

Caring for Kids



Ready for Group Time

The most successful group times begin with an activity that gets children into the right mood.

A good activity at this time has two important features:

- 1 Get the children moving around
- 2 Calm the children down at the end, so they are ready to pay attention.

A good time to try the 'Letting Go' game is just before circle time. Children pretend to be one of the following:

- a wind-up toy that gradually runs down
- a melting ice cube
- a puppet
- a rag doll
- a tire going flat

To make the activity calming, help the children do the activity slowly by using a quiet voice and doing

the activity along with the children. Allow time for relaxation before you begin your circle time.

For more great ideas like this one ask your Cooperative Extension Agent to borrow the book *Follow Me Too* by Mariane Torbert and Lynne B. Schneider from the County Cooperative Extension Resource Library.



**telephone help line for
child care providers**

Do you have questions about caring for other people's children, such as...

- How do I get children to eat?
- Why won't children share?
- How do I stop a child from biting other children?
- What do I do when a parent doesn't pay in time?
- Where do I call to find out how to become a registered child care provider?

**You're not
alone . . .**

Telephone Help Line

**Call Toll Free
1-800-859-8340**



S N A C K S

Animal Snacks

Deviled-egg Chicks

Hard boiled eggs
Mayonnaise
Mustard
raisins
carrot

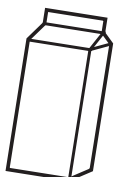
Remove the shells from hard-boiled eggs and cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Scoop the yolk into a small bowl. Mix the egg yolk with mayonnaise and mustard to taste. Fill each egg half with some of the yolk mixture. Add two raisins and a small piece of carrot to make the eyes and a beak.



Monkey Banana Butter

3 small ripe bananas
3/4 cup peanut butter
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon shredded cocoanut
1/2 cup raisins

Mash the bananas with a fork. Mix in the remaining ingredients. Blend well. Serve the mixture on bread, crackers or fruit.



Bird's Nest Salads

grated carrots
chow mein noodles
mayonnaise
grapes or peas

For each serving, mix together 1/2 a grated carrot and 1/4 cup chow mein noodles. Stir in mayonnaise to moisten. Place the mixture on a plate and push the back of a spoon down into the middle to form a "nest." Let the children place grapes or peas in their nests for "eggs."

Hot Dog Octopus

Cut 4 slits two-thirds of the way up each hot dog. Use a toothpick to poke two eyes near the tops of each of the hot dogs. Put the "octopus hot dogs" in a pan of boiling water. As they cook, the arms will curl up and the eyes will pop out.

Crabby Snacks

Explain to the children that crabs grab their food with their pincers when they want to eat. Serve different types of crackers for snack and ask the children to eat like crabs, using their thumbs and index fingers as pincers.

Doggy Bones

Cut slices of bread into bone shapes with a knife or a cookie cutter. Spread the bone shapes with peanut butter and sprinkle with wheat germ.

Popcorn Octopuses

At snacktime give each child a plate with some popcorn, softened cream cheese and shredded white cheese on it. Have the children dip their pieces of popcorn into the cream cheese, then into the shredded cheese. The popcorn pieces will resemble tiny octopuses with shredded cheese arms.

CAUTION: *Be aware that infants and young children can choke easily on some foods, such as seeds, nuts, popcorn, fruit seeds or pits, pieces of hot dogs or bacon, and some raw vegetables, such as carrots and celery. Using grated or finely chopped foods may reduce the risk of choking.*



You're not Alone Telephone Help Line

Here is some information from a recent call to the *You're Not Alone* telephone help line.

Question: How can I make sure that children are eating well in child care?

Answer: It helps to have a clear idea of the division of responsibility in feeding. Both the adults and the children have a role. Adults who care for children are responsible for two things; what is presented to eat and the way it is presented. Child care programs differ in terms of who prepares the food. Sometimes caregivers themselves prepare food for children and in other programs caregivers serve food prepared by others. If you are preparing foods for children your responsibility is to offer children a variety of nutritious food choices. All caregivers decide when and how the food is to be presented to the young children in their care. It is best to feed infants on their own individual schedules and to introduce regular meals

and snacks to toddlers, preschoolers and schoolage children.

