

WISDOM WONDER PROJECT™

Preschool Literature
Collection

March



**We make the power, magic,
and mystery of learning
accessible to our modern world.**



I'm 47 years old and every time I see an open carton of Neapolitan ice cream, I think of a weary hound named Fletcher that hatches from an enormous pink polka dotted egg. The story has nothing to do with ice cream, Neapolitan or otherwise, but the colors on the cover of that book from long, long ago are that perfect combo of pink, brown, and white. The circumstances in which I grew up did not afford me with many things, but the one thing my mother never skimped on was books. We did not live close enough to a library, and I was not yet of school age, so my mother managed to obtain for me the greatest gift I ever received, a monthly book subscription. Each month a hardcover picture book would arrive. For me! That dog Fletcher I was talking about before? He was in one of those books. But it wasn't just Fletcher that came to visit me. *Strega Nona* visited, as did *Petunia the Hippopotamus*. I met *Babar*, sailed upon *The Maggie B*, and was invited to a *Butterfly Ball*. These first books that I was exposed to have been with me for decades. The rich language, the beautiful illustrations, and the adventures and emotions have all helped cultivate a creative spirit in me. A spirit that I endeavor to inspire the families that I teach with.

I was a very outgoing child, but somewhere along the way I grew into a very shy young adult. The very thought of having to interact with strangers out in the workforce petrified me. Eventually, I found work in a bookstore. Oh joy of joys! At work I was still awfully shy, that is, until someone would ask me for assistance with children's books. Any opportunity to share that wonder of reading would light up my face. It still does. I was a natural fit for children's books and was the person on hand to help during our very packed storytimes. Over and over I was asked if I wanted to do a storytime myself. Over and over again, I declined. TOO SHY! One day, I was tricked into reading to the group and from then on, I was hooked. I got to READ my favorite books to children who then asked for MORE BOOKS! I felt like I had magic powers. Though I had many books growing up, I cannot remember anyone ever reading them to me. I cannot imagine how I would have been shaped if that had happened for me, but I am very grateful for having the books I did have. The more I read to children, the more I wanted to stop and share ideas from the books. I wanted to ask questions about the books, and even more so, I wanted to hear what the children had to say. I wanted to learn about the authors and the illustrators. I wanted to make art with the children. I wanted to play. And so I did. As I do now.



Jessica Wilson

Jessica is a passionate purveyor of beautiful picture books and a believer in the power of every story. She has eight years of professional preschool teacher experience under her belt. In addition, she's also taught art classes, led storytimes at several bookstores, and written children's book reviews and DIY tutorials. When not busy with all that, she spends her days wondering about what songs other people have stuck in their heads.



I had read books aloud and led discussions. I had created art projects for small groups, classrooms, enormous groups, tv crews, and friends and their children. It seemed an obvious choice that I go to school for this. When looking down the road at a career path, it quickly became apparent that the obvious choice was to pursue my love of educating young minds through a degree in Early Childhood Education.

My husband once told me that he fell for me because I was a reader and because I had a passion for wonder. We share passages from the books we are reading over meals, discuss articles we have read while on long car trips, and share our library books when we feel the other will enjoy them. I am full of gratitude for him and the tribe of people I work with who share my passion for reading and a continuing wonder for learning.

- Jessica Wilson



EQUIPPING YOU: a message to the educator



Flow and Scheduling

The Wisdom Wonder Project Preschool Literature Collection was created to give educators a feast of ideas and activities that directly correlate to one rich and beautiful picture book each week. It is intended to encourage a deep, engaging, and slow rhythm to your weeks and months as you journey through the preschool years alongside your child. There is not one schedule or one right way to go about each week. This collection is about creating a love of literature and all that can be taken away from one piece of work. It is meant to walk you slowly through each week—not to overwhelm you or cause you to rush to check boxes. It is meant to create time for you and your child to spend together, enjoying the process and learning. You may want to do all of the activities, you may want to do less, or you may even want to add more. You have our permission. Enjoy the feast however you see best for this season and your family.



Finding Success in the Journey

1. Read through the monthly collection.
2. Create your vision for teaching the collection to your child.
3. Look at your calendar and plan out your weeks.
4. Gather necessary supplies.
5. Read the books yourself.
6. Engage in the feast of activities and ideas.
7. Enjoy these tiring, but fleeting, preschool years.



Sample Schedule

M	T	W	Th	F
Read the Book, Poetry, Discussion, Sensory	Read the Book, Poetry, Fine Motor, Nature	Read the Book, Poetry, Art	Read the Book, Poetry, Journaling, Blocks/Math	Read the Book, Poetry, Nourishment



Book of the Week

Each week will revolve around one carefully selected picture book. We recommend purchasing the books, however, checking them out at your local library is an option too. Be sure to keep the books accessible: on the coffee table, on their night stand, or on the dining room table. Read it as many times as your child will listen—likely, many more times than you would imagine. Children thrive on routine, repetition, and familiarity. One way to give them that is by reading the same book over and over. Look at the pictures with your child. Read with fluctuation and a variety of voices. Snuggle up on the couch or a comfy chair and have your child sit to your side or on your lap. Soak this time up!

Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.

EMILIE
BUCHWALD



Author & Illustrator Introduction

You will see a short overview of the author and illustrator for the weekly book. This information is meant to give you a bit of insight into who is behind the book. Although this information is intended for the educator, it can also be shared with your child if you feel it would enrich your time together.



