



Penn State Better Kid Care Distance Education Lesson

- **How to Make
and Use Puppets**

Professional Development Code K2C1
Child Development Associate CDA 5

How to Make and Use Puppets

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Assignments & Required Forms



Lesson Instructions

1. Watch the educational video.
2. Read the workbook.
 - Plan time each day to work on the lesson.
 - Set a goal to complete the lesson in about two weeks.
3. Complete all assignment pages and forms written in ink. Save a copy of all completed work for your files in case there is a need to refer to your saved copy. We will no longer return incomplete lessons. You will be notified if lessons are incomplete.
4. We encourage the use of distance education lessons in staff meetings; however, all assignments need to be completed independently. Copied answers, "does not apply" answers, or incomplete assignments are considered not complete.
5. **To avoid delays in processing your registration for this professional development, be sure to go over the check list on the Registration Form, include all items, and mail to :**

Penn State Better Kid Care
Distance Education Program
341 North Science Park Road, Suite 208
State College, PA 16803

Please note:

- Two professional development hours will be given for successful completion of this lesson.
- Completed assignments will be checked and returned to you with a certificate of completion.
- Training developed by Penn State University Better Kid Care Distance Education provides:
 - Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
 - Keystone STARS professional development
 - PA Dept. of Public Welfare required hours
 - Act 48 hours for certified educators
 - Child Development Associate (CDA) credential hours
- Completed assignments must arrive at the Penn State Better Kid Care office for processing at least **6 weeks** before your certification or registration renewal due date.
- The video portion of this lesson was a previous satellite broadcast. Discussion questions are included in most lessons. They can be used by a group of staff members in a child care center or group home. They can also be used in planning a family night to help spark discussion among families.
- If you are completing this as a Web-based lesson, please refer to the online instructions at <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/AngelUnits/GeneralDirections.html>

Teaching Social Skills with Puppets

Have you thought about using puppets to teach children how to become good problem solvers? Try doing simple puppet plays, acting out real life problems that the children in your care have had about getting along with others. Talk about those problems with the children after they have seen the play. Through puppet plays and discussion, children can learn new and better things to do when another child takes a toy, how to join a group of playing children, and how to problem solve together with another person.

You don't need fancy puppets to teach problem solving with puppets. If you don't have puppets in your child care you can use stuffed animals, dolls or small people figures. The best puppets are simple ones. Ellen Neches, from Shady Lane School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has developed this approach for use with young three-year-olds. She recommends that you use the names of the children who were really involved in the problem you are acting out. Ellen found that the children easily recognized the problem when she was using made up names. They often said, "That's me! That's what happened to me today." Instead of feeling shy or embarrassed this approach helped these children and all of the others to be even more interested in the puppet plays. Teaching problem solving works well for children, ages three and up.

Here are some things you can act out with the puppets:

Act out the positive things that children do.

