to that child. Have that child say his or her name and the name of another child before rolling the ball to that child. Once a child has caught and rolled the ball, have the child sit cross-legged until everyone has had a turn. Then play the game again.

 **Variation:** To make the game simpler, have each child roll the ball back to you instead of to another child. Once the children have mastered the basics of the game, let them roll the ball to one another.

 **Variation:** Instead of rolling a ball to one another, let the children toss a beanbag.

 **Extension:** Challenge the children to pass the ball to one another as quickly as possible. Use a timer each time they play the game. Talk about playing quickly but carefully so that the ball does not roll out of the circle. Keep a chart with their times written on it. Ask the children, *What was your shortest time? What was your longest time?*

 **Extension:** Use this game format to learn new things about the children. For example, in addition to having the children say their names, have them say how old they are, what their favorite color is, what they like to eat for breakfast, or some other interesting fact about themselves.

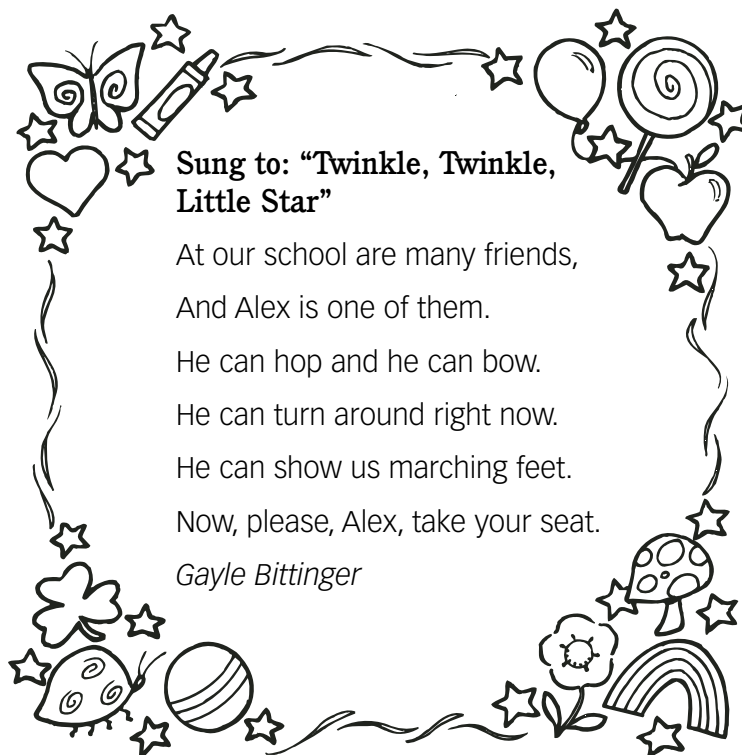
2 UP AND DOWN


Materials

Carpet squares

Activity

This circle time activity is a great way to practice the children's names and to help them expend extra energy in an appropriate way. Place carpet squares in a circle, making sure there is one square for each child. Invite the children to sit on the carpet squares. Begin by singing the first two lines of the following song, substituting the name of one of the children for *Alex*. Have the child who is named stand in the middle of the circle. Continue with the rest of the song, having the child in the middle act out the motions as they are described in the song. At the end of the song, have the child sit down. Begin singing the song again, naming a different child to stand in the middle of the circle. As the children become familiar with the song, encourage them to sing along with you. Repeat until each child has had a chance to stand in the middle of the circle and act out the motions.



 **Variation:** To encourage listening skills with this activity, change the movements each time you sing the song.

3 ON THE OUTSIDE

Materials

Four vases

Four mirrors

Activity

Learning to respect one another's differences is what this activity is all about. Have the children sit in a circle. Place four different vases in the middle of the circle. Ask the children to tell you what they are. Let them tell you how each vase is different from the others. Then ask the children if one vase is better than another for holding flowers. Encourage the idea that even though the vases are all different, they can all hold flowers. Repeat with four different hand mirrors, reinforcing the idea that while the shape or appearance of each mirror might be different, each one still shows your reflection.

Now have all the children stand. Ask them if they notice anything about their body shapes—each child has his or her own special shape. Lead them to the conclusion that while each child might have a different shape, each one is a person who is special and needs to be respected. Encourage the idea that liking someone and being kind to him or her should not depend on that person's shape or appearance. Sing the following song to reinforce the idea that each person is special in his or her own way.

Sung to: "The Farmer in the Dell"

I look just like me,

And you look just like you.

We all look just like ourselves.

Each one is special, too.

Gayle Bittinger

Extension: Let the children continue this concept at a table where a variety of cookie cutters have been set out. Point out that while each cookie cutter looks different, they all do the same job of cutting out shapes. Give each child some playdough. Let the children flatten the dough and use the cookie cutters to cut out a variety of shapes.



4 RAINBOW DOLLS

Materials

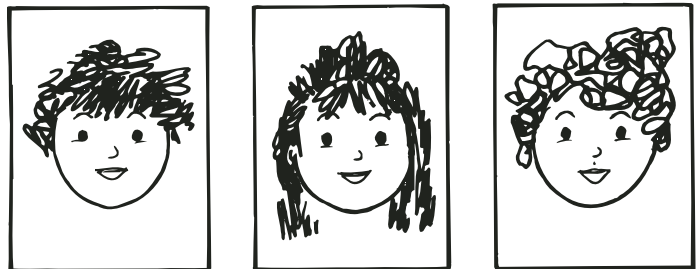
Plain paper
Black marker
Tape
Crayons

Activity

Respecting others is a big concept for young children. This activity teaches respect through stories and a child-created visual aid. For each child, draw a doll face without its hair on a sheet of plain paper. Tape the faces in a row on a wall at the children's eye level. Have the children sit in a circle. Talk about what it means to respect someone. Explain that respecting a person means appreciating and valuing the things that make him or her special, even when those things seem different to you. It means treating people nicely. Tell the children short stories about children playing together: *Katie wants to play on the swings, but Jason won't let her because she has a red shirt on. Dustin is playing blocks with three other boys. When Allie wants to play with them, he invites her to join them.* Encourage the children to think of other pretend situations like these. Have them tell you which children are being respectful and which ones are not.

Now have the children look at one another. Encourage them to notice how the other children look different from themselves because of different hair, clothes, body shapes, height, and so on. During their observations ask the children questions about respecting one another. Foster the idea that people should be respected no matter what they look like.

Set out crayons in a variety of rainbow colors. Let each child select a crayon to use to color in the hair on one of the doll pictures you have hung on the wall. When everyone is finished, look at all the dolls. Ask the children if all of the dolls look the same. *Should the blue-haired doll feel she is better than the green-haired doll? Should the pink-haired doll respect the purple-haired doll?* Reinforce the concept that each doll or person is special and different, and each should be respected.



5 YES AND NO

Materials

Red and green construction paper
Scissors
Marker

Activity

Expressing your own opinions and respecting others are at the heart of this activity. Before the activity begins, cut red and green construction paper into fourths to make small signs. Use a marker to write “Yes” on all the green signs and “No” on all the red signs. Make a green and a red sign for each child.

Have the children sit in a circle. Discuss opinions with the children. Explain that an opinion is the way a person feels about something; it isn’t something that is right or wrong. Explain that different people have different opinions. We should all respect one another’s opinions even when they are not the same as ours.

Now let the children explore their own opinions and discover how they are alike or different from everyone else’s. Pass out a green “Yes” sign and a red “No” sign to each child. Have the children hold their signs in their laps. Then ask the children a “yes” or “no” question such as the following:

- Do you like animals?
- Is pink your favorite color?
- Is pizza the most delicious food you’ve ever tasted?
- Do you like to go swimming?
- Would you like a dog for a pet?
- Would you like to fly in an airplane?
- Do you like snowy days the best?
- At the park, do you like swinging on the swings the most?
- Would you like to ride on a train?

Have each child hold up the sign that describes how he feels about the question. Count the green signs and the red signs. Have the children look around. Ask them if all their friends have the same opinion as they do. Reinforce the idea that people have different opinions about things and that their opinions should be respected.

6 RESPONSIBLE ME

Materials

Index card

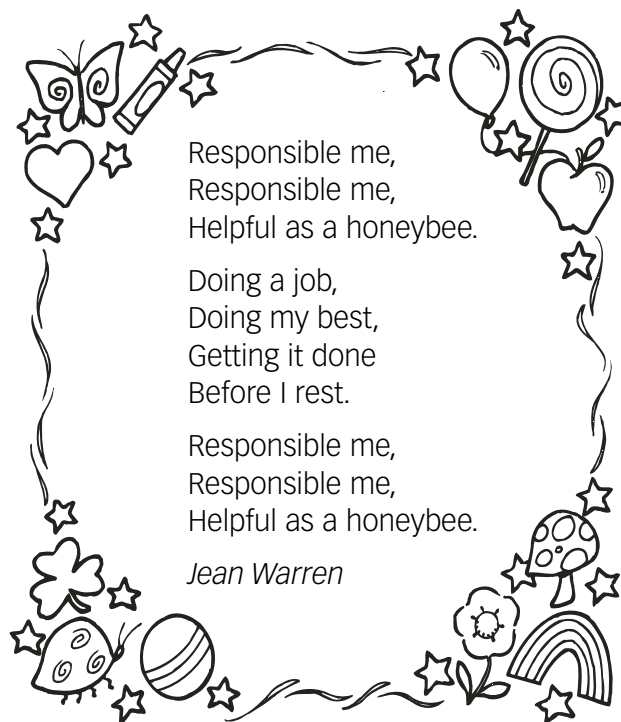
Marker

Activity

This activity introduces young children to the concept of responsibility and how it applies to them. Write the letter *R* on an index card. Show the children the card. Explain that the letter stands for the word *responsibility*. Say the word slowly and have everyone repeat it. Ask the children if they know what *responsibility* means. Help them brainstorm ideas. Encourage the idea that being responsible for something means that you take care of it.

Ask the children to think about the responsibilities they have as members of their families. Pass around the *R* card. As each child holds the card, have that child tell what he or she is responsible for taking care of at home. Possible answers include brushing teeth, picking up toys, making the bed, putting away clothes, or setting the table.

Teach the children the responsibility chant below. Have them clap out the rhythm. Say this chant frequently throughout the year.



Variation: Instead of talking about responsibilities as members of their families, have the children discuss their responsibilities as members of your group.

7 THE MIRROR AND ME


Materials

Hand mirror

Music

Activity

Learn about one another with this informative group activity. Have the children sit in a circle. Give one child a hand mirror to hold. Begin playing some music and have the children carefully pass the mirror around the circle. Stop the music. Let the child who is holding the mirror answer a question about him or herself. Start the music again and continue playing the game, stopping and starting the music as needed until everyone has had a turn.

 **Variation:** Instead of answering a question, have the child who is holding the mirror listen while classmates each tell one thing they like about him or her.

8 POSITIVE STATEMENTS POSTER

Materials

Poster board

Markers

Activity

Help the children practice positive statements with this activity. Hang a sheet of poster board on a wall. Invite the children to sit near the poster board. Ask them to think about the things they can say to help others feel happy. They could say:

You're nice.

I'm glad we're friends.

I like to play cars with you.

That's a great picture you're painting.

I like your playdough sculpture.

Write the children's positive statements on the poster board as they say them. Talk about the power of positive statements to help get along with others, or to help make the day go well. Leave your positive statement poster on the wall as a reminder to everyone to make lots of positive statements every day.

9 TALKING TUBE

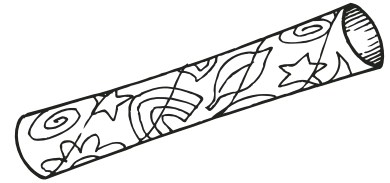
Materials

Cardboard tube

Crayons

Activity

Waiting for your turn to speak is a challenge for young children, but a talking tube can make this task a little easier for them. Decorate a cardboard paper towel tube with crayons to make a talking tube and show it to the children. Explain that this tube is similar to the Native American talking stick. Some Native Americans used a talking stick whenever a group of people was gathered together. Only the person holding the stick could talk. Everyone else had to listen. Then the person holding the stick would hand it to the next person to talk.



Sit with the children in a circle. Hold the talking tube and say your name. Pass the tube to the child beside you and have that child say his or her name. Continue until each child has said his or her name. Then ask the children to think of their favorite thing to do. Pass the talking tube to one of the children and have him or her name a favorite activity. Have the other children who have not had a turn silently raise their hands. Let the child with the talking tube give it to a child with his or her hand raised. Repeat until each child has had a turn. After the children have practiced with the talking tube, you may wish to use it whenever you want to have a group discussion in which one person at a time may talk.

10 THE CIRCLE OF NOISE

Materials

Yarn

Scissors

Activity

Help the children learn to distinguish between inside noise and outside noise with this activity. Cut a 15-foot length of yarn and arrange it on the floor in a circle. Have the children stand around the circle of yarn to make the "circle of noise." Explain to them that you will be making quiet and loud noises. When you make a quiet sound (dropping a paper clip to the ground, tapping drinking straws together), have them stand inside the circle of noise. When you make a loud sound (beating on a drum, banging blocks together), have them stand outside the circle of noise. Remind them to make quiet sounds when they are indoors and to save their loud sounds for outside.

11 HAPPY HANDS, SAD HANDS

Materials

None

Activity

Play this game after noticing the children fighting, hitting, pushing, or otherwise using their hands in inappropriate ways. Have the children stand in a circle. Begin with this rhyme:

Let's hold hands and circle round.
(Hold hands in a circle and walk around.)


Now everyone, please sit down.
(Sit down.)

