IMAGINATION



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Language and Literacy

Feather Tip Salt Tray Writing: Themed Alphabet

EZ.009.LA.1001-1002

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objective:
Students will identify uppercase and lowercase letters.
Students will recreate uppercase and lowercase letters in unconventional ways.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Students write letters using feather tips in salt trays to practice letter recognition and formation. Pre-writing exercises like this promote directionality and support the development of fine motor skills and coordination.

WHAT TO DO

Place the trays filled with salt in a writing center or on a table. Show students how to use the feather tip to write in the sand and the feathered side to erase their writing. Encourage students to write spontaneously and regularly. Also, students can practice writing letters or words, using the magnetic letters or word bank words as a guide.

PLAY TIPS

- Before introducing the salt tray as a writing activity, allow the students to spend time exploring the salt tray in different ways such as scooping, pouring, and moving the salt around in other ways and with other tools.
- Encourage students to use other tools to write, such as a stick, paintbrush, or even their pointer finger.
- Try using other material in the tray fine sand, cornmeal, or baking soda. Discuss the differences in texture.

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Mathematics

Picture Puzzles: Number Cards

EZ.009.LA.1003-1004

Activity Type:
Small Group and Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will recognize numbers 1-10.
Students will develop one-to-one correspondence to complete puzzles.

Each themed classroom includes themed number cards. A featured activity will be included with each set of themed number cards. Students begin and continue to recognize numbers through repeated exposure. Matching number cards to associated picture cards reinforces one-to-one-correspondence. Understanding one-to-one correspondence deepens student's number sense and strengthens the idea that numbers correspond to specific quantities.

WHAT TO DO

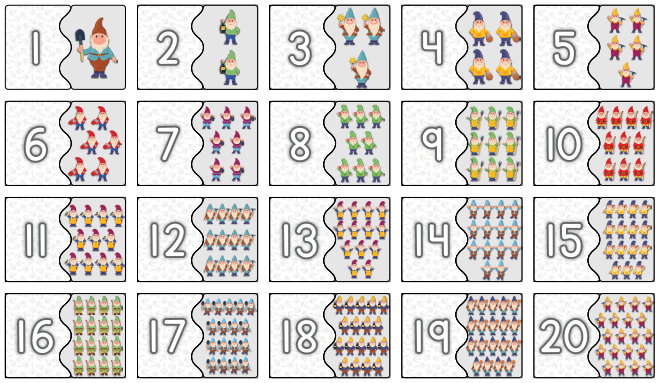
Introduce the picture puzzles as a small group or free choice activity. As a small group exercise, model saying the number together and the picture that corresponds to the quantity (pointing to each item). As a free choice exercise, have the students put the pieces together to create a one-to-one match.

PLAY TIP

Have students find manipulatives in the classroom to enhance the one-to-one correspondence. The students can place a manipulative on an image as they count.

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Mathematics

Counting and Measurement

EZ.009.LA.1005

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will count items up to 10 with one-to-one correspondence.
Students will begin to add to and take away items.
Students will begin to use nonstandard measurement tools.

Students use counting manipulatives, non-standard forms of measurement like Unifix Cubes, and themed counters, to practice one-to-one correspondence and early practices of measurement using themed math cards. Measurement can be an abstract concept for young children. Manipulatives like blocks, cubes, or cups provide a tangible way to understand concepts like length, and height. By physically comparing and ordering objects, they can build a foundation for understanding measurement units later.

WHAT TO DO

After modeling how to use the mats, place the counting and measurement mats in a learning center as a teacher-directed or student-directed experience. As a teacher-directed experience, guide students to use manipulatives to show one-to-one correspondence and length. As a student-directed experience, allow students to freely explore the manipulatives and mats.

PLAY TIPS

- Use the math manipulatives to reinforce sorting by color and type. Encourage students to count how many are in each category. Encourage students to think of other ways to sort the manipulatives.
- Ask students to use the manipulatives to create patterns. Create simple pattern mats (ABAB, AABB, ABB) for additional support and guidance.

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Mathematics

Making Patterns

EZ.009.LA.1006

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize common 2-D shapes.
Students will sort by features and attributes.
Students will recognize patterns.

