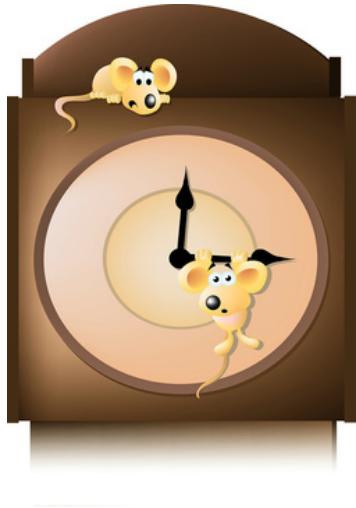




Rhymes and Songs



FINGER RHYMES

Good for fine motor development and listening skills

Tommy Thumb Where Are You?

Tommy Thumb, (hands behind back)
Tommy Thumb,
Where are you?
Here I am, (hold left thumb in air)
Here I am, (hold right thumb in air)
How do you do? (wriggle thumbs)

Repeat verse with: Peter Pointer (index finger), Toby Tall (middle finger), Ruby Ring (ring finger), Baby Small (little finger), and Fingers All.

Ten Fingers

I have ten fingers (hold up both hands, fingers spread)
And they all belong to me (point to self)
I can make them do things,
Would you like to see?
I can shut them up tight (make fists)
I can open them wide (open hands)
I can put them together (place palms together)
I can make them all hide (put hands behind back)
I can make them jump high (hands over head)
I can make them jump low (touch floor)
I can fold them up quietly (fold hands in lap)
And hold them just so.

Here is the Beehive

Here is the beehive, where are the bees?
(clench fist and bring out fingers quickly one by one)
Hidden away where nobody sees.
Watch and you will see them come out of their hives,
One, two, three, four, five,
Buzz, buzz, buzz.

Homes

A nest is a home for a bird. (cup hands to form a nest)
A hive is a home for a bee. (turn cupped hands over)
A hole is a home for a rabbit. (make a hole with hands)
And a house is a home for me. (make roof with peaked hands)

I See the Wind

I see the wind when the leaves dance by,
(dance your hands around)
I see the wind when the clothes wave "Hi!"
(wave your hand)
I see the wind when the trees bend low,
(bend your arms over and down)
I see the wind when the flags all blow.
(wave your arms high)
I see the wind when the kites fly high,
(raise your arms high)
I see the wind when the clouds float by.
(wave your hand gently)
I see the wind when it blows my hair,
(lift your hair with your hands)
I see the wind 'most everywhere!
(hold your hands out, palms up)

Two Little Dickey Birds

Two little dickey birds sitting on a wall,
(both index fingers in air, move both of them)
One named Peter, (wiggle one index finger)
One named Paul (wiggle the other finger)
Fly away Peter, (draw the hand with "the Peter finger" behind your head and hide it)
Fly away Paul (draw the hand with "the Paul finger" behind your head and hide it)
Come back Peter, (reverse the last action with "the Peter finger" hand)
Come back Paul. (reverse the last action with "the Paul finger" hand)

Where Is Thumbkin?

Start with hands behind back.

Where is Thumbkin? Where is Thumbkin?

Here I am. (bring right hand to front, with thumb up)

Here I am. (bring left hand to front, with thumb up)

How are you this morning?

Very well, I thank you. (wiggle thumbs as if they're 'talking' together)

Run away. (hide right hand behind back)

Run away. (hide left hand behind back)

Repeat rhyme with each finger: Pointer, Tall Man, Ring Man, and Baby.

The Finger Family Song

Start with one hand behind back, bring fingers out one at a time, starting from the thumb.

Daddy finger, daddy finger, where are you?

Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Mommy finger, Mommy finger, where are you?

Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Brother finger, Brother finger, where are you?

Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Sister finger, Sister finger, where are you?

Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Baby finger, Baby finger, where are you?

Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Incy Wincy Spider

Touch the thumb of one hand to the index finger of the other hand. Then touch the index finger to the thumb of the other hand. Do it over again while lifting your hands up.

Incy Wincy Spider went up the water spout.

Down came the rain,

(wiggle hands down to simulate rain falling)

And washed the spider out.

(sweep your hands away from one another)

Up came the sun, and dried up all the rain,

(make a circle with your hands to form the sun and raise your hands to show it rising)

And incy wincy spider went up the spout again.

(repeat the first action)

Two Little Birds

Two little birds,

sitting in a tree (hold up a finger from each hand)

My name's Lucy, (bend one finger as if it's talking)

My name's Lee. (bend the other finger)

Hello, Lucy, (address the first finger)

Hello, Lee. (address the second finger)

Goodbye, Lucy, (put the hand of the first finger behind your back)

Goodbye, Lee. (move other hand)

This Little Piggy

Wriggle one finger at a time, starting with the thumb - instead of toes.

This little piggy went to market,

This little piggy stayed at home.

This little piggy had roast beef,

This little piggy had none.

And this little piggy went "Wee, Wee, Wee" all the way home!

Bunny Puppet

Here is a bunny, with ears so funny, (raise two fingers)
And here is a hole in the ground. (make hole with other hand)

At the first sound she hears, she picks up her ears,
(straighten fingers)

And pops right into the ground. (put fingers in hole)

ACTION RHYMES

Develop gross motor coordination and listening skills

Five Little Ducks

Five little ducks went swimming one day
(hold up five fingers)
Over the hills and far away
(hold arm across body and tuck fingers behind shoulder on the opposite side of the body)
Mother duck said, "Quack, quack, quack, quack"
(use other hand to make a mother duck beak and open and close hand to quack)
But only four little ducks came back
(bring first hand back to the front with four fingers showing)

Continue until no little ducks came back, then:
Old Mother Duck
went out one day,
Over the hills and far away,
Mother Duck said "Quack, quack, quack, quack"
And all of those five little ducks came back.

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
(roll forearms over one another in front of the body)
Round and round; round and round.
The wheels on the bus go round and round,
All day long.

The lights on the bus go blink, blink, blink,
(open and shut hands)
Blink, blink, blink; blink, blink, blink.
The lights on the bus go blink, blink, blink
All day long.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish,
(make arms like windscreen wipers)
Swish, swish, swish; swish, swish, swish.
The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish,
All day long.

Make up other actions:
e.g. the moms go chatter, the horn goes toot etc.

Ring-a-Ring o' Roses

Ring-a-ring o' roses
A pocket full of posies
(hold hands and go around in a circle for the first two lines)
Atishoo, atishoo, we all fall down!
(fall to the ground)

Stretching

When I stretch up, I feel so tall (reach high)
When I bend down, I feel so small (bend over)
Taller, taller, taller, taller (reach up high)
Smaller, smaller, smaller, smaller
Into a tiny ball (get low on the floor)

An Action Rhyme

Raise your hands above your head,
Clap them one, two, three,
Rest them now upon your hips,
Slowly bend your knees.
Up again and stand up tall,
Put your right foot out;
Shake your fingers.
Nod your head
And twist yourself about.

Little, Bigger, Biggest

A little ball (make ball with finger and thumb)
A bigger ball (make ball with two hands)
And a great big ball (make ball with arms)
Now help me count them
One, two, three! (repeat gestures for each size)

Head and Shoulders

Touch each body part as you call them out.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes.
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes.

