

Tower Topple

Every child will need one block from the block center for this game. The first child places her block on the floor. The second child places his block on top of the first block. The game continues as each child adds her block to the tower. When the “tower topples,” children get a block and the game begins all over again.

Hint! Have children count the blocks and see if they can beat their previous record.

Charades

Children will have fun “performing” and “stumping” their classmates with this game. One child at a time gets up in front of the room. The child acts out a nursery rhyme as her friends try and guess which one it might be. The first child to guess correctly gets to act out the next rhyme. (You might need to suggest rhymes to younger children.)

Hint! Children could also act out book titles, songs, feelings, animals, or other categories.

*Children can make sounds or simply pantomime.

“Statues” is a similar game where children work in groups and freeze in position to symbolize a book, song, or other event.

Guess Who I am?

Pepper Scatter

Materials: clear bowl
pepper
liquid detergent

Directions: Fill the bowl with water. Sprinkle the pepper on top. Squirt a drop of detergent in the middle of the bowl. Observe what the pepper does. What makes the pepper scatter?

Adaptations: Do a similar experiment by putting the end of a bar of soap in the bowl with pepper.

Shiny Pennies

Materials: old pennies, vinegar, salt, cup, and spoon

Directions: Put 1/2 cup of vinegar in the cup. Add 1 TB salt and mix to dissolve. Drop the pennies in the cup and stir them around while you count to 25. Take the pennies out of the cup and rinse them off in water. Taaa Daaa! Shiny pennies just like magic!

Adaptations: Put this experiment in a learning center so children can repeat it.

Try shining pennies with ketchup or lemon juice.

Happy Face Balloon

Materials: balloon (Use a large balloon and blow it up first to make sure it will inflate easily.) permanent marker, drink bottle, vinegar, baking soda, spoon, funnel

Directions: Blow up the balloon and draw a happy face on it with the marker. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vinegar in the bottle. Put several spoonfuls of baking soda in the balloon using the funnel. Insert the end of the balloon over the mouth of the bottle. Hold up the balloon so the baking soda falls in the bottle and watch what happens. What made the balloon blow up? Have children draw pictures in sequential order of how this experiment was conducted.

Magnetic Mouse

Materials: magnet
paper cut in the shape of a little mouse,
paper clip, cardboard or paper plate

Directions: Attach a paper clip to the mouse. Place the mouse on top of the cardboard. Slide the magnet under the cardboard to make the mouse move.

Adaptations: Put iron filings, paper clips, or magnetic letters in the sand table. Have children go on a treasure hunt and find the objects with a magnet.

What's Up?

Materials: 2 stalks of celery (with the leafy tops), 2 clear glasses, food coloring

Directions: Place the stalks of celery in two glasses of water. Add red food coloring to one cup and blue to the other. Have children predict what they think will happen. Observe for several days.

Adaptations: You can do a similar experiment with white carnations or daffodils.

Slit one stalk of celery from the bottom half way up. Put one end in blue water and the other end in red water.

Funnel Phone

Materials: 2 plastic funnels, 4' to 8' of plastic tubing 3/8" thick (available at hardware stores), tape

Directions: Fit each end of the plastic tubing in one of the funnels and tape in place. Have one child hold a funnel to his ear while another child talks into the other funnel. How does sound get from one funnel to the next?

Adaptations: Make individual phones with paper cups, string, and paper clips. Poke holes in the bottom of two cups and thread the string through the holes. Tie a paper clip to the ends of the string. Let children take turns speaking and listening with the "cup phones."

Growing, Growing!

Materials: clear jar or glass, paper towel,
sand or soil, popcorn kernels

Directions: Take a clear jar and fold a paper towel so it fits inside the jar. Put sand or soil inside the paper towel. Drop several beans or popcorn kernels between the paper towel and the cup. Water and place in a sunny spot. Children can observe the seed, root, and stem as they grow.

Adaptations: Put an old sock over your shoe and walk on the playground where there are a lot of weeds. Place the sock in a zip bag. Water the sock and punch a few small holes in the bag. Hang in a sunny window and watch it grow!

Feely Socks

Materials: old socks, common objects such as a ball, block, crayon, spoon, shell, sponge, coin, magnetic letter, etc.

Directions: Place a different item in the toe of each sock. Tie a knot in the top of the sock. Have children feel the sock and then try to guess what it is. You could also number the socks and ask the children to write or draw pictures of what they think is in each sock.

