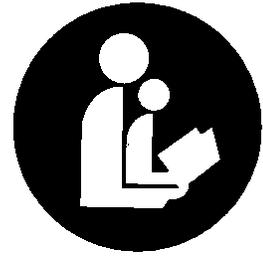


# Picture It, Dads!



## Home Activities For *The Mitten*



## Home Activities The Mitten



### Activity #1: Counting Rhymes

Counting songs and rhymes are a fun way for young children to learn math concepts. *This Old Man* (See: *Where Is Spot?* Home Activities) is a well known song children love to sing. Children should use their fingers to represent each number as they say it. This song reinforces forward sequencing which is the precursor to addition. *Six in the Bed* is a great song for practicing backward sequencing as is *Five Little Monkeys*. Learning backward sequencing is just as important as forward sequencing because it is the basis for learning subtraction. For more learning songs and rhymes, visit the website Songs For Teaching at <http://www.songsforteaching.com/numberscounting.htm> for more counting songs. You can listen to the songs at this site.

### Six In The Bed

There were six in the bed and the little one said,  
"Roll over, roll over." (Make *rolling motion* with arms and hands)  
So they all rolled over and one fell out.  
There were five in the bed and the little one said,  
"Roll over, roll over." (Make *rolling motion* with arms and hands)  
So they all rolled over and one fell out....

*This is repeated until you get to the number one. Each time "roll over" is said, rolling motion is dramatized.*

There was one in the bed and the little one said (Pause)

"Alone at last!" (Stretch arms in the air.)

### Other Variations

You can also begin this rhyme at another number when your child is ready (i.e. 10, 12) or you can count backwards by 2's (i.e. So they all rolled over and 2 fell out...etc.)

## Five Little Monkeys: The Actions:

**Repeat these actions with each verse:** **Five little monkeys** -- with one hand hold up the number of fingers to match the verse. **jumping on the bed** -- bounce your fingers (monkeys) up and down on your other hand (the bed) **One fell off** -- hold up one finger **and bumped his head** -- hold head with both hands and rock head back and forth **Mama called the Doctor and the doctor said** - make phone with fingers of one hand and hold up to your ear **No more monkeys jumping on the bed** -- shake index finger ("no no")

## The Rhyme:

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,  
One fell off and bumped his head.  
Mama called the Doctor and the Doctor said,  
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Four little monkeys jumping on the bed,  
One fell off and bumped her head.  
Papa called the Doctor and the Doctor said,  
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Three little monkeys jumping on the bed,  
One fell off and bumped his head.  
Mama called the Doctor and the Doctor said,  
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Two little monkeys jumping on the bed,  
One fell off and bumped her head.  
Papa called the Doctor and the Doctor said,  
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

One little monkey jumping on the bed,  
He fell off and bumped his head.  
Mama called the Doctor and the Doctor said,  
"Put those monkeys back to bed!"





## Activity #2 Water and Ice Experiments

One of the most incredible compounds on earth is water. There are many great science experiments you can do with your child that involve water and ice. All of these experiments teach young children about chemical reactions, mixtures and how even though ice is frozen water, it behaves differently than water does. The following activities require few materials and little preparation:

### Floating Water?

Add a few ice cubes to a glass of water. The ice cubes will float. Talk with your child about what they notice when they add the ice to the water.

### Which Takes Up more space? Ice or Water?

Fill a clear plastic or paper cup half-way full of with water. Mark the water line with a marker. Add an ice cube and mark the new water line. Wait for the ice to melt. Did the water line change at all?

Fill a small plastic bag with water (don't make it too full or it may pop). Using a piece of string, measure the how big around the bag is. Make a mark on the string with a marker. Put the bag into your freezer and wait for it to completely freeze. Re-measure the frozen bag. The bag should be slightly bigger.

### How Long Does Ice Take To Melt?

Put an ice cube into a few different paper cups. Put the paper cups in various locations around your house. Some examples include: outside, in the sun, in the shade, in the car, in the snow, in a cupboard, in a bathroom and in a refrigerator. Note what time you placed the cup in the location (Making a chart or list works well to keep track). Keep checking with your child until all the ice is melted in the cup. Record the time to find the one that melts the fastest.

### Fun with Food Colouring and Ice: Making Mixtures

Add a few drops of various food colouring to water in an ice cube tray. You should have at least two different colours of ice cubes—the more the better. Let the ice tray freeze and take out the coloured ice cubes. Combine different colours of ice cubes to different cups. Watch the ice cubes melt and the colours combine. See how many different colours you and your child can make with ice!