If You're Happy and You Know it

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands x 2
If you're happy and you know it
And you really want to show it
If you're happy and you know it
Clap your hands

Repeat with:

If you're happy and you know it *pat your cheeks, stamp your feet, say hurrah, do all four.*

Our Helpers

Make up actions as you say the verbs.
Chop, chop, choppity chop
I am a wood cutter.
Tap, tap, tappity tap
I am a cobbler.
Wash, wash, washity wash
I am washerman.
Snip, snip, snippity snip
I am a tailor
Dance, dance, dancity dance
I am a dancer.
March, march, marchity march
I am a soldier.
Left-right, left-right
Off we go.

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Here we go round the mulberry bush
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush
Here we go round the mulberry bush
So early in the morning.

This is the way we wash our face
Wash our face, wash our face
This is the way we wash our face
So early in the morning.

Repeat with:

This is the way we *take our bath, wear our clothes, drink our milk, march to school.*

Row Your Boat

Sit facing your child, hold hands and make rowing motion.
Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream

Hands on Shoulders

Hands on shoulders,
Hands on knees.
Hands behind you, if you please;
Touch your shoulders,
now your nose.

COUNTING RHYMES

Develops mathematical concepts

The Ants Go Marching

The ants go marching one by one, Hoorah! Hoorah!
The ants go marching one by one, Hoorah! Hoorah!
The ants go marching one by one,
The little one stops to suck his thumb
And they all go marching down to the ground to get out
of the rain.

Repeat verse, increasing number by 1 each time and
changing the 4th line:

The ants go marching two by two,
The little one stops to tie his shoe

3 - climb a tree, 4 - shut the door, 5 - take a dive, 6 - pick
up sticks, 7 - pray to heaven, 8 - shut the gate, 9 - check
the time, 10 - shout "THE END!!"

One, Two, Buckle My Shoe

One, two, buckle my shoe,
Three, four, knock at the door.
Five, six, pick up sticks,
Seven, eight, lay them straight.
Nine, ten, a big fat hen,
Eleven, twelve, dig and delve.
Thirteen, fourteen, maids a-courting,
Fifteen, sixteen, maids in the kitchen.
Seventeen, eighteen, maids in waiting,
Nineteen, twenty, my plate's empty.

Rabbits

Rabbits-rabbits 1 2 3
Will you come and play with me?
Camels-camels 4 5 6
Why do you have a hump like this?
Monkeys-monkeys 7 8 9
Will you teach me how to climb?
When I have counted up to ten
The elephant says now start again.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I Caught a Fish Alive

1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
Once I caught a fish alive,
6, 7, 8, 9, 10,
Then I let it go again.
Why did you let it go?
Because it bit my finger so.
Which finger did it bite?
This little finger on my right.

Five Little Ladybirds

Five little ladybirds, climbing on the door
One flew away and then there were four.
Four little ladybirds, sitting on a tree.
One flew away and then there were three.
Three little ladybirds, sitting on a shoe
One flew away and then there were two.
Two little ladybirds, looking for some fun
One flew away and then there was one.
One little ladybirds, hiding behind the sun
One flew away and then there was none.

Five Fat Sausages

Five fat sausages frying in a pan
All of a sudden - one went "BANG"!
Four fat sausages frying in a pan
All of a sudden - one went "BANG"!
Three fat sausages frying in a pan
All of a sudden - one went "BANG"!
Two fat sausages frying in a pan
All of a sudden - one went "BANG"!
One fat sausage frying in a pan
All of a sudden - it went "BANG"!
No fat sausages frying in a pan.

GENERAL RHYMES

Teaches Rhyming and Sound Patterns

Hickory, Dickory, Dock

Hickory, Dickory, Dock
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down.
Hickory, Dickory, Dock

Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down
And broke his crown.
And Jill came tumbling after.

Baby Bumble Bee

Baby Bumble Bee had a fly upon his nose,
Baby Bumble Bee had a fly upon his nose,
Baby Bumble Bee had a fly upon his nose,
And he flipped it and he flapped it and it flew away.

Little Miss Muffet

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

A Little Nut Tree

I had a little nut-tree,
And nothing would it bear,
But silver apple.
And a golden pear.
The king of spines daughter
Come to visit me.
All for the sake of
My little nut-tree.

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

It's Raining, It's Pouring

It's raining; it's pouring.
The old man is snoring.
He went to bed but he bumped his head,
And he didn't wake up in the morning.

Rain

Rain on the green grass,
Rain on the tree,
Rain on the rooftops
But not on me.

Vegetables

Tomatoes and Carrots
Cabbage and Beans
Look so yummy
All red and green.

So little children
Eat them every day
To make you grow
Strong and smart.

Hey Diddle Diddle

Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed to see such fun
And the dish ran away with the spoon!

Cobbler, Cobbler

Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe
Get it done by half-past-two;
Stitch it up and stitch it down,
Then I'll give you half-a-crown.

Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shell,
And pretty maids all in a row.

Georgie Porgie

Georgie Porgie,
pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry,
When the boys came out to play,
Georgie Porigie ran away.

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Mary had a little lamb
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
That lamb was sure to go.
It followed her to school one day
That was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play,
To see a lamb at school.

Old mother Hubbard

Old mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard,
To get her poor doggy a bone,
But when she got there,
The cupboard was bare
And so the poor doggy got none!

A Little Golden Fish

A little golden fish
In a golden bowl she swims
And a golden bird is singing
In a golden cherry tree.

Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater
Had a wife and couldn't keep her,
He put her in a pumpkin shell
And there he kept her very well.

Ricky Rabbit

Ricky Rabbit flew his rocket
Right up to the moon.
But he forgot
His red carrot
And so, he came back soon.

Jack Sprat Could Eat No Fat

Jack sprat could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean,
So it come to pass
Between them both.
They licked the
Platter clean.
Jack ate all the lean,
Joan ate all the fat,
The bone they
Picked it clean,
Then gave it to the cat.

Red Light

Red light, red light
What do you say?
I say stop-stop
Right away.

Yellow light, yellow light
What do you say?
I say wait-wait
Right away.

Green light, green light
What do you say?
I say go-go
Go away.



Short Stories for Kids

Wake Up Mum

Written by Christina Wither

Two little bears peeped out of their cave.
Winter was over and they could smell the
fresh spring air. It was time to get up and
play after their long sleep.

"Let's run under the trees," said Ben.

"I want to roll in the grass," said Bessie.

"We'd better ask mum," said the bears together.

Ben and Bessie went into the cave where they had slept with their mum. There she was in the far corner. Mother bear was still fast asleep. The two little bears tiptoed over to their mum and shook her gently.

"Wake up mum. The snow has melted and it is time to play," said Ben.

Mother bear did not even move. She grunted and rolled over to carry on sleeping.

"What can we do?" asked Bessie. "We need our mother to wake up and take us into the forest to have some fun."

The two little bears sat outside the cave and tried to think of a way to wake up their mum.

"I know, let's get some tickly spiders and see if they will wake up our mother," said Ben.

