

Lesson 6

Entertainment

LESSON 6

Activity:

Practice reading, sound, and movement activities

Life Skill Addressed:

Empathy
Nurturing relationships
Communication

Objective:

To teach ways to play with children according to their “Ages and Stages.”
To teach toy safety.

Materials Needed:

Child/ren’s books
Assorted items to make instruments (oatmeal cartons, margarine tubs, plastic lids to fit, aluminum pie plates, paper towel tubes, small stones, plastic eggs, baking powder cans, construction paper or fabric scraps, uncooked macaroni or rice, buttons, rubber bands)
Adhesive or masking tape, scissors, yarn, hole punch
“Age Appropriate Activities” handout (see Appendix pages 156-157) and decks of cards such as Old Maid, Fish, and Crazy Eights

What to Say . . .

Playing with the children they are caring for is very important, not only because it is fun, but also because it helps their brains develop in positive ways. Hands-on activities with blocks, play-dough, puppets, toy cars, jigsaw puzzles, reading with the child/ren, imagining together, coloring, going for a walk, singing, etc. all have an impact on how the child/ren develop emotionally, how they learn and how they function later in life. Tell the teens to play with them on their level, to get on the floor, so they are not always seen as “giants.” They can do exercises like jumping jacks, deep knee bends, etc. Children love being active! Quiet time is also important. Children need to learn how to quiet themselves and prepare for sleep when it is nap or bedtime.

Teens can help the child/ren in their care be more creative by doing art, language, music, and fantasy activities with them. Tell them to be prepared with craft ideas, crayons, glue, play dough, whatever they can think of to keep the child/ren interested. They can also make up “plays” and “pretend” games. Tell them to try dancing, singing, or playing home-made instruments. Tell them it’s “okay” if the child/ren have imaginary friends.

Remind the teens that play **is** a child/ren’s work and that as babysitters, they should play with the child/ren, not just “watch” them. Play activities should not be too hard or too easy. Try books, fingerplays, learning a song, or board games. For young children, the “making” and “doing” are the most important parts of the activity. Tell them not to worry if the project is not finished!

When it comes to language and reading with children, keep in mind that some children have had much more experience with stories and music than others. As a result, it’s not possible to say that one book or song will always be preferred by a three-year-old and another by a five-year-old. However, tell the teens this information may be helpful.

More activities to do with children can be found on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html.

Activity:

Read children's books out loud.

Books and Reading

Children like to look at picture books.

- The pictures should be large, and there should be only one or two pictures on a page. It is good if the pictures are of real objects that the children can recognize (a ball, a cat, a car).
- Young children also like to turn the pages of a book.
- They sometimes like to tell stories that they make up about the pictures. Turning pages and talking are activities that children enjoy and an important part of having a story "read" to them.
- As children grow older, they like longer stories, but still are interested in familiar things: mothers, fathers, grandparent/guardians, aunts, brothers and sisters, animals, playthings, food, etc. They like to imagine parts of the story.
- Children like to see the pictures in a book that is being read. They like to sit in the reader's lap and help hold the book.
- If they are babysitting for more than one child, tell the teens to have the children sit in front of them and to read the story by looking at it sideways.
- Children often like to talk about what is happening in the story. It's a good idea to stop and let them talk about their ideas.
- Tell the teens that listening to what the children have to say is more important than finishing the story.
- Tell the teens to use puppets or props, if possible, to illustrate the story and to use their own voices and gestures to make the story more realistic.
- Raising, lowering and changing the tone of their voices with the different characters helps create the different personalities of the characters and encourages the child/ren to listen.

Telling Stories

Children from one to two years old usually prefer a story that is made up. They especially like a story or song about themselves. It takes only a few simple ideas with actions to make a "story" for them. The story might go something like this: "Juan is a fine boy. He has brown eyes (point to them). He has curly brown hair (point). He likes to eat his cereal. . . ." Dressing, eating, and playing all make good ideas around which to build a story that a very young child enjoys. The story may be spoken, or it may be "sung."



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"Age Appropriate Activity" - See Appendix page 156 & 157 to make copies

Activity:

Make copies of the "Age Appropriate Activity" to distribute, one per teen. Ask for volunteers to read aloud.