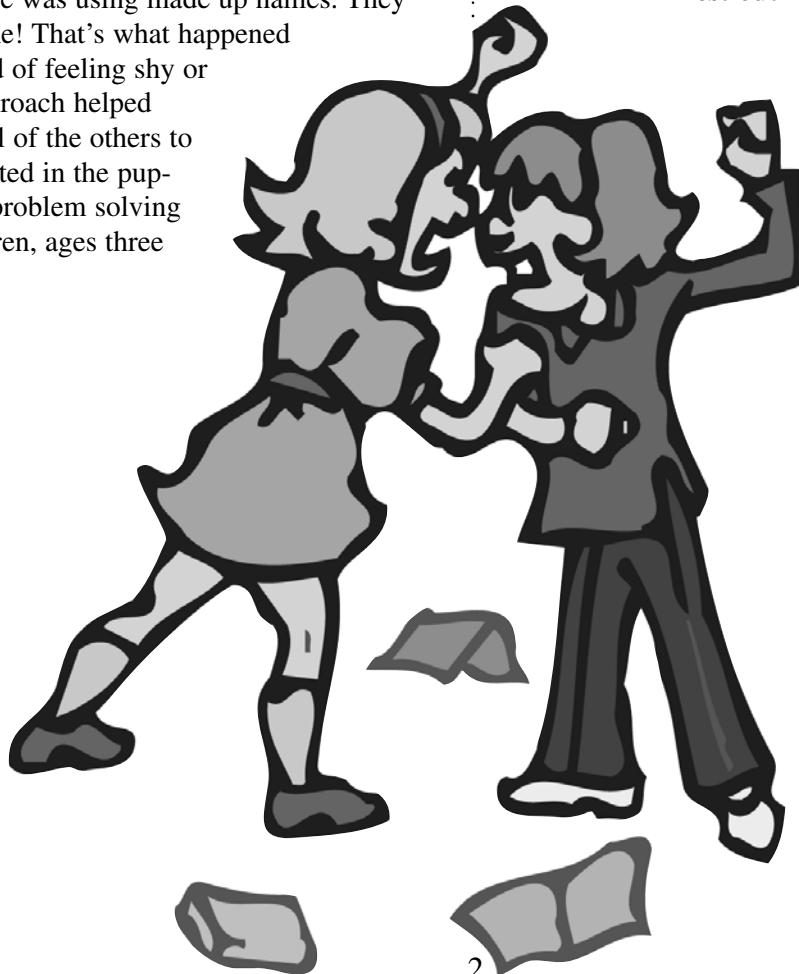
One way to help children learn positive behaviors is to use the puppet to act out the positive behaviors that you notice in the children. For instance, act out a lunch time when the children remembered to say "please" and "thank you." Act out a time when a child shares with a friend or act out a problem between two children when they used words, instead of hitting to solve a problem.

Act out problems in getting along with other children

Use the puppets to act out something that has happened that day. If two children were fighting over playing with truck, act it out. Ask the children to tell you what the puppets might have said or done differently. Or ask the children for solutions and let the puppet react to their ideas.

Test out new ways of doing things

You could show the puppets trying things in a new way. Two puppets with a sharing problem might trade some toys. Take the ideas of the children and have the puppets say and do what they suggest.



Teaching Social Skills with Puppets

Use what you learn from the children

You will learn a lot about how the children think about the problems that they have getting along. What you learn may help you to think of things that you can do differently. You may want to discuss new rules for the group that would help the children to get along better. The children may have some very good ideas about what kind of changes would be valuable. A puppet show can be a great way to begin to talk about these things.

Act out stressful situations

Adjusting to child care is a stressful situation can be eased with the use of puppets. In the video, the caregiver acts out the child's morning routine using little people as puppets. She talks about waking up, getting dressed, eating breakfast and going to child care. She

uses the names of the child and his or her family members. She acts out the parent saying, "good-bye," then uses a puppet to represent herself comforting the child. She acts out what they will do in child care and reassures children by acting out the return of the parent. Children find these plays reassuring and even ask for them when they are missing Mom and Dad. This caregiver believes this approach helps children to make a smooth adjustment to child care. She also uses these puppet plays to talk to children about other stresses like upcoming surgery for family members and other real life stresses that children face.

Adapted from Ellen Neches, Shady Lane School, Pittsburgh, PA; Diane Levin (1994) Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom. Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility.



Becoming Comfortable Using Puppets

Most of us feel a little uncomfortable when we first use a puppet with a group of children. Most people feel worried about being foolish and not being able to think of something to say. Here are some tips from some caregivers who have learned how to use puppets effectively with children:

Give your puppet a clear and interesting personality. Puppeteers say that once the puppet has a personality it is much easier to make up things to say.

If you are having trouble finding the personality of a puppet, dress him or her in some clothes. It helps to bring out their uniqueness.

Find out about your puppet's personality by asking your puppet these questions.

- What is your name?
- What do you like to do?
- What do you dislike?

See if you can think of other questions

Try to make your puppet move around. See if you can make your puppet:*

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| • kiss | • bow |
| • twist | • dance |
| • jump | • run |
| • push | • pull |
| • nod | • shake |
| • cry | • laugh |

When most people start using puppets they start by talking in a very high or very low voice. This is interesting but it is very tiring and can really strain your voice. Try using your natural voice with an accent or different speech pattern.

* Ideas from "I Can Make Puppets" Mary Wallace Greey De Pencier books, 1994.