Book Summary

Each week you will see a short summary of the book. Pre-reading the book before reading it with your child is always best, but may not always be possible. That's where this summary comes in. It gives you a glimpse of the story you're about to discover.



Story Discussion

Each week there are 3-5 questions that we hope will ignite a discussion around literature. These questions will relate to the book of the week and are a very gentle introduction to literary analysis. They will cover the where, when, who, and why of the story.

*The important thing is
to not stop questioning.
Curiosity has its own
reason for existing.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN



Poetry

Each week you will find one rhyme or poem from either *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young* or Sylvia Long's *Mother Goose*. "All four rhymes for the month are included at the end of this unit. You may also purchase the book, or checking them out at your local library is an option, too.

At the beginning of each week, we suggest that you introduce the rhyme or poem to your child and continue to recite it over and over throughout the days until your child has memorized it. Recite in the living room, in the car, in the bathtub, standing on a chair, or while doing a handstand. Help bring it to life for your child by supplying props and acting it out. Consider having your child recite it in front of family members, neighbors, or friends. Memorizing and reciting helps to develop your child's memory, introduces them to beautiful language that they store in their minds, and also gives them practice speaking aloud in front of others.

*Poetry is
when an
emotion
has found
its thought
and the
thought
has found
words.*

ROBERT
FROST

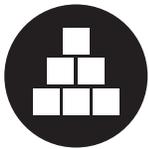


Art

Each week you will find one art activity that relates to the book of the week. These activities will vary by week. We encourage you to let your child enjoy the process of creating art by putting more of a focus on the process rather than the final product. Give guidance as needed, but be careful not to do too much.

Painting is just another way of keeping a diary.

PABLO PICASSO



Blocks/Math

Each week you will find one block activity that will aid your child in their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. We encourage you to present these activities in a way that provides your child the opportunities through play to take risks, problem solve, collaborate, and exchange and build on ideas with you or your peers. Providing children the opportunity to play with blocks builds their spatial literacy. This is defined as the ability to problem-solve operations such as thinking about objects in space, viewing things from a different perspective, coordinating use of space, discovering representation, and using complex reasoning. Spatial thinking is a critical element of education and teaching as it lays the foundation for learning science and mathematics throughout your the school age years.

Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, computations, or algorithms: it is about understanding.

WILLIAM
THURSTON



Sensory

Each week you will find one suggested sensory activity that is designed to ignite your child's senses. These activities lend themselves to discovery and play. In addition, you will find 2-3 questions each week that encourage conversation about the senses.

The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.

W.B. YEATS



Nourishment

Each week you will find one suggested activity that involves food. This activity may be as simple as enjoying a piece of fruit out on the grass or may involve making cookies together in the kitchen. We think everything's a little bit better when there's food involved.

You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces — just good food from fresh ingredients.

JULIA CHILD



Nature

Each week, you will find one suggested nature activity that will prompt you to get outside with your child. Watch and wonder as they play in, explore, and observe the world around them. In addition, you will find 2-3 questions each week that promote conversation about the nature activity for the week. They will lead to seeing, thinking, and wondering.

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



Fine Motor

Childhood is the critical time to properly develop the fine motor muscles essential for functional activities. We want to help foster this development through a variety of activities including cutting, tracing, gluing, sorting and painting. These activities are examples of ways to ensure proper development and practice of fine motor skills to promote the most functional use of a child's hands.

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking down complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

MARK TWAIN



Journaling

Each week you will find one suggested journaling activity. These activities are intended to be open-ended, allowing your child to share their learning. Feel free to offer direction and support as needed by your child. As your child works, strive to put emphasis on the process rather than the end product. We recommend that you purchase one journal for the year, adding to it on a weekly basis. At the end of the year, you will have a compilation of the pictures books that you enjoyed together. Our hope is this will become a keepsake that your child can pull off the shelf and flip through in future years, reflecting back on your quality time together.

The blank page whispers “once upon a time...” and the child supplies the rest in words and symbols fresh from his mind and heart.

LAURIE
BESTVATER

Recommended Products

In this section, you can expect to find an array of carefully selected items that we believe will enhance your child’s learning experience, above and beyond the unit materials. Our goal is to find products that will last a lifetime while also keeping affordability in mind. Links for items will be included for your convenience. Happy shopping!

Preschool Literature

March

- 01** *A RAINBOW OF MY OWN*
- 02** *WHO TOOK THE FARMER'S HAT*
- 03** *CHALK*
- 04** *MOUSE COUNT*

*Children are made readers
on the laps of their parents.*

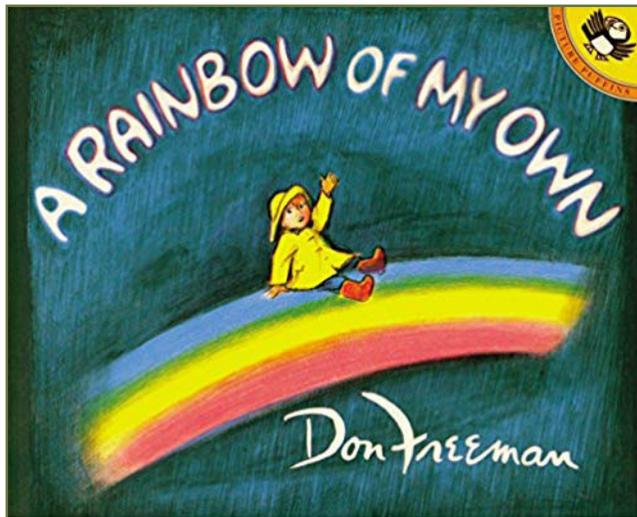


EMILIE BUCHWALD



A Rainbow of My Own

By Don Freeman



“Today I saw a rainbow. It was so beautiful that I wanted to catch it for my very own.”