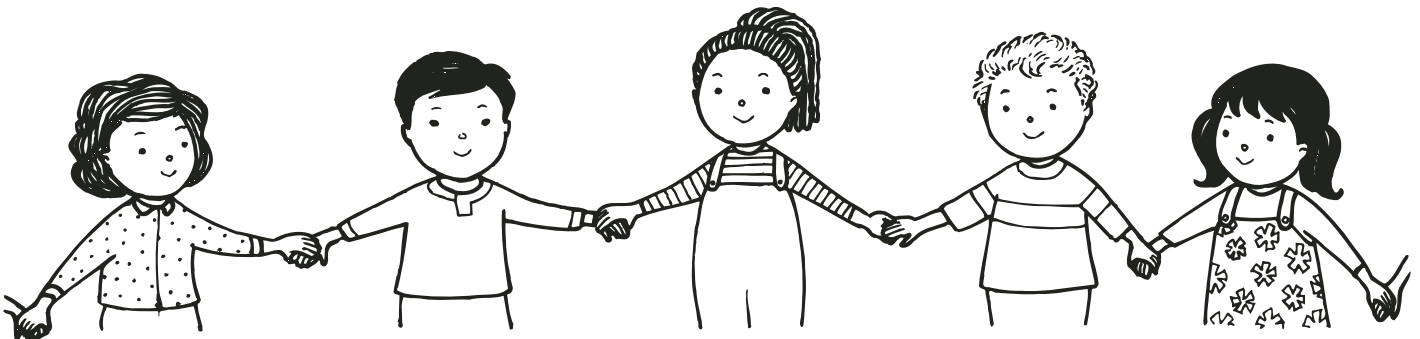
Place your hands in front of you
(Place hands in lap.)

And talk about what they can do.

Patty Claycomb

Explain to the children that "happy hands" are hands that do things to make others happy. "Sad hands" are hands that hurt others and make them sad. Have the children think of ways they use their happy hands such as waving, rocking a baby, holding a friend's hand, or softly patting someone. Then ask them to think of ways to use sad hands such as pushing or shoving, throwing toys, grabbing a toy from someone else, or pulling on a stuffed animal. Ask the children which kinds of hands they would rather be around. Have them tell you ways to use happy hands today.

 **Extension:** Cut hand shapes out of construction paper. Draw a happy face on half of the hand shapes and a sad face on the other half. Place the hand shapes on the floor, facedown. Let each child turn over a hand. If a happy face is showing, have the children name a way to use hands nicely. If a sad face is showing, let the child tell of a way that hands can hurt.



12 FEELINGS SONG

Materials

None

Activity

Have the children name feelings and ways to show them. Start with familiar feelings such as happy, sad, and mad. Then try feelings such as frustrated, worried, excited, and sleepy. When the children are feeling comfortable showing a range of feelings, let them help you fill in the blanks of the following song. Ask them to name a feeling and a way to show it. For example, the children could sing "If you're sad and you know it, cry boo-hoo." Repeat for as many different feelings as the children can name.

Sung to: "If You're Happy and You Know It"

If you're _____ and you know it,

_____.

If you're _____ and you know it,

_____.

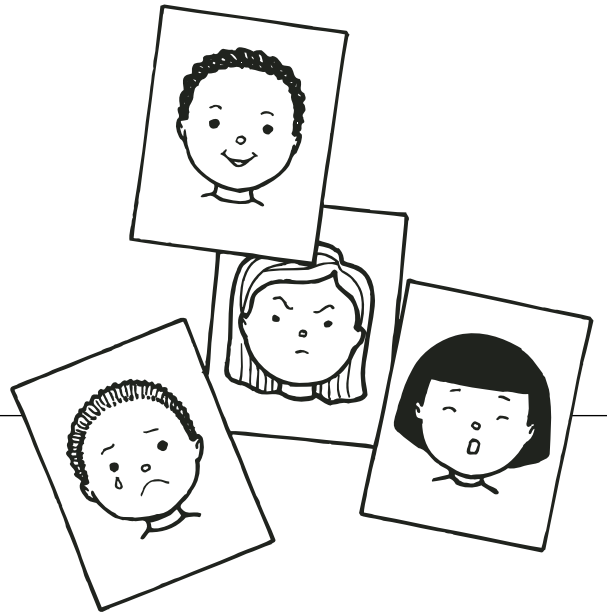
If you're _____ and you know it,

Then your face will surely show it.

If you're _____ and you know it,

_____.

Adapted Traditional



13 FEELING FACES

Materials

Index cards

Markers

Activity

Draw simple faces showing easy-to-recognize feelings on index cards. Mix up the cards and place them in a pile. Have the children sit in a circle. Choose one child to start. Have the child pick up one of the cards and look at it without showing it to anyone else. Ask the child to act out the feeling shown on the card. Let the other children try to guess what feeling the child is acting out. When they have guessed, choose another child to act out a different feeling.

14 KNOCK, KNOCK

Materials

None

Activity

Have the children sit in a circle. Talk about ways to express their feelings. Invite them to share their ideas with you. Tell the children that you have a special chant to help them express their feelings. Begin by having the children think of something that makes them happy, such as someone sharing their blocks. Choose one child to be the happy child. Then teach the children the following chant:

The child who is happy begins: *Knock, knock.*

The group responds with: *Who's there?*

The child says his or her name and the name of his or her feeling: *Amanda Happy.*


The group repeats the child's name and feeling: *Amanda Happy?*

The child gives a reason for his or her feeling: *Someone has shared their blocks.*

The group responds: *Oh, Amanda. Oh, Amanda. Oh, Amanda Happy!*

Patty Claycomb

Let the children practice saying the chant in response to situations you make up, such as a child sharing his or her snack, a child helping another child put away toys, a child being pushed, or a child left out of a game.

 **Variation:** This Knock, Knock chant can also be used for individual rule reminders, such as the following:

Teacher: *Knock, knock.*

Children: *Who's there?*

Teacher: *Teacher Happy.*

Children: *Teacher Happy?*

Teacher: *I saw a child putting his toys away.*

Children: *Oh, Teacher. Oh, Teacher. Oh, Teacher Happy!*

This chant can also be used to compliment the children when they are following the rules, such as cleaning up, washing hands, or sitting quietly.

15 FRIENDSHIP RING

Materials

Yarn

Scissors

Activity

Cut a length of yarn long enough for each child to hold onto part of it. Tie the ends of the yarn together to make a circle. Spread the yarn circle out on the floor. Have the children stand around the circle, hold onto a section of yarn in front of them, and pick it up while you recite the following rhyme:



Tell the children that the yarn circle they are holding is their friendship ring. Have them hold their friendship ring high in the air and low to the ground. Ask them to wiggle it and move it slowly up and down. Have them think of other ways to move the yarn. Tell the children that each of them has a friendship ring filled with friends and people they've met—people who should be cared for and respected. Then ask two or three children to let go of the yarn ring. What happens? The friendship ring starts to fall down. Explain that this is just like our real ring of friends; we need everyone to make it complete.

CHAPTER 2

Language and Literacy

16 WONDER WHY

Materials

Magazines

Scissors

Construction paper

Glue

Activity

Look through magazines to find pictures of unusual situations such as an apple in a swing, a cat standing on a scale, a dog reading a book, or a child sitting under a picnic table eating a piece of pie. Cut out the pictures and glue them to sheets of construction paper. Show the children one of the pictures. Have them think of reasons why the people or the animals in the picture are doing what they're doing. For example, if you show the children a picture of a family driving in a car with an empty bird cage tied to the top, the children could make up reasons such as they have lost their pet bird and are trying to catch a new one or they are letting the wind clean out the cage. Repeat with the remaining pictures.

17 WHAT IF?

Materials

None

Activity

Encourage the children's creative expression in brainstorming sessions centered around "What If" questions. Remind the children that there are no right or wrong answers. Help them to respect each child's attempts at creative thought and communication. Think of your own questions or try some of the following:

What if you had your own robot?
What if your teddy bear could sing and dance?
What if it rained all the time?
What if your family had no car?

What if animals could talk?
What if you were no bigger than your thumb?
What if you lived in a house made of ice?
What if you could fly?



18 HOW MANY WAYS?

Materials

None

Activity

Play this language game with the children. Ask them one of the following questions. Encourage them to think of as many responses as they can. Support the children's creative thinking by accepting all of their answers as "correct," even the absurd ones. Continue with as many questions as you and the children would like.

How many ways can you get across the room?
 How many ways can you say "hello"?
 How many ways can you go down the stairs?
 How many ways can you eat peanut butter?
 How many ways can you show you are happy?
 How many ways can you get across a river?
 How many ways can you play with a ball?

19 RHYMING RIDDLES

Materials

None


Activity

Encourage the children's language and listening skills with this activity. Read one of the following rhyming riddles to the children. Have them tell you what the riddle is about. Remind them that the name of the item rhymes with the word given in the riddle.

I am thinking of something that is straight or curly and rhymes with *chair*. What is it? (Hair.)

I am thinking of something that is red, white, and blue and rhymes with *tag*. What is it? (Flag.)

I am thinking of something that has windows and doors and rhymes with *mouse*. What is it? (House.)

 **Extension:** Once the children are familiar with this game, let them think of their own riddles to say and solve.

20 STORY BAG

Materials

Objects for storytelling

Bag

Activity

Collect a variety of interesting, non-breakable items to use while telling a story. For example, you could collect a toy car, a plastic animal, a small stuffed animal, a spoon, a block, a game piece, a small book, a crayon, a pair of sunglasses, and a hat. Place all of the objects in a cloth or paper bag.

To play the story bag game, start a simple story with an opening line such as "One day as I was walking down the street . . ." Pause and ask the child sitting next to you to draw one of the objects out of the bag. Incorporate the object into your story. If the child draws a spoon out of the bag, you could continue your story like this ". . . I was eating a bowl of chocolate pudding. All of a sudden . . ." Ask another child to pull a new object from the story bag. Incorporate that object into your story as you continue. Keep telling your story until all of the objects are used. As the children become familiar with this activity, let them help you tell the story. Eventually, the children will be able to make up a story all by themselves.



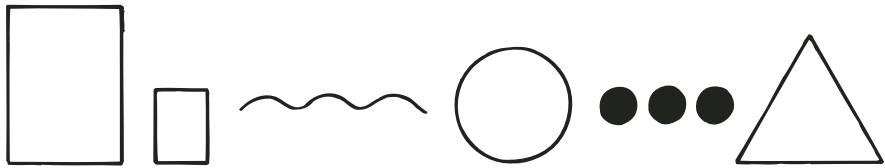
Variation: Older children may enjoy this story-telling variation. Have the children sit in a circle. Tell the children that they will be making a story web. Let them help you choose a topic for the story, such as a day at the park, going to the beach, or playing with friends. With a ball of yarn in one of your hands, start telling your story. When you arrive at a stopping point, hold onto the end of the yarn and roll the rest of it to one of the children. Have that child continue the story for a while, then hold onto the yarn and roll the ball to another child. (Let the children who do not wish to play say "pass" and roll the yarn ball to another child in the circle.) When the story is finished, have the children look at the story "web" they have made on the floor.

Extension: Record the story bag stories as you and the children tell them. Write down the stories and let the children illustrate them.

21 SYMBOL STORIES


Materials

Paper
Markers



Activity

Symbol stories encourage children to use their imagination. On a large sheet of paper, draw a symbol story line consisting of a large rectangle, a small rectangle, a wavy line, a circle, three black dots and a triangle. Show the story line to the children. Have the children think of people or objects the symbols can represent in a story. For example, for this story line the children could tell a story like this, "The mother bear and the baby bear ran down to the lake. They caught three fish and stayed in a tent." Or, the children could tell the story this way, "The big truck and the little car drove over the mountain and stopped at a big town. They stayed for three days and went home."

 **Extension:** Let the children draw their own symbol story lines. Encourage them to share their stories and story lines with you.

22 ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

Materials

None

Activity

Play this thought-provoking language game with the children. Give the children an "answer" and have them think up "questions" that fit the answer. Below are examples of answers and their possible questions.

Answer: Three


Question: How old is Katie? How many apples are there? How many boys wore shorts?

Answer: Yes

Question: Did we read a story today? Do you like pizza? Will we sing songs?

Answer: Yesterday

Question: When did we go to the library? When did we paint our pictures?

 **Hint:** You may need to give the children many examples of this game before they catch on to how it is played. Or you may wish to begin playing this game by having the children give you the answers while you make up the questions.

23 SIMON SAYS OPPOSITES

Materials

None

Activity

Test the children's mastery of opposites with this version of Simon Says. Tell the children that you will be giving them directions to follow. If you give a regular direction such as, "Stand on one foot," then they should follow that direction. If, however, the direction begins with the words *Simon says*, then they should do the opposite of what you say. For example, if you say, "Hop on one foot," the children hop on one foot. If you say, "Simon says stand up," the children do the opposite and sit down.

- ☉ **Variation:** Let the children take turns giving the commands. Be sure to have them mix in regular commands with "Simon says" commands.
- ☉ **Extension:** Sing this song to the children. Have them listen carefully for the regular commands and the "Simon says" commands. Once they have mastered the actions, let them help you make up additional verses to sing.

Sung to: "Three Blind Mice"

Hop on one foot.
(*Hop on one foot.*)

Hop on the other.
(*Hop on other foot.*)

Simon says "stand up."
(*Do the opposite—sit down.*)

Simon says "sit down."
(*Do the opposite—stand up.*)

Now it's time to spin around,
(*Spin around.*)

Simon says "please touch the ground,"
(*Do the opposite—reach up to the sky.*)

Simon says "run around."
(*Do the opposite—walk in place.*)

Now please stop.
(*Stand still.*)

Gayle Bittinger



24 COLORFUL EGGS

Materials

Various colors of construction paper
Scissors
Basket

Activity

Cut six-inch egg shapes out of pink, red, green, white, blue, and yellow construction paper. Make sure you have enough eggs so that each child can have one. Have the children sit in a circle. Choose one child to be the bunny and give the child a basket. Pass out the paper egg shapes to the remaining children, handing out at least one egg of every color. Read the first three verses of the following rhyme. In the third verse, substitute the number of children holding pink eggs for the word *one*. Have the bunny hop around the circle, picking up all of the pink eggs, counting as he or she goes. Repeat for each of the next five verses. During the last verse, have the bunny redistribute the eggs. Choose another child to be the bunny and begin again.

There once was a bunny who came to town,
Carrying a basket big and brown.

The bunny went here, the bunny went there,
Looking for eggs everywhere!

"I'm getting near, that's what I think."
Then he found one egg colored pink.

He looked some more, and scratched his head.
Then he found one egg colored red.

These eggs were the prettiest he'd ever seen.
Then he found one egg colored green.

Hunting for eggs was such a delight.
Soon he found one egg colored white.

The bunny was happy, you would be, too.
Then he found one more egg colored blue.

"My, oh, my," he said, "I'm such a lucky fellow,"
When at last he found one egg colored yellow.

"My basket is so full, oh, what can I do?
I know, I'll share my eggs with you."