The two bears went to find some tickly spiders. Bessie was feeling a bit scared of the spiders but Ben collected them on a big leaf. He took them to where his mum was lying.

The spiders walked off the leaf and across mother bear's back. Mother bear giggled in her sleep, but she did not wake up.

"I think we should ask a noisy cuckoo," said Bessie.

The bears went out to the trees near the cave. Sitting in the tree was a cuckoo.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo," sang the bird.

The two bears asked the cuckoo to follow them back to the cave and call out to their mom.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo," sang the bird but mom just rolled over and carried on sleeping.

The two little bears did not know what to do. They had tried tickling, making a loud noise and calling out to mum.

"I know," said Ben. "What about something she likes to eat?"

"Honey!" said the bears together.

Off they ran to a beehive. They talked politely to the bees and the bees gave them some honey. They ran back to the cave and tiptoed in to see if their mum would smell the honey. Mum's big brown bear nose began to twitch. Then her nose began to wiggle and she opened one eye. The baby bears took a few steps backwards.

Mother bear opened both her eyes and blinked. The baby bears took a few more steps back.

Now they were up at the opening of the cave. Mother bear sat up and gave a big sniff.

"I smell honey," she said.

Mother bear was awake at last. Ben and Bessie were so happy.

The little bears took a few more steps out of the cave and happily mother bear followed them. At last they had found the best way to wake up mum!

Three happy bears skipped into the forest to enjoy the spring and have fun together.



Puppy Dreams

Written by Becky Ross Michael

Dad walked into the kitchen, followed by the scent of a cool autumn afternoon. He placed bags of groceries on the counter, which Mom started to unload. "Yum," she said, "this will be great for dinner."



Sister checked the bags, hoping for a special treat. But Brother stood still as stone, gazing at his father. "Um, Dad...why's your jacket moving like that?"

With a smile, Dad unzipped his coat. Nestled in the pocket of his shirt lay a little, black creature. Speechless at first, everyone stared.

"You didn't," Mom finally said.

"A puppy?" guessed Brother.

Dad lifted the wiggly mass of fur from his pocket and set it on the dark kitchen rug.

"Oooh!" yelled Sister in delight. At the sound of her loud voice, the tiny animal froze.

"I think you've scared him," said Mom, reaching to pick up the small dog. As she did, a patch of wet rug was revealed from underneath him.

"Oops," Dad said. "He had a boo-boo on the floor. Looks like we've got some potty training to do. I couldn't resist. Someone was selling puppies from the back of their pickup outside the store. It was either that or off to the shelter. When I walked over, this little guy practically jumped into my arms."

"I can just imagine," Mom said with a grin.

"What's his name?" Brother asked.

"That's for you and your sister to figure out."

The afternoon passed in a whirl of fun. Mom set up a feeding and watering area in the kitchen. Dad placed a comfortable, new pet bed in a corner of the living room. They all took turns guiding the puppy outside to avoid more potty accidents.

"Chester might be a good name," suggested Mom, while they watched the puppy nap.

"Blackie would fit him because of his color," Brother said.

"When I was a kid, we had a dog named Roamer," said Dad. "Maybe that could be his name."

"Not sure," said Sister. The puppy yipped. "I'll take him outside this time, while I'm thinking about a good name."

"Time for bed," Mom later announced. The sky had turned dark, and the children were yawning.

"What about the puppy?" Brother asked. "Can he sleep with me?"

"No, meee!" pleaded Sister.

"I didn't get him a crate for sleeping yet," Dad said. "But I don't think this guy should be on the loose during the night. Too many chances for accidents."

"That's for sure," agreed Mom. "There's a big, empty box in the garage. It would be open on the top for air, but he wouldn't be free to wander around the house. The living room is the warmest, so we can set it up right here."

Disappointed, the children agreed and wandered off to get ready for bed.

Mom and Dad awoke in the morning, surprised they had slept all night through, without interruption. Creeping down the stairs followed by Brother, they discovered how that had happened. Sister lay on the living room carpet with her head on the pet bed next to the puppy. Both stirred when the others came into the room.

"I heard him crying," explained Sister with a sleepy smile. "So I took him from the box for a snuggle. And I just had a dream about his name," she added.

"You dreamed a name for him?" asked Brother.

"Well, I was dreaming about yesterday. In my dream, I heard Dad saying the puppy had a 'boo-boo' on the floor. Don't you see? That's his name!" she declared, looking back and forth at their faces. "He's Boo-Boo!"

The dog let out a happy, little yip. And "Boo-Boo" he was, from that day forward!

Five Rats and a Funny Hat

Written by Christina Wither

Samson, the big black cat, lay across the mat fast asleep. He was a very big, fat cat. Samson looked as if he was asleep, but he really had one eye open all the time.

Samson's one eye was looking right at the hole in the wall where a family of rats lived. One, two, three, four and five little rats. Five little frightened rats were peeping out from behind the hole in the wall. The five rats wanted to get away from the big, black cat.

Samson yawned and stretched and turned over to sleep a bit longer. The rats were quivering with excitement. Now was their chance to escape. One rat tiptoed out to cross the room. He started to run towards the door.

Suddenly the door opened! In walked a tall man wearing a top hat. The man threw the top hat onto a chair but it missed the chair and fell on the floor.

Samson jumped up and hissed. The rat ran back to his hole with the other rats. The chance to escape had gone.

Slowly Samson went back to sleep. The rats looked at the cat and then they noticed the top hat lying on the floor and it gave them an idea.

The rats nodded to each other as they made a plan. They would hide under the hat and see if they could sneak past the big, black cat. Carefully, one by one, they wriggled under the hat and waited.

The rats heard Samson snoring. They thought they would start to walk towards the door under the shelter of the hat. Slowly the hat slid across the floor. The cat did not wake up. The rats reached the door. It was open just enough for them to slip out and go on down the road. The hat, with the rats, went out of the door.

At the same time Samson woke up. His greedy eyes saw the hat moving across the steps and out of the door. He jumped up and started to walk towards the door. The rats knew they would have to start to run.

The cat was getting closer and the rats could see no escape. Behind them was the cat and in front of them was the road and it led to a duck pond. Oh, what should they do?

Whoosh, a sudden gust of wind blew down the road. It tipped the hat over and the rats fell inside. They hung on tightly. What would happen now?

The hat blew down the road and into the pond. The rats peeped over the edge. They saw that they were floating on the pond. Now the hat was a boat!

Samson looked at the rats floating on the pond. He was very angry. He could not swim. The rats had escaped in their funny top hat. The little rats laughed at the cat. Samson hissed and went home.



Friends in the Forest

Written by Becky Ross Michael

A tear slipped from Rosie the red fox cub's eye. She tried to ignore it, as she walked lightly on her toes toward the family den. Mama fox heard Rosie and moved toward the entrance.

"Why so sad, Rosie?" her mother asked. "You're usually happy when you return from chasing grasshoppers in the field with your fox friend, Scarlet."

"Oh, Mama," Rosie wailed. "She just told me the news! Scarlet and her family are moving to a different part of the forest to live by her grandma and grandpa. I may never see her again!" More tears filled Rosie's eyes.