Adaptations: Put unusual items in the socks, such as styrofoam packing, a scouring pad, or items from nature. Let the children reach in the sock and identify the different objects.

Lunch Sack Book

Materials: brown lunch sacks, brad fasteners, markers, crayons, paper, glue, etc.

Directions: Stack up 4 or five sacks. Punch holes near the open end and bind with brad fasteners. Fold over the bottom of each sack to make a flap. Open flaps and draw objects or glue magazine pictures to the sacks. Fold over the flap so part of the object is revealed. Children guess what is hidden and then open and see.

Hint! You can also use photos for this book.

Baggie Book

Materials: zip sandwich bags, photos or magazine pictures, stapler

Directions: You will need 4 or 5 sandwich bags for each book. Cut the photos or magazine pictures into 5 1/2" squares. Let children choose four pictures and insert them in the bags. Zip shut. Stack the bags and staple together.

Hint! Cut paper into squares and let children draw their own pictures for their books.

Collect leaves and other natural objects and use them to make baggie books.

Gift Bag Book

Materials: gift bag, paper, stapler

Directions: Cut the front and back off the gift bag. Untie the handle from the bag. Cut paper the size of the gift bag and staple between the back and front of the bag. Re-attach the handle.

Hint! Buy a seasonal bag each month and make a class book.

* Old greeting cards also make good book covers. Cut the front off the card and then use it as a pattern to cut blank paper. Staple together.

Hint! You could also hole punch and bind with ribbon or yarn.

Box Top Book

Materials: box of Cracker Jacks, animal cookies, or dog biscuits, paper, hole punch, string

Directions: Cut the front and back off a box. Cut paper the size of the box. Hole punch and bind the book together with string.

Hint! With a Cracker Jacks book each child could draw a picture of a prize he would like to find.

*In the animal cracker book children could draw a picture of their favorite zoo animal.

*In a book made from a box of dog biscuits each child could draw her pet. (If she doesn't have a pet she can draw a picture of a pet she would like.)

I Can Read!

Materials: food wrappers, cereal boxes, magazines, store advertisements, construction paper, scissors, glue, stapler

Directions: Staple several sheets of construction paper together. Write "I Can Read!" on the front page with a marker. Help your child look through the magazines and cut out environmental print (product logos) that she can read. Glue these to the pages in the book. Encourage your child to glue additional words she can recognize from food products.

Hint! You can also glue a magnetic strip to the backs of logos and place them on the refrigerator.

Scat The Cat

Materials: file folder, scissors, glue, markers, construction paper (2 black, 1 blue, 1 red, 1 yellow, 1 green)

Directions: Download the attached pattern and story. Trace around the cat on the front of the file folder. Cut out. Add grass, flowers and other details if you desire. Place the construction paper in this order inside the file folder:

black, blue, red, yellow, green, black.

Glue the story to the back of the file folder. As you tell the story, remove the construction paper in front to reveal the appropriate cat.

Letters Of Love

Materials: paper, envelopes, pen, computer

Directions: On special occasions, such as when your child has a birthday, starts school, loses a tooth, etc. , write a letter to your child recalling the memory and how you feel. Seal up the envelope and save the letters in a special box. These will be a priceless gift of your love to give your child on the day she graduates from college, gets married, or has a child of her own.

Good Book

Materials: spiral notebook or composition book, markers

Directions: Write "Child's name's Good Book" on the front of the notebook. Explain to your child that when you catch him doing "something good" you will write it down in the book. Try to do this at least once a day. Review entries in the book at night before your child goes to bed.

Hint! Add photos to this book or let your child illustrate with his own drawings.

Story Tapes

Materials: tape recorder, favorite book

Directions: This is a great idea for grandparents or parents who travel. Make a tape of yourself reading a book to your child. You might want to ding a little bell or use a sound effect each time the page should be turned. Your child will feel “close” to you as they listen to you read them a bedtime story.

Hint! This would also be a neat treat for when a babysitter comes.

Bedtime Ritual

Materials: none

Directions: Create your own special routine to send your child off to dreamland. You might want to sing a song, say prayers, or follow the ritual below:

Kisses – Kiss, hug, butterfly kiss (blink eyelashes together), nose kiss (rub noses), etc.

Proud Thoughts – Ask your child to tell you something she did that day that made her feel proud.

Positive Tomorrow – Ask your child to tell you something she is looking forward to the next day.