Students explore patterns and properties of shapes as they create whole images using pattern blocks and themed pattern block mats. Pattern blocks boost students' ability to think critically, make predictions, and test their predictions.

WHAT TO DO

Pattern block mats and pattern blocks work well as a self-directed activity. The intuitive nature requires little direction. Place the mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the whole image.

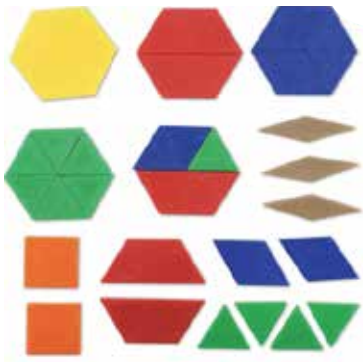
PLAY TIPS

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place the design on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill in the design with pattern blocks.
- Have students take a two-handed scoop of pattern blocks and sort by shape or color. Use graphing paper or a graphing mat to visualize the sorting process.
- Students can use mirrors to create patterns and make observations in the reflections. Ask students to describe what they are seeing as they create patterns in the mirrors.

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Language and Literacy

Pre-Writing Line Tracing

EZ.009.LA.1007

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will build pre-writing skills by tracing curved, notched, and zigzag lines. Students will recognize directionality in print and writing.

Students work on emergent literacy and transition to letter formations by tracing lines, patterns, and shapes with a theme in a dry erase, reusable format. To connect to fine motor development, students are encouraged to add detail. Themed templates are included for tracing.

WHAT TO DO

1. Place the dry erase templates in the writing center. Students have the choice to use dry erase markers on the dry erase templates or place paper on the template and trace using a pencil/crayon. Remind students to start from left to right and top to bottom.
2. Encourage students to make their own tracing templates using the dry erase templates as a guide. Students can work on tracing shapes, lines, and numbers by repetitively tracing the same shape, line, or number using a different color crayon each time.

PLAY TIPS

- Include the themed tracing patterns in the writing center to align with other free-choice writing exercises. Using a clipboard will help students control the writing utensil.
- Tape the template vertically, on an easel or teacher board, to encourage the strengthening of fine motor development.

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Language and Literacy

Syllable Awareness

EZ.009.LA.1009

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to blend and segment syllables in words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Recognizing that words can be broken down into syllables or units of sound is a phonological skill.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the vocabulary cards as a guided activity or free choice center activity. Have students clap the number of beats on the vocabulary card and indicate the number by moving the clip.

PLAY TIPS

- Provide simple instruments to reinforce the number of syllables. Rather than clap the number of syllables in a word, students can shake the number of syllables.
- Students can use their body to emphasize syllables in a word. Have students jump up and down, tap their toes, march in place, do jumping jacks, or tap their head to count syllables.

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Language and Literacy

Rhyming Awareness

EZ.009.LA.1010

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to recognize rhyming words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Rhyming activities help children listen for ending sounds in words, a precursor to phonics activities in late preschool.

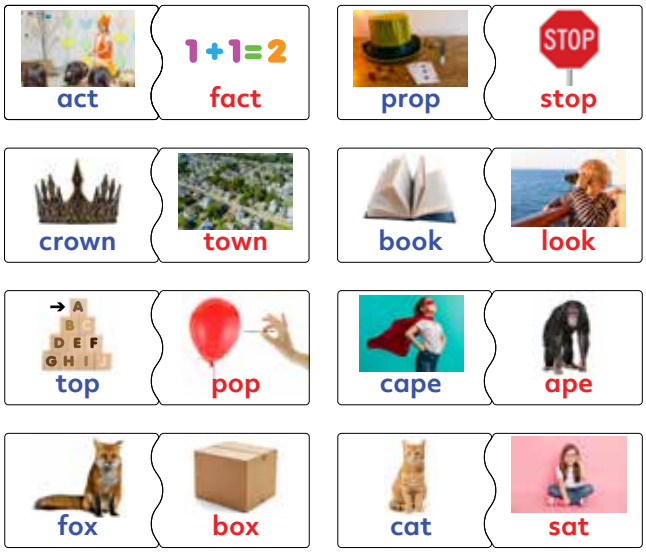
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the rhyming cards as a small group or free choice activity. Say the words on the cards together and help students to identify the rhyming pairs. Students can connect the rhyming pairs by placing the cards side by side on the table.