Transition with Puppets

Puppets are a great way to help children to make good transitions. Transitions are the times of day when you are changing from one activity to another, such as story time to lunch time or from lunch to resting time. Most children at one time or another have difficulty with transitions. Transitions times are when children are likely to misbehave.

Puppets seem almost magical to most children (and adults). Children are often so fascinated that they forget everything else but the puppets. You can take advantage of the magic by using a puppet during the transition time. The puppet can tell children that it is time for clean up or the puppet can ask each child to go and put on his or her coat. Use puppets to ask children to come to circle time. Children are much more willing to do tasks they may not like when a puppet does the asking.



Puppets from Recyclables

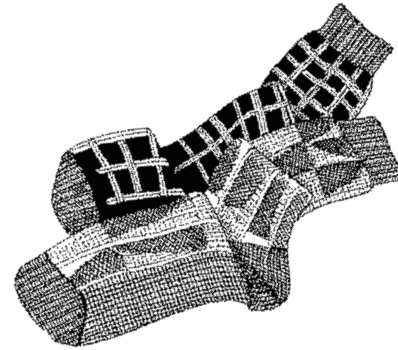
The materials for making puppets are all around you. You and the children can create wonderful one-of-a-kind puppets with recyclable materials. Don't be afraid to try different things. Before you know it your imagination will take over. You and the children will be creating your own designs. Using recyclables is one of the best ways to make puppets with personality. Collect these recyclables and common household objects. They are wonderful for puppet making.

General Supplies

- popsicle sticks
- plastic forks and spoons
- boxes — oatmeal and bandage boxes
- ping pong balls
- lids and caps
- felt and fabric scraps
- paper towel and toilet paper tubes
- gloves and mittens that have lost their partners
- big and little socks that have lost their partners
- magazines and newspaper
- junk mail
- wrapping paper
- thread, string and yarn
- feathers
- drinking straws
- buttons and beads
- cotton balls
- egg cartons and clean dried crushed eggshells
- styrofoam balls
- ponytail holders
- cereal boxes (can be flattened and cut along one edge)
- erasers
- sponges
- jar lids
- beans
- hair curlers
- clothes pins
- feathers
- chenille stems
- pantyhose
- broken jewelry
- ribbon and yarn
- shells
- small seed pods
- wood scraps
- cardboard
- paper of different weight and textures, and colors
- corks
- dry, uncooked pasta
- empty thread spools

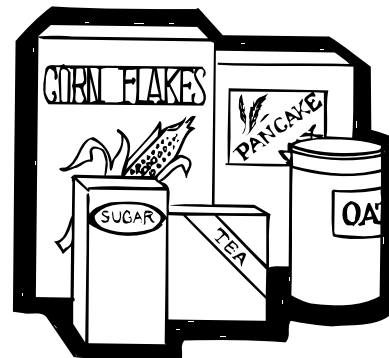
Give your puppet great hair! Try some of these ideas:

- fur fabric
- feathers
- pot scrubbers
- fringe or tassels
- yarn
- pipe cleaners



Give your puppet great teeth! Try some of these ideas:

- cardboard
- felt
- styrofoam
- buttons
- dried beans
- plastic pearls
- sponges
- paper cup



Give your puppet great eyes! Try some of these ideas:

- buttons with a felt pupil
- felt circles
- dried beans
- styrofoam
- 2 plastic spoons
- pom pom balls
- egg carton
- dry, uncooked pasta shells
- hole reinforcers
- ping pong balls



Puppets from Recyclables

Give your puppet a great nose!

Try some of these ideas:

- styrofoam peanuts
- egg cartons
- old knit glove
- buttons
- stones
- dry uncooked pasta

Give your puppet great ears! Try some of these ideas:

- peanut shells
- styrofoam peanuts
- buttons
- shells
- dry, uncooked pasta

When you ask children to make puppets from recyclables, relax and let them create for themselves. Don't give the children many directions. Eyes, ears, noses, and mouths don't have to be in any order for a child to make a truly wonderful puppet. If the child thinks he or she has made a face, then it is one.

If you want to help children make recognizable puppet faces, let them play with the recyclables to make face designs with them. Start this activity several weeks before you want to make the puppets. Children can lay the faces out on oval paper without using glue. They may want to experiment with a number of designs. This gives them a chance to explore the many ways to create faces. It will give them exciting ideas for when they make their puppets.