### Activity #3: Storytelling

Storytelling and story-making bring parents and children together. Use the animals included to tell your own version of *The Mitten*.

#### Materials

A mitten

Plastic animals

#### How to play

Using a real mitten and plastic animals, ask your child to choose which animal he/she would like to put in the mitten. Each time an animal is added say the following together:

"It's frosty cold here outside,  
let me in, let me in,  
where it's nice and warm".



#### Tips and Suggestions

- Your child will also like retelling the story of *The Mitten* using Jane Brett's pictures of the animals in the story. The Jan Brett website (<http://www.janbrett.com>) has pictures from the book to use in an exact retelling. Mount these on card stock and cut out. Use an actual mitten or make a paper one from the pattern. Your child will enjoy retelling this story over and over either exactly like the book or making up new versions. This is a wonderful website. You can also find animal masks for downloading so your child can become as many of the characters in the book as he/she wants!
- Go to the Library and find out more about the animals in the story.
- True stories: Choose a selection of family photographs and talk with your child about when they were taken and who is in the picture and what the occasion was. On a piece of blank white paper ask your child what he/she would like to have you write about the picture. Print a sentence or two on the paper. As you write, talk about the letters you use and reread the words from time to time. Do not do this as if you are teaching, but rather, as if you are reminding yourself of what you need to do as you write. Trim the white paper and arrange it with the photo on a piece of coloured paper. Glue both to the coloured paper and hang on the fridge or a bulletin board so you and your child can re-read what you wrote.

#### **Activity #4: Go On A Nature Scavenger Hunt**

A twist on an old classic, a nature scavenger hunt is the perfect way to enjoy a sunny day and explore the natural beauty of the outdoors at the same time. Children can spend time alone strolling with mom and dad, or you can invite some friends along and turn the nature scavenger hunt into a friendly competition. Either way, a nature scavenger hunt is an enjoyable outdoor activity for the whole family and can be done in any season.



#### **What You Need**

A list of items to collect (You can make a simple list with pictures of the things you have to find, e.g., a rock, a stick, a leaf.)

A shopping bag, paper sack or small basket

#### **What To Do**

Take a walk through your neighbourhood and search for the items on your nature scavenger hunt list, instructing your child to put the items he/she finds into the bag. (You will need to help if there are no pictures on your list. You should also help with the looking by giving hints or clues; e.g. "You're getting warmer, etc.") If several children are participating, you may want to use your backyard or other secure location for this activity in order to allow participants more freedom to safely explore. When you think your child may be losing interest or after you have collected a number of items from the list, choose a place where you can sit down to examine and share your findings. It is also fun to bring along a nature-related surprise for your child. A butterfly net or some gummy worms are sure to put a smile on his/her face!

#### **Tips and Suggestions**

- Talk about your walk and the items your child found. Ask your child to hold up an item from their sack and describe it. Encourage them to describe the color, weight, size, how it feels, smells, etc. Help them whenever necessary with the descriptions. If the nature scavenger hunt has been a group activity, pass the items around to each child so they can have a closer look.
- Take a magnifying glass with you so you can closely examine your treasures.
- Try this activity as a way to celebrate each new season (even winter!)

## Talking About Stories A Questioning Technique To Build Your Child's Language and Literacy Skill



Reading picture books with your child is a great way to help your child learn new words and help your child tell more complete descriptions about what they see. Look through a book before you read it with our child for the first time. Depending on your child, the first time you read a book together, you will likely do most of the talking yourself. Make sure that you point out the names of things your child may not know. The next time you read the same book, do the following for each of the pictures/objects you named when you and your child read the book the first time:

- **Ask "what" questions:** Point to the item in the book and say, "What's this?" or "What's this called?" Avoid questions that your child can answer with a "yes" or "no," or by pointing.
- **Follow answers with questions:** When your child names an object, ask a question about it. For example: "What color is the truck?", "What is this part of the truck called?", "What is the dog doing?", or "What do we use the bowl for?"
- **Repeat what your child says:** Let your child know his or her answer is correct by repeating it back: "Yes, that's a cow."
- **Help your child as needed:** If your child isn't able to answer your question, give the correct answer and ask him or her to repeat what you have said.
- **Praise and encourage:** Tell your child when he or she is doing well by saying things like: "Good talking!" or "That's right. Good job!"
- **Follow your child's interests:** If your child shows an interest in a picture either by talking or pointing to it, follow it up immediately by asking questions to let your child talk.