"I understand why you're upset. But you'll find a new friend before you know it," her mother assured. "Now, come share some berries for dinner."

The next day, Rosie decided to find a new friend. "Don't go near the water, beyond the edge of the marsh," warned her mother.

Catching sight of a grasshopper, Rosie moved quickly across the open field. While chasing and swatting at the insect, she came chin to chin with Russet, another red fox.

"Will you be my new best friend?" asked Rosie, swinging her bushy tail.

"I would, but I already have a best friend," Russet answered, walking away.

Disappointed, Rosie moved toward the trees. Approaching a hollowed-out log, she saw Looney Raccoon, fast asleep. She gave him a nudge with a black-tipped paw. "Looney, will you be my new best friend?"

The raccoon yawned. "Go away; I'm trying to sleep. And no, I will not. I already have a best friend."

So Rosie moved further into the trees, soon catching sight of Roberta Rabbit hopping along the trail. "Wait up," called Rosie, but the rabbit continued to scamper. "Will you be my new best friend?" The rabbit stopped and twitched her nose.

"I already have a best friend," Roberta said, turning to hop away.

Not ready to give up, Rosie the red fox moved toward the edge of the marsh. All of a sudden, she stopped and pricked up her ears at the sounds of moving leaves from above. Lifting her nose, Rosie saw Squiggy the black squirrel.

"Hellooo!" she called into the branches. "Will you be my new best friend?"

"Thanks for asking, but I already have a best friend," he chattered.

Another animal hidden in the bushes listened and watched Rosie as she hung her head and walked to the edge of the marsh.

Blinded by tears, Rosie forgot to be careful about where she was stepping. Without warning, one of her black feet slipped into the water. *Splash!* Rosie suddenly wished she had paid more attention when Mama tried teaching her to swim. With four legs flailing this way and that, Rosie struggled to reach solid ground. Unexpectedly, she felt something grab the scruff of her neck, pulling her from the murky water.



"Who's that?" cried Rosie, shaking water from her red fur. When her eyes finally cleared, she was surprised to see a gray fox cub.

"Are you okay?" the gray fox asked Rosie.

"Yes, and thanks for the help. I really need to practice my swimming."

"I can assist with that. My name's Pearl, and maybe I could be your new best friend."

Rosie stared in surprise. "Gray foxes don't usually like red foxes," she said.

"My parents taught me to give everyone a chance," Pearl answered. "So what if my coloring is different than yours and I'll stay a bit smaller than you when I'm all grown up. What difference does any of that make?"

"You're right!" answered Rosie. "I never really thought of it that way. I'd love for us to be best friends. Now, let's go chase some grasshoppers!"

The Spotty Grey Kitten

Written by Christina Wither

Grady was a little, grey kitten. He had a white spot on his back and a black spot on his nose. Grady lived with his mum and two sisters on a farm. Grady's sisters were white with black spots. Both of his sisters were very good. Grady was the naughty one. He was always getting into trouble. Grady was very adventurous. He wanted to explore the farm. One day he went out into the farmyard to see what was in the big wide world. Grady said to himself, "I am not afraid of anything!"

Suddenly a big monster roared out of the garage and sent Grady spinning into the bushes. He did not know what had roared past. He picked himself up and decided it was time to go home.

Grady looked left and he looked right, but there was nowhere that looked like home. He was lost.

'Oh dear,' Grady thought. 'Now what shall I do?' He walked across a field and suddenly he stopped! There in front of him was a furry, white animal with spots on its back. Grady thought it must be one of his sisters.

Grady ran up to the furry, spotted animal.

"Can you take me home?" asked Grady.

"No," said the furry animal. "You do not belong in my home."

"Look at you, you do not have big ears and you do not hop like me," said the furry animal. Grady realized he did not belong with this animal. Grady ran to the farmyard where he saw another spotty animal. It was a bit bigger than Grady, but it had spots on its back.

Grady ran up to the spotty animal.

"Can I come home with you? You look just like me with all those spots," said Grady.

The big animal grunted and jumped into a mud puddle.

"I have mud spots on my back. Come and roll in the mud if you want mud spots," said the muddy spotty animal.

"No thanks," said Grady. He did not want to get muddy. Grady ran away again.

Grady was getting worried. He was hungry too.

Then Grady saw another spotty animal. This animal had a loud voice.

"Ruff, ruff," said the voice. "Can I help you?"

Grady just nodded. He felt himself being lifted up and carried away. A spotty dog had found Grady. He scratched at the front door. A little girl opened the door. She jumped up and down.

She was so happy to see the spotty dog and the kitten. She took Grady right back to his mother. She was lying in a basket in the kitchen.

Grady saw his mum and his two sisters. Grady listened to their soft purring.

"Purr, purr," said the other kittens. They were happy too.

Grady was put back in his basket. He felt happy as he snuggled up with his family. He was safe now and he was going to get some milk for his supper.

Purr, purr, purr!



Sulky and Stubby

Written by Becky Ross Michael

From where he sat on a tree, the lone chipmunk watched animals moving around below. Sulky the chipmunk was searching for others with handsome stripes just like his own. But he didn't see anyone who looked exactly like his reflection in the still waters of the pond.



That's okay, Sulky thought. At least I've found some cousins. And he ran down the tree to join them.

Skittering along the path, Sulky first spotted a ground squirrel. She wore dark brown and tan stripes along her sleek brown back. "Hello!" greeted Sulky. "I'm happy to meet you, cousin!" "You don't look it," grumped the ground squirrel. "No wonder they call you Sulky. You don't appear very friendly with all those dark stripes on your face. You look rather mean." And the ground squirrel scurried farther into the woods.

Does my striped face look mean? wondered Sulky. Surely, his other cousins would feel differently! He scampered away and soon met a groundhog.

"Hello!" said Sulky. "I'm happy to meet you."

"Doesn't seem like it," said the dull brown groundhog. "You look anything but happy."

"Really? I feel glad. And we're cousins, you know," the chipmunk pointed out.

"That may be, but I want nothing to do with you," groused the groundhog, waddling away.

Suddenly, something stirred up ahead. Sulky caught sight of a wispy red squirrel's tail.

"Hello," said the hopeful chipmunk. "I'm happy to meet you."

"I wouldn't have known it by looking at you," sassed the squirrel. "If you want to be friendly, you need to look the part."

"But this is just how I look on the outside," cried Sulky. "My face has nothing to do with what I think and feel. Besides, we're cousins."

"Doesn't matter," answered the red squirrel. "I spend time with those who look much nicer than you."

With drooping ears, Sulky the chipmunk headed toward his burrow.

As he walked, an acorn caught Sulky's eye. Guess I'll take it home to eat later, he thought. As he reached for the nut, Sulky came nose-to-nose with another animal. Hesitating, he pulled back a bit to examine this new arrival. Light stripes decorated his face. And he was marked with dark stripes along his brown back and tail...wait a minute. Where was the rest of his tail???

"I know exactly what you're thinking," chattered the other chipmunk. "What happened to him...am I right? They call me 'Stubby' because I lost part of my tail in an accident when I was just a little kit."

"Oh, I didn't notice," answered Sulky.