Surefire Puppets

Photo puppets

Ask parents to bring in full length pictures of their child and other family members. Cut out the pictures, cover them with clear self-stick paper, and glue a popsicle stick on the back of each.

These puppets are great for children who are missing Mom and Dad. Act out the story of the child getting up, eating breakfast, coming to child care and saying “good-bye.” Then act out the story of playing at child care and the parent returning to pick up the child.

Puppets on fingers

What do you do:

Use a nontoxic washable marker to draw a puppet onto children’s fingers.

You may want to add small recycled lids, such toothpaste tube caps, to make hats and a small amount of yarn stuck under the hat makes great hair.

Sock puppets

What do you do:

Collect socks that have lost their partners, Set out recycled materials for children to decorate their sock puppets.

Snack puppets

What do you do:

Make a puppet out of food, using a pear, apple, or other fruit. Ask the children to decorate their puppets with baby carrots, raisins, and other foods to make a face. Give children time to play with their food puppets, then eat them.



Puppet Plays

Children can create their own stories and act them out with puppets.

Preschool aged children will need your help.

You don't need to spend a lot of money to buy a puppet stage. Try some of these ideas to make your own stage:

- a large cardboard box with a hole cut in the side
- a small table, turned on it's side
- a card table with a sheet or blanket draped over it
- a table cloth tacked across a doorway
- two chairs with a board placed between them
- a table cloth hung between two trees
- a shoe box with the bottom cut out is a great stage for finger puppets

Make a wide variety of puppets available for the children to choose.

Homemade puppets are just as good as those you buy in stores — often better. The best puppets are the ones that the children make themselves.

Limit the number of puppeteers to only two or a very small number at the same time. Ask everyone else to be the audience. You can ask the puppets questions to help the story develop. Let the children invent the story on the spot. Don't worry if it doesn't make too much sense. As children have more experience they usually get better at it

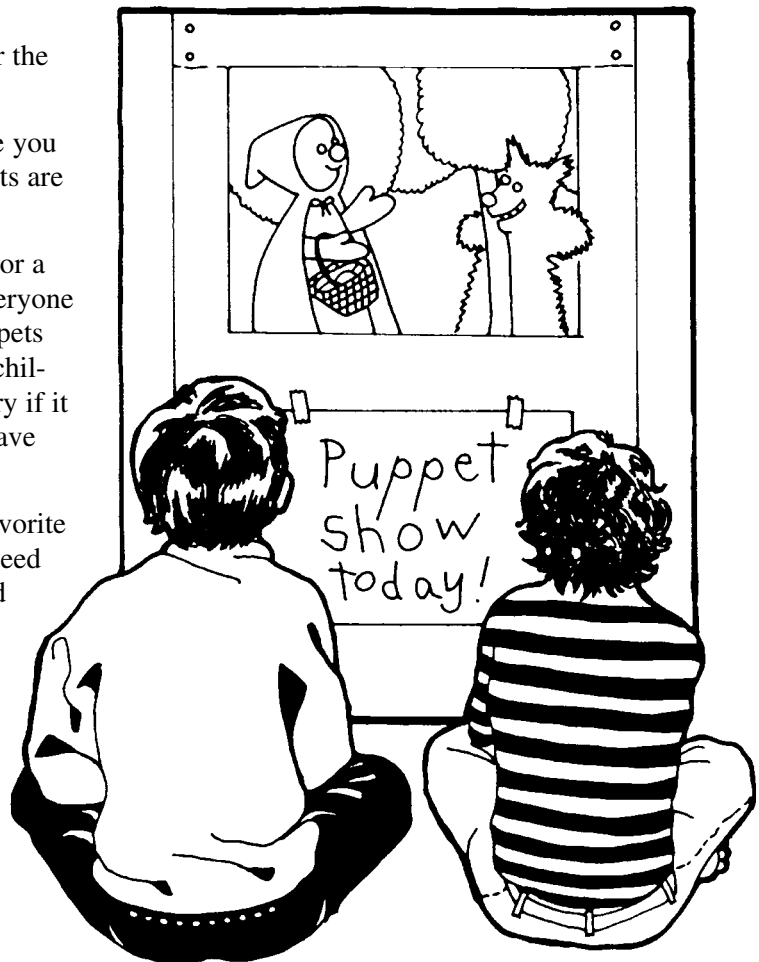
If you would like the children to act out a favorite story, such as "The Three Little Pigs," you need to tell the story to them many times over and over again before you try it. The children must know the story very well. This can be great fun because children love to hear their favorite stories time and time again.