Before writing and illustrating children’s books, Don Freeman was a dance band trumpet player in New York City during the 1930s. His first book, published in 1951, was *Chuggy and the Blue Caboose*. He was inspired to write the story after he and his wife Lydia moved from New York City to Santa Barbara, California. They even co-wrote the book.

An avid theater goer, Freeman would often make his way backstage to sketch the people and scenes that he saw. It wasn’t until he lost his trumpet that he decided to make a go of it as an artist. Freeman soon saw his sketches in *The New York Times*, *The Herald Tribune*, and more.



A child describes the fun they would have if they had a rainbow for a friend.



Who is this story about?

Did the child in the story find a rainbow?

In the story, the child imagines a rainbow would hide in a garden, where else could a rainbow hide?



"Just Watch" by Myra Cohn Livingston

Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young, p.6



A rainbow in the sky, shows as an arc, either whole or partial. Before setting out painting supplies, demonstrate to your child how to use their entire arm to make an arc. Then start by using a paintbrush and a jar of water to practice brushing arc strokes on a piece of colored construction paper or take it outside to create arcs on the sidewalk. Once you are ready to paint, set out a small square sheet of high quality watercolor paper cut to your preferred size, a jar of water, a damp sponge, and paint palette with liquid watercolor in the colors of the rainbow. As you set the paint out, discuss the colors of the rainbow and their order. Demonstrate how to use the liquid watercolors by first dipping the brush in the water, brushing it against the jar to remove some water, touching the brush to the liquid watercolor paint, brushing a stroke across a sample paper, then rinsing the brush in water. Show your child how to remove the remaining color off the brush by brushing it on the damp sponge a few times. Now they are ready to paint a rainbow. You may wish to set out other sturdy paper to practice on before beginning or to extend the experience. Using a higher quality of paper crafted for watercolor paint elevates the experience and final picture.



Temporarily add rainbow colors to your child's blocks by using colored masking tape. Wrap a band or two of one color around each block. Encourage your child to build a rainbow city. Add circles of felt, pom poms and colored bricks for even more color. Washi tape works well too.



This activity needs to be prepped one day ahead, so the day before you want to dive into our sensory project, invite your child to assist with the water bead preparation. Fill a large bowl or a bucket with a gallon of water and add 2-3 tablespoons of water beads. Set the bowl or bucket aside until the next day. When it is time to explore the following day, set your child up with a bin of the water beads and a variety of scoops and spoons. The goal for this sensory experience is to have fun. If you want to add a bit more learning to the environment, use rainbow colored cups or bowls, if you have them, so your child can color sort. If not, make your own by painting the insides of inexpensive cups with acrylic paint. Or have them sort the beads by color in clear or white containers.



Craft up an edible rainbow snack served in a six cup muffin pan. Bring your child into the decision making. Will they choose red bell peppers or strawberries? Green kiwi or celery sticks. Set out a small wood cutting board to act as a workstation for your child to chop, slice, or peel their snack. Choose soft foods that are easy to cut through with a butter knife.



Rainbows happen when light is refracted (bent) through water droplets. Head outside on a sunny day to create a rainbow factory. If you have a hose, set your sprayer to mist. Spray the mist in the sun. Adjust the angle until your child spies a rainbow in the mist. If you do not have access to a hose, use a clean, smooth glass jar of water to bend the sunlight like a prism would. Place the jar outside in a variety of locations until a rainbow is cast. You can experiment with the jar and light inside if weather is too hairy outside. Grey skies? Use a flashlight!



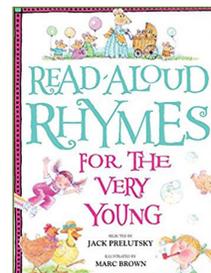
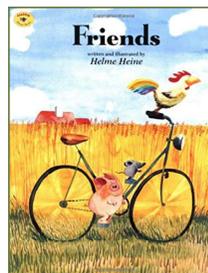
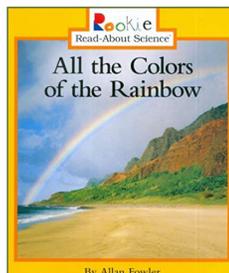
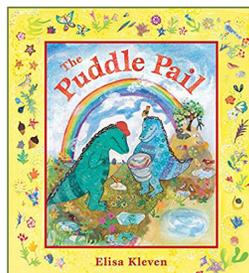
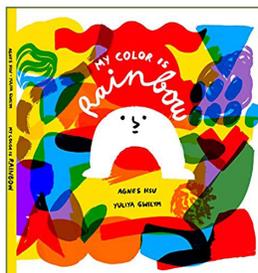
Gather together and then set out a cylinder block or a medium sized pinecone, elastic hair ties or rubber bands in rainbow colors, and a tray to work on. Encourage your child to stretch the bands over the cylinder or pinecone to arrange them in rainbow order, or reverse rainbow order. Are there other items in your home or classroom that could be used as well?