### Open-Ended Questions and Expanded Descriptions

Once your child is able to readily respond to the "what" questions you ask, start using more general, open-ended questions as a way of getting your child to say more than just one word at a time. It is also important for you to build upon what your child says to help your child learn how to tell even longer descriptions of what he or she sees in the pictures.

**Ask open-ended questions:** Continue to use questions during storytime as a way to get your child talking about the pictures. Now though, instead of using specific "what" questions like "What is this?", ask more general open-ended questions that require your child to answer with more than one word. For example, "What do you see on this page?" or, "What's happening here?"

**Help when needed:** When your child doesn't know anything else to say about a picture, provide something for your child and try to get him or her to repeat it. For example: "The duck is swimming. Now you say it, The duck is swimming..."

**Ask your child to say more:** When your child gets used to answering open-ended questions, ask your child to say something more by asking another question, like "What else do you see?"

**Expand what your child says:** When your child says something about a picture, praise him or her and add a little to what's been said. For example, if your child says "The dog is barking", you might say "Yes, the dog is barking at the cat." In this way, you expand on what your child has said with some description or endings your child left out and provide a new piece of information.

**Keep your expansions short and simple:** Make sure you build upon your child's phrases just a little so that your child is able to imitate what you have said.

**Have your child repeat:** If you encourage your child to repeat your longer phrases, he or she will start using them more quickly.

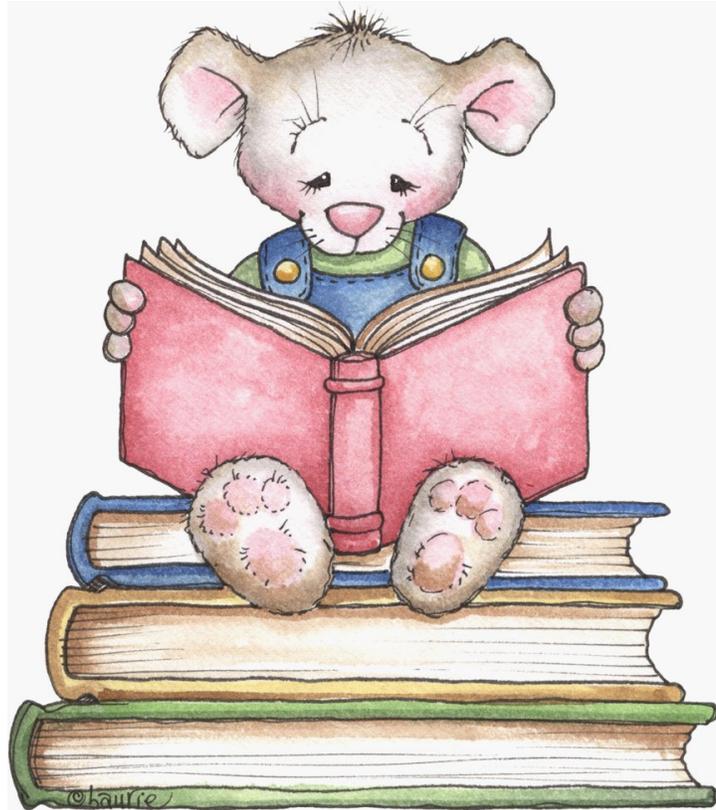
### **Tips and Suggestions:**

Have fun! Try to keep your reading times fun and like a game. One way to do this is to switch between asking questions and just plain reading. For example, you could read one page and then have your child tell you about the next page.

Keep your child's mood in mind. Keep it fun.

Make your questioning sound as natural as possible. It shouldn't seem like a test or your child will not want to do it. Keep a conversational or playful tone so the reading can be a fun activity.





**More Books by Jane Brett**

*Gingerbread Baby*

*Town Mouse, Country Mouse*

*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*

*The Hat*

*Annie and the Wild Animals*

**More Books to Try**

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*All You Need For a Snowman* by Alice Schertle

*Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson

*Caps, Hats, Socks, and Mittens* by Louise Borden

*Froggy Gets Dressed* by Jonathan London

*The Jacket I Wear in the Snow* by Shirley Neitzel

*The Missing Mitten Mystery* by Steven Kellogg