PLAY TIPS

- Play rhyming words with body parts. Have students touch their head, nose, arm, etc. and think of a word that rhymes with the body part.
- Play, *I Spy with My Little Eye*, using target items in the classroom. For example, decide on something in the classroom, like *door* as the target word. Then state, "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with *floor*." The students look around the classroom for something that rhymes with floor.

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Language and Literacy

Onset and Rime Awareness

EZ.009.LA.1011

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to identify and segment one-syllable words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Onset and rime activities help children identify patterns in words.

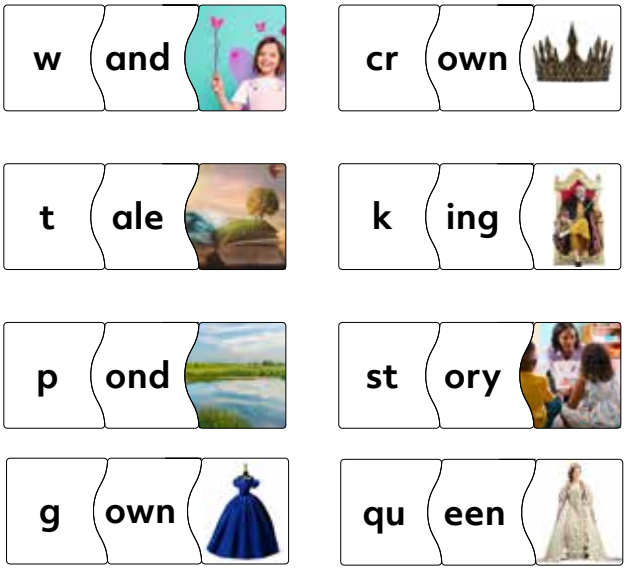
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the picture puzzles as a small group or free choice activity. As a small group exercise, model saying the onset together, the rime together, and the picture that identifies the word. As a free choice exercise, have the students put the pieces together to create a word.

PLAY TIP

Attach beginning and ending sounds to a set (2) of large dice. Have students roll the dice and say the word created, putting the onset and rime together.

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Language and Literacy

Flip Word Pancakes: Word Bank Words

EZ.009.LA.1012

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify word bank words.
Students will reinforce word bank words.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Students begin to recognize words from the word bank by engaging in repetitive visual activities. By participating in Flip Word Pancakes (memory), students start to recognize letters and understand that print directionality occurs from left to right. Memory exercises lend to critical thinking which helps children nurture their attention to detail.

WHAT TO DO

Spread the pancakes out on the floor, upside down. Students take turns flipping a pancake into the frying pan using the spatula. Once the pancake is right side up, students can find the matching word bank word and practice verbalizing letters in the word, clapping syllables, and sorting words into piles that begin with the same sound.

PLAY TIPS

- Students can use the pancakes in a game of memory, matching the Spanish word to English word.
- Ask students to use manipulatives (counting bears, Unifix Cubes, color tiles, etc.) to count out each letter of the word on the pancake.
- Add two (or more) pancakes together and ask students to use manipulatives to count out the total amount of letters in both words (one to one correspondence up to 10).

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Social Studies

Storybook Character Scavenger Hunt

EZ.009.LA.1013

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objectives:
Students will explore features of a map.
Students will collaborate with peers to solve problems and make discoveries.

Students can take turns hiding storybook characters and objects around the classroom, searching for the items using identification cards, and providing verbal clues. Scavenger hunts help children develop observational skills while also building vocabulary as they make discoveries of their own.