Jean Warren
Susan Paprocki



25 SYMBOLIC PROP STORIES

Materials

Various

Activity

Storytelling props, such as hats, puppets, and flannelboard figures can bring literature to life for preschoolers. Props capture children's attention and help young minds visualize story characters and action. But choosing story props ahead of time can also deny children an opportunity to use their imagination. Once in a while, it's fun to let the children decide what props should be used to tell a story. The benefits are many: Children get to use their imaginations; there are no right or wrong choices; everyone successfully contributes to the story; children learn that they can act out stories even if they do not have the exact story characters to play with; and searching for symbolic characters helps children strengthen their thinking skills.

To begin with, choose a story the children are familiar with, such as "The Three Bears." Guide the children in following these four simple steps.

Step	Example
1. Determine what props you will need.	For "The Three Bears" you will need three bears, Goldilocks, three bowls, three chairs, and three beds.
2. Now you're ready to begin collecting props. Start with the items that establish the setting of the story.	For this story you will need bowls, chairs, and beds in three different sizes. For the three bowls, the children may decide on small, medium, and large blocks. For the three chairs, they may choose a cup, a pan, and a book. For the three beds, they may select a blanket, a pillow, and a shoe box.
3. Next, ask the children to find items to represent the characters in the story.	For this story you will need three different sizes of bears and a child. The children may choose a toy car, a beanbag, and a hat to represent the bears, and a marker to stand in for Goldilocks.
4. Now that you have your story characters, let the story begin. Strive to include all of the children in the storytelling.	As you tell the story, invite the children to come up and move the props around.

26 FUN WITH BOOKS

Materials

Picture books

Activity

Select a children's picture book that is unfamiliar to you and the children. "Read" the book with the children by looking only at the illustrations and making up a story about just what you see in the pictures. (Do not read the words at this time.) Let the children think of names for the characters and describe what is happening in the illustrations. After enjoying the story you and the children have created, read the author's story together. Ask the children which story they liked better.

Variation: As you are reading a new picture book with the children, stop frequently to ask questions. Try asking the children questions about what they think will happen next, why a particular character is feeling a certain way, or what made the character want to do that. Have the children tell you what they would do if they were that character.



27 NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Materials

None

Activity

Ask the children to name some of the ways people communicate without words. For example, waving your hand to say "Hello" or "Good-bye," holding a finger to your lips to say "Be quiet," or holding out your hand to say "Stop." Then sing the following song with the children. Let them help you make up additional verses using different hand signals.

Extension: This is a great time to introduce sign language. Check out a sign language book from the library and learn a few simple signs to teach the children.



28 WORDS ALL AROUND US


Materials

Magazines

Scissors

Activity

Look through magazines to find examples of environmental print that are familiar to the children. For example, you may find a picture of a stop sign, an exit sign, a walk sign, and a restaurant franchise logo. Have the children sit in a circle. Show them one of the word pictures. Point to the letters in the word. Talk about how letters are put together to make words. Ask them to tell you what word is on this picture. Repeat with the other word pictures. Have them look around the room to find other words they can read.

 **Extension:** Encourage the children to bring in examples of other words they see and read every day. Make a bulletin board display of all the words the children know.

29 ALPHABET LETTER MAGNETS

Materials

Alphabet letter magnets

Magnet board

Activity

Set out upper- and lower-case alphabet letter magnets and a magnet board. Invite the children to join you in playing these fun letter identification games.

Matching Letters: Mix up five pairs of upper- and lower-case alphabet letter magnets and place them on the floor in front of the magnet board. Ask one of the children to find a pair of matching letters and place them on the magnet board. Ask another child to find a second pair of matching letters. Repeat for each letter pair.

Alphabetical Order: Pass out all of the upper-case letters to the children. (Some children may have more than one letter.) Begin saying the alphabet very slowly. As you name each letter, pause and let the child holding that letter place it in on the magnet board.

Find a Letter: Place the alphabet letters on the floor. Ask one child to choose a letter, name it, and place it on the magnet board.



30

LISTEN TO THE SOUND

Materials

Familiar objects

Activity

Collect the familiar objects named in the song below: stuffed toy cat, cookie, ball, stuffed toy bear, jump rope, block, doll, puzzle, and pan. Set out the cat, cookie, and ball. Sing the first verse of the song to the children. Have them listen carefully to each word. Ask them to tell you which word starts with a different letter sound. Sing the verse again, if needed. Repeat for each verse.

Sung to: "The Farmer in the Dell"

Cat, cookie, ball,

Cat, cookie, ball,

One of these does not belong,

Cat, cookie, ball.

Bear, jump rope, block,

Bear, jump rope, block,

One of these does not belong,

Bear, jump rope, block.


Doll, puzzle, pan,

Doll, puzzle, pan,

One of these does not belong,

Doll, puzzle, pan.

Gayle Bittinger

 **Variation:** Make up your own verses to go along with familiar objects you have on hand. Or let the children take turns making up verses for one another.

CHAPTER 3

Math

31 COUNTING SONG

Materials

Construction paper

Markers

Activity

Number 10 sheets of construction paper from 1 to 10. Pass out the cards to 10 of the children. Sing the following counting song with the children. As each number is named, have the child holding that number raise it above his or her head. At the end of the song, give the number cards to different children and sing the song again.

Sung to: "The Farmer in the Dell"

One, two, three, four, five,

Six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

We can count from one to ten.

Let's all count again.

Gayle Bittinger



32 COUNTING CATCHES

Materials

Beanbag

Activity

Play this activity with the children to practice their counting and hand-eye coordination. Have the children stand in a big circle, leaving at least three feet of space between each child. Give one child a beanbag. Have him or her toss it to the next child in the circle. Have that child, in turn, toss the beanbag to the next child. As the beanbag travels around the circle, have the children count each time it is caught. Ask them to tell you how many times the beanbag was caught as it went around the circle. Challenge the children to see how many times they can catch and count the beanbag without dropping it.

33 NUMBER MATCH GAME


Materials


Index cards

Markers

Activity

Number 10 index cards from 1 to 10 to make a set of number cards. Make a set of cards for each child and one for yourself. Give each child a set of number cards. To play the game, hold up a number card from your set. Have the children look through their cards to find the one with the matching number and place it on the floor in front of them. Repeat for each number in the set. If you wish, let the children take turns holding up a number card for the others to match.

 **Hint:** For younger children, make number card sets with cards from 1 to 5. Write each number in a different color. For older children, make number card sets with cards from 1 to 20, or just cards from 11 to 20.

 **Variation:** Number 10 sheets of construction paper from 1 to 10. Place the numbered sheets all around the room. Give each child a set of number cards. Have the children walk around the room, finding the numbered sheets and placing their matching numbered cards on top of them.

34 SEASONAL NUMBER RHYME

Materials

Felt
Scissors
Flannelboard

Activity

Cut 10 simple flower shapes out of felt. Place one of the shapes on a flannelboard. Read the following rhyme to the children. At the end of each verse, let one of the children add another flower to the flannelboard. At the end of the rhyme, have the children help you count each shape.

One little flower, damp with morning dew,
Along comes another one, then there are two.

Two little flowers, looking right at me,
Along comes another one, then there are three.

Three little flowers, growing by the door,
Along comes another one, then there are four.

Four little flowers, looking quite alive,
Along comes another one, then there are five.

Five little flowers, in a pretty fix,
Along comes another one, then there are six.

Six little flowers, loved by little Devan,
Along comes another one, then there are seven.

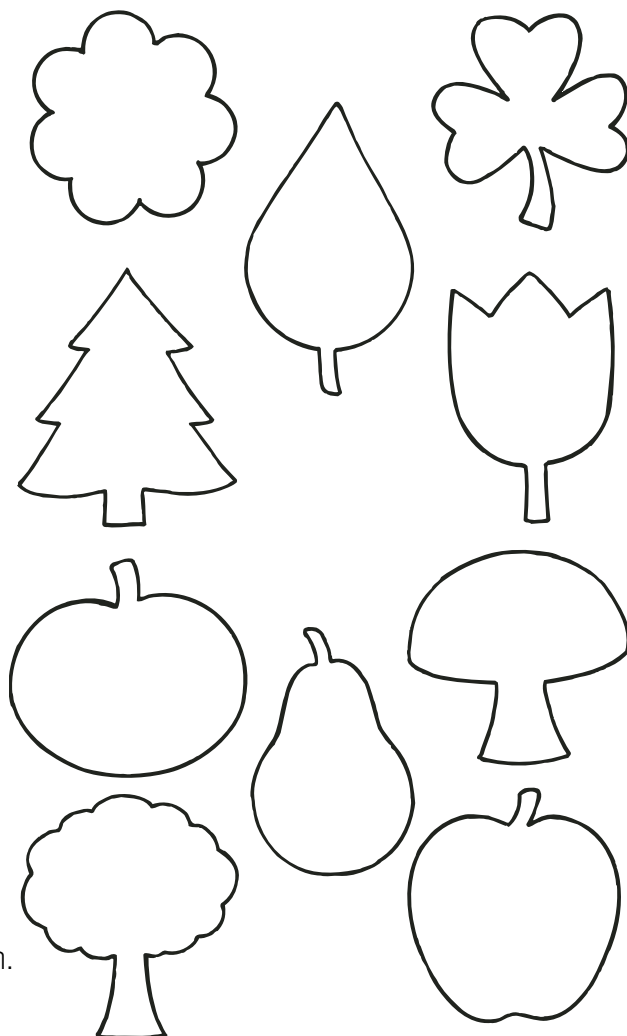
Seven little flowers, growing by the gate.
Along comes another one, then there are eight.

Eight little flowers, growing in a line,
Along comes another one, then there are nine.

Nine little flowers, just for you, my friend,
Along comes another one, then there are ten.

Ten little flowers, count them once again,
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

Gayle Bittinger



 **Variation:** Substitute other seasonal shapes (pumpkins, evergreens, leaves) for the felt pieces and the word *flowers* in the rhyme.

35 HOW MANY?

Materials

Five teddy bears
Five hats
Five toys
Five books

Activity

Set out five teddy bears. Collect five hats that will fit on the teddy bears, five small toys, and five books. Have the children sit around the teddy bears. Count the teddy bears together. Now set out three hats. Have one of the children place each hat on a different bear. Ask the children if there are enough hats for each bear to have one. How many more do they need? Help the child count the remaining two bears without hats, then give them two more hats to place on the teddy bears. Repeat with the toys and the books, starting with a different number of items each time. When all of the teddy bears have their own hats, toys, and books, sing the following song with the children:



Extension: Give each child a sheet of construction paper and five precut teddy bear shapes (available from school supply stores). Have the children glue their teddy bear shapes onto their papers. Then give each child five star stickers, five heart stickers, and five circle stickers to add to their teddy bears. Encourage the children to count as they glue on their bear shapes and add the stars, hearts, and circles.

36 WALK AROUND THE SHAPE

Materials

Masking tape

Activity

Active, hands-on learning is a wonderful way to teach young children about shapes. Before beginning this activity, use pieces of masking tape to make a large outline of a circle on the floor. Have the children stand around the outside of the shape. Talk about what a circle looks like. Guide them to notice that a circle is round with no sharp edges. Then sing the following song while the children walk, hop, and crawl around the circle outline on the floor.


Sung to: "Skip to My Lou"

Walk, walk around the circle,
Walk, walk around the circle,
Walk, walk around the circle,
Walk around the circle.

Hop, hop around the circle,
Hop, hop around the circle,
Hop, hop around the circle,
Hop around the circle.

Crawl, crawl around the circle,
Crawl, crawl around the circle,
Crawl, crawl around the circle,
Crawl around the circle.

Gayle Bittinger

 **Extension:** Repeat this activity to introduce other shapes (square, triangle, rectangle, oval, etc.) to the children.



37 SHAPES IN THE AIR

Materials

None

Activity

Have the children draw circles in the air with you while you sing the following song. At the end of the song, challenge the children to use their bodies to make a circle. Ask the children to hold their arms or their bodies in a circle shape. Can they make a circle with everyone? Let them think of other ways to make circles with their bodies.

Sung to: "The Mulberry Bush"


This is a circle as you can see,

You can see, you can see.

This is a circle as you can see,

Now draw it in the air with me.

Neoma Kreuter

 **Extension:** Repeat this activity for other shapes.

38 SHAPE PICTURES

Materials

Poster board

Scissors


Magnet board

Glue

Magnets

Activity

Cut small, medium, and large sizes of circle, squares, triangles, and rectangles out of different colors of poster board. Glue a small magnet to the back of each shape. Set out the shapes and a magnet board. Let the children take turns arranging the shapes on the magnet board to make shape pictures. Encourage them to name the shapes as they make their pictures.

 **Extension:** Use the shapes to play this game. Place one large circle, one small circle, and one large square on the magnet board. Ask the children to tell you which shape is not the same. Repeat with other combinations of shapes and sizes.


39 I SPY A SHAPE

Materials

Construction paper
Scissors
Tape

Activity

Cut circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles out of construction paper. Put a loop of tape on the back of each shape. Arrange the shapes on a table, tape-side up. Have the children sit in a circle. Ask them to look around the room to find objects of different shapes. Point out any you see, such as a round clock, a square block, a rectangular door, and a triangular roof on the doll house. Then ask one child at a time to choose a shape from the table and stick it to something in the room with the matching shape.

 **Hint:** You may need to add a few “shapely” objects to your room for this activity.


40 SHAPE BINGO

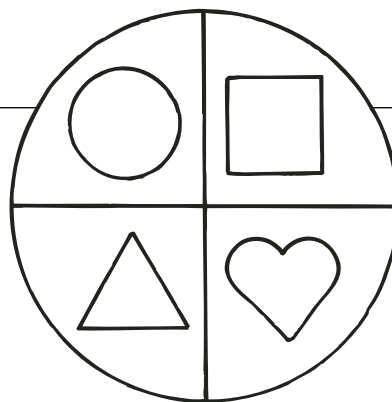
Materials

Drawing markers
Paper plates
Index cards
Markers, such as coins or dried beans

Activity

Make a shape bingo card by dividing a paper plate into quarters and drawing a different shape (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, heart, star, oval, etc.) in each section. Make a shape bingo card for each child, using a different combination of shapes. Draw each of the shapes used on an index card. Give each child a shape bingo card and four markers. Mix up the shape cards and hold one up. Have each child with the matching shape on his or her bingo card place a marker over that shape. Repeat with the remaining shape cards. When a child has all four shapes covered, have him or her shout, “Bingo!” Continue holding up the shape cards until all of the children have shouted, “Bingo!”