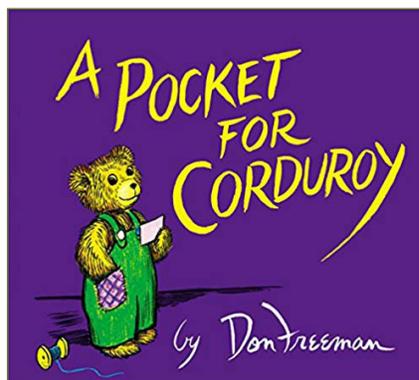
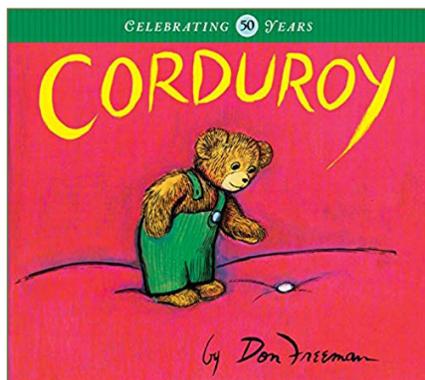
Have your child reflect on their experience with the water beads. What did they like? Did they enjoy them? Have them brainstorm a few descriptive words for the beads. Write down your child's dictation of their experience. What colors did they see? Set out a paint palette and paint with the colors described, or use small dishes. Encourage your child to use their pinky finger to make dots of color to show the water beads. Ask them to think of other tools they could use to make dots. If your child would prefer, or is unable to use their pinky, set out cotton swabs instead.



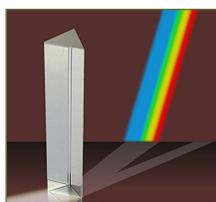
Suggested Reading



Other Books by this Author



Recommended Products



Prism



Water Beads



Grimm's Rainbow Stacker



Rainbow Set of Masking Tape



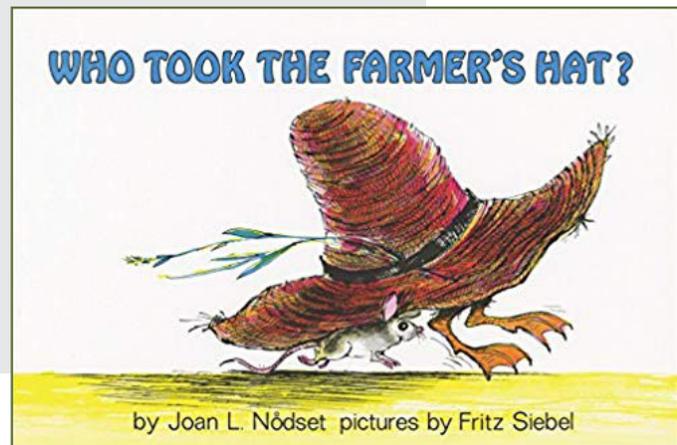
Watercolor Paper



Who Took the Farmer's Hat?

By Joan L. Nodset

“The farmer looked at the nest in the tree. A nice old round brown nest.”



Joan L. Nodset is the author of a number of books, most of which were written under her real name, Joan Lexau, in the early 1960s.

Like many children's book illustrators of the 1950s and 60s, Fritz Siebel began his career in advertising. After a long run illustrating books for Random House, his first books included *A Fly Went By* and *Amelia Bedelia*, Mr. Siebel returned to advertising, this time creating a company that focused on package design. Fun fact: Fritz Siebel is the creator of the iconic Mr. Clean!



One windy day, a farmer loses his favorite brown hat and goes off in search of it. Where it ends up is a big surprise!



Does this story take place inside or outside? How do you know?

What is the weather like in the story?

What time of day does the story take place?



"Little Robin Red-Breast" (Anonymous)

Sylvia Long's Mother Goose, p. 39



Nest making. Once you have finished exploring your sticks for our sensory and block/math activities it is time to get building! For this project, you will need a base to work on that can be moved out of the way to allow for drying time. Dry time may take up to two days depending on how much glue your young one uses. A cookie sheet with a sheet of newspaper taped to it and a sheet of wax or parchment paper taped to that should hold everything together without making too much of a sticky mess. I recommend Aleene's Tacky Glue or Wood Glue for this project.

To begin, invite your child to build a nest with the sticks you have gathered. They may or may not wish to add additional nest making materials such as string, twine, leaves, etc. Set out all the materials at hand along with a small bottle of sturdy glue. White glue can work but it is not as sturdy as wood or Tacky glue. Let them build and glue as they see fit.

Once your child has determined their nest is complete, set it aside to dry. If there is time, or perhaps on another day, set out supplies to create a bird for the nest. Ask your child what supplies they would like. A few suggestions include pom poms, feathers, foam scraps, and paper.



Before we do our art activity, we are going to explore our sticks some more as we add blocks to the mix. How many sticks did you find? Can you sort them by size? Do you have more short sticks, or more long sticks? What can you build with sticks and blocks? Can you build a nest?



Set out the bundle of sticks and twigs your child collected as a part of our nature activity. A shallow tray or cookie sheet will work nicely. Encourage your child to explore the sticks. What do they feel like? Are they hard or soft? Smooth or bumpy? What colors are they? Are they heavy or light? Your child may be inspired to paint a stick or two. If they wish to do so, set them up with a few colors of tempera paint. Chalk will create an interesting effect on the sticks as well. You can also set out a small ball of playdough and invite your child to make impressions in the dough.



