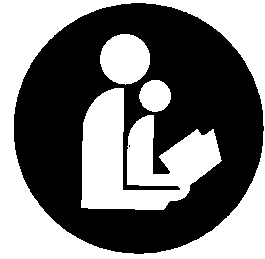


Picture It,
Dads!



Home Activities For
*If You Give A
Mouse A Cookie*



Home Activities
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

Activity #1 Nursery Rhyme

This is an enjoyable language game that you can do with your child at home or when going for a walk, or in the car. The rhythm and repetition makes this one a memorable favourite.

Together: Who took the cookies from the cookie jar?
_____ (Daddy) took the cookies from the cookie jar.

Dad: Who me?

Child: Yes you.

Dad: Couldn't be.

Child: Then who?



Repeat using your child's name. Keep saying the rhyme and name other members of the family, friends, pets or other people your child knows. You can also help your child learn about categories of things by naming farm animals, furniture, fruits or vegetables. You can be as silly with this as you like. For example, for farm animals: "Who took the cookies from the cookie jar? The pigs took the cookies from the cookie jar."

Five Cookies

Action poem

Here is another action poem to practice counting backwards. Hold up five fingers to show the number of cookies and take one away as you count backwards.

Five little cookies in the bakery shop.

Delicious cookies with sugar on top.

Along comes _____ (child's name)

with money to pay.

(He/she) buys a cookie and takes it away.

(continue counting backwards with four, three, two and one).

For more finger plays, visit

<http://www.preschoolrainbow.org/preschool-rhymes.htm>



Activity #2 Recipe: Mouse Snacks

These mouse snacks are fun to make and fun to eat. As you help your child put them together you will be giving him/her practice listening carefully and following directions. You can also create this snack as a mirror activity by telling your child to be the mirror and to do exactly what you do.

Ingredients:

- 1 Townhouse (or graham) cracker*
- 2 Ritz Bitz sandwich crackers*
- 2 raisins*
- 1 chocolate chip*
- 1 Cheerio*

How to Assemble:

- 1) Use a knife to spread a thin layer of peanut butter onto the Townhouse cracker.
- 4) Slip the edges of the 2 Ritz Bitz crackers over the Townhouse cracker. (*These are the ears!*)
- 5) Place the 2 raisins on to be the eyes, the chocolate chip to be the nose, and the Cheerio to be the mouth.
- 6) Eat and enjoy!



Activity #3: It's in the Bag

This activity helps develop your child's creative thinking and language skills.

Materials

Household Items: Gather items from around the house.

For example: odds and ends

like a piece of string or a sheet of paper, an item of clothing, a personal item such as your child's comb or toothbrush, or any assortment of household items.

A clean, non-see through bag or pillow case

How to Play

Put the items you have gathered in the bag. Ask your child to reach into the bag without looking and pull out an object. Ask: "What did you pull out of the bag?" When your child has named the object say "If you give _____ (your child's name) a _____ (name of the object) he's/she's going to want to _____ (your child finishes by saying what he/she will want to do).

For example: If the object is a deck of playing cards you would say:

"If you give _____ (your child's name) a deck of cards he's/she's going to want to play."

Tips and Suggestions

You might have to help your child think of what they would do with the item in the beginning until they catch on. You can gradually add more unusual items like a measuring cup, a can opener, a box of crackers, etc. The more creative you are in choosing the objects the more creative your child will need to be when thinking up what to do with them.

It is also fun to have your child round up items for you to pull out of the bag! (You will want to set some ground rules so your child chooses things that are safe for him/her to handle.



Activity #4: Exploring Print in Your Home

Making Signs and Labels

Environmental print is the print we see all around us - the print on commercial signs, labels and products we use everyday. Displaying environmental print at home helps children feel successful "reading" at an early age. These early successes motivate young children to read more and more! This activity is a fun way to help your child learn how print is used everyday.



Materials

Paper or index cards

Markers

The Activity

Make signs and labels as reminders or to identify special places. Start by making a sign to hang on each bedroom door (i.e. _____'s (your child's name) Room, etc.) in your home. Keep the print big so your child can trace over the letters if they would like. Encourage them to decorate their sign and then use a thumb tack or tape to hang it on the door. If you want to be a bit more fancy punch two holes at the top and add some yarn or string to hang the sign on the doorknob.