 **Variation:** Divide the paper plates into six sections instead of four, using additional shapes as needed. To teach colors and shapes, draw the shapes in various colors. In order to cover a section with a marker, the shape and the color must match.



41 SHAPE DANCE

Materials

Construction paper

Scissors

Hole punch

Yarn

Activity

Cut three-inch circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles out of construction paper. Make sure there is one shape for each child. Use a hole punch to punch a hole near the top of each shape. Thread a short length of yarn through each hole and tie it to make a necklace. Give each child a shape necklace and have him or her say the name of the shape. Have the children form a big circle. Read the rhyme to the children and have them move all around as directed. At the end of the rhyme, have the children trade necklaces and do the shape dance all over again.

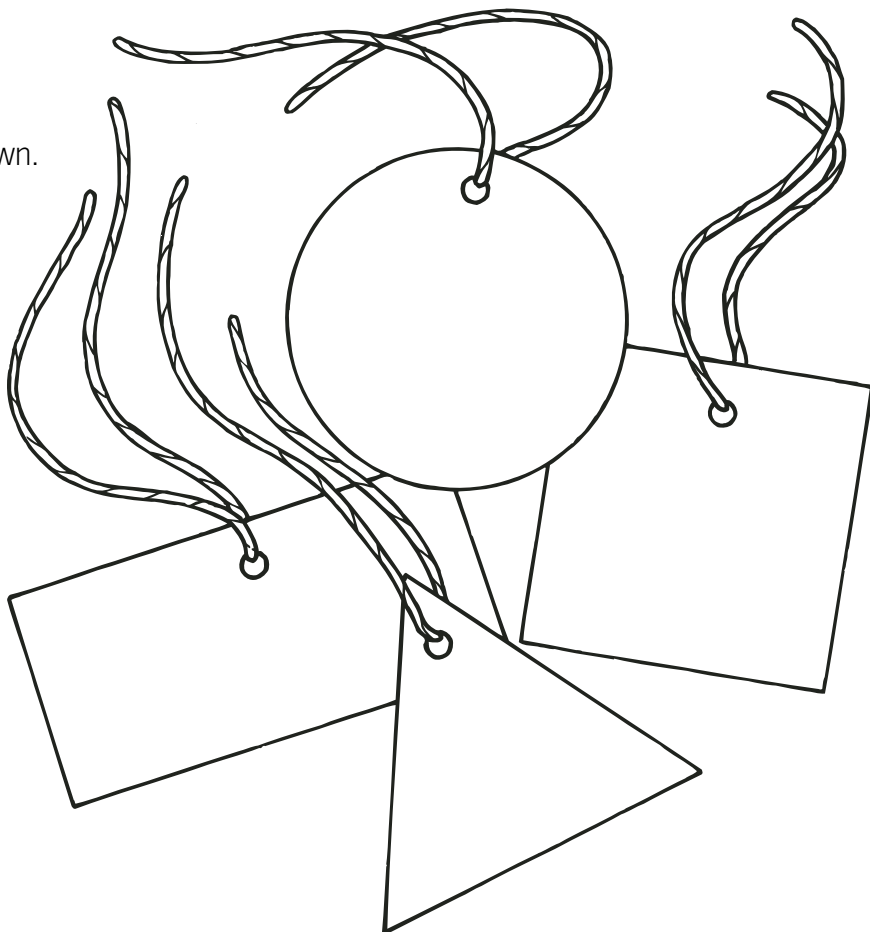
Circles step forward
Then turn around,
Back to your place
While squares jump up and down.

Triangles hop to the middle
And back again,
Find the rectangles
And shake their hands.

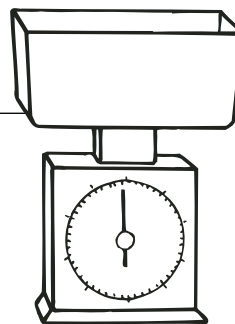
Now rectangles slowly
Turn around,
Clap your hands
And make a sound.

Do-si-do, around
The circle we go,
All the shapes walk
Heel to toe.

Jean Warren



42 WHAT DOES IT WEIGH?



Materials


Kitchen scale

Fruits and vegetables

Activity

Set out a kitchen scale and a variety of sturdy fruits and vegetables (apples, oranges, cantaloupe, potatoes, yams, zucchini, carrots, small pumpkins, etc.). Place a potato on the scale and show the children how to read its weight. Place a second potato on the scale and ask the children how much two potatoes weigh. Once they are familiar with reading the numbers on the scale, ask them to weigh the other produce. If you wish, give them problems to solve. How much do three apples weigh? Which weighs more, five carrots or one pumpkin? How many oranges does it take to weigh more than five pounds? Encourage the children to think up their own problems, as well.

 **Hint:** When doing this activity with younger children, concentrate on the concept of what weighs the most and what weighs the least, instead of specific weights.

 **Extension:** Help the children make a chart to compare the weights of the various fruits and vegetables you have set out.

43 LENGTHY FUN

Materials

Ribbon

Scissors

Activity

Cut ribbon into varying lengths. Set out several ribbons. Let the children help you arrange the ribbons in order from shortest to longest. Repeat with other sets of ribbons. Then use one of the short ribbons to measure your leg. Have the children count the number of times the short ribbon fits on your leg. Next, use one of the long ribbons to measure your leg again. Ask the children to guess if it will take more or less ribbon lengths to measure your leg with the long ribbon. Then give each child a ribbon. Let the children use their ribbons to measure their arms and legs. Then have them use the ribbons to measure objects around the room.

44 SHAPE PATTERNS

Materials

Felt
Scissors
Flannelboard



Activity

Cut squares and circles out of several different colors of felt. Give each child and yourself an identical set of felt shapes. Use your felt shapes to make a pattern on a flannelboard. Have the children use their shapes to repeat your pattern. Name the pattern together. Make a new pattern with your shapes. As you are putting the shapes on the flannelboard, ask the children to predict which color and shape will come next. Once the children have copied several of your patterns, let them try making their own patterns.


45 PATTERNS IN SOUND

Materials

None

Activity

Talk about the many different sounds the children can make with their voices and bodies. Let each child demonstrate a different sound, such as clapping, stomping, tapping, clicking, laughing, or whispering. Tell the children that you would like to take their sounds and use them to make a pattern. Choose two sounds, such as clapping and stomping. Have everyone join you as you clap, stomp, clap, stomp. Then let the children think up other sound patterns to make.

 **Variation:** Sing the following song. Let the children choose which actions they would like to do. Substitute the names of those actions for *stomp*, *jump*, and *clap*.

Sung to: “Frere Jacques”

Stomp-jump-clap, stomp-jump-clap.
Stomp-jump-clap, stomp-jump-clap.
Stomp-jump and clap,
Stomp-jump and clap.
Stomp-jump-clap, stomp-jump-clap.

Gayle Bittinger

CHAPTER 4

Science

46 PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

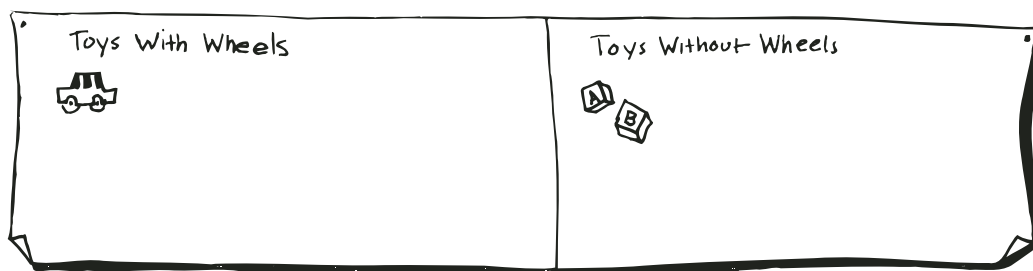
Materials

Magazines
Scissors
Manila envelopes
Poster board
Index cards
Glue

Activity

Recognizing similarities and differences and classifying are important science skills. This activity will help young children develop both of these skills. Look through magazines to collect a variety of interesting pictures. As you collect the pictures, categorize them according to topic. Manila envelopes work well for this purpose. You might start with five or six categories, such as people, transportation, animals, plants, houses, and toys. Look for pictures of all sizes. Glue large pictures onto pieces of poster board and smaller ones onto index cards.

Once you have collected a number of pictures in each category, use them to explore similarities and differences with the children. For example, show the children eight or ten dog pictures. Have them think of ways the dogs are the same and ways the dogs are different. Let them decide on how to categorize the dogs—by size, by color, by type, by whether or not it is wearing a collar, or by some other criteria. Repeat with other sets of pictures. Encourage the children to think of a wide range of ways to sort each group. For example, they could sort pictures of people by age, facial expression, or whether they are sitting or standing. They could sort pictures of houses by color, by size, by number of windows, or by whether or not they have a chimney.




47 SAME AND DIFFERENT

Materials

Familiar objects

Activity

Help the children develop their observational skills with this activity. Have the children sit in a circle and place five or six familiar objects (a block, a rubber ball, a key, a clothespin, and a crayon) in the middle. Ask the children to compare and contrast the items. Encourage them to notice the size, shape, material, and color of each object. Let them think of something each object has in common (they are all found in our room, they are all useful, etc.) and a way in which they are all different (each one is a different size, each one is a different color, etc.).

 **Hint:** When doing this activity with younger children, you may need to ask specific questions about the objects' characteristics. For example, you could ask the children to tell you which object is yellow, which one you write with, or which one is small.

48 BUG IN THE RUG GAME

Materials

Large blanket

Activity

Play this game to develop children's observation skills. Spread a large blanket out on the floor and have the children sit around the edges of it. Ask one child to step away from the group and turn around. Choose another child to be the "bug" that hides under the blanket "rug." Ask the first child to rejoin the group. Sing the following song. At the end of the song, pause and let the child name the "bug under the rug."

Sung to: "Eensy, Weensy Spider"

There's a little bug
Who is hiding in this rug.
Will you play this game
And try to guess its name?
Do you know the bug
Who is hiding in the rug?
Yes, I do. Yes, it's true.
The bug's name is _____.

49 BACKWARDS PHOTOS

Materials

Sheet

Camera with film

Activity

This activity develops children's observational and deductive reasoning skills. To prepare, you will need to take a photograph of the back of each child. To make the pictures look consistent, hang a sheet in the corner of your room. One at a time, have the children stand in front of the sheet with their backs to you. Take a picture of each child's back, then have the photos developed. Invite the children to sit in a circle. Hold up one of the photos. Have the children guess whose back is showing in the picture. Encourage them to observe the details in the photograph. Ask them to think about who has hair like that. Who wears clothes like that? Help them put all the information together to guess whose back is in the photo. When the children guess correctly, hang the photo on a bulletin board. Continue until all the children have been identified.


50 NATURE WALK STORIES

Materials

Art materials

Activity

Sharing ideas in a variety of ways is one thing that scientists do. This activity encourages the children to think about three different ways to communicate a group experience. Take the children on an outdoor nature walk. After the walk, have the children sit in a circle and remember what they saw on the walk. Let each child decide how he or she would like to share a story about the walk with the group—by dictating a story, drawing a picture, or acting out something they saw. Set out art materials (construction paper, markers, scissors, glue, etc.) for the children who would prefer to draw a picture of the walk. Have pencil and paper ready for those who would like to dictate a story. Let the children who would like to act out something practice in a separate area. When all the children are finished, have them sit in a circle. Let each child share his or her own nature walk story through the retelling of a dictated story, showing a picture, or acting out a scene. Encourage the children to ask one another questions.

 **Variation:** Try this activity to communicate any kind of story or information, such as "How to Care for a Pet," "What We Did at School Today," or "My Family."

51 SHADOW EXPLORATIONS

Materials

Bright light

Activity


Set up a bright light to shine on a blank wall in your room or in a hallway. Have the children sit near the light. Invite three children to stand between the light and the wall to make shadows on the wall. Ask them to make their shadows move around while you read the following rhyme. Have them find ways to make their shadows do all of the things that the shadows in the rhyme are doing. At the end of the rhyme, choose three new children to make shadows on the wall.

Shadows, shadows, jump up and down
Shadows, shadows, turn around.

Shadows, shadows, get very small.
Shadows, shadows, get very tall.

Shadows, shadows, wave your hands.
Shadows, shadows, now please stand.

Gayle Bittinger

 **Variation:** If it is a sunny day, take the children outside to make shadows.



52 BUZZ

Materials

Familiar object

Activity

For this game, let the children help you choose a small, familiar object that can be easily hidden. To play this game, have the children sit in a circle. Select two of them to be the searchers. Have the searchers turn their backs or leave the room while you and the other children hide the selected object. When the searchers return, have the other children start buzzing. Explain to the searchers that the closer they get to the hidden object, the louder the others will buzz. The farther away they get from the hidden object, the softer the others will buzz. When the searchers finally find the hidden object, let them choose two new children to be the searchers.


53 THE FAN CLUB

Materials

Various kinds of paper

Activity

Talk about how people use paper fans to cool themselves on hot days. Show them a paper fan you have made by folding a sheet of paper back and forth, accordion style. Use the fan to gently fan each child. Help the children make their own accordion fans using a variety of papers, such as construction paper, tissue paper, index cards, and newspaper. Have the children test their fans. Ask the children to think about which fans work the best, which fans are the easiest to make, and which fans they like the best. Then let them make as many different fans as they wish.

 **Extension:** Ask the children to think about other ways to keep cool when the weather is hot. Then sing the following song together. Let the children fan themselves while they sing.

Sung to: “Sing a Song of Sixpence”

When the days of summer
Get so very hot,
I start to look for
A special cool spot.
Sitting by a big fan
Is, oh, so very nice,
Or soaking in a bathtub
Filled with water cold as ice!

Out beneath a shade tree,
That’s where I will go—
Drinking lemonade
And dreaming of cold snow.
Maybe I’ll make Popsicles™
Or jump into the pool—
Summer is a lot of fun
If you can just keep cool!