Birth to Six Months

- Cuddle
- Sounds - humming, crinkle paper, tinkle of a spoon on a cup/glass
- Faces - eyes are fascinating
- Reading, singing, talking
- Newborns will grasp anything you place in their palms

Six to Twelve Months

- Read
- Sing
- Talk
- Baby-safe mirror
- Pat-A-Cake, Peek-A-Boo, This Little Piggy rhymes
- Repetition: Dropping things
Reaching for things
- Roll ball back and forth
- Hide toy under blanket, let baby find it
- Safe objects to put in and take out of box or basket
- Play with pots, pans, plastic containers

One to Two Years

- Make believe telephones, miniature cars, trucks and dolls
- Simple puzzles, take apart toys, stacking toys
- Tower building blocks (knock down again and again)
- Reading books (probably will request same book over and over again)
- Security blanket or favorite toy goes everywhere with child/ren - especially to bed
- Pick-up time can be a game - tossing toys into basket
- Simple hide and seek games - let him or her find you

Two to Three Years

- Wooden puzzles and play with construction toys
- Enjoys scribbling on paper with crayons or markers; stringing large wooden beads, shaping playdough and making paper chains
- Pegboards and other matching toys
- Fascinated by puppets/puppet shows - let them take part
- Make music with rhythm instruments
- Outdoors - sandbox, water play with plastic cups for measuring and pouring
- Quiet time - finger games, counting songs
- Reading time - will point to pictures and talk about story

Three to Four Years

- Role play “house,” “store,” and/or “school”
- Clay, crayons, coloring books, finger paints, chalk and chalkboards, safety scissors (which can cut hair and clothes as well). Supervise child/ren closely if using scissors. Never leave a child alone when using scissors!
- Simple games, i.e., “Lotto,” “Candyland,” “Simon Says,” “Statues”
- Short attention span during reading or television watching, but often returns after a few minutes
- Take a walk outdoors - collect leaves, pine cones, or stones
- Have child/ren lie down on big piece of wrapping paper and draw outline of body. Watch or help the child/ren draw face, hair, clothes
- Make a fort out of blankets stretched across two or three chairs. Make a bus out of a line of chairs and let the child/ren be the driver
- Simple dice games

Four to Five Years

- All indoor activities and crafts that three-year-olds like are still popular. (They can do them better. Still expect messiness)
- Interested in letters and numbers and likes to play word and math games
- Quiet game to stimulate imagination: for example, “If you could have one wish, what would it be?” “What would happen if it came true?”
- Active play outdoors - hopscotch, hide and seek, tricycle riding and timed runs around the house
- Make hats and masks for dress-up from large paper bags. Cut holes for eyes and mouth and help child/ren color masks
- Do simple calisthenics (just bending, stretching, and reaching are fine) or dance when indoors
- Look through family album with the child/ren and let them point out pictures of friends and family members
- Tape is also a fun item for this age group to use in a variety of ways

Five to Seven Years

- You may spend less time entertaining this age child
- Outdoors they’re active - jump rope, running games, riding bikes. They may be happy to have you join them or prefer to play alone or with friends
- They like to read to you or with you - usually they love riddles
- Playing with dolls, playing dress-up, manipulative toys, and construction materials will keep them busy for hours
- They will enjoy playing board games. They want to WIN! (so be prepared for some made up rules and cheating)
- Make up a silly song with the child/ren. You start a sentence, let them finish it

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Activity: Practice fingerplay

Singing and Dancing

Tell the teens that children like to sing and dance!

Preschool children like songs with actions. They usually like to play "Farmer in the Dell," "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush," and "Duck, Duck, Goose." By five or six, children like singing games with more complicated actions such as "In and Out the Window."

When child/ren are four, five, or six years old, they start to like to "just listen" to music. An optional activity would be for the teens to make a list of children's song that they might sing with the child/ren while babysitting.



"Quiet Cats"

We are little kitty cats (use hands, crawl, or tip-toe)

Walking round and round

We have cushions on our feet

(whisper) And never make a sound

"I'm a Little Teapot"

I'm a little teapot, short and stout

Here is my handle, here is my spout

When I get all steamed up, hear me shout

"Tip me over and pour me out!"