WHAT TO DO

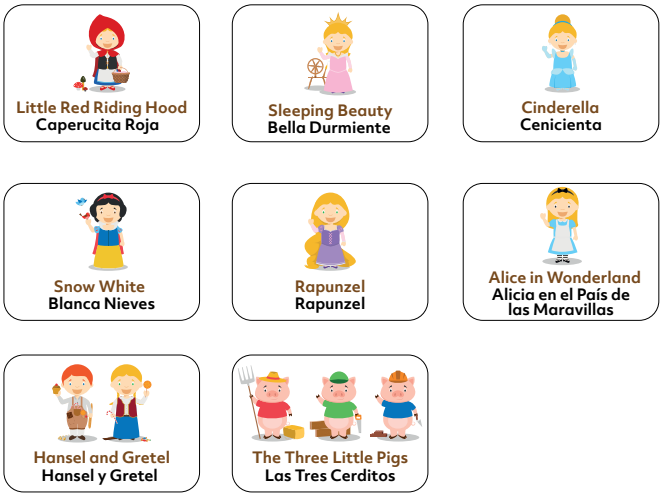
1. Before the activity, hide the storybook character cards around the classroom, circle a different storybook character on each map, and draw a path to find the storybook character. The idea is for students to stop at various locations in the classroom using the map to see if they can find the storybook character.
2. Gather students in a small group. Tell students that several storybook characters have gone missing in the classroom and you need help finding them! Show students a map and explain that they must travel the path with their peers, stop at each location, and look for the storybook character. Once they find the storybook character, they can move on to the next map and storybook character.

PLAY TIPS

- Extend the concept of scavenger hunts by creating a color, shape, alphabet, or number hunt. Ask students to find specific items in the classroom and report back.
- Take the scavenger hunt outside, hiding the storybook characters in nature. Ask students to look for other items in nature like insects, rocks, leaves, and sticks.

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Language and Literacy

Guessing Bag

EZ.009.LA.1014

Activity Type:
Large Group, Small Group, and Routines

Objectives:
Students will ask questions to expand their background knowledge.
Students will respond to questions and situations with understanding.

Using storybook picture cards and character models, students participate in a guessing game. Educator places a character or object into an opaque bag and provides simple detail about the character or object. Using the storybook picture cards as a guide, students make deductions and guess which character or object the educator is describing. Question asking is a powerful tool for increasing background knowledge and deepening understanding. Students who learn to ask questions take control of their own learning.

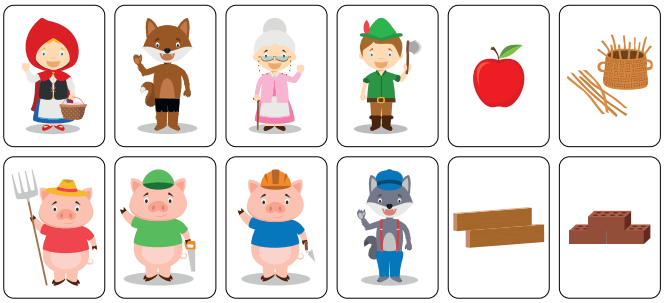
WHAT TO DO

1. Show students the storybook characters/item and matching storybook character cards/items. Discretely place one of the characters into the opaque bag. Tell students that they will try to guess which storybook character or item is in the bag by listening to clues.
2. Provide students with several clues, such as: “This character is an animal” and “This character is a human,” referring to the matching storybook character after each clue. Students can start to make deductions after each clue until they are able to guess the character’s identity. Point out the matching picture card after the character’s identity has been discovered.

PLAY TIPS

- Extend the activity by creating a tactile experience. Before providing any clues, allow each student to touch the character in the bag without looking. Can they make observations with their hands? Encourage students to describe what they are feeling.
- Ask students to bring something in from home to place in the bag. Students can work on using describing words and phrases as they provide clues to their classmates, with adult assistance.
- Use the STEM kits as intended, allowing students to explore the plan, create, and test process in a learning center.

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Fine Arts

Shadow Puppet Theater

EZ.009.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will dramatize stories using sounds, movements, and props.

By incorporating puppets and various story props, students can bring fairy tales from the library to life. Puppets inspire children to tap into their imagination, allowing them to create both realistic and fantastical narratives. They also offer a fun way for kids to share their favorite stories through retelling.

WHAT TO DO

1. Show students the different types of puppets and props, including the acrylic shadow puppets. Demonstrate using a shadow puppet and flashlight against a backdrop to create a shadow.
2. After reading several stories from the classroom library, demonstrate retelling a story using the props and shadow puppets. Encourage students to retell a story using the props, shadow puppets, and tabletop theater on their own or in a small group. Guide students to consider characters, setting, and plot through beginning, middle, and end.