Make "eggs in a nest". There are many ways to whip up this tasty snack or breakfast. The idea is to cook an egg in a piece of bread (also known as a toad in the hole). Have your child use a round cookie or biscuit cutter to cut an approximately 3 inch hole out of a slice of your favorite bread. Once the hole is cut from the bread, place it in a lightly buttered/oiled skillet and toast it for a minute or two. Flip the bread over, crack an egg into the hole and cook until satisfied. You may flip it again if you prefer a more solid yolk. Serve on a plate with a small bunch of greens or fruit. You may also cook the egg in a muffin pan using hashbrowns as your "nest". Mashed potatoes work too, as does sweet potato. You may substitute tofu for the egg if you are egg free.



Head out to a park or go on a walk and spend some time collecting twigs, sticks, and other nest materials from the ground. Parks with trees are excellent to visit for twig gathering. Don't forget to bring a bag or backpack to carry them in. We are going to use these for our art, block/math, and sensory activities. For a child to become truly acquainted with an object we want to allow ample time for exploration and encourage them to think about the objects in a variety of ways. Some questions to guide your hunt are, "I wonder if we can find anything to build a nest out of" "What do you think a bird uses to build a nest?"



For our fine motor activity this week, we are going to fold a paper fan. Magazine pages are a perfect material to teach your child how to do an accordion fold. You may wish to dismantle a magazine before you begin, if you would rather, newspaper or newsprint will work for this as well. The goal is to use a thinner paper than construction or copy paper as it will grow tiresome for small fingers to work.

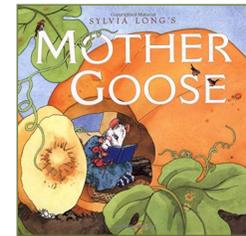
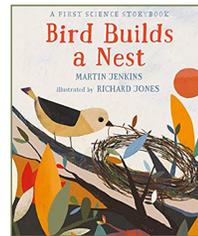
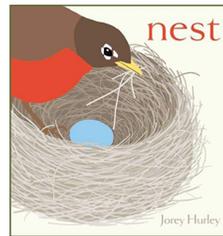
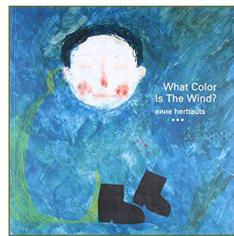
To begin, have a piece of paper for each of you and orientate the paper so that it is placed in front of you and your child in a portrait position, aka, tall. Demonstrate to your child how to fold the paper up from the bottom about an inch, or a few finger's' width. Once you both have your fold, flip your paper over, and fold up from the back so that the open flap will now face you. Repeat folding and flipping until all of the paper had been gathered into an accordion shape. Next, keep the paper folded, pinch the paper in the middle of the folds, fold it in half from where you have pinched, and staple it about a half inch up from the bottom fold. Fan out the bellows of your fan and fan away!



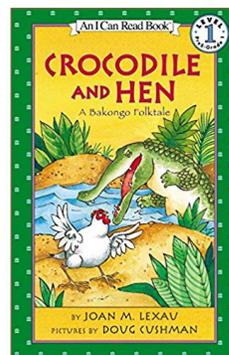
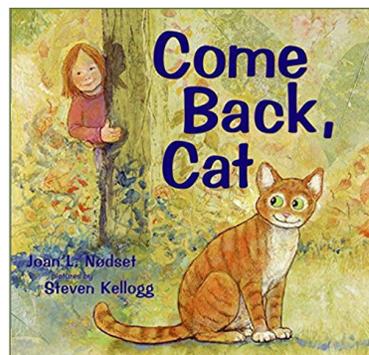
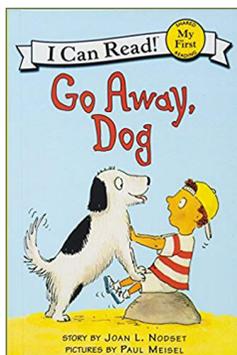
In our story, the farmer had an old brown hat that he really liked. Use your block crayons, markers, or colored pencils to have your child draw a picture of their perfect hat. Draw it as large as they can on their journal page. Have your child tell you a name for their hat and dictate a sentence about it, write that in the journal.



Suggested Reading



Other Books by this Author



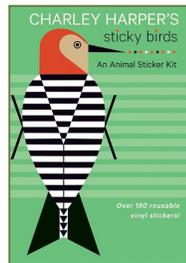
Recommended Products



[Paradise Bird Kite](#)



[Dance Scarves](#)



[Charley Harper's Sticky Birds](#)

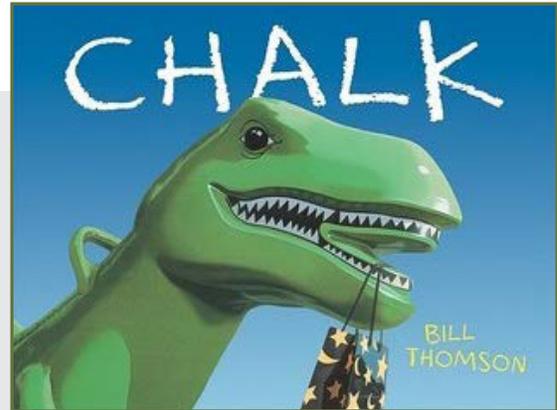


Chalk

By Bill Thomson

“Wordless stories require the participation of young readers and offer the opportunity to create unique narratives by interpreting what is seen in the illustrations.”