"Taller, Smaller"

When I stretch up, I feel so tall

When I bend down, I feel so small

Taller, taller, taller, taller

Smaller, smaller, smaller, smaller

Into a tiny ball

"The Apple Tree"

Way up high in the apple tree (point up high)

Two little apples smiling at me (make two circles with hands)

I shook that tree as hard as I could (wrap hands around "trunk" and shake)

Down came the apples and (two circle hands come down)

Mmmm, they were good! (rub tummy)

"Home Sweet Home"

A nest is a home for a robin (cup hands to form a nest)

A hive is a home for a bee (turn cupped hands over)

A hole is a home for a rabbit (make a hole with hands)

And a house is a home for me (make roof with peaked hands).

Drums

Tape the top securely on an oatmeal box or a margarine container.

Drumsticks can be your hands, spoons, pencils, dowels, or sticks.

You may want to wrap one end of the dowel or stick with cloth, or tie cotton on it to make a different sound. This also makes it safer to use.

"The Itsy Bitsy Spider"

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the waterspout

Down came the rain and washed the spider out

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain

And the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again

Activity:

Building musical instruments

Shakers

(for older child/ren)

Bring your own plastic eggs, baking powder cans, potato chip cans, oatmeal boxes, or boxes with lids.

Experiment with different sounds by putting macaroni, rice, buttons, stones, etc., in them. Glue together securely. Please note: these are to be made before you babysit, not during the time due to the small items to be used. Young children like to put things in their mouths, so be sure they cannot get to the contents of the shaker or undo the lid.

Glue paper plates together with something that rattles inside. Use fairly large objects, and place the staples very close together. Cover the staples with masking tape to prevent sharp points from injuring the child/ren. Or lace the edges with yarn after holes are punched.

Kazoos & Horns

Fasten a square of wax paper to a toilet paper or paper towel tube with a rubber band or tape. Hum into the open end with your mouth open a little. This may take a little practice. A different sound is made if you make three holes in the tube with a hole punch or pointed object such as a sharpened pencil. Blow across the mouths of different sized empty plastic bottles. Different sizes give different tones.

Activity:

Joke and riddle activity

What to Say . . .

Young children are developing their sense of humor, which goes along with all of the other ways they are developing and understanding the world. For example, a three-year-old may laugh when you put a hat on your knee or elbow. They are learning where hats are to be worn and anything different from where they belong can be pretty funny. Many five-year-olds like to hear knock-knock jokes because they can participate in saying, "Who's there?"

The jokes have to be very easy to understand for the children to think it is funny. Look for websites or books with jokes for specific age groups. Make sure these are clean, socially responsible jokes to tell to young children.

Older children will enjoy riddles. Give hints to help them solve the puzzle.

What to Do ...

Have teens look up two jokes and two riddles that would be appropriate for two different age groups. Try them out in pairs or small groups. If the jokes and riddles are appropriate, write them down on index cards and keep them in the babysitter bag for when you need to lighten the mood.



LESSON 6

Activity:

Toy “Show and Tell”

Life Skill Addressed:

Concern for others

Safety

Materials Needed:

A wide variety of toys, games, etc. in various stages of disrepair

Cardboard paper towel tubes

What to Say . . .

Tell the teens that infants need bright-colored toys of many textures, but because they put everything in their mouths, toys should be washable, non-breakable, and have no sharp edges that might cut or scratch. Toys should be large enough so they cannot be swallowed and they should have no small attached pieces (such as eyes on a stuffed animal or bells on a rattle) that could be pulled off and swallowed. Infants like to look at, feel, chew on, hold, and drop toys. Good toys for infants include: rattles, squeak toys, blocks, crib mobiles, stacking toys and rings, push-pull toys, stuffed animals or dolls without detachable parts, nested boxes or cups, books with rhymes, simple picture books, safe noisemaking toys, small soft toys, and short string of beads (large, plastic).

Tell them toddlers are active and enjoy climbing, running, and jumping. They need toys to meet these needs. They also are interested in doing things with their hands as the small muscles in their fingers become more developed. However, toys for this age group should be simple and require little coordination.