You and your child can decide on other signs to make as reminders: Put Your Toys Away! Please Do Not Disturb or Shhhhh, Quiet Zone, etc. Plan what each sign will say and where it will go.

Tips and Suggestions

You can also make labels for various objects in your home. Label household items in the kitchen (refrigerator, stove, microwave, etc.), in your child's bedroom (bed, door, window, dresser, toy box, lamp, etc.) and in any other room in which you don't mind living with labels! From time to time have your child go on a label hunt. Make a second set of labels on index cards, small cardboard pieces (the inside of cereal boxes are good to use) or strips of paper by printing one word on each card. Give your child three cards to start and ask him/her to find the label that matches and tell you what it says. As this activity becomes easier, include more cards.

You and your child can also make a book of favourite grocery labels (soup can labels, names of cereals, etc.). Place each label in the pocket of a small photo album or glue it on a sheet of paper and staple the pages together with a cover. Your child will be able to read this book on his/her own.

The Relationship Between Imaginative Play and Reading

Imaginative play has a definite connection to reading. Children often "play out" make-believe roles. They are race drivers, shopkeepers, detectives, doctors, vets, and teachers to name a few. As they play, they use actions and language they associate with that role. The link to reading comes as children begin to identify with the actions, feelings, and words of the characters they meet in the stories they hear and read.



Children often pretend to be using a real tool or object, such as a telephone, or hammer, a teapot or a toy car. They go through the actions and talk to themselves or others about what they are doing. When they hear a story about a child meeting a mouse who wants a cookie, they imagine the cookie jar, the kitchen, the boy and the mouse as the story takes shape.

When they create their own imaginary dramas, children give them a setting (a castle, a forest, a boat) and work out a series of actions and events. They do the same thing when they hear a story about a pig building a house of bricks, they imagine themselves lifting the bricks, using the trowel, building the house, and running inside just in time to get away from the wolf!

Often children become quite caught up in their imaginative play and will stay with them for a long time. This continuing involvement in a story is carried over into the longer stories they hear or read.

When children are inventing and playing stories, both on their own or with one or more partners, there is a lot of talk going on. They decide what part to take on, what the character will do and say at each stage of the game and what they will do next. Things have to make sense to them. In listening or reading a story, the expectation of "making sense" continues. If the story does not "make sense" to them, for whatever reason (the book is something beyond their experience, the language is too complicated, the story is not well written), they either tune out or take steps to get the story back on track. (This is often the case if a parent tries to leave something out of a favourite story when reading it aloud. The child will often notice and want the parent to fill in the missing part or they will add it themselves!)

Most young children engage in imaginative play easily and naturally. Here's how you can help:

- Provide opportunities, space and props (a blanket for a tent, empty toilet rolls taped together to use as binoculars, box of dress-up clothes [odds and ends from a second-hand store are inexpensive and can be replaced periodically to maintain interest])
- Participate some of the time (You will make a great giant, troll, or even a hero who saves the day! Take your lead from your child. You can also suggest you both act out a favourite story. Invite other family members or your child's friends to play too.)
- Invite your child to make up stories and tell them to you or to tell you a true story about something that has happened or they have done. Be sure to be attentive and listen closely [Turn off the TV so your child won't get distracted].

Tips and Suggestions

Almost any favourite story can be acted out. If your child needs more "actors" to play some of the parts, he/she can use puppets or stuffed animals to help out!

Don't always expect your child to act out the story completely accurately. Allow your child to take liberties with the tale. This is a sure sign that they likely know the story inside-out and backwards and that their creative juices are flowing!

Stories to Act Out

Fairy Tales

The Three Pigs
Goldilocks and the Three Bears
Red Riding Hood

Mother Goose Rhymes

Old Mother Hubbard
Jack and Jill
Little Miss Muffet

More Books by Laura Numeroff

If You Give a Pig a Pancake by Laura Numeroff
If You Give a Pig a Party by Laura Numeroff
If You Give a Moose a Muffin by Laura Numeroff
If You Take a Mouse to School by Laura Numeroff
If You Take a Mouse to the Movies by Laura Numeroff

