



Ladders to Literacy

A Kindergarten Activity Book

SECOND EDITION

by

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Rhythmic Activities

Main Purpose To develop awareness of sounds and the ability to separate sounds from their meanings

Children learn to explore rhythm by moving their bodies to music. Exploration of rhythm helps children become sensitive to the temporal quality or duration of sounds. Children also learn to manipulate sounds in words independent of their meanings.

Materials Drum, sticks, pictures, piano, books, other rhythm instruments

Description of the Activity Have children move their bodies to different rhythms and music. Beat a drum, clap hands, or play the piano to different beats (e.g., even, uneven), tempos (e.g., fast, slow), intensities (e.g., soft, loud), frequencies (e.g., high, low), and durations (e.g., long, short). Begin with slow, regular, even beats to which children can clap their hands. Introduce uneven beats later, with variations in intensity and tempo. Encourage children to sing and chant along. Introduce blending and segmenting of sentences and multisyllable words by clapping hands, banging the drum, or hopping or jumping to individual syllables. Relate movement to children's personal experiences ("Let's move slowly and pretend we are walking in heavy snow").

Propose a theme or an imaginary story for the children to mime. Pretend, for example, that the children are slowly climbing up a mountain and then running down fast. Pretend that children are different animals related to the theme (e.g., a heavy, slow elephant; a light butterfly). Use pictures or books to help children focus on the theme. Encourage children to plan ahead ("Which animal will you be when the music gets real loud?"). Discuss how different music can affect feelings (e.g., sad, happy, sleepy). During and after the activities, ask the children to explain what they thought the music was about, how the music made them feel, and why they moved in a certain way. Write a few of their feelings on the board or a flip chart. Encourage imaginative thinking and dramatic play.

This activity develops the following behaviors and concepts that are related to early literacy:

Print Awareness

Print: words

Phonological Awareness

Perception and memory: words, phrases

Word awareness: words

Phonological skills: blending, segmentation

Oral Language

Literate discourse: conversations, decontextualization, interpretive/analytic discourse

ADULT-CHILD INTERACTIVE BEHAVIORS



High Demand/Low Support

Children move to the different rhythms of the music, playing imaginary roles and developing pretend play scenes. They will

Segment words into syllables and blend syllables into words

Open-ended questioning

Have children choose to be an object or an animal that moves slowly or in a fragmented manner, and have them segment words into syllables.

“Think of an animal that hops on one foot or that jumps on two feet and can say words in little bits. Which animal would you like to be?”

Task regulation

Have children segment words into syllables and hop or clap to each syllable. Begin with segmenting familiar words such as children’s own names.

Instructing

Model word segmentation, and have the children repeat or say word segmentation along with you.

“How many parts are there to the word butterfly?”

Use visual and auditory cues while modeling (e.g., hop, clap hands).



Medium Demand/Medium Support

Children move to the different rhythms of the music, playing imaginary roles and developing pretend play scenes. They will

Segment words into syllables and blend syllables into words

Open-ended questioning

Ask children to choose an animal or object that moves fast, and have children say words quickly.

Task regulation

Play slow music when presenting the segmented word and fast music when asking children to blend the word

“Say /ba-na-na/” [to slow music].

“Say banana, banana” [to fast music].

Instructing

Draw children's attention to what to listen for.

"Is this music fast or slow?"

"Raise your hands when the music changes."

Say words segmented into syllables, and ask children to say the word fast. Model the blended word, and have children repeat.

**Low Demand/High Support**

Children move to the different rhythms of the music, playing imaginary roles and developing pretend play scenes. They will

Segment words into syllables and blend syllables into words

Open-ended questioning

Ask children how the music makes them feel like moving.

Providing feedback

Describe the music and children's actions and movements.

"The music is fast, and you are hopping up and down just like a little rabbit! Say rabbit fast. Now the music is slow. Say rabbit slowly."

Task regulation

Provide choices.

"This music is fast and soft.

Do you want to run or walk? Can you be a /but-er-fly/?"

Ask children to repeat words and sentences to a peer.

"Tell Jamal to be an /el-e-phant/."

"Tell Josie, 'I'm jumping up and down like a jumping bean!'"

Instructing

Give directions.

"When Nathan plays the drum quickly, everyone run fast!"

Ask direct questions.

"How are you going to run?"

Ask children to imitate words and sentences.

"Let's see how slowly we can say

'I'm walking slowly. III'mmm wwwwaalking sssllloooowlllyyy.' "



Ideas and Adaptations

Comments

Introduce this activity after children have had an opportunity to play with the musical instruments because they will tend to focus first on the instruments rather than on the beat and rhythms. The Clap the Syllables activity can be incorporated within this activity.



Home Link

Parent Activity: Let's Dance!