PLAY TIPS

- Create backdrops for stories using butcher paper and art materials.
- Have students create additional shadow puppets using stencils and paper. Students can glue the cutouts onto craft sticks.
- Compare versions of fairytales and have students retell the different versions using the storytelling props.

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Language and Literacy

Fairy Tale Maps

EZ.009.LA.1016

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will make connections to read alouds and retell stories to demonstrate understanding.

Students can retell or re-enact a familiar story using dry-erase storyboards, character manipulatives, and setting props in the miniature play area. Many fairy tales and nursery rhymes guide characters through a narrative journey. By allowing students to retell stories and explore character journeys, educators can strengthen their language skills, comprehension, and critical thinking abilities.

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask student(s) to choose a story from the classroom themed library. After reading or rereading the story, ask student(s) to recreate scenes from the story in the miniature play area using blocks, trees, castles, etc. Ask students questions like, “What structures are in the story?” and “Does the story take place inside or outside?”
2. Using a story map, ask students to create a new story, drawing the appropriate elements. Students can use the manipulatives as inspiration to create a new story or consider different settings and characters for a story.

PLAY TIPS

- Design a new story on the story map as a small or large group. Use the manipulatives as inspiration for characters and setting.
- Provide students with open-ended opportunities to engage with the fairy tale manipulatives in the miniature play area.

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Mathematics

Castle Engineering

EZ.009.LA.1018

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will develop fine motor skills through structured block play.
Students will describe and discuss characteristics of structures as they build.

Real pictures of castles inspire students to explore castle building using different types of blocks. Students can build and rebuild castles, discovering new ways to make the structures taller, wider, and sturdier. Young children learn about spatial awareness when they manipulate blocks. As children build structures, they also continue to increase vocabulary by using spatial terms like “over,” “under,” “on top,” and “below.”

WHAT TO DO

1. Read several books about castles, pointing out various castle features such as towers, thick walls, moats, drawbridges, and stones. After the read alouds, review the castle features by making visual connections to the books and stand-alone images.
2. Allow students to explore the blocks and practice engineering skills. They can build towers, construct simple bridges, and design complex structures with encouragement. Provide students with the space to build and tear down their creations as part of their learning.

PLAY TIPS

- Ask your students to draw a picture of what they would like their castle to look like. Together, examine the blocks and building materials, finding blocks that align with each part of their picture.
- Explore castle building using other items like empty boxes, pipe cleaners, and sand.

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Science

Bridge Building

EZ.009.LA.1020

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will build and test designs.
Students will re-enact story elements using story cards and props.

Building bridges can be part of pretend play! After reading *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone, students share examples of bridges in their community and discuss the purpose of a bridge. Students can explore and build with materials like craft sticks, paper, blocks, and cups to create bridges that will help the goats safely across a moat. Participating in inquiry-based experiences helps children go beyond their natural curiosity, think outside of the box, and reach a solution to a problem through investigations.

WHAT TO DO

1. Read *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone as a large group, emphasizing the repetitive phrases and encouraging students to read along. Ask questions that encourage prediction and reflection on context throughout, such as "What do you think will happened next?" and "How do you know?"
2. After reading the story, have students retell the story using story cards. Pose the problem from the story cards, "How can the goats cross the river safely?" Encourage students to identify the problem on the story cards.
3. After students have identified the problem, ask students to create a bridge using the open-ended materials that will safely help the goats cross the river. Introduce the materials, such as craft sticks, cups, wooden blocks, and tape. Encourage students to draw out their plan before creating and recreating after testing strength and durability of the bridge.

PLAY TIP

Find images of bridges in books and other online resources. Brainstorm bridge design ideas and encourage students to draw out a plan (act as an architect) before creating and recreating a bridge of their own.

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Fine Arts

Act It Out

EZ.009.LA.1021

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will participate in cooperative dramatic expression to recreate stories, moods, and experiences.
Students will create new stories, using props and artifacts to share their stories.

After reading and discussing several fairy tales and repetitive stories from the classroom library, students can rehearse and act out a story of their choosing using props and other items such as gowns, shoes, capes, crowns, armor, and wands. Creative drama provides an outlet for children to express thoughts and emotions. Acting out imaginary roles and situations encourages them to think critically and creatively.