Jean Warren



54 ENVIRONMENTS GAME

Materials

Poster board

Markers

Magazines

Scissors

Activity

Set out three sheets of poster board and draw a different environment (sky, ocean, forest) on each one. Look through magazines to find pictures of animals that live in these environments. Place the environments posters in the middle of the circle. Let the children take turns choosing an animal picture and placing it on the environment where it lives. Sing the following song when all of the animal pictures are in their environments:

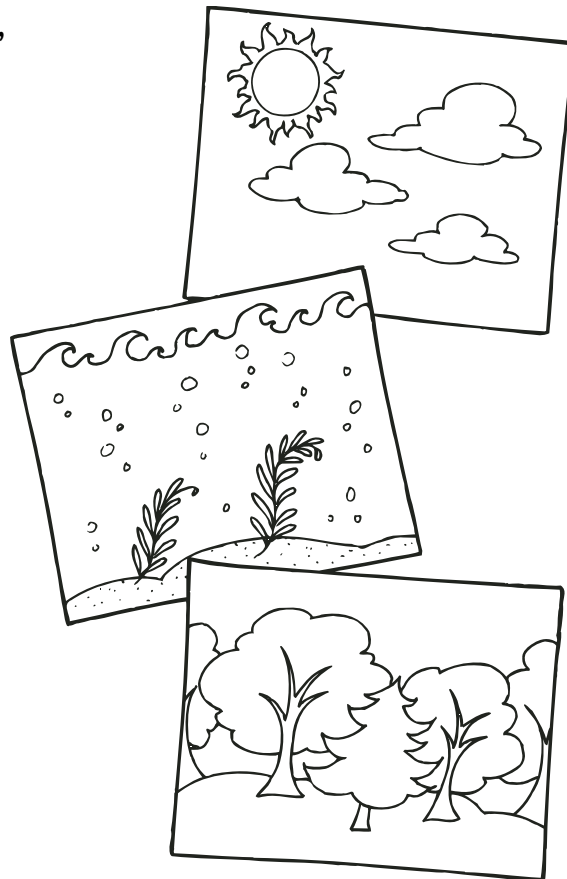
Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

In the ocean you will find
Animals of every kind.
Sharks and fish and dolphins, too,
Octopus and whales of blue.
In the ocean you will find
Animals of every kind.

In the blue sky you will find
Animals of every kind.
Robins, bats, and bald eagles,
Hummingbirds and gray seagulls.
In the blue sky you will find
Animals of every kind.

In the forest you will find
Animals of every kind.
Bears and deer and ringed raccoons.
Timber wolves howling at the moon.
In the forest you will find
Animals of every kind.

Gayle Bittinger



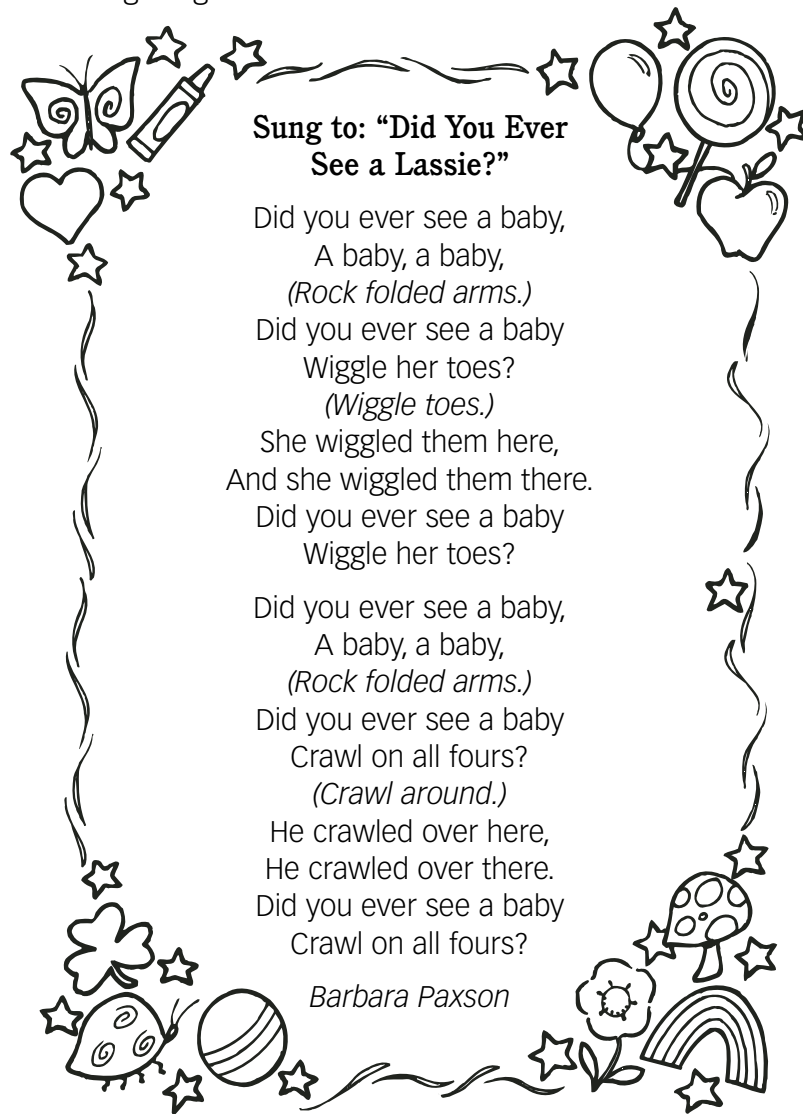
55 WHEN WE WERE SMALL


Materials

Baby photos

Activity

Show the children pictures of a baby, a one-year-old, a two-year-old, and a three-year-old. Ask the children to think about the things they have learned to do over the years. What can they do now that they couldn't do as babies? Sing the following song with the children:



 **Hint:** Instead of providing the baby pictures, ask the children to bring in pictures of when they were infants, one-year-olds, two-year-olds, and three-year-olds.

56 WHAT IS THE WEATHER?

Materials

Magazines

Scissors

Activity

Cut out magazine pictures that depict sunny, rainy, snowy, and windy weather. Show the pictures to the children. Ask them to tell you what kinds of activities they can do outside in each kind of weather. Then sing the following song. Have the children shout out the kind of weather needed for that activity at the end of each verse. If you wish, let the children make up additional verses.



Sung to: "Do You Know the Muffin Man?"

When you build a great snowman,
A great snowman, a great snowman,
When you build a great snowman,
What is the weather?

When you splash in mud puddles,
In mud puddles, in mud puddles,
When you splash in mud puddles,
What is the weather?

When you build a sand castle,
A sand castle, a sand castle,
When you build a sand castle,
What is the weather?

When you fly a super kite,
A super kite, a super kite,
When you fly a super kite,
What is the weather?

Gayle Bittinger



57 TIME FOR GRAPHING

Materials

White poster board Markers
Clear, self-stick paper Dry-erase markers

Activity

Make a multi-purpose graph that you can use over and over again. Draw a grid on a piece of white poster board. Be sure to leave enough room for a title and for identifying what you are graphing. Cover the poster board with clear, self-stick paper.

Our Favorite Colors				
	Red	Blue	Yellow	Green
Addison	✓			
Joe	✓			
Rachel		✓		
Maria		✓		
Leo				✓
Anthony				✓
Kayley			✓	
Patrick	✓			

Introduce graphing to the children with this simple activity. Using a dry-erase marker, write each child's name in a row on the left-hand side of the graph. Write the name of a different color in each column across the top. Write *Our Favorite Colors* at the top of the graph. Show the graph to the children. Explain that a graph is one way to share information. Have the children tell you their favorite colors and make marks in the appropriate boxes on the graph. Help them analyze the results shown on the graph. Encourage them to look for such things as the most favorite and least favorite colors, colors liked by a certain number of children, or which children like a particular color. Let the children think of other things they would like to graph about themselves.


58 SINK OR FLOAT?

Materials

Clear tub or storage box
Water
Objects that float
Objects that sink

Activity

Fill a clear tub or storage box about halfway with water. Collect a variety of objects that float (a cork, a plastic spoon, a toy boat, etc.) and a variety of objects that sink (a metal spoon, a metal washer, a cotton ball, etc.). Place the tub of water in the middle of the circle. Let the children take turns selecting an object and predicting if it will sink or float. Ask them to think about why some things float and others sink.

 **Hint:** Use the graph from the activity on this page. Help the children keep track of which items float and which ones sink.

59 QUALITIES

Materials

None

Activity

Talk about the qualities or characteristics that objects have. Introduce the children to descriptive words such as *soft*, *hard*, *rough*, *cold*, *hot*, *small*, *empty*, and *full*. Ask them to think of other words that can be used to describe something. Then name a quality and have the children think of things that have that quality. For example, if you said the quality "red," the children could name objects such as a stop sign, a fire engine, a crayon, an apple, a marker, a shirt, and a car.

Variation: To make this a hands-on activity, name a quality and have the children walk around the room to find objects with that quality. As each child finds one, have them place the object in the middle of the circle and sit down. After everyone is finished, examine each object to determine how it has that particular quality.

60 LIGHT SHOW

Materials

Flashlights
Cellophane
Scissors
Tape

Activity

Collect several flashlights and a few different colors of cellophane. (Colored cellophane is available where gift wrapping paper is sold.) Cut circles out of several different colors of cellophane. Tape the cellophane circles over the ends of the flashlights, leaving one flashlight uncovered. Have the children sit in a circle. Switch on the flashlights and choose several children to hold them. Turn out the room lights. Ask the children to observe the lights coming from the various flashlights. What colors of light do they see? Ask them to find out what happens when two lights of different colors shine on the same spot. Have the children holding the flashlights hand them to someone else. Continue experimenting with the flashlights until each child has had a turn to hold one.



CHAPTER 5

Music and Movement

61 DRUMBEATS MOVEMENT

≡ **Materials**
Hand drum

≡ **Activity**
Play a simple pattern on a hand drum that will encourage the children to move their feet. Have the children decide if this is a fast beat for running, a slow beat for walking, or perhaps a soft beat for tiptoeing, then let them show you. Stop drumming and have the children freeze in place. Begin drumming a different pattern. Have the children choose another way to move their feet. As they become familiar with this activity, switch drumming patterns without stopping. Challenge the children to hear the differences and change their movements accordingly.

62 STREAMER FUN

≡ **Materials**
Crepe paper Scissors Plastic lids
Ribbon Stapler Cardboard tubes

≡ **Activity**
Encourage the children's creative movement by providing them with a variety of streamers, such as the ones described below. Let them use the streamers while dancing and moving to different kinds of music.

Simple Streamer: Cut two-foot lengths of crepe paper or ribbon. Put 10 of the strips together and staple them at one end to make a streamer.

Ring Streamer: Cut out the center of a plastic lid to make a ring. Staple two-foot lengths of crepe paper or ribbon to one side of the ring. Leave the other side free for holding onto.

Tube Streamer: Staple lengths of crepe paper or ribbon to the end of a cardboard paper towel tube to make a tube streamer.

63 MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Materials

Rhythm instruments

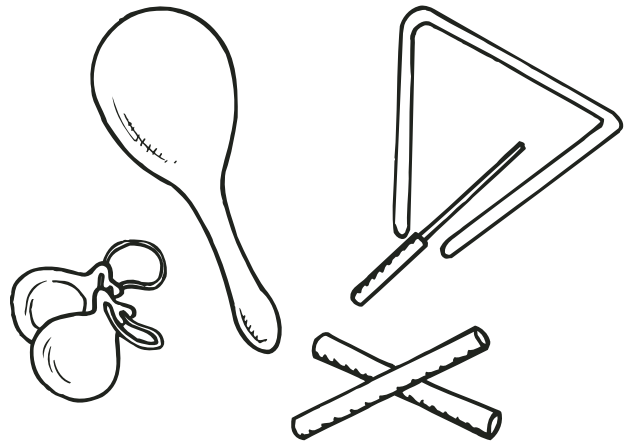
Activity

Give each of the children a rhythm instrument. Sing the following song and let the children play their instruments as directed. At the end of the song, have the children pass their instruments to the children on their right. Sing the song again. Repeat, until each child has a had a chance to play each instrument.

Sung to: "Three Blind Mice"

Play it slow, play it slow.
 Play it fast, play it fast.
 Play your instrument with your hands.
 Play your instrument in our band.
 Making music is oh, so, grand.
 Play, play, play.

Gayle Bittinger



64 MUSIC EVERYWHERE

Materials

Noisemakers

Activity

Collect a variety of noisemakers, such as a wind chime, a bell, a kitchen timer, a radio, a music box, a squeeze toy, a wind-up toy, and two spoons. Let the children play with and listen to the sounds the items make. Ask the children to tell you where these kinds of noisemakers are found. Have they heard these sounds before? Let them think of other things, besides instruments, that can make noises. Have the children find things around the room that make noise, but are not instruments.

Extension: Place an assortment of noisemakers in a large paper bag. Let each child reach into the bag and pull out one. Have the children use their noisemakers to make their own special music together. Challenge them to think about how to use a particular item to make more than one kind of sound. For example, a kitchen timer can tick and ding, but it can also make a drum-like sound when lightly tapped.

65 HIGH AND LOW

Materials

Musical instrument

Activity

Find a musical instrument that plays high and low notes, such as a piano, a xylophone, or a harmonica. Introduce the children to the concept of high and low notes. Play high notes on your instrument and have the children sing “la-la-la” in very high voices. Then play low notes on your instrument and have the children sing in very low voices.

Teach the children the following song. Once they are familiar with the words, sing the song using very high voices and then again using low voices.

Sung to: “Battle Hymn of the Republic”

I like to sing a happy song,
I’ll sing it all day through.
I like to sing a silly song,
And laugh all day with you.
I like to sing a quiet song,
A lullaby, it’s true.
I like to sing with you.

Singing, singing all day long,
Singing, singing loud and strong,
Singing, singing old and new,
I like to sing with you.

Gayle Bittinger



 **Hint:** If you do not have access to an instrument, make your voice sing high and low notes.

 **Extension:** Play high and low notes on your instrument. Have the children stretch their hands up high when they hear a high note and reach down low when they hear a low note.

66 MUSIC DETECTIVES

Materials

None

Activity

Have the children sit in a circle. Ask them to close their eyes. Move to a corner of the room and sing the following song. Ask the children to keep their eyes closed as they listen carefully and point to where they hear the music.




67 PARTNERS MOVE!

Materials

Recorded music

Activity

Help each child find a partner. Play some music and have the children perform an action, such as hopping, dancing, or skipping, with their partners. Call out the actions by saying "Partners march!" or "Partners jump!" As the children become more experienced at this game, let them choose their own actions. Each time you stop the music, have the children find new partners and make up new actions.

