Early childhood literacy and numeracy resource

Open, shut them

Links to the Early Years Learning Framework

Learning outcome 5: Children are confident learners	
Key component: Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating	This is evident when children: ● apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations ● explore their environment ● manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect, trial and error, and motion.
Key component: Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts	This is evident when children: ● Take on roles of literacy and numeracy users in their play.

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Learning focus

Position and direction

Children learn about location and direction from everyday experiences, first by experimenting with ways to move their bodies, to navigate furniture and avoid falls. As they develop physical knowledge of being in a space, children begin to see relationships between people and other objects or events. For example, a child may begin to make judgments, such as whether a toy car will fit into a small box or whether they need a larger box.

As your child/children learn about location and direction it’s important to introduce spatial language including:

• Position: over, under, above, below, top, bottom, side, on, in, between, outside, inside, around, in front, behind, front, back, before, after, beside, next to, opposite, apart, middle, edge, corner.

• Direction: left, right, up, down, forwards, backwards, sideways, across, along, through, close, far, near, to, from, towards, away from.

• Comparison: wide, wider, widest, loud, louder, loudest, quiet, quieter, quietest, empty, full, half full, same, overflowing.

• Movement: slide, roll, stretch, bend.

Resources

Open, shut them (finger rhyme)

Open, shut them

Open, shut them

Give a little clap

Open, shut them

Open, shut them

Lay them in your lap.

Creep them, creep them

Creep them, creep them

Right up to your chin

Open wide your little mouth

But do not let them in!

Shake them, shake them

Shake them, shake them

Shake them just like this

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Roll them, roll them

Roll them, roll them

Blow a little kiss.

Engaging with position and direction to support learning

- Play a game of Simon Says. If your child/children are unfamiliar with the game, explain the rules (only do the action if ‘Simon says’) and have several practices to help them become familiar with the game. Demonstrate being Simon using location, direction and movement words, for example ‘Simon says crouch down low. Simon says turn around. Simon says jump forward. Jump back!’ Invite your child/children to join in several rounds to gain their confidence, then encourage them to have a turn at being Simon.
- Take a look at different types of maps – pictorial maps (e.g. of a gallery or zoo), road maps, online and interactive GPS maps, satellite images (weather maps) and globes. Talk with your child/children about maps – What do they already know about maps? What do different maps show? Why do we need them? How are they different/same? Use the language of location, direction and comparison when talking about places on maps, for example ‘Look, here is Dubbo. Yes, we live there, don’t we?’ ‘Way over here is Newcastle. Who lives there? That’s right – grandma and grandad. It’s a long way away.’ ‘Aunty Susie is here in Sydney. She is much closer to us.’
- Invite your child/children to help with cooking and preparing food. Healthy foods such as sandwiches, sushi, omelettes or homemade pies provide the perfect opportunity to talk about position (my sandwich has bread on the outside and cheese on the inside), direction (lay the cucumber across the rice and roll it into sushi), comparison (fill it halfway with mince then we can put mashed potato on top) and movement (roll the sushi, fold the omelette over).

Story video

The pear in the pear tree https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2PjKS1TZ5k

Text

Allen, P. 2000, The Pear in a pear tree, Puffin, Hawthorne, VIC.

Engaging with the text to support learning

Step 1. If you have this book at home, encourage your child/children to predict what the story is about from the cover. If not use the suggested video link in the resources box and watch the story together.

Step 2. Read/watch the story.

Step 3. Here are some questions to ask your child/children about the story.

1. What did John and Jane see up in the tree? (pear)
2. How did they try to get the pear? (holding Jane up, climbing a ladder)
3. How do you think the bird felt in the end?
4. Why did the Jane land in the pond?

Taking the learning further

- Together with your child/children, draw the characters on some paper and/or gather together some props to retell the story of The pear in the pear tree. Involve your child/children in drawing, cutting out and decorating the paper shapes to make Jane, John, the bird, the pear tree, a pear and a ladder. The paper cut-outs will stick to a board or the fridge using blu-tac or they can be used on a flat surface such as a table. Place the story book nearby for your child/children to look at as they retell the story with the characters and props. Encourage them to innovate on the story to create a different adventure or a new ending.
- Invite your child/children to build a tree house at the base of a tree. Together with your child/children, gather long sticks, palm fronds, or items from around the house, and choose a suitable tree (you can use chairs or a small table if you do not have a suitable tree in your yard). Support your child/children to plan and build their tree house and solve problems as they arise. Use the language of location as you talk with your child/children about their treehouse, ‘I like how you leaned the big branches against the tree trunk and put the palm fronds over them to make the walls. Can you fit inside? Look – you can crawl right through!’

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- Encourage your child/children to be involved in taking out or putting away items in different locations. For example, invite your child/children to put away their clean clothes, using the language of location, ‘That’s right, socks go in the top draw. Can you please put your pyjamas in the middle draw?’ Encourage your child to problem solve when it comes to accessing different locations, ‘Hmm, the cups are a bit high, aren’t they? What could you do to reach them? Great idea – I will hold the stool while you stand on it. Can you reach the cups now?

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