– BILL THOMSON



Bill Thomson is the creator of *Chalk* and other wordless picture books. He is a professor of illustration at Hartford Art School and lives in Connecticut with his wife and three sons. Thomson uses many tools to work on his illustrations beginning with thumbnail sketches and moving to photographs to help guide his work.



A group of children happen upon an enchanted bag of chalk. What happens next is a most amazing adventure!



What is the weather like in this story?

Who are the characters in this story? How many characters are there?

If you had enchanted chalk, what would you want to draw?



"Showers" by Marchette Chute
Read-Aloud Rhymes For the Very Young, p. 12



For our art project, we are going to explore different ways of making marks with chalk. You will need a pack of sidewalk or regular chalk with at least six colors, a variety of types of paper (such as dark colored construction paper, newspaper, and cardstock), a sturdy cup or short jar of water, and an assortment of natural items, such as sticks, rocks, and leaves. To begin, invite your child to explore the colors of the chalk. Can you arrange them in the order of the rainbow? How about sorting them into cool colors, such as blue and green, or warm colors, such as red and yellow. After sorting and exploring the colors, put half of the chalk in small cup or basket and put the other half in the small cup of water so that at least an inch of the chalk is submerged. Invite your child to make marks with the dry chalk. Encourage conversation as they are making their marks or drawing their pictures. When drawing with dry chalk, your child may notice the chalk dust and how it coats their hands. Observe and take a moment to ask your child questions. "Why do you think that happened?" "How does it feel?" After your child has had ample time to explore the dry chalk, encourage them to use the wet chalk. Allow ample time again and ask questions that will help your child compare the two experiences. "Which do you like using most?" "Does it feel the same?" Once making marks on paper has been exhausted, bring out the nature items to encourage further coloring and exploration. What other types of surfaces can you use chalk on?



We applied some math practice during our art exploration by counting our chalk, color sorting, creating two equal groups, and by applying chalk to both two and three dimensional surfaces. Now that we have done that, let's add chalk and toy dinosaurs to our block play. The beauty of chalk is that it will wash off of most surfaces. You may wish to test run the chalk on the blocks before setting it out for your child if you wish for your blocks to return to their mark-free state when the activity is finished. To correlate to this piece of literature, your child might like to build dinosaurs, the sun, a storm, butterflies, a person, the playground, or a kingdom for the toy dinosaurs. If you do not have dinosaurs to use with the blocks, use insects or other small animals. You can also use bottle caps. Bottle caps and lids from various containers are a tremendous resource for math play and creativity. They can be sorted by size, material, and color. They can be stacked, nested into each other, and they can represent items and characters in your child's play story. Never underestimate the power of a cap! Some caps to consider come from milk or juice cartons, squeezie food pouches, and electrolyte drinks.



We already explored chalk mark making for our art activity, now we are going to explore the texture and feel of the chalk itself. After your child has finished making their marks, gather up an assortment of chalk, a plastic zip bags, and a rolling pin or hammer. Place a piece of chalk into the zip bag and seal it. Demonstrate to your child how to roll the rolling pin over the chalk to crush it. You may also use a hammer or mallet for this. If using a hammer, I recommend doing this outside on the ground because when children are given a hammer to wield, they will wield it with a mighty force! You do not need a bag to do this part but the bag will keep the chalk in a relatively tidier bit of chaos. To further the exploration add small cups, wooden spoons, water and a paintbrush. What fun your child will have!



Brainstorm with your child on how to build a sunny snack. What can you use to make the sun? Think of a small orange or tangerine, a round slice of cheese, a pineapple ring, tortilla, or toast? Will your child go savory or sweet? Explain what savory and sweet mean. A savory sun could be a circle cut from a tortilla or a sunny-side up egg with cheese slice or pretzel stick rays. A sweet sun could be a slice of apple cut widthwise into a circle and smothered in nut or seed butter with mango rays. Perhaps your child will wish for savory and sweet. What will that look like. Engage your child in the process. They can spread jam or nut butter on toast or fruit or they can use a cookie cutter to cut out circle shapes from cheese or bread. Creating a snack or meal together with your child touches on all parts of our curriculum: art, math, sensory, nature, and fine motor!



Head outside with a bag of chalk to create your own chalk drawings. Can you draw a butterfly, the sun, or a dinosaur? Is the ground you are drawing on smooth, rough, or bumpy? How does that affect your drawing? Ask your child, "I wonder what would happen if our chalk drawing came to life?"



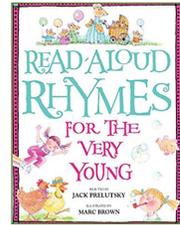
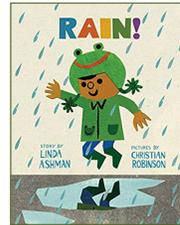
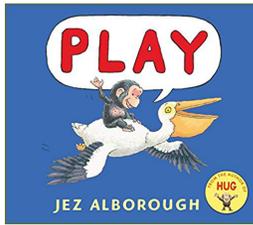
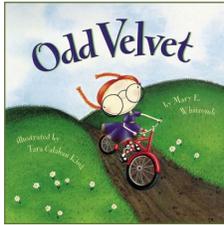
For our fine motor activity you will need dark colored construction paper, a paintbrush, a pencil, and a small jar of water. Select at least four sheets of paper. To set up, on one sheet of paper draw a sun. On another, draw a butterfly. Continue drawing items from our literature, such as rain and a dinosaur. Lay one of your drawings in a cookie sheet large enough for the paper to lay flat. Invite your child to “erase” the pictures by painting with water along the lines of the drawing. Older three year olds will generally have enough focus to engage in this manner and may wish to draw their own pictures as well. Younger three year olds will probably paint all over the paper with the water and that is okay. The emphasis for this fine motor opportunity is to hold a paintbrush and to dip it into water. The more you do this, the more opportunities you will have to observe your child at work. Some children will begin holding their brushes at the very end of the brush. Do not fret, they will begin to move their hands around for a better grasp as the muscles in their arms develop. You can also do this activity with chalk marks on a chalkboard or on the sidewalk. For older children that may also be in the home or classroom, invite them to write their name and then erase it, or even draw the pictures for the younger children to erase.