 **Hint:** If you have an uneven number of children, choose one child to stand by you and call out an action each time partners are switched.

68 MOVING WITH SCARVES

Materials

Scarves

Activity

Collect enough scarves for each child to have one. Let each child choose one of the scarves. Sing the following song with the children. Have them use their scarves to act out the motions as described in the song.

Sung to: “Hokey-Pokey”

We put our scarves on,
We take our scarves off,
We put our scarves on,
And we take them off again.

We give our scarves
A shake, shake, shake
And turn ourselves around—
That’s what it’s all about!

We wave our scarves up,
We wave our scarves down,
We wave our scarves up,
And we wave them down again.

We give our scarves
A shake, shake, shake
And turn ourselves around—
That’s what it’s all about!

Gayle Bittinger



 **Extension:** Set out the scarves and let the children play with them. Encourage them to pretend that the scarves are wings, sails, or capes.

69 DANCE FEVER

Materials

None

Activity

Sing this song and lead the children in dancing all around the room. Encourage them to think of new ways to dance as they move their bodies around the room.

Sung to: "Skip to My Lou"

I like to dance, how 'bout you?
I like to dance, how 'bout you?
I like to dance, how 'bout you?
Please come and dance with me.

Dance, dance, dance, dance, dance,
Dance, dance, I like to dance.
Dance, dance, dance, dance, dance,
Please come and dance with me.

Jean Warren

Have the children pretend they have magic feet. Sing the following song and let them dance their magic feet all over the room.

Sung to: "Do You Know the Muffin Man?"

Have you seen my magic feet,
Dancing down the magic street?
Sometimes fast and sometimes slow,
Sometimes high and sometimes low.

Come and dance along with me,
Dance just like my feet you see.
First we'll slide and then we'll hop,
Then we'll spin and then we'll stop.

Jean Warren



CHAPTER 6

Visual Arts

70 MUSICAL COLLAGE

Materials

Recorded music Tape Crayons
Butcher paper Scissors

Activity

Collect a variety of music for this activity. Tape two lengths of butcher paper together. Cut a large circle out of the middle of the butcher paper and tape it to the floor. Invite the children to sit around the circle. Explain that you will play several different kinds of music while they draw on the paper circle. Ask them to think about what each piece of music is like and draw something to go along with it.

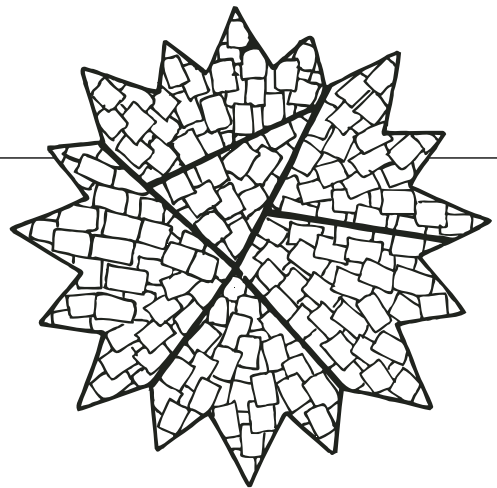
71 PUZZLE MURAL

Materials

Poster board
Scissors
Tissue paper
Glue
Paintbrushes

Activity

Cut a large seasonal shape out of poster board (snowman, flower, sun, pumpkin). Cut the shape into puzzle pieces, one for each child. Cut colorful tissue paper into one-inch strips. Give each child one of the poster board puzzle pieces and several strips of tissue paper. Show the children how to cut the strips of tissue paper into one-inch squares. Have the children brush glue all over their puzzle pieces and then cover the glue with their tissue paper squares. When the glue is dry, let the children help you put the shape together on a wall or a bulletin board.



72 PLAYDOUGH CREATION

Materials

Playdough
Paper plates
Baking sheet

Activity

Ask the children to sit in a circle. Give each child a paper plate and a small amount of playdough (use store-bought playdough or make your own—recipe follows). Have the children play with their playdough on their paper plates. Show them how to make playdough pancakes, logs, and balls. Encourage them to think of other shapes they can make. Then explain to the children that they will be using their playdough to make a group creation. Place a baking sheet in the middle of the circle. Ask one child to begin the creation by molding his or her playdough into a shape and placing it on the baking sheet. Repeat, until each child has added his or her playdough. Let the children think of a name for their creation.

No-Cook Playdough: In a large bowl, mix together 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, and 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Slowly add up to 1 cup water as you stir the flour mixture. Knead until dough is soft and pliable. Mix in food coloring as desired. Store dough in the refrigerator.


73 OUR SCULPTURE

Materials

Cardboard box
Assortment of reusable objects
Masking tape

Activity

Have the children sit in a circle. Place a large, empty cardboard box in the middle of the circle, along with an assortment of recyclable materials such as cardboard tubes, small cardboard boxes, empty plastic containers, plastic lids, and plastic bottles. Let the children take turns choosing one of the recyclable materials and taping it to the box. Continue until the children are satisfied with their sculpture.

 **Extension:** Cover a table with newspaper and place the sculpture on top. Set out tempera paints and paintbrushes. Let the children work in small groups to paint their sculpture.

74 BRICK BUILDING MURAL

Materials

Red construction paper

Butcher paper

Scissors

Tape or glue stick

Activity

Fold sheets of red construction paper in thirds. Hang a length of butcher paper on a wall at the children's eye level. Give each child a piece of folded construction paper. Show the children how to cut their papers along the folds to make construction paper "bricks." Let the children work together taping or gluing the bricks to the butcher paper to build a structure such as a house, a fort, or a wall. While they are working, sing the first two verses of the following song. When they are finished, have them tell you the name of creation. Substitute that name for the word *building* in the last verse of the song.


Sung to: "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush"

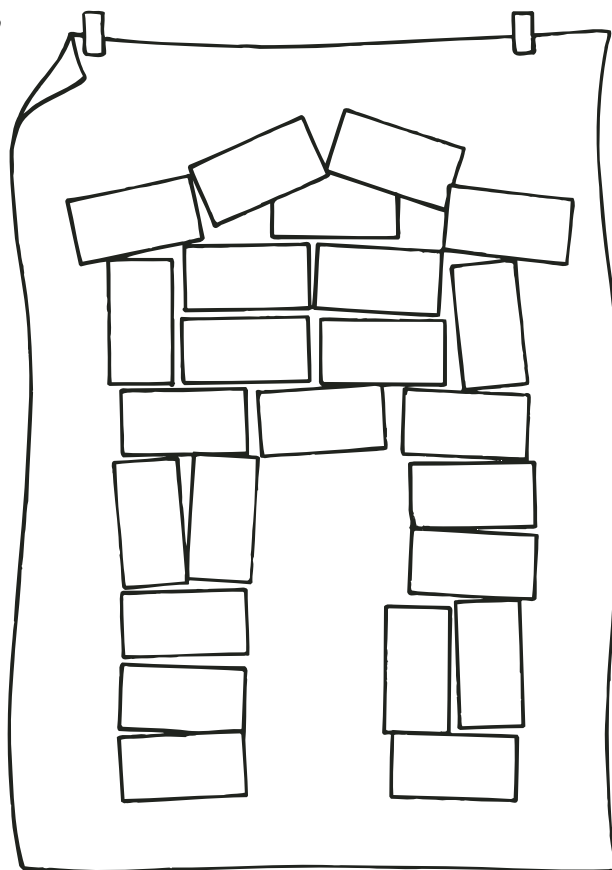
Brick by brick we'll build it up,
Build it up, build it up.
Brick by brick we'll build it up.
We'll build it up so high.

Brick by brick we'll work together,
Work together, work together.
Brick by brick we'll work together.
We'll work together fine.

Brick by brick we built a building,
Built a building, built a building.
Brick by brick we built a building.
We built a building today.

Gayle Bittinger

 **Variation:** For younger children, precut the paper brick shapes and put rolls of tape on the backs of them. Hand out the paper bricks to the children, one at a time.




75 SCULPTURE BAGS


Materials

Plaster of Paris	Spoon
Small resealable plastic bags	Measuring cup
Water	Food coloring

Activity

Prepare a sculpture bag for each child by scooping two or three spoonfuls of plaster of Paris into a small resealable bag. Fill a measuring cup with water and add several drops of food coloring. Add a small amount of the colorful water to each bag—enough to form a soft dough—and seal the bag shut. Immediately give each child one of the sculpture bags. Have the children gently squeeze their plastic bags to move the plaster all around. When it begins to feel warm, it means it is ready to set. Have the children hold their bags in the desired shapes until the plaster hardens. Remove the plastic bags and let the children's sculptures sit out overnight or until completely dry.

 **Hint:** You may wish to use heavy-duty resealable bags for this activity or place each child's sculpture bag in a second resealable bag.

 **Variation:** Prepare the plaster of Paris without food coloring. When the children's sculptures are completely dry, let them paint their sculptures with tempera paint.

76 STICKY MURAL

Materials

Clear, self-stick paper
Tape
Collage materials

Activity

Cut a six-foot length from a roll of clear, self-stick paper. Carefully remove the backing. Tape the self-stick paper to a wall, sticky side out. Collect a variety of lightweight collage materials, such as ribbons, feathers, sequins, small fabric scraps, and paper scraps. Have the children sit by the sticky paper. Show them how the collage materials just stick to the paper. Let them come up and touch the paper, if they would like. Then let the children take turns adding collage materials to the sticky paper until it is completely covered.

77 WEAVING NET

Materials

Sports net
String
Two chairs
Weaving materials

Activity

Choose a durable but no longer used sports net for this activity, such as volleyball, badminton, or hammock net. Tie the net to two sturdy chairs (ones that won't tip over if the net is pulled or pushed on). Position the chairs so that the net is spread out. Collect a variety of weaving materials as suggested below. Have the children sit around the net. Using a length of ribbon, show them how to weave it in and out of the holes in the net. Let the children use the weaving materials to weave horizontal, vertical, and diagonal patterns across the net. Encourage them to work together to create their own weaving designs. Hang the children's completed weaving on a wall or a bulletin board.

Nature Weaving: Take the children on a nature walk to collect items for weaving. For example, the children could use small twigs, leaves, flowers, and long blades of grass in their weaving.

Ribbon Weaving: Cut colorful ribbons into a variety of lengths. Let the children weave the ribbons throughout the net. To make it a little more challenging, have the children weave the ribbons in a color pattern such as red-yellow-green-red-yellow-green.

Paper Weaving: Set out a variety of kinds of paper, such as construction paper, wrapping paper, newspaper, and brown paper bags. Help the children cut the papers into strips that can be woven into the net. If needed, tape the strips together to make them long enough for weaving.



78 CHALK PIZZA

Materials

Sidewalk chalk


Activity

Use sidewalk chalk to draw a large circle "pizza" in a safe, paved area. Divide the circle into "slices," one for each of the children. Give each child a piece of colored chalk and have him or her sit in front of one slice. Have the children color their pizza slices with only the chalk they were given. Sing the following song. At the end of the song when you sing out, "Pizza pie!" have everyone pass his or her chalk to the person on his or her left and start coloring with the new color. Repeat the song as often as you'd like. When the chalk pizza is complete, take time to admire the children's masterpiece.

Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Add the sauce and add the cheese,
Add the pepperoni, please.
Put on mushrooms, olives, too,
And some sausage just for you.
I think it's done and that's no lie,
Now it's time for PIZZA PIE!

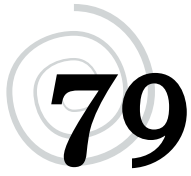
Gayle Bittinger

 **Variation:** If you are unable to go outside to draw a pizza, try this variation. Give each child a crayon and a sheet of paper with the outline of a pizza drawn on it. Have the children use their crayons to draw details on their pizza papers while you sing the song on this page. When you say, "Pizza pie!" at the end of the song, have the children switch papers and start adding new details to the next pizza paper. Continue until each pizza paper has had several children add "toppings" to it.



CHAPTER 7

Dramatic Play



79 NURSERY RHYME FUN

Materials

None

Activity

Nursery rhymes provide great material for dramatic play experiences. Let the children act out these or any other nursery rhymes.

Jack Be Nimble: Set up a small, unlit candle in a candleholder. Let the children take turns jumping over the candlestick while they pretend to be Jack (or Jane).

Mary Had a Little Lamb: Choose one child to be Mary (or Martin). Have the rest of the children pretend to be lambs and follow her or him around the room.

Little Miss Muffet: Children love acting out this nursery rhyme. Set a stool in the middle of the circle. Choose one child to sit on the stool and pretend to be Mr. or Miss Muffet. Have the child pretend to eat and then run away when you dangle a plastic spider beside him or her.

Jack and Jill: Divide the children into pairs. Have them pretend to climb a hill, fetch a pail of water, and roll down the hill.

80 SPACE ADVENTURE

Materials

None

Activity

Invite the children to go on a space adventure with you. Have them put on imaginary space helmets and large moon boots. Ask them to climb into their pretend one-person spaceships. Count down from 10 to 1 and let them "blast off" into space. Be sure the children use their "radar" to prevent collisions with the other spaceships. When the children reach outer space, have them slow down and begin to orbit the moon. (If you wish, designate a certain area in the room to be the "moon.") Encourage the children to land on the moon. Have them climb out of their spaceships and walk around in their moon boots. Ask them to pick up rock samples from the moon surface. Finally, have the children climb back into their spaceships and come home for a landing.

81 AIRPLANE TRIP

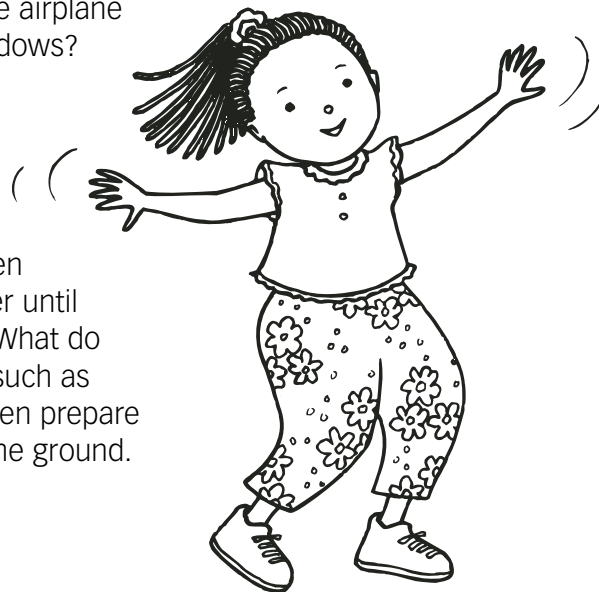
Materials

None

Activity

If any of the children have taken an airplane trip, invite them to tell the group about their experience. What happened when the airplane took off? Was it fast or slow? Did they look out the windows? What did they see?

