



Playing with Puppets

Puppets are not just for fun!

Puppets are fun for children to play with but did you also know that they can support a child's development?

Puppets can help children pay attention and encourage imaginative play. They are also a great way to help children learn new skills and concepts.

Puppets don't have to be expensive to be fun and help children learn. Homemade puppets can be made out of just about anything and can be simple or complex. There are so many opportunities to use puppets in everyday routines and activities to help children learn and have fun!

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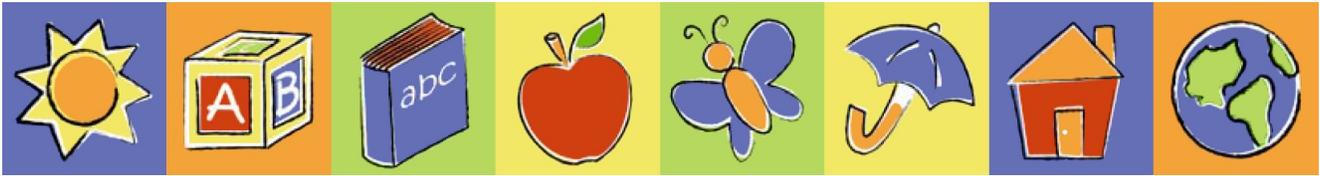
Learning happens with puppets

- » **Social skills:** playing with puppets can help increase communication and social skills by practicing skills when they interact with the puppet. Children can also use the puppets to interact with other children.
- » **Emotional development:** Children can use the puppet to talk about how they are feeling to others or can use the puppet as a friend to talk with.
- » **Confidence in reading and speaking:** Using a puppet can help give children practice in reading as the puppet or speaking as the puppet.
- » **Encouraging creativity:** using the puppets children can invent stories, songs and much more.
- » **Small and Large motor skills:** puppets encourage children to use both small and large motor skills to make and use their puppets.

Where can puppets be used?

Puppets can be used in everyday activities to help children learn and have fun. Here are a few ideas on using puppets:

- » **Reading:** children can make character puppets from their favorite book, practice reading to their puppet or have their puppet tell a story.
- » **Play time:** children can put on puppet shows, use puppets to act out their own stories or play games such as "Simon Says" and "I-Spy" with the puppet as the leader.
- » **Car rides:** puppets are a great way to keep children entertained while riding in the car because they can show the puppet everything they are seeing or use the puppet to sing songs, tell stories or play games.



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Making your own puppets

There are so many different types of puppets but sometimes the best ones are the ones that children make themselves. This allows them to be creative and use their imagination to come up with a puppet on their own. You can make puppets out of just about anything in your house including brown paper bags, sticks, spoons, balls, gloves, socks or mittens.

Here is an easy way to make homemade puppets out of brown paper bags:

What you will need:

- » Paper bags (lunch sized)
- » Glue or tape
- » Crayons or markers
- » Small items to decorate the bag (google eyes, chenille stems, yarn, colorful tape, pom poms, etc.)

What to do:

- » Have the child decide what type of puppet they will make (an animal, a person, an insect, etc.)
- » Show the child how they will use the paper bag as a puppet by inserting your hand into the opening of the bag and using the bottom flap as the face of the puppet. Have the child practice using the puppet.
- » Allow the child to choose how to decorate the puppet using the items that were provided.
- » Once the puppet is done, allow it to dry and then start having fun by having the child use the puppet to tell you a story or sing you a song!