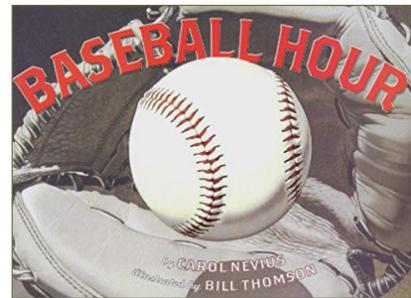
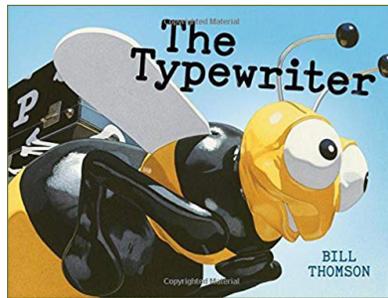
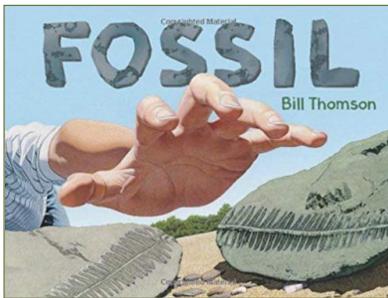
One of our questions to foster wisdom in the Story Discussion section was, “If you had enchanted chalk, what would you want to draw?” Set out crayons for your child to use, ask them to pretend the crayons are enchanted, and have them draw what they said they would draw. You may use chalk, but chalk rubs off of the paper easily . If you do choose to use chalk, make sure to set it with a spray matte fixative or, in a pinch, hairspray.



Suggested Reading



Other Books by this Author



Recommended Products



[Dinosaur Friends Floor Puzzle](#)



[Grimm's Large Four Elements Building Set](#)



[Uncle Goose Dinosaur Blocks](#)



[Solabela Artist Pastels](#)

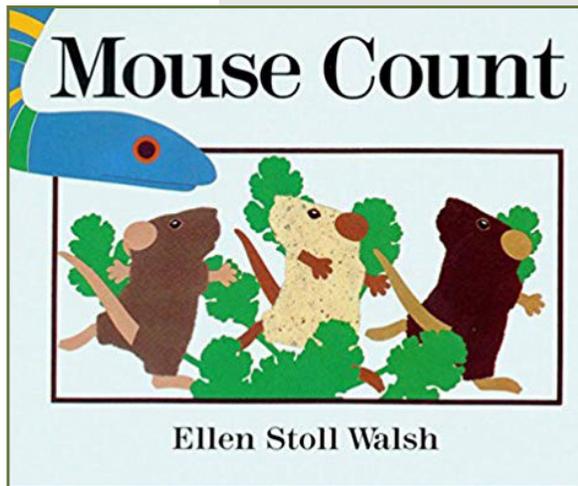


[Acacia Wood Mortar and Pestle](#)



Mouse Count

By Ellen Stoll Walsh



“It wasn’t long before he found three mice, little, warm, and tasty, fast asleep.”



Ellen Stoll Walsh is the author and illustrator of many books that feature mice as the main characters. Her love of storytelling was inspired by listening to her mother read aloud to her. Her illustrations are created from brightly colored, torn, and cut paper that she collaged together to create a picture.



Ten little mice fall asleep in the grass where a hungry, greedy snake happens upon them.



Does this story happen in the country or the city? What makes you think so?

How do the mice escape from the jar?

Did you think the snake was going to eat the mice?



"Three Blind Mice"

Sylvia Long's Mother Goose, p.65



Gather up your sticks from your nature walk. Observe the snake in our story, is it one color, striped, or polka dotted? Have your child select three colors of tempera paint to paint their sticks into snakes. A sheet of wax or parchment paper set flat on a cookie sheet will work as a sturdy work surface if you are painting inside and will enable you to move the snakes out of the way as they continue to dry.



Set out ten cubes in one or two colors, or use Duplos cubes. Invite your child to build a snake with the ten blocks. If you have two colors of cubes, introduce an AB pattern by alternating the colors in a line. Touch each block and state what color it is. Repeat. The more you do this, the more your child will be able to anticipate the following color in the pattern. Once they get the hang of it, invite them to create their own pattern snake. Children at age three do not need to know patterns as of yet. What we want to do is nourish them with new concepts and ideas, such as these, so that when patterns are formally taught it will click for them. Two colors are the easiest for your child to grasp. When your child shows their "pattern" that is surely not a pattern, smile and say, "Look at that design you made, let me make a design." Then create a random design. Repeat to your child that a pattern repeats, a design uses a lot of colors or items. And then show them an example of an AB pattern again. What else can they make with ten blocks or cubes?