Want to learn more about puppets?

Puppeteers of America is a national organization that promotes the art of puppetry. It offers an annual Puppet Festival, a puppetry store for purchasing books, videos and puppets and a bi-monthly magazine. A membership fee is required. Write for information about your local puppet guild. Galye G. Schluter, Membership Office, #5 Cricklewood Path, Pasadena, CA 91107-1002.

Try these books on making puppets:

- *I Can Make Puppets*
Mary Wallace Greey De Pencier books, 1994.
- *The Muppets Make Puppets*
Cheryl Henson and the Muppet Workshop,
Workman Publishing, New York, 1994.





PARENTS COUNT

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



Puppets at Home

Puppets can be more than fun when used as part of your regular daily routine. Kids love puppets and best of all, they almost always listen to puppets. Keep bath puppets in the kitchen and you'll find your children reaching out to have their hands wiped by a puppet after meals. Puppets in the bathtub make getting clean fun.

Puppets are a great help when your child is going through a difficult stage with dressing. Keep a puppet in your child's closet and have the puppet help your child to get dressed. Even children who hate to put on their clothes, enjoy getting dressed together with their puppet friends.

Want to learn more about puppets?

Contact this organization:

Puppeteers of America

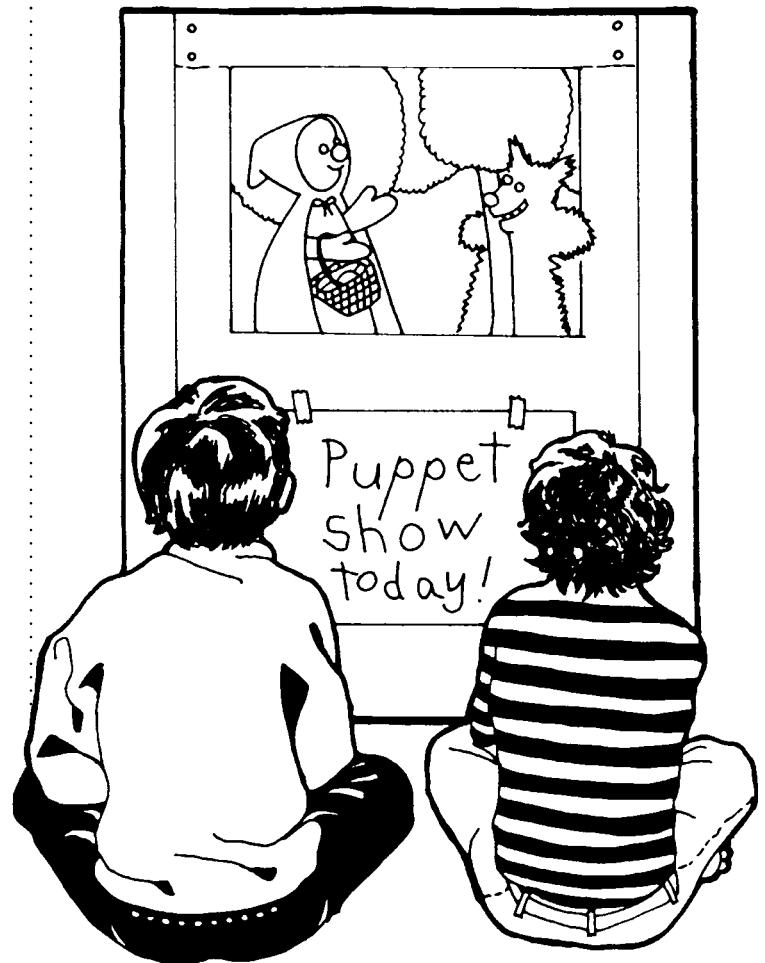
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"The Muppets Make Puppets" by Cheryl Henson and the Muppet Workshop, Workman Publishing, New York (1994).