During this period, toddlers become interested in playing with others and in imitating grown-up activities. Dress-up clothes are perfect! Toddlers also are interested in getting their hands into things such as paint, play dough, crayons, and chalk. They like to scribble and mix colors. Use non-toxic paint, crayons, etc. Talk to children about their creations. Say, “Tell me about your picture,” rather than “What is it?” Toddlers still put toys in their mouths, so you will need to watch for objects with small parts. Be on the lookout for items such as paint and chalk that toddlers may try to eat. Toys should be sturdy and should not have sharp edges or points.

Preschoolers enjoy movement, too. So tell the teens to have the children march as they say “right” and “left,” hop on one foot, jump high/low on one foot, then two feet, walk like animals (duck, elephant, snake, kangaroo, rabbit, crab, etc.), walk forward, backward and sideways, walk on tip-toes, and dance to music.

What to Do . . .

To demonstrate toy safety and selection, spread out several toys on a table or on the floor. Tell the teens to each select one item and evaluate it for safety and age appropriateness using the “Toy Safety Checklist.” Tell them to put small toys or parts of toys into a cardboard paper towel tube. This is a visual, hands-on way for checking on toy size. Pieces that fit into it easily are too small for infants and toddlers. Stress that even older children have to be watched at all times! Suggest that they keep cardboard tubes in their Babysitter Magic Bag. Other items to be on the lookout for are toys with long strings or cords, toys that shoot things, and toys with “toxic” on the label. Balloons and plastic bags are not to be used as toys because a child could inhale a piece of plastic and suffocate.

If there is time, keep the selection and discussion process going until all the toys are evaluated. Ask, “What did you learn about toys?” “How will you use this information in the future?” If teens have been working on “Babysitter Magic Bags,” this could be a good time to bring them in and discuss any entertainment items they have in their magic bag.

Toys

Tell the teens that the best toys are those that are fun for the child/ren, and will do one or more of these:

- Increase their skills
- Help them learn about their world
- Let them express themselves
- Encourage creativity
- Help them learn how to concentrate

The teens also need to choose toys

- For ACTIVE PLAY: Push and pull toys, wheel toys, sport items
- For QUIET PLAY: Building blocks, construction toys, dolls
- For SHARING PLAY: Board and noncompetitive games
- For SOLITARY PLAY: Arts, crafts, finger paints, modeling clay, puzzles and books

Tell the teens

- To check the age recommendations on the packaging of the game or toy (such as not intended for children under three years)
- To watch and learn what fascinates the child/ren and to choose items accordingly
- To allow projectile toys to be used only by responsible children over eight years of age and only with supervision
- To be careful and thoughtful in their selections

If they find any damaged toys, tell them to take the toys away from the child/ren. Show the damaged toys to the parent/guardians when they get home.

Be sure to reinforce the fact that as babysitters, they must play with the child/ren. It is not enough to sit and watch the child/ren play!

Tell the teens to inspect all toys before they let the child/ren play with them.

Look for:

- Sharp points, jagged edges, or rough surfaces
- Small detachable parts that may be swallowed or could lodge in the windpipe, nostrils or ears
- Glass that could break and leave sharp cutting edges
- Sharp spikes or pins that become exposed if someone pulls the toy apart
- Long cords or strings
- Squeakers, or other noise makers, that are not securely attached to the toy and could be removed and swallowed
- Caps, guns, and other toys that produce a very loud noise that could impair hearing
- Nuts, bolts, and clamps that are not tightly secured
- Outdoor play equipment that are not on a level surface or anchored properly
- Items with missing parts or pieces
- Poorly constructed dolls and animals stuffed with small pellets that will fall out when the seams are opened

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Toy Safety Checklist - See appendix page 158 to make copies

Toy Safety Checklist

1. Circle appropriate age group infant toddler pre-schooler school-ager

2. What kind of toy did you choose? _____

3. Does it have sharp edges? No Yes

4. Could that be harmful? No Yes

Explain how _____

5. Does it have small pieces that could break off? Eyes? No Yes

6. Could that be harmful? No Yes

Explain how _____

7. Could the toy fit easily into the child/ren's mouth No Yes

8. Could that be harmful? No Yes

Explain how _____

9. Does it make really loud noises? No Yes

10. Could that be harmful? No Yes

Explain how _____