Set out your rainbow rice from our A Rainbow of My Own sensory activity. If you no longer have the rice, you can substitute with plain rice, green dyed rice, dried split peas, or lentils. For this activity a one pound bag will suffice, though I encourage you to use more if time and space allows. Set out your rice in a shallow tray or tub, add a toy snake, a handful of toy mice, and let the fun begin. Toy, articulating wood snakes are really fun, but plastic, rubber, or plush snakes will work too. Mice, cat toys are my go to but you can use plastic or plush mice as well.



String up a snake snack to eat. Gather up an assortment of favorite treats that either have holes in them or are soft enough to poke a hole through. Treats that work well are pretzels, cereal O's, sliced strawberries, dried apple, cubes of cheese, etc. Use a muffin pan to house the snack assortment for your child while they string. Set out a length of waxed thread or unflavored dental floss that has been threaded onto a large embroidery needle. If you are worried about your child poking themselves, you may wish to use a large darning needle instead. Double thread the needle and knot the two ends together. Tie one of the cereal O's to the end or thread a piece of dried fruit. This will act as a stopper so that your child does not thread the food item all the way off the string or floss. While they are threading their snake snack, prepare a small bowl of yogurt, if the snack is sweet, or hummus, if the snack is savory, to accompany the treat and to balance it out with some protein.



Head outside to your yard, or a park if weather allows, and encourage your child to build a mouse house with nature items they find in the yard or at the park. Make sure to bring some sticks home for the art activity. If weather does not permit, build a house inside using items from outside, such as sticks, leaves, rocks, etc. Allow this house to be transient, do not use glue or any fixatives. Later, if your child is so inspired, supply them with other materials that they have suggested to create another mouse house. Some questions to ask might include: "I see there are a lot of items we can use to build a mouse house, what do you think we need?" "I wonder if there are any mice out here that need a mouse house, do you?"



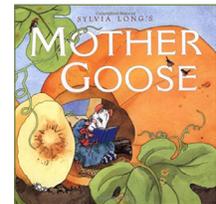
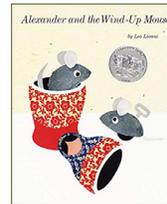
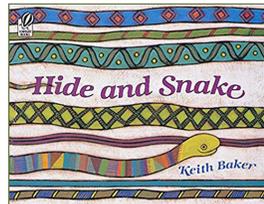
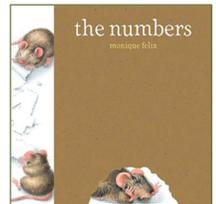
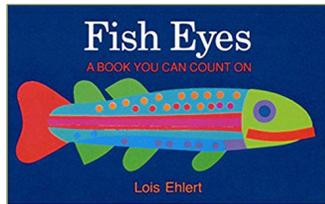
Use a "snake" clothespin to collect pom pom "mice" to put into a jar. Set out an empty jar, an assortment of pompoms or cotton balls, and a clothespin. Invite your child to pretend the clothespin is the hungry snake from our literature and that the pom poms/cotton balls are the sleeping mice. Have them use their pinching fingers to open the clothespin, grab the mouse, and drop it into the jar. They can then count how many mice they put in the jar.



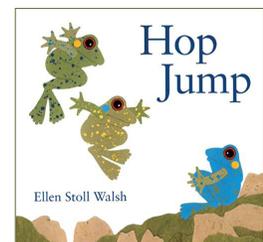
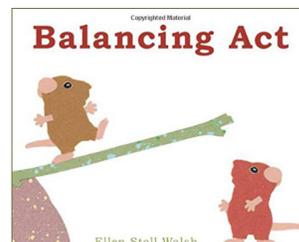
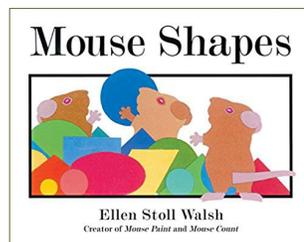
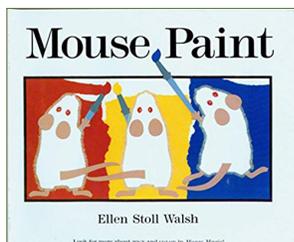
For our nature activity your child built a house for a mouse. Ask them to draw a picture of what they built in their journal. For their drawing, set out markers and/or crayons in colors that can be found in nature such as green, brown, and yellow.



Suggested Reading



Other Books by this Author



Recommended Products



Folkmanis Mouse Finger Puppet



Playable ART Ball



Lacing Beads



Wooden Wiggle Snakes



Just Watch

by **Myra Cohn Livingston**

Watch how high I'm jumping,
Watch how far I hop,
Watch how long I'm skipping,
Watch how fast I stop!

Little Robin Red-Breast

by **Kate Greenaway**

Little Robin red-breast
Sat upon a rail.
Niddle, naddle, went his head,
Wiggle, waggie, went his tail.

Showers

by **Marchette
Chute**

Squelch and squirt and squiggle,
Drizzle and drip and drain-
Such a lot of water
Comes down with the rain!

Three Blind Mice

Three blind mice. Three blind mice.
See how they run! See how they run!
They all ran after the farmer's wife
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife.
Did you ever see such a thing in your life
As three blind mice?

Expressions of Gratitude

Thank you to all of the families that have gifted me the opportunity to be a part of their child's learning journey. It's simply amazing how much I learn every new year as I share these amazing books with each new class.

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