Young children, even babies are capable of regulating their food intake and to learn to listen to their own appetite. So, they are responsible for how much and even whether they eat. The most important thing to remember is that the hungry child will eat, so keep doing your job of offering nutritious choices on a schedule appropriate for the ages of the child and you will be doing the best job possible.

As a child care provider, you are definitely NOT alone as you work hard to handle this and other questions on a daily basis. While there are no quick and easy answers, providers have found it helpful to talk about their concerns. Keep the help line number by your phone. Do not hesitate to call 1-800-859-8340.



Tuning into Babies

Even without the ability to speak, babies are good communicators. For instance, every baby has his or her own way of telling us that they are done playing. You might notice that the baby closes his or her eyes, turns his head or looks away from you, or becomes fussy or cranky. Get to know the signs of each of the infants in your care. Talk about this with parents. They enjoy getting to know more about their baby.



Safe & Responsible

Children learn responsibility when they participate in age appropriate clean-up and maintenance activities of outdoor play spaces. Children can gather sticks and papers. With supervision, young children can carefully rake grass and leaves. Over the warm weather months children can regularly wash the outdoor toys, enjoying their own "car washes." Children enjoy these responsibilities and it can help you keep the outdoor play area as safe as possible.

Great Mealtime Conversation

Lunch and snack time are a great time to have wonderful conversations with children. Sit down together with the children and start an interesting conversation today. Some great topics of

conversation:

The food that is being eaten and how it is prepared.

Talk about the flavors of the food: bitter, salty, sweet and sour.

Discuss the textures of the food.

Discuss where the food came from.

Discuss things that the children have already done today.

Discuss things they played with.

Ask them to tell you about what they played.

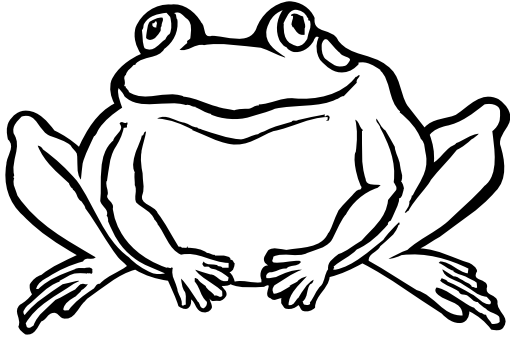
Discuss things that the children will be doing later in the day.

Share things about the family.

Ask children about their brothers and sisters and other relatives.

Make it your goal to get the children to talk to each other. Pleasant conversations makes for pleasant mealtimes.

all about animals



Little Green Frogs

Have the children pretend to be little green frogs crouched down in the grass. Recite the rhyme below and have the children take big “frog hops” every time they hear the word “hop.” When they hear the word “stop,” have them stay crouched down without moving. Repeat the rhyme, changing a different “hop” to “stop.”

*Little green frog, won't you
hop -hop-hop?
Little green frog, won't you
hop-hop-STOP?*

Feather Dusting

Set out feathers and shallow containers of paint. Give each child a large construction paper bird shape. Let the children use the feathers as brushes to paint their birds. The children can also stick their feathers in the wet paint on their papers when they are done.

Horse Color Game

Cut five horse body shapes out of white posterboard. Paint each shape a different color. Paint two spring-type clothespins to match each of the shapes. After the paint has dried, set out the horse body shapes and the clothespin “horse legs.” Have the children clip the matching colored “legs” on each horse body shape.

Crab walk

Ask the children to sit on the floor and lean back on their hands. Have them bend their knees, keeping their feet flat on the floor. Then have them lift their bottoms off the floor and try moving sideways like crabs do. Have them try moving forward and backward also. Sing the following song while the children are practicing their “crab walk.”

Sung to the tune “The Farmer in the Dell”

We're little orange crabs
who live down by the sea,
and wherever we do go
we're quick as quick can be.

We're little orange crabs
who like to run and hide,
and when you see us walking by
it's always side-to-side.