Then take the children to an open area indoors or outdoors. Invite them to go on a make-believe plane ride. Have them stand very still with their "wings" spread, making sure that they are "safe for takeoff." Then have them "take off," pretending to fly higher and higher until they are far above the clouds. Ask them to look down. What do they see? (If necessary, suggest things they might see such as clouds, cars, houses, and farms.) Finally have the children prepare to land, gently flying lower and lower until they reach the ground.



82 FLY IN AND OUT THE WINDOW

Materials

None

Activity

Have the children stand in a circle and join hands to form “windows.” Choose one child to stand in the middle of the circle. Have him or her name a creature that flies, such as a butterfly. Then let the child pretend to be that creature as he or she “flies” in and out the windows. Encourage the children in the circle to raise and lower their arms as everyone sings the song on this page.

Sung to: “Go in and out the Window”

Fly in and out the windows,
Fly in and out the windows,
Fly in and out the windows,
Little butterfly.

Adapted Traditional

Sing the verse twice while the child passes through the windows. Then choose another child to be a flying creature. Continue playing until all the children have had a turn.

83 PUMPKIN PATCH

Materials

None

Activity

Select two or three children to be farmers. Have the remaining children join hands to form a long, winding pumpkin vine. Ask every second or third child on the vine to become a pumpkin. Have the pumpkins crouch down and hug their knees. At your signal, have the farmers “pull” the pumpkins off the vine by gently rolling them over onto their sides. Then have the pumpkins roll away. Repeat until every child has had a turn being a pumpkin and a farmer.

84 ROW YOUR BOAT

Materials

None

Activity

Ask the children to sit on the floor in pairs. As they sit down, have each pair of children face one another, hold hands, and touch feet. Have the children gently rock forwards and backwards while singing, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Teach them the following additional verse, if you wish:

Sung to: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Waves, waves, back and forth,
Rock the boat all day.
We row and row so we can go
Somewhere far away.

Jean Warren

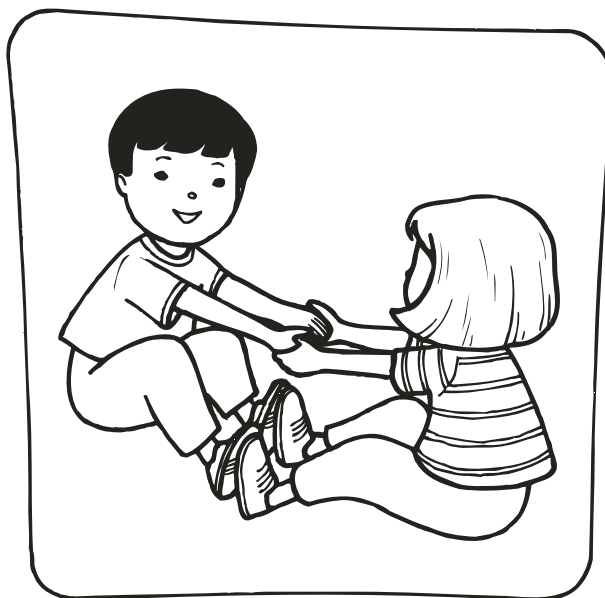
Extension: Use masking tape to make a boat outline on the floor. Provide dramatic play props such as hats, binoculars, life jackets, and long cardboard tube oars. Encourage the children to take imaginary journeys to places near or far in their boat. Then sing the following song, substituting the name of the children's destination for *island*.

Sung to: "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean"

We're rowing our boat to the island.
We're rowing our boat, can't you see?
We're rowing our boat to the island.
We're rowing as fast as can be.

Rowing, rowing, we're rowing our boat
Can't you see, you see?
Rowing, rowing, we're rowing our boat
Can't you see?

Gayle Bitterger



85 MOUSY MOVES

Materials

None

Activity

Have the children pretend that they are tiny mice. Encourage them to demonstrate how they would scamper across the floor, how they would wiggle their whiskers, and how they would nibble cheese. Finally, have them demonstrate how they would curl up and go to sleep. Then read this rhyme to the children. Have them do the hand motions along with you.

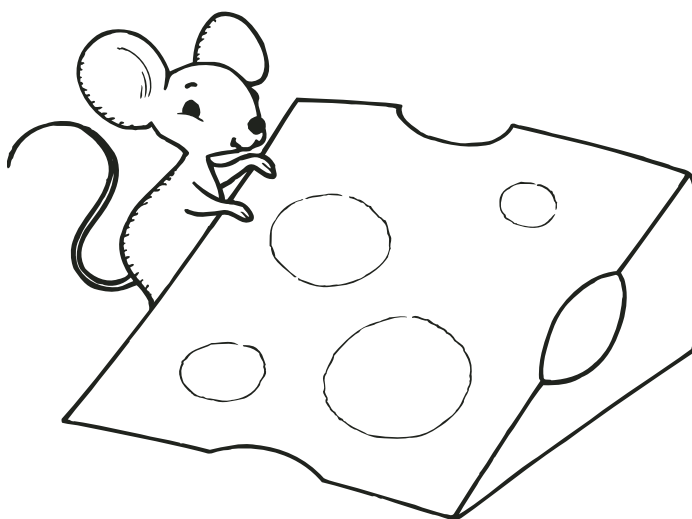
A house for a mouse is a hole in the wall.
(Form hole with thumb and forefinger.)
She's quiet and timid and meek.
She hides in her hole and she rarely comes out.
(Cover thumb with remaining four fingers.)
But the smell of fresh cheese makes her peek.
(Sniff air and poke thumb between fingers.)

Rene Gutyan

Share the following rhyme with the children, saying the first two lines in a deep, booming voice and the last two lines in a high, squeaky voice. Recite the rhyme again, asking the children to suggest the names of other foods to substitute for *cheese*. Silly responses make this activity even more fun.

Little mouse, little mouse,
What will you eat?
I'll have cheese,
My favorite treat.

Susan Hodges



86 STICKY STORY

Materials

None

Activity

Guide the children in imagining that they are making special cards for their friends. Just when they are almost finished, someone opens the door and a gust of wind blows in, knocking over the glue and scattering all the cards. As the children try to pick them up, their feet stick to the floor and their hands stick to whatever they touch. Let the children develop the story through their actions. Ask the children to think of ways they could move around. What would happen if they all got stuck together? How could they get unstuck?

Variation: Have the children pretend they are mail carriers delivering their letters and packages. Ask them to show you how they would deliver a letter to someone who lives on top of a mountain or on an island. How would they deliver a large, heavy package? A long, thin package? If you wish, sing the following song and let the children pretend to be the mail carrier delivering the packages described in the song. Have them think of other kinds of packages to sing about and “deliver.”

Sung to: “The Wheels on the Bus”

Here is a package that’s big and heavy,
Big and heavy, big and heavy.
Here is a package that’s big and heavy.
I’ll deliver it to you.

Here is a package that’s light as a feather,
Light as a feather, light as a feather.
Here is a package that’s light as a feather.
I’ll deliver it to you.

Gayle Bittinger



87 ANIMALS SLEEPING

Materials

None

Activity

To begin this game, have the children lie on the floor and pretend to be sleeping. Explain that you will be singing a song to them. When they hear the words *Time for puppy dogs to play* at the end of the first verse, have them wake up and pretend to be puppies while you sing the second verse. When they hear the words *Puppy dogs get tucked in bed* at the end of the second verse, that is their clue to lie down on the floor once more and pretend to sleep. Sing the song as many times as you would like, naming a different animal and animal actions each time.

Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Go to sleep now, close your eyes,
Time to sing a lullaby.
It is nighttime, time to sleep.
Rest your head in slumber deep.
Now the sun is out today.
Time for puppy dogs to play.

Puppy dogs do like to play.
They will bark and run all day.
They will have a great fun time,
While the sun above does shine.
When the moon pokes out its head,
Puppy dogs get tucked in bed.

Gayle Bittinger





88 FOOTBALL PRACTICE



Materials

Carpet squares
Masking tape, optional
Footballs
Hula-Hoop™
String
Plungers
Kicking tee



Activity


Let the children pretend to be football players practicing for the big game. Have them warm up by running in place, touching their toes, and doing jumping jacks. Then have them try the following football drills:

Tire Course: Place carpet squares on the floor for tires and have the children run or jump from tire to tire. (Tape the carpet squares in place, if necessary, so they don't slip when the children jump on them.)

Toss and Catch: Have the children stand in a circle. Call out a child's name, toss the football to them, and then have the child toss it back to you. Repeat until each child's name has been called. Or, divide the children into pairs. Give each pair of children a small, soft football. Let the children gently lob their footballs back and forth.

Make a Pass: Hang a Hula-Hoop™ from the ceiling (or tie it to two chairs). Let the children take turns trying to toss a football through the hoop. As the children become more skilled, have them stand farther and farther away from the hoop.

Field Goal: Set up two plungers for goalposts in an area with lots of space. Place a kicking tee several feet from the plungers. Show the children how to place a plastic foam football in the kicking tee and then kick it between the "goalposts."

 **Extension:** Act out football action words such as *pass*, *catch*, *run*, *kick*, *punt*, and *tackle*, with the children. As they become more familiar with the actions, let two or three children at a time act out one of the actions while the other children try guessing what they are doing.

CHAPTER 8

Motor Skills

89 BUILD A TOWER

Materials

Small building blocks

Activity

Give each child an equal number of building blocks. (Three to five blocks for each child works well.) Have the children sit in a circle with their blocks in front of them. Let them practice building small block towers with their own blocks. Have them notice that the towers are sturdier when the big blocks are on the bottom and the smaller blocks are on the top. Then explain to the children that they will be working together to build a group tower. Choose one child to place the first block in the middle of the circle. Let the other children take turns stacking one block on top of the other to form a tower. Have everyone count as the blocks are added and the tower grows. Continue the game until the tower falls. Then let the next child start a new tower as everyone begins counting again.

Variation: Instead of a tower, let the children build a group structure, such as a castle or a spaceship. Have them continue playing until all of the blocks have been used. When their group structure is complete, sing the following song, substituting the name of their structure for *castle*:

Sung to: "The Hokey-Pokey"

We put the blocks right here.
We put the blocks right there.
We put the blocks right here,
And we gave a little cheer.
We made a great big castle
With the help of everyone.
Building is lots of fun!

Gayle Bittinger



90 THE FEATHER DANCE

Materials

Feathers


Activity

Give each child a feather. Show the children how to hold the feather in one hand and blow on it to make it float in the air. Challenge the children to see how long they can keep their feathers in the air by blowing on them again and again. As the children are dancing their "feather dance," sing the following song:

Sung to: "Jingle Bells"

Feather dance, feather dance,
Dancing all around.
Keep your feathers in the air
Don't let them hit the ground.
Feather dance, feather dance,
Feathers are such fun.
We will dance the feather dance
Until our dance is done.

Gayle Bittinger

 **Variation:** If blowing on a feather to keep it in the air is too difficult, let the children hold their feathers in their hands and dance around the room while you sing the song on this page.



91 FUN WITH A PARACHUTE

Materials

Parachute

Activity

Have the children hold a parachute by the edges. As you sing the following song, have them raise the parachute above their heads so it billows like a big tent. When a child is named, have him or her run under the parachute and grab hold of it on the other side. Then slowly lower the parachute. Continue playing until all the children have had a chance to run.

Sung to: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Up, up, up it goes.

Down, down, down it comes.

If your name is _____,

Now's your turn to run!

Diane Thom

Sing the following song while the children raise and lower the parachute. Have them stomp their feet each time the parachute goes up, as mentioned in the song. Encourage the children to think of other movements to substitute for *stomp your feet*.

Sung to: "If You're Happy and You Know It"

When the parachute goes up,

Stomp your feet.

When the parachute goes up,

Stomp your feet.

When the parachute is high,

It floats up to the sky.

When the parachute goes up,

Stomp your feet.

Diane Thom

92 BEANBAG GAME

Materials

Beanbags

Activity

Give each of the children a beanbag. Sing the following song, and have the children follow the movement directions in each verse. Invite the children to make up additional verses.

Sung to: "If You're Happy and You Know It"

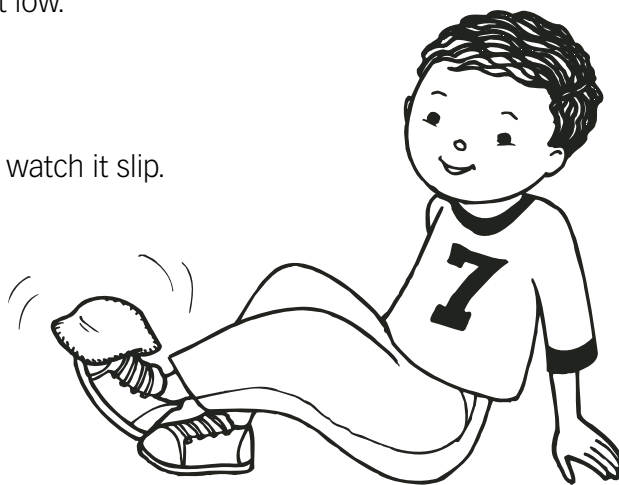
Put your beanbag in your hand, in your hand.
Put your beanbag in your hand, in your hand.
Put your beanbag in your hand, toss it up and watch it land.
Put your beanbag in your hand, in your hand.

Put your beanbag on the ground, on the ground.
Put your beanbag on the ground, on the ground.
Put your beanbag on the ground, now step and step around.
Put your beanbag on the ground, on the ground.

Put your beanbag on your toe, on your toe.
Put your beanbag on your toe, on your toe.
Put your beanbag on your toe, lift it high and lift it low.
Put your beanbag on your toe, on your toe.

Put your beanbag on your hip, on your hip.
Put your beanbag on your hip, on your hip.
Put your beanbag on your hip, now stand up and watch it slip.
Put your beanbag on your hip, on your hip.