"Thanks for your kindness, but it's the very first thing everyone sees. Then they get embarrassed and don't even try getting to know me."

"I understand perfectly. My cousins don't like these dark stripes on my face. They say I look mean and call me 'Sulky.'"

"Looks aren't important," said Stubby. "How we act should be what matters most."

"That's right!" Sulky agreed. "And you can have this acorn. I think you probably arrived one paw-length before I reached it."

"So polite of you," Stubby said, with a swish of his short tail. "But here's a thought. Let's work together and gather acorns for both our homes."

"Great idea!" answered Sulky, with happy eyes.

The two chipmunks scurried about, filling their cheeks with acorns. Along the way, they also found time to race and play. They smiled beneath twitching whiskers when their cousins asked to join in the games!

The Mighty Meeting

Written by Christina Wither

It was a hot, sunny day in Africa. Elephant was walking down the path on his way to his favourite water hole. He was looking forward to the cool water and a mud bath.

Lion was also walking along the path. Lion was on his way to the grassy plains. He was going to lie down and wait for his lunch.



Elephant turned the corner and lifted his trunk in the air. He smelt the water at the water hole. Lion turned into the same corner. He was getting closer to his favourite hunting spot.

Suddenly the two animals met in the middle of the path.

"Out of my way," roared the lion.

"Out of my way," trumpeted the elephant.

"Make way for the king of the jungle," growled the lion.

"Certainly not! Where shall I go?" answered the elephant.

The path was blocked. The two strong animals stood facing each other.

The elephant would not move. The lion would not move.

Other animals began to walk along the path. Some were standing behind the elephant and others behind the lion.

Lion and elephant just stared at each other and refused to move.

A monkey came running past. He greeted the other animals. Then he reached the lion and the elephant. He looked at the fierce lion. He looked at the enormous elephant.

The monkey started to chuckle. He ran off into the jungle to get some 'monkey vine' that hung from the trees. He rushed back to the lion and the elephant.

"I know how to solve your problem," said the monkey.

All the animals behind the elephant and the lion wanted to get a look at what was going on.

They saw the monkey arrive with a long piece of monkey vine. He tied one end around the elephant and the other around the lion. He stood on an anthill nearby and shouted!

"Friends, we are going to have a tug of war. When I say 'heave' then it is time for the lion and the elephant to pull the monkey vine!"

"May the best animal win," shouted the monkey.

Elephant was very strong and pulled hard at the rope. Lion dug his extra sharp claws into the path and pulled hard too.

Suddenly there was a clap of thunder! The animals looked up into the sky. They saw huge dark rain clouds. A storm was on its way.

Then lion felt the first drops of rain. He let go of the monkey vine and ran off into the bushes.

"My mane, my beautiful mane. I combed it as smooth as silk this morning!" he cried.

Lion ran to hide under an Acacia Tortillas, the umbrella thorn tree.

"I win," cried elephant, as he stood in the rain. Elephant's thick skin was like a raincoat. He was not worried about getting wet.

Monkey hopped about with delight. He wanted elephant to win.

Suddenly all the animals heard a mighty roar! "No, rain stopped play, there is no contest."

Lion did not want the animals to think he had lost. No contest meant there was no winner.

Elephant nodded his head and walked down the path. He did not care if he got wet and he was looking forward to getting muddy too.

Family Fireworks

Written by Becky Ross Michael

DING said the elevator as Ella, Rae Ann, and Mom arrived on the second floor. After the door slid open, they walked down the hallway toward Grandma's apartment.

"I love your new place!" said Ella.

"Thanks," Grandma answered. "And we can watch the fireworks from my balcony or go downstairs after they get started."

"Okay," said Mom. "It will be a while before dark."

"Could I play your piano while we're waiting?" asked Rae Ann, the younger sister.

"Sure," said Grandma, leading her into the next room.

"I need to use the bathroom," Ella said.

Mom pointed down the hallway.

In the bathroom, Ella looked around. She knew better than to touch anything dangerous, like sharp things or medicines. Ella just wanted to peek in some of Grandma's cabinets. She flushed the toilet, washed her hands, and quietly opened a drawer. After squirting a touch of scented lotion on her hands, Ella rubbed them together. I sure hope they don't notice the smell!

Rae Ann was playing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on the piano. Mom and Grandma chatted in the living room.

Quiet as a mouse, Ella opened another drawer. She found a hair drier and curling irons of various sizes. Moving those aside, Ella discovered several kinds of hairbrushes. She picked up a narrow, rounded brush and gazed into the mirror over the sink. Maybe I could get my hair to curl a bit.

Imagining how Grandma might use it, she twirled the brush through the straight ends of her fine hair.

What? Oh, no! Somehow, the brush had become tangled in her long hair. In alarm, Ella pulled harder, twisting the brush this way and that, only making things worse.

"Ella, let's go," said Mom through the door. "We've decided to watch the fireworks from downstairs."

"Just a minute," said Ella. She pulled at the hairbrush until her head hurt. In the mirror, she saw bright red checks and alarmed eyes.

"Now!" demanded Mom.

Gulping tears, Ella entered the living room with the brush dangling from her hair. "It's stuck..."

"No!" Mom shrieked. "You were bald until you were three and can't afford to lose any of that hair!"

Rae Ann giggled. A look of concern filled Grandma's eyes.

"Come here," Mom ordered. "Let me see if I can get that out." Her hands shook as she worked on Ella's tangled locks.

"No, I can't get it," said Mom. "Ella, I can't believe you did this. We might have to cut your hair. And we're going to be late for the fireworks show."



"Here, let me try," Grandma said in a calm voice. She led Ella back into the bathroom and closed the door. Grandma worked slowly, releasing a few strands at a time.

"Wow, your hair is sure twisted around this. From now on, please ask before using my things, okay?"

"I will," answered Ella.

"There's just this one little clump that's too snarled. I'd rather trim it off than break the hairs."

Grandma reached into the cabinet for small scissors. SNIP, SNIP.

"There we go. You're all set."

Ella's head tingled. It could have been from all the excitement in the air. Most likely, she had a sore scalp from all that tugging!

The outdoors was still and warm. Cicadas sang in the distance. The dark sky exploded with light.

"Ooh," said Grandma, "that was beautiful!" Minutes later, "Aah," Grandma remarked, "that one was even better."

Color, noise, and energy surrounded the family. Ella looked Grandma's way, and they shared a secret smile.



Games for Kids



1. *Simon Says*

Simon Says is quick and easy to play with young children. It can also be used as a transition game, to quickly grab the attention of a group of kids.

Call out a series of instructions, beginning with the words *Simon says* and kids must follow the actions:

- Simon says clap your hands
- Simon says run and touch the wall

If you start an instruction without the words *Simon says*, children must not follow it:

- Clap your hands
- Run and touch the wall

This game usually has the children in fits of giggles, as they get caught out following the actions when they shouldn't.

2. *Telephone Game*

The *Telephone Game*, also called *Broken Telephone*, is a game the whole family can play, and it's also a fun carpet game for the classroom.

Everyone sits in a circle or round a table and the first player thinks of a word or phrase and whispers it into the next person's ear. The message gets passed around until the last person calls out the phrase. The person who started confirms if it's correct.