Paper Plate Duck Puppets

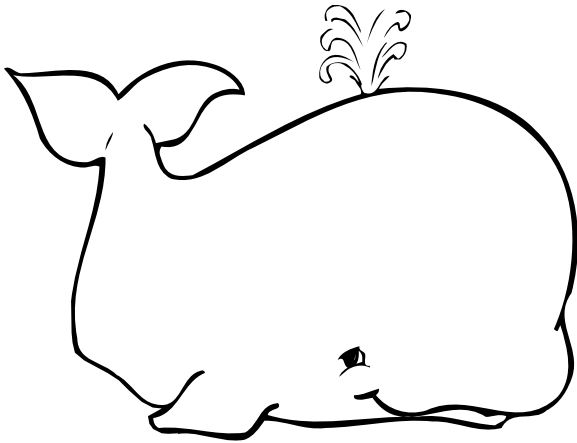
Give the children paper plates and let them decorate the backs of the plates with felt-tip markers and duck bill shapes (cut out of orange construction paper) to make duck faces. Staple half of a paper plate over the front of each whole paper plate to create a pocket. Have the children put their hands in the pockets to make their puppets move.

Feathers or Fur?

Explain to the children that birds have feathers on the outside of their bodies while other animals have fur. Cut out magazine pictures of birds and other animals. Hold up the pictures one at a time and ask the children to tell you if feathers or fur cover the animal. Ask the children what else animals covered with feathers have in common? What else do animals covered with fur have in common?



all about animals



I'm a Great Big Whale

Sung to "I'm a little teacup"

I'm a great big whale,
watch me swim.

Here is my blowhole,
(point to back of head)

Here are my fins.
((wave hands against body))

See me flip my tail as down I go,
(pretend to dive)

Then up I come and WHOOSH!
I blow.

(raise arms above head to form spout)

Lions and Lambs

Use the saying "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb" as a basis for discussing opposites. Older children may understand the meaning behind the saying. Younger children will be more interested in talking about loud lions and quiet lambs. Ask the children to "roar" loudly and "baa" quietly. Ask the children to tell you about times when they must be quiet and times when they can be loud.

Lacing Bear Shapes

Cut brown posterboard into bear shapes and punch holes around the edges. Give each child a bear shape and a piece of colorful yarn with one end taped to make a "needle." Let the children lace the yarn through the holes.

Sheep count

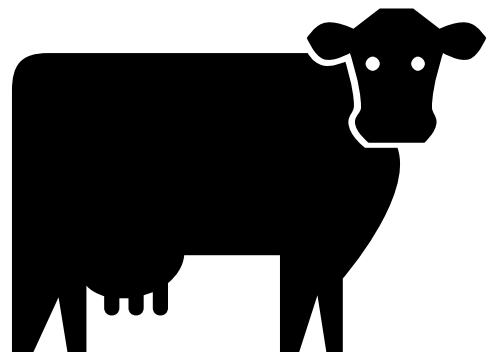
Cut several sheep shapes out of felt. Arrange a piece of yarn in a circle on a flannel board to represent a fence. Place the sheep shapes on the flannel board as you tell the children a story that involves counting. For example, you might begin your story like this: "Two sheep were standing in a field inside a fence. Another sheep came and stood beside them. How many sheep are inside the fence now? Two of the sheep left to find better grass to eat. Now how many sheep are inside the fence?"

Feeding the Dogs

Set out five "dog" dishes (use paper bowls). Number the dishes 1 to 5 by taping numbered pieces of paper to the sides. Set out the bowls and fifteen small bone shapes cut out of brown paper. Let the children take turns identifying the numbers on the dishes and placing the appropriate number of "bones" in each one.

Milking Cows

Let the children experience what it would be like to milk a cow by hand. Put up a clothes line outside about 3 feet off the ground. Fill several disposable plastic gloves with water and poke a very tiny hole in each fingertip. Hang the gloves from the clothesline and place a bucket and a stool under each glove. Have the children sit on the stools. Show them how to squeeze the fingertips of the gloves to make water squirt into the buckets.





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TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Share your special tips on caring for children with other child care providers. Send your ideas to:

Caring for Kids Caregiver Tips
Room 5 Armsby Building
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802

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* Indicates that book can be borrowed from the County Cooperative Extension Resource Library

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Project Director

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