5 Minute Puppet Stages

- use a large cardboard box with a hole cut in the side
- a table turned on it's side
- a card table with a sheet or blanket over it
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Puppets from Recyclables

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Don't be afraid to try different things. Before you know it your imagination will take over and you and your child will be creating his/her own designs. Recyclables are one of the best ways to make puppets with personality.

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- pantyhose
- broken jewelry
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- shells
- small seed pods
- wood scraps
- cardboard
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- corks
- dry, uncooked pasta
- empty thread spools

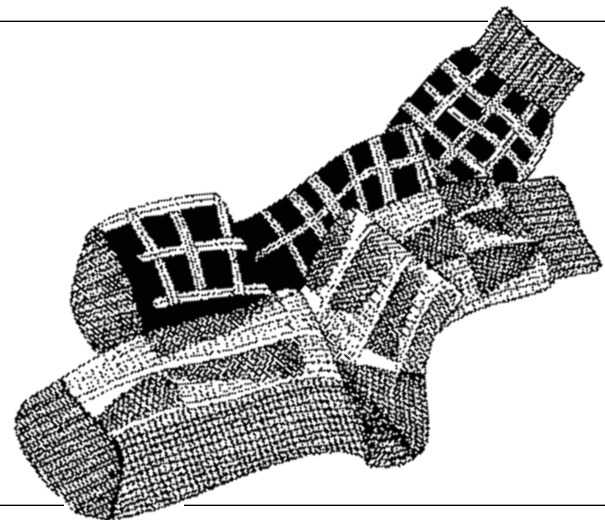
Give your puppet great teeth! Try some of these ideas: cardboard, white felt, styrofoam, buttons or lima beans, plastic pearls, sponge, paper cup.

Give your puppet great eyes! Try some of these ideas: buttons with a felt pupil, felt circles, dried lima beans, styrofoam, 2 plastic spoons, pom pom balls, egg carton, pasta shells, hole reinforcers, ping pong balls.

Give your puppets great noses! Try some of these ideas: styrofoam peanuts, egg cartons, old knit glove, buttons.

Give your puppet great ears! Try some of these ideas: peanut shells, styrofoam peanuts, buttons, shells.

Adapted from "The Muppets Make Puppets" by Cheryl Henson and the Muppet Workshop, Workman Publishing, New York (1994).



When you ask your child to make puppets from recyclables, relax and let her create for herself. Don't give many directions. Eyes, ears, noses and mouths don't have to be in any order for a child to make a truly wonderful puppet. If your child says that what they have created is a face, then it is a face.

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Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity and the diversity of its work force.

Developed by the Penn State Better Kid Care Program
253 Easterly Parkway, State College, PA 16801 • Phone: 800-452-9108 • Website: betterkidcare.psu.edu.

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Program Director, Lyn Horning, Assistant Director of Programs

Discussion Questions

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever used puppets? Do you feel comfortable using puppets? What would make you feel more comfortable using puppets?
2. Since almost anything can be a puppet, what do you have that you could use as a puppet?
3. Ellen Neches says that puppetry is a form of storytelling with a prop. How can you add props and puppets to stories that you already tell or read to the children?
4. Ellen Neches thinks that children need to hear a story over and over again until they know it very well. Have you ever repeated a story over and over again with children? Do you think that the children become bored with a story repeated time and time again or do you think that children need to hear stories again and again?
5. Unsupervised puppet play, like any other unsupervised play, can be a problem. Children sometimes become aggressive and make the puppets fight and bite. In the video, Ellen Neches says that you must supervise the children closely when they are playing with puppets. What can you do to help the children use the puppets?
6. Can you think of some ways to help children learn to solve real life problems with puppets?
7. Penny Fahlman uses puppets to talk about fears that children are likely to have. Can you think of some other situations that children have strong feelings about that you could talk about using puppets?
8. Mimsie Leyton says that children who are having problems biting can learn something from using a biting puppet. How can you make use of this idea?
9. Sometimes you can avoid a power struggle by using a puppet. Have the puppet tell a child what to do. How can you use a puppet to teach children the rules?
10. Ellen Neches uses puppets to comfort children who are missing their mothers. How could you use this same idea with the children in your care?