Polly Reedy



93 HOOPS OF FUN

Materials

Large plastic hoops

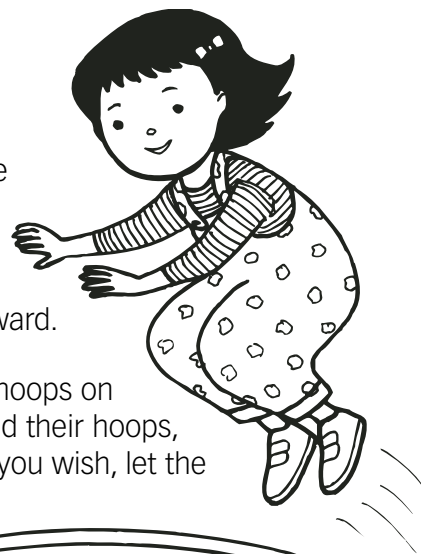
Activity

Collect several plastic hoops in varying sizes. Use the hoops to help the children develop their large motor skills through the following activities:

Hoop Toss: Have the children stand in a circle. Place a hoop in the middle of the circle. Give each child a beanbag to toss into the hoop. Have everyone retrieve the beanbags and stand in a circle again. Ask the children to take one giant step backwards, then toss their beanbags into the hoop again. Repeat several times, each time taking more steps backward.

Hoop Commands: Give each child a hoop. Have the children place their hoops on the floor. Ask them to jump inside their hoops, outside their hoops, around their hoops, hold their hoops above their heads, and sit in the middle of the hoops. If you wish, let the children take turns giving hoop commands to one another.

Ride Around the Hoop: Have all of the children hold onto one large hoop as you sing the following song. (If all of the children cannot fit around one hoop, divide them into smaller groups and use two or more hoops.)



Sung to: "Ring Around the Rosie"

Riding around the big hoop
(Hold onto hoop as you circle around.)

On our frisky ponies.

Buck once, buck twice—

(Lift up hoop at the word **buck**.)

We all fall down.

(Let go of hoop and fall down.)

Virginia Colvig

94 WADING POOL FUN

Materials

Wading pool

Water

Chairs

Towels

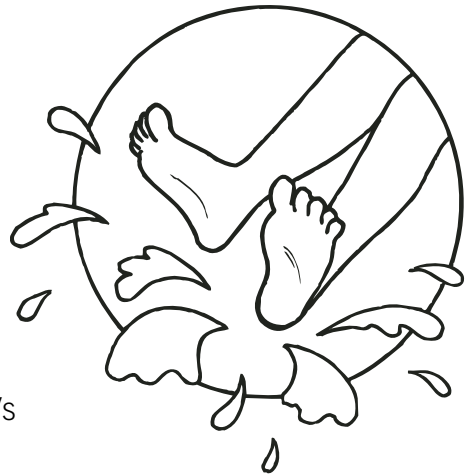
Activity


Set up a small, plastic wading pool outside and fill it with water. Arrange chairs around the pool. Take the children outside. Help them remove their shoes and socks and roll up their pants legs as needed. Have the children sit in the chairs around the pool, then let them play in the pool with their feet. Encourage them to splash in different ways: loud and quiet splashes, big and little splashes, fast and slow splashes. Sing the following song while the children make their feet splash. Ask them to help you make up new verses, about different ways to move their feet in the pool, such as tapping feet, swirling feet, or clapping feet.


Sung to: "Frere Jacques"

See my feet, see my feet,
 Splashing feet, splashing feet.
 See my feet splashing,
 See my feet splashing.
 Splashing now, splashing now.

Gayle Bittinger



 **Hint:** Be sure to have towels ready to dry off the children's feet as they finish this activity.

 **Variation:** Fill a small wading pool with dry fall leaves for the children to explore with their hands and feet. Or, fill the pool with cotton ball "snowballs." Let the children take turns sitting in the pool of "snow."

95 BUBBLE WRAP PLAY

Materials

Bubble wrap
Plastic hammers
Masking tape
Construction paper

Activity

Children love the sound and feel of bubble wrap. Collect sheets of bubble wrap and let the children enjoy any or all of the following activities:

Pop It!: Tape bubble wrap to the floor. Let the children march, hop, or dance on it to pop the bubbles.

Roll It!: Tape a long sheet of bubble wrap to the floor. Let the children take turns rolling like “logs” over the bubbles.


Pound It!: Tape small sheets of bubble wrap to the floor or a table. Let the children use plastic hammers to pop the bubbles one at a time. If you wish, place different colors of construction paper under the bubble wrap. Ask the children to pop bubbles only of the colors you name.

Squeeze It!: Give each child a small sheet of bubble wrap. While you sing the following song, have the children use their fingers to pop the bubbles:

Sung to: “Frere Jacques”

Pop the bubbles, pop the bubbles.
Pop them fast! Pop them slow!
Popping is such fun.
Popping is such fun.
Pop the bubbles, Pop! Pop! Pop!

Gayle Bittinger

 **Hint:** Ask parents to donate bubble wrap they have or call local businesses and ask if they have any bubble wrap from packages they’ve received. Bubble wrap may also be purchased at stores that sell shipping supplies.

96 DOT-TO-DOT MURAL

Materials

Butcher paper
Self-stick circles
Crayons

Activity

Hang a length of butcher paper on a wall at the children's eye level. Give each child several self-stick circles. Let the children place their circles all over the butcher paper. Take a moment to admire all of the dots. Then have the children use crayons to draw lines from "dot to dot" on the paper. As the children work to connect the dots, sing the following song:

Sung to: "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush"

Dot to dot, we draw the lines,
Draw the lines, draw the lines.
Dot to dot, we draw the lines
Dot to dot like this.

Gayle Bittinger


97 THE FRIENDSHIP SQUEEZE

Materials

None

Activity

Help the children practice small motor control and develop small motor strength with this activity. Have them sit with you in a small circle and hold hands. Explain that they will be working together to pass a very gentle friendship squeeze around the circle. Tell them that when they feel a gentle squeeze in one hand, they should pass it along by gently squeezing the other hand. Begin the friendship squeeze by squeezing the child's hand that is in your right hand. Have the child pass the squeeze along to the child next to him or her. Continue until the friendship squeeze has traveled around the circle and back to you.

 **Extension:** Once the children have mastered passing along a single, gentle squeeze, challenge them to correctly pass around a special squeeze "code" such as two squeezes or one long squeeze and a short squeeze.

98 MUSICAL CHAIRS AND MORE

Materials

Carpet squares
Recorded music
Chairs
Index cards
Marker
Tape

Activity

Try these variations of the traditional musical chairs game with the children. Everyone will enjoy the variety of games that can be played in a no-lose way.

Musical Carpet Squares: Arrange one carpet square for each child in a circle. Play some music and let the children march around the squares. Stop the music and have each child find a carpet square to sit on. Repeat, leaving all the carpet squares in place each time.

Musical Hugs: Play some music and ask everyone to dance around the room. When the music stops, have each child find another child (or two or three) to hug. Play the music again, stopping for hugs as you wish.

Musical Names: Arrange chairs in a circle, one for each child. Write each child's name on an index card and tape one card to each chair. Play some music and have the children march around the chairs. When the music stops, have each child find the chair with his or her name on it. Switch the chairs around.

Musical Hoops: Collect several large, plastic hoops, about one for every three or four children. Arrange the hoops on the floor in a circle. Play some music and have the children walk around the hoops. When the music stops, have each child find a hoop to be in—there will be more than one child in each hoop. Start the music and remove one hoop. Have the children walk around the hoops until the music stops again and they must find a hoop for themselves. Repeat until there is just one hoop left. Stand back and watch the children's creativity and cooperation skills grow as they figure out a way for everyone to be inside the last hoop.



99 MOVING WITH CARPET SQUARES

Materials

Carpet squares

Activity

Carpet squares are a great tool for developing young children's motor skills. Collect at least one carpet square for each of the children, then try the following games:

Magic Carpet Rides: Give each child a carpet square to sit on. Invite the children to go on a "magic carpet ride." Let them spread their arms to make "wings," and have them lean one way and then the other. Encourage them to tell what they "see" on their imaginary carpet rides.

Frog Jump: Scatter carpet squares around the room. Have each child pretend to be a frog and crouch down on one of the carpet squares. Let the children practice making frog jumps off their carpet square "lily pads." Encourage them to "ribbit" as they jump.

Follow the Leader: Arrange carpet squares in a line, keeping them about six inches apart. Choose one child to be the leader. Have the other children follow the leader as he or she jumps, hops, walks backwards, or tiptoes down the line of carpet squares. Let the children take turns being the leader.

Follow Directions: Place carpet squares in a circle on the floor. Have each child sit on a carpet square. Give the children simple directions to follow. For example, ask the children to stand with both feet on their squares, jump up and down on their squares, or touch their squares with their hands. As the children become more experienced in following directions, give them multiple-step directions. For example, ask the children to stand on carpet squares and turn around, jump on their carpet squares and clap their hands, or stand with one foot on their carpet squares while they wave and blink.

Hint: If you don't already have carpet squares, check your local carpet store for sample squares of discontinued carpet styles. You can also make your own carpet squares by cutting large scraps of carpet into two-foot squares.



100 WALK THE LINE

Materials

Jump ropes

Activity

Extend a jump rope on the floor for a safe and easy balance beam substitute. Invite the children to pretend they are tightrope performers as they practice walking on the line. Have them walk slowly at first, then faster as they become more confident. As the children's skills develop, try the following variations:

Backwards Walk: Let the children try walking backwards along the rope. Have them use their feet to touch the rope and feel where to walk.

Snake Walk: Lay a jump rope on the floor in a curvy pattern. Have the children follow the curves as they walk along the rope.

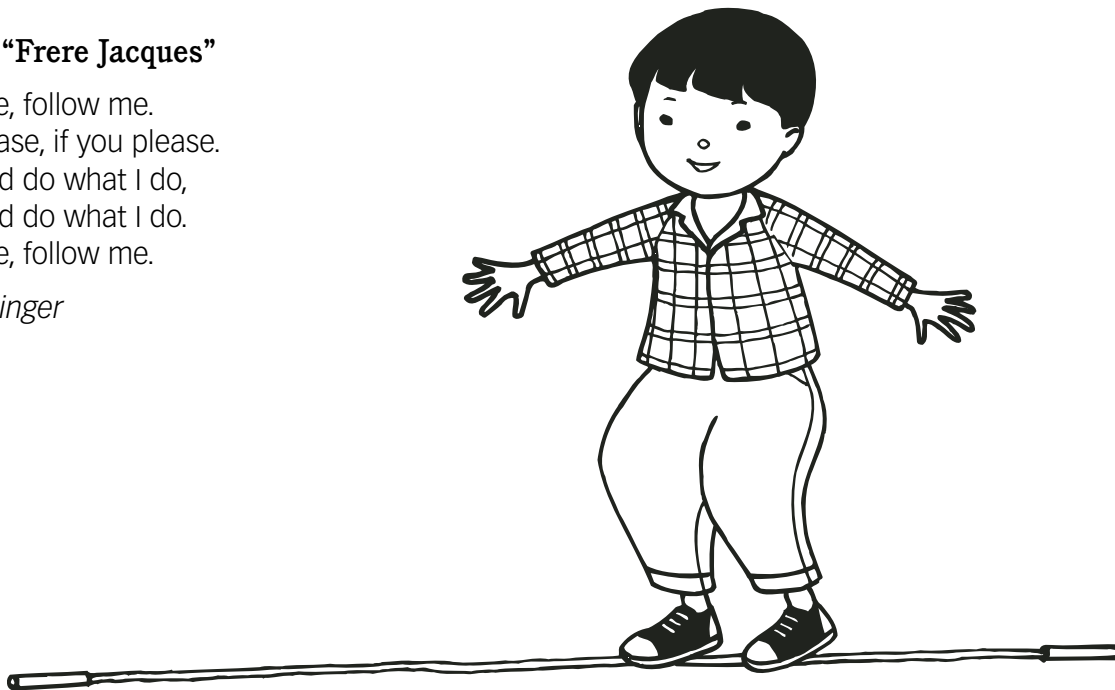
Jump the Tracks: Lay two jump ropes parallel, about 12 inches apart, on the floor to make "railroad tracks." Have the children try jumping inside the tracks, outside the tracks, and on the tracks.

Follow the Leader: Choose one child to be the leader. Have the leader walk across the rope in two or three different ways. Let the other children follow his or her movements. Have the children take turns being the leader. If you wish, help the leader sing the following song while the children are following him or her across the jump rope.

Sung to: "Frere Jacques"

Follow me, follow me.
If you please, if you please.
Watch and do what I do,
Watch and do what I do.
Follow me, follow me.

Gayle Bittinger



101 COPYCAT

Materials

None

Activity


Have the children stand in a circle and choose one child to be the leader. Let the leader show the group a new, crazy way to stand. For example, the child might wrap one leg around the other, bend over, and put both hands on top of his or her head. After demonstrating this new way to stand, have the child call out "Copycat!" Sing the following song while the rest of the children do their best to make themselves look exactly like the leader. Continue playing until each child has had a turn leading the game.



Sung to: "Three Blind Mice"

Copycat.
Copycat.
Just like that,
Copycat.
Can you move your legs like me?
Put your arms like this, you see.
Will you be able to copycat me?
Copycat.

Gayle Bittinger

 **Variation:** Play this simpler version with younger children. Instead of choosing a leader, you will be the leader. Stand in a simple position, with just one part of your body arranged in a special way. For example, you could stand with your hands on your hips or with your legs crossed. Have the children copy your position. As they become more experienced, arrange a second part of your body, as well. For example, you could stand with your head tilted and your arms out to the side or with your arms crossed and your feet together.

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About This Book

Circle time is an important part of an early childhood program. It gives children an opportunity to learn how to be part of a group, develop listening skills, experience music and movement, and play games. It can be a time for introducing new concepts and for practicing language, math, and science skills. In this book you will find activities to foster children's social and emotional development, build language and literacy skills, and develop an understanding of basic math concepts. You will also find science activities that strengthen children's observation and reasoning skills, music and movement activities that get everyone involved, and group art activities that inspire creativity and cooperation. An Early Childhood Standards Correlation Chart is included to help you quickly identify activities that focus on a specific skill.

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