Expect more fits of laughter when the message gets jumbled. When playing with younger children, it's better if an adult starts the round, using very simple phrases.

3. *Hide and Seek*

A classic childhood game, *Hide and Seek* can be played outside or inside on rainy days. It's a cooperative game that requires children to follow simple rules.

One child faces the wall and counts aloud to 10 (or a higher number) while the rest of the children find places to hide. The child then calls out "ready or not, here I come" and proceeds to look for all the other children.

The first person to be found will be the seeker in the next round and the last person to be found wins the round.

4. *Tag*

Also called Catchers, *Tag* is the simplest of the chasing games and can be played with a small or large number of players. *Tag* is a good social skills game.

In this game, one person is "it" and chases the other players, attempting to tag someone by touching them. Once someone is tagged, that person then becomes the chaser and tries to tag someone else.

5. I Spy with My Little Eye

For some more indoor fun and a game that builds vocabulary, play *I Spy with My Little Eye*. The first person to guess the answer becomes the next person to describe something they “spy”.

One person spots something in the room or classroom and describes it, as in the following example: “I spy with my little eye something round that helps us tell the time.”

You can describe something based on colour, shape, function, a word that it rhymes with, the first letter that the word starts with, etc. You can actually practise multiple skills with this game. Make the clues as easy or challenging as necessary, to match the age and maturity of the players. This is a game you can easily play with one child.

6. Duck, Duck, Goose

Duck, Duck, Goose is one of the most fun outdoor group games and is also a chasing game. It develops gross motor, listening and social skills, as well as the ability to determine one’s position in space.

Children sit in a large circle. One child is chosen to be “it” and walks around the circle, tapping each child on the head as they call out “duck” on each tap. When the person eventually taps someone and calls “goose,” the person who is the goose must quickly get up and try to catch the child who is “it,” before they make it round the circle to sit in the “goose’s” place.

If caught, the child who is “it” must sit in the middle of the circle and can only be freed when another child is caught and they can then swap out. The “goose” is then “it.” If “it” is not caught and manages to sit in the “goose’s” spot, the goose becomes the new “it.”

7. Red Light, Green Light

Red Light, Green Light is an active outdoor game that can build gross motor skills like speed, balance and body control, as well as the ability to focus and follow instructions.

To play this game, have children line up against a wall while you stand at a distance from them. When you shout *green light*, they can run towards you, but when you shout *red light*, they have to stop and freeze. If anyone moves when they should be freezing, they must go back to the starting point and start over again.

8. Pass the Parcel

Pass the Parcel is a classic party game. Children sit in a circle and pass a wrapped parcel around from player to player, until the music stops. Whoever is holding the parcel when the music stops, can take off one layer of wrapping. When the music starts again, the parcel continues to go around the circle, until the last layer of wrapping is taken off.

The person to take off the last layer gets the gift hidden inside, but if playing with young children, it may be better to wrap a bag of small party favours for everyone.

9. Freeze Dance

Also called *Musical Statues*, *freeze dance* is one of the most fun music games to play.

Kids dance to the music and have to freeze and try not to move at all, every time the music stops. If they move, they are *out* and have to wait for the next round to join in again.

10. Do This, Do That

Do This, Do That is a similar game to Simon Says and makes a great quiet game to calm children down. This game takes a lot of concentration and builds listening skills.

Act out a series of simple actions to be followed – such as putting your hands on your head or wriggling your nose – beginning each with either “do this” or “do that”. If you call out “do this”, the children must copy the action, but if you call out “do that”, children must freeze and not follow the action.

11. Odd One Out

The *Odd One Out Game* can either be played as a word game or with objects. With younger children, it is better to play with physical objects.

Explain to kids that they must look at the group of items that you’ve chosen and tell you which one of the things is not like the others.

Show, for example, a set of four fruits and one vegetable, or three toy cars and one toy train. With older children, you can simply call out a string of a few words and ask which is the odd one out.

This game teaches children cognitive skills such as grouping according to common properties, and categorizing.

12. Hopscotch

Hopscotch is a traditional game that involves drawing large numbered squares on the ground with chalk and hopping through them. It’s a game that can help build number recognition, as well as balance and gross motor coordination.

There is a traditional layout of the hopscotch court and rules that may be slightly complex for younger children, so feel free to make up simpler rules for preschoolers. Children can hop on one or two legs along the squares and call out the numbers as they go. They can also use beanbags.

Traditionally, they throw a stone into the first square, hop over onto the next empty square, and then hop to the end, on one leg on a single square and landing on two feet when there are side-by-side squares.

They then turn around and hop back to the start, picking up the stone and throwing it into the second square on the next round, then the third square on the next round, and so forth. The player must not touch the lines at any point, or they lose the round.

13. Categories Game

The *Category Game* is a great cognitive game that can help children develop the ability to identify common properties, build memory and develop vocabulary.

Pick a category and go around the group, having each child add a new word that belongs in the category. It could be a list of examples of a certain thing, such as vehicles (car, truck, bus), or it could just be words you’d associate with the category, such as the doctor (injection, stethoscope, medicine).

14. Kim's Game

This is a great game for building visual memory. To play *Kim's Game*, show children a few objects placed onto a tray, then cover the tray and remove one item, asking them to identify the missing object.

This will develop memory and concentration as children try to commit the four or five items to memory, and then try to spot the missing object each time.

15. Blind Man's Bluff

Blind Man's Bluff is another common party game that improves kids' sense of direction, position in space and auditory perception.

One player is blindfolded and spun around a few times by the other players. They then move around the area, calling out to, dodging and trying not to get touched by the blindfolded player. Anyone who is touched then has a turn to be blindfolded.

16. I Wrote a Letter to my Love

I Wrote A Letter to My Love is played much the same as *Duck, Duck, Goose*.

Children sit in a circle and one child walks around the outside of the circle, holding a piece of material or paper, while saying "I wrote a letter to my love and on the way I dropped it. Someone must have picked it up and put it in their pocket. It wasn't you, It wasn't you, It wasn't you..."

That child must then choose someone by saying "It was you" while tapping them on the head. The chosen child must pick up the material or paper and chase the other child, attempting to catch them before they sit in their vacant place.

17. Follow the Leader

Follow the Leader is a simple game that is a great exercise in following directions and concentrating.

An adult or child is the leader and all the children must line up behind the leader. They must copy all the leader's actions and movements.

If playing with older children, they can be called out if they don't successfully copy the actions, and the last person standing becomes the new leader.

18. Stuck in the Mud

Stuck in the Mud is a chasing game that is a variation of the popular game *Tag*.

One child is "on" and must chase and tag as many players as possible. The tagged players are then "stuck in the mud" and must stand with their legs apart.

They cannot move until someone frees them, by crawling through their legs.

The game ends when all the players are stuck. Make the game more challenging by having two children chase and tag.