Parent Discussion Questions:

1. Did you ever go to a puppet show as a child or put one on yourself?
2. Have you ever used puppets as an adult? Do you feel comfortable using puppets? What would make you feel more comfortable using puppets?
3. Do you have any puppets or anything that you think you could use as a puppet? How could you use it?
4. Ellen Neches says that puppetry is a form of storytelling with a prop. Do you tell stories to your child? Have you ever used a prop or puppet to tell a story to your child?
5. Ellen Neches thinks that children need to hear a story over and over again until they know it very well. Have you ever repeated a story over and over again with children? Do you worry that the children will get bored?
6. Making puppets can be a fun family activity. What ideas do you have for making puppets at home?
7. Most people are surprised to learn that young children can think of solutions to difficult problems like sharing and hitting. What was your reaction to learning that puppets can be used to teach children to think about problems like hitting, pushing, and biting, and not sharing?
8. Can you think of a way that you can help your child to think about problems with sharing or hitting and give your child a chance to come up with his or her own solution to the problem?
9. Sometimes you can use a puppet to avoid behavior problems. Can you think of a time that it might be useful to use a puppet to avoid problems?
10. Using a puppet to avoid behavior problems is an example of using a positive approach to avoid misbehavior. Can you think of some other positive ways to avoid misbehaviors?
11. Ellen Neches uses puppets to comfort children who are feeling sad or worried. Can you think of other situations that a puppet can help a child understand better and to feel comforted?



Assignments

Name
Address
City/State/ZIP
County
Phone Number

BKC OFFICE USE ONLY

1. Anything can be a puppet. Make a list of five things that you already have in your child care that can used as a puppet.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. Ellen Neches believes that puppetry is a form of storytelling with a prop. Write down the name of a story that you tell or read to the children in the space below. Describe how you could use a puppet to tell this story.

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.....

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Name

3. Describe a way you would use puppets to help children change from one activity to another?

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4. One way to help children learn how to get along is to use puppets to act out good things that you see the children doing. These may include sharing toys, getting something for someone else, saying something nice, using words rather than hitting, and helping someone. When you talk about the good things, you are teaching children the behaviors that you want and are showing everyone how to do these things.

- Describe an example of good behavior that involves children getting along together.

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- Explain how you would use puppets to act out the behavior and what the children will learn from this activity.

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.....



Name

Another way to help children learn how to get along is to act out their problems. Problems you might see include trouble with sharing and hitting instead of using words. Ask the children what the puppets can do about the problem. Children learn how to solve these kinds of problems by being asked to think for themselves. This is also an opportunity to teach children the words to use or actions to take to help solve a problem.

- Describe a problem that involves children not getting along together.

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- Explain how you would use puppets to act out the behavior and how you could help the children solve the problem.

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5. Design an activity where children will make puppets.

- What materials will you need?

.....
.....
.....



Name

- What will you say to the children to introduce this activity?

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- What will you have the children do with the puppets?

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.....



Tell Us More About You...

Since we can't meet face to face, we are interested in knowing more about you. This information is very helpful to the early education specialists who review your assignments. Please return this sheet with your assignment pages.

1. Which of the following best describes you?

- I provide child care in my own home
- I provide child care in someone else's home
- I work in a child care center
- I'm thinking about becoming a child care provider
- Other, please describe

2. How long have you been a child care professional? _____

3. What are the ages of the children in your care? Check all that apply.

- Birth to 12 months
- 13-24 months
- 25-36 months
- 3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9 years and over
- Special needs

4. Please feel free to tell us a little about yourself and/or the work you do with children.

5. Other comments (please use the back of this page if necessary).

**Thank you for taking the time to help us make a connection to you
and for being part of our program!**



**Penn State
Better Kid Care Program**

James E. Van Horn, Ph.D., CFLE
Program Director

Lyn Horning
Assistant Program Director

Patricia Wells
Assistant Director Distance Education

Sheila Milnes
Early Childhood Educator

Web site: www.betterkidcare.psu.edu

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