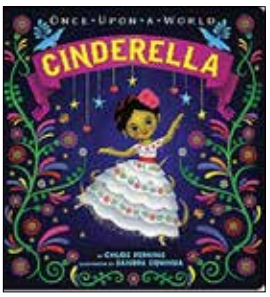
WHAT TO DO

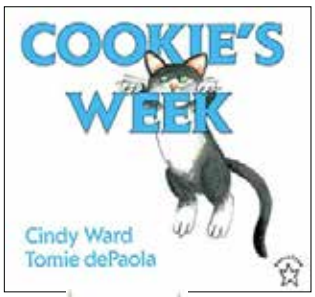
1. After reading several fairy tales and repetitive stories as a group, reinforce the beginning, middle, and end of each fairy tale by picture walking through the books during a second reading. Ask students to recall the characters, setting, and issue. Retell the stories as a class.
2. Place the props and fairy tales in the Mirror Mirror Storytelling Center and encourage students to retell the stories as a small group.

PLAY TIP

Act out everyday activities like getting dressed, brushing your teeth, and eating an apple. Students practice working memory and sequencing, important skills for storytelling, as they practice acting out everyday activities.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED























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Social and Emotional

I Like Me!

EZ.009.LA.1023

Activity Type:
Large Group and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify feelings and emotions.
Students will use a variety of art materials to express and represent their emotions.

After reading *I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson, students will celebrate what makes them unique by creating a self-portrait with a variety of art materials such as paper, crayons/markers, yarn, sequins, and buttons. This activity helps students recognize and appreciate their individual features, while also promoting self-confidence and positive self-image. The creative process strengthens fine motor skills, encourages self-expression, and provides an opportunity for students to share and celebrate their identities with classmates.

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask students to share some things they like about themselves, including special food choices that help keep them healthy. Share several favorites of your own to help spark ideas. Read *I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson, asking the following questions: "What are some things the pig really liked about herself?," "How does it feel to try new things?," and "How do you and the pig similarly stay healthy?"
2. Provide students with a variety of art materials for them to use to create self-portraits. Ask students to "study" their facial features in the handheld mirrors and share similarities with one another.

PLAY TIPS

- Reinforce body parts and physical features by singing familiar songs and rhymes such as *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* and *If You're Happy and You Know It*.
- Create self-portraits on handheld mirrors. Students can look at their reflection and draw directly on the mirror with a dry erase marker.

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Fine Arts

Musical Lines and Colors

EZ.009.LA.1024

Activity Type:
Small Group and Large Group

Objectives:
Students will explore abstract art by translating music into lines and colors on paper. Students will identify and express emotions through artistic elements such as lines, shape, and color.

In *Musical Lines and Colors*, students will experience how music can inspire visual art. By listening to different types of music, such as fast, slow, energetic, or calm, they will paint what they "hear," using lines, colors, and shapes to express the emotions and movement of the sound. This creative process helps students connect auditory experiences with visual expression, reinforcing their understanding of abstract art. Through this activity, students will discover that art doesn't always have to "look like something." Instead, it can represent how something feels, sounds, or moves.

WHAT TO DO

1. Show examples of abstract art and briefly explain that abstract art doesn't have to look like a real thing. Abstract art uses colors, lines, and shapes to create a feeling. Have students stand up and use their fingers or arms to draw different types of lines in the air, like straight, zigzag, and curvy lines.
2. Give each student a piece of paper, watercolors or tempera paint, and a paintbrush. Guide them to create a continuous, curvy line across the page. Encourage them to add more lines, making them crisscross to form different sized shapes. Have students fill in the shapes with colors of their choice, experimenting with blending, layering, and using different brushstrokes or painting tools.

PLAY TIPS

- Play a piece of fast, energetic music. Encourage students to paint what they "hear," moving to the rhythm of the music. After the energetic music, play a slow, calm piece. Ask them to paint the same shapes again, this time moving slower, and using different colors.
- Cut out shapes from different colored paper and have the students glue them onto a background to create a collage. This reinforces the idea of using shapes, colors, and lines in a new way.

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