Fine & Gross Motor Activity Ideas



FINE MOTOR IDEAS

- Thread beads onto a string
- Peg clothing pegs around a paper plate
- Sort buttons or beads by colour into egg boxes
- Make a hedgehog with playdough and toothpicks
- Thread beads onto a string or shoelace
- Place pom-poms into an ice tray with tweezers
- Hammer nails into a wooden plank
- Roll playdough into balls and make a caterpillar
- Make a macaroni necklace
- Screw lids onto jars
- Crumple paper into balls, aim and throw into a basket
- Sort and stack coins
- String beads onto a pipe cleaner
- Make a mini playdough-pizza with toppings
- Build structures with marshmallows and toothpicks

FINE MOTOR PROCESS ART IDEAS

- Nature collage – create a collage with leaves, twigs flowers, etc. Stick them down with liquid glue.
- Sponge printing - dip a sponge in paint and stamp with it, or make patterns by smearing it.
- Sticker art - create freely with stickers, crayons and paper.
- Mud painting - dip paintbrushes in mud and paint on the paving.
- Chalk painting - draw with wet chalk on paving, or on black paper.
- Potato printing - cut a potato in half, carve a shape into it and dip into paint and print on paper.
- Sand art - spread liquid glue onto cardboard in patterns and throw coloured sand onto it.
- Texture collage - create a collage using tape, different types of paper, paint, materials, etc.
- Shape picture - make a picture creation out of colourful paper shape cutouts.
- Cork printing - dip corks in coloured paints and create a fun, colourful page of dots

GROSS MOTOR IDEAS

- Pretend to be different animals and move like them
- Play *Simon Says* and follow the movement instructions
- Walk like a crab (palms on the ground behind you)
- Play ten-pin bowling with plastic bottles and balls
- Play a chasing game like *Tag* or *Stuck in the Mud*
- Make an obstacle course with chairs, boxes, ropes, etc.
- Place chairs or bottles in a line and race by weaving in and out
- Aim and throw bean bags or balls into a box or basket
- Build a fort out of chairs, blankets, tables, etc.
- Draw a big “figure 8” in chalk and ride toy cars along the lines
- Race while balancing beanbags on your head
- Walk along a “tight rope”
- Have a pillow fight
- Walk along a balancing beam or raised wooden plank
- Dribble a ball around cones, beanbags or bottles

Fine & Gross Motor Milestones 2-6 Years

FINE & GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

PLEASE NOTE:

This list has been written for general informational purposes. Use it as a guideline only. If you suspect a child has poor motor development, seek out advice from a professional. It is by no means a replacement for professional advice from an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, medical doctor or any other professional trained to assist children with difficulties or special needs.

It's important to remember that children develop at their own pace, so use these as a guide only.

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FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

2 TO 3 YEARS

- Uses one preferred hand consistently when doing activities
- Threads 4 large beads onto a string
- Turns one page of a book at a time
- Builds a tower of around 7 or 8 blocks, and bridges (two blocks placed apart to support a third block)
- Snips paper with scissors
- Holds crayons with thumb and fingers, with improved tripod grasp
- Makes circular, vertical and horizontal lines
- Imitates letters T and V
- Begins to move wrist while painting
- Paints dots, lines and circular shapes/strokes
- Manipulates playdough – squeezes, rolls, pulls and pounds it
- Attempts to get dressed and undressed

FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

3 TO 4 YEARS

- Builds a tower of 9 or 10 blocks
- Begins to build three-cube bridges from a model
- Threads large beads onto a shoelace
- Hammers nails and places pegs into a pegboard
- Manipulates playdough and clay – rolls it, makes balls, snakes, cookies, etc.
- Copies circles and crosses
- Copies letters V, H and T
- Holds pencil near the point, between the first two fingers and thumb, and uses it with good control
- Mostly uses the preferred hand
- Draws a person with a head and one or two other features
- Enjoys painting at an easel with large brushes
- Cuts with blunt-nosed scissors

FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

4 TO 5 YEARS

- Uses fingers separately
- Builds more complex towers of 10 or more cubes, with bridges of 3 blocks
- Cuts along a straight line
- Draws some basic shapes – circles, squares and triangles
- Copies crosses and letters V, H, T and O
- Holds and uses a pencil with good control
- Draws a person with head, trunk, legs, and usually arms and fingers
- Draws a house
- Opens and closes taps to wash hands
- Puts toothpaste on a toothbrush with both hands
- Better control when dressing

FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

5 TO 6 YEARS

- Picks up and handles tiny objects
- Builds 3 steps with 6 blocks, or 4 steps with 10 blocks, when shown
- Cuts out simple shapes
- Draws basic shapes, including diamonds
- Copies first name
- Copies numbers 1 to 5
- Copies letters V, T, H, O, X, L, A, C, U and Y
- Writes a few letters spontaneously
- Holds a pencil with an adult grasp and has good control when drawing and writing with crayons, pencils and paintbrushes
- Draws a person with head, trunk, arms, legs and features
- Draws other pictures, such as a house with details (door, roof, windows, etc.)
- Colours neatly and within the lines
- Has established left or right-handedness
- Cuts, pastes and glues materials
- Counts the fingers on one hand with the index finger of the other
- Threads and ties shoelaces
- Laces (embroiders) with wool/yarn and a thick needle

GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

2 TO 3 YEARS

- Stops and starts while running and avoids obstacles
- Climbs onto furniture and can get down again
- Shows a greater understanding of size of self in relation to other objects and spaces, as well as an understanding of where they are positioned
- Walks up and down stairs while holding onto a rail/wall
- Throws a small ball forwards without losing balance
- Tries to kick a large ball but walks into it
- Sits on and steers a tricycle but pushes forward with feet on the floor instead of using the pedals
- Climbs simple playground equipment
- Squats without losing balance
- Walks along a narrow wall or balancing beam while holding a hand
- Jumps off a low step or over an obstacle with two feet together
- Stands or hops on one leg briefly
- Stands on tiptoes if shown
- Pushes and pulls large toys, but still learning to steer around obstacles
- Aims and throws a ball stiffly from body level
- Kicks large ball gently without losing balance

GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

3 TO 4 YEARS

- Rides a tricycle, steering around wide corners
- Hops and jumps and makes rhythmic movements
- Plays ball games and catches a large ball with stiff arms
- Walks heel-toe, heel-toe and on tiptoes
- Walks forwards, backwards and sideways
- Walks up stairs with alternating feet and down with two feet to a step, often jumping off the last step with feet together
- Stands on one leg briefly and hops on one leg a few times
- Carries a large toy up and down stairs
- Can avoid corners and obstacles while running and pushing and pulling large toys
- Understands size and movement of own body in relation to the environment – objects and space
- Runs forwards and backwards, stopping suddenly and turning sharply
- Throws a ball at a target

GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

4 TO 5 YEARS

- Walks up and down stairs in an adult fashion
- Has a good understanding of position in space and can move easily when running around obstacles and people, and turning sharp corners
- Navigates a tricycle easily, turning sharply
- Stands on one leg and hops on one foot for several seconds
- Climbs ladders and trees
- Swings independently
- Stands, runs and walks on tiptoes
- Walks alone along a balancing beam
- Sits with knees crossed
- Develops ball skills such as hitting, throwing, catching (large ball), using a bat, kicking, bouncing, etc.
- Jumps on a trampoline and attempts somersaults
- Can learn to swim, dance and roller-skate

GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

5 TO 6 YEARS

- Walks along a narrow line
- Walks forwards, backwards and sideways along a balancing beam or wall
- Runs lightly on toes
- Skips on alternate feet
- Can hop a few metres forwards on each foot, and can stand on each foot for about 10 seconds with arms folded
- Becomes skilful at large movements such as climbing, sliding, digging, etc.
- Bends over to touch toes without bending knees
- Moves rhythmically to music
- Plays all kinds of ball games, including those with rules
- Hits a ball on a rope with a bat (swing ball)
- Catches a bean bag with one hand
- Kicks a rolling ball
- Dribbles a ball
- Bounces and catches a bounced ball with two hands
- Marches to the beat of music and learns simple dance steps
- Some can ride a bicycle at this age but may fall off at times

Early Literacy & Numeracy Activities

EARLY LITERACY IDEAS

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP LISTENING SKILLS:

- Play the Telephone Game (Broken Telephone).
- Play a game where you clap a beat or sequence and children copy the sequence.
- Pick a word that appears frequently in a story (e.g. monkey). Read it aloud. Children clap every time they hear the word.
- Play “How many words can you think of?” Pick a category (e.g. fruit) and see how many words children can list.
- Play a game of true and false. Make statements such as “an octopus has 6 legs”. Children must decide if the statement is true or false.
- Play a game where you give instructions that require some listening (e.g “If you’re wearing blue pants, clap your hands” or “If your hair is blond run around the room.”)

STORY TIME ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP THINKING & LANGUAGE:

- Tell a story without a book.
- Read a story from the pictures alone.
- Read the first page of a story, put it down and make up the rest of the story together.
- Make up a nonsense story – parent and child take turns to add one line at a time to the story.
- Ask children to make predictions about what will happen in the story.
- Introduce cause and effect by asking “What do you think will happen if...?”
- Ask questions that encourage personal opinions, such as “Do you think she should marry the prince?” or “How would you feel if you were the wolf and no-one liked you?”

EARLY LITERACY IDEAS

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP VISUAL PERCEPTION:

- Sort buttons according to size, shape, number of holes, etc.
- Play the game *I Spy with my Little Eye* by describing objects that are a certain colour or shape.
- Collect leaves and categorize them by shape, size or colour.
- Build puzzles and tangrams.
- Lay out 4 toys, name them, hide one and ask which is hidden.
- Sort out playing cards by numbers, colours, suits, etc.
- Look for an item on a picture (e.g. Where's Waldo/Wally books).

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP SOUND AWARENESS:

- Point to a body part and say a rhyming word. Ask for the name of the body part which rhymes with it: Point to your leg and say “peg”.
- Play *I Spy with my Little Eye* with rhyming words: “I Spy with my little eye something that rhymes with hair” (chair).
- Clap the syllables in these words: flamingo, lizard, monkey
- Place an object in a bag and make up riddles as clues: “I have something in my bag that starts with a *b*. It is a fruit. It is yellow. What is it?”
- Add a rhyming word to the end of the sentence: “My cat sat on a big...rat, mat, hat etc.”
- Say c - a - t. Put them together – cat
- Ask if these words sound the same or different: “Bee and bear, meet and meat, ear and air”.
- Say a sentence, breaking up one word into phonemes. Ask children to guess the word: “I went to the sh-o-p and bought some bread”.

PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES

- Arrange blocks in order of size, colour or shape.
- Scribble in circular movements on newspaper/large paper.
- Scribble in zig-zags (up and down, left and right).
- Make patterns in the sandpit.
- Scribble slowly to slow music, then faster to fast music.
- Make a puzzle from a printed picture and cut into 9 pieces.
- Do patterning activities, such as copying a pattern on a peg board.
- Play with plastic, wooden, foam or rubber letters.
- Write your name in shaving cream.
- Make the letters of your name in playdough.
- Trace your name in salt or sand tray.
- Bake cookies shaped like letters.
- Trace around your name - written in large letters - with small pasta shapes.
- Draw a big figure 8 on its side on large piece of paper. Trace it with crayons (to stimulate midline crossing). Then draw the figure 8 standing upright.
- Write your child's name on the paving in large letters in jumbo chalk and get them to walk the letters.
- Draw 2 straight parallel lines and ask your child to draw a line inside your line. Then make the two lines curvy and ask them to follow again inside the lines.

EARLY MATHS IDEAS

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP NUMBER SENSE:

- Count body parts (eyes, toes, fingers, etc.)
- Make mud cakes with sand and water.
- Play with Dominoes.
- Play board games where you move according to the number on the dice.
- Introduce number lines by laying a ladder on the ground and counting the jumps or draw a large number line and count how many jumps to the end.

- Ask your child to fetch you a vegetable/cup/plate for each person in your family for dinner. Or hand out an item to each person in the group in class.
- Count how many toys are in the bath/water table. Add one more and count them again, take away two and count them again.
- As you count items - such as beads - point to each one.
- Count the rungs on the ladder of a slide (also use the ordinal numbers e.g. first, second, third).
- While reading a story, ask questions like “How many cats does he have?” or “Are there enough chairs in this picture for everyone to sit?”
- Sing counting rhymes and learn to count forwards and backwards.
- Play shop with play money in your currency.

EARLY MATHS IDEAS

ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING ABOUT MEASUREMENT:

- Compare a few objects against one specific object. Which of them are longer, shorter, the same?
- Pour water from one container into another.
- Play with containers of different sizes and shapes in the sandpit. Compare how much sand each container can hold.
- Guess which container holds more water then check by filling each one.
- Order buckets in the sandpit from the one that holds the least sand to the one that holds the most (use the words less, more, equal, how much).
- Measure objects with string and compare the length of the strings (place them next to each other like a graph – with the bottoms of the strings in a straight line).
- Compare cut-outs of the same shape in different sizes, and order them from smallest to largest.
- Compare two objects that are a similar size and feel which is heavier. Use a balancing scale to confirm.
- Use containers that are similar in height but have different shapes and compare how many cups of sand each could hold.
- Measure body parts with a tape measure.
- Measure the length of an object - such as a desk or a large book - using a non-standard unit (a hand or block, for example). Compare the length of various objects.

EARLY MATHS IDEAS

ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING ABOUT SHAPE AND SPATIAL SENSE:

- Make a bead necklace by following a pattern of colours or sizes.
- Lay out a pattern of buttons or blocks and ask your child what has been left out.
- Draw and cut out shapes and make a picture of a house.
- Bake shape cookies using shape cutters.
- Point out shapes in the environment all the time (e.g. windows, doors, bricks, etc.)
- Play matching shape memory games.
- Place shapes into a bag and identify the shapes by reaching inside the bag and feeling them.
- Categorize a tub of shapes according to colour, shape or size.
- Experiment with how to make a square from two triangles, and how to make a circle from two semi-circles.
- Sort out leaves or other objects in nature according to their size and shape.
- Play with plastic and wooden shapes and feel their properties. Do they roll when you put them down? Can they stand on all sides? Are there flat sides and curvy sides?
- Alternate between identifying a pattern, copying a pattern, finding the next one in a pattern, extending a pattern and making up a pattern. Use blocks, beads or pegboards to make the pattern.