

RABBIT MIRRORS

The purpose of this activity is to help children realize that, just like them, rabbits react to their environment by modifying their behaviour and movements.

Instructions

1. Ask children to share how they would react to various situations. For example, how would they behave if they were afraid? Would they ask their parents to pick them up? Would they hide? Explain that like us, rabbits also react to their environment. When observing a rabbit, we can tell by its behaviour if it is afraid, curious or even hungry. With the children, go over a rabbit's response to various stimuli. For example, if a rabbit is angry, it will stamp its feet. Other responses might be the following:
 - fear — remains perfectly still
 - fear — flattens ears back on its head
 - fear — hops away
 - curiosity — wrinkles and wiggles nose
 - listening — ears stand straight up and move to and fro
2. Group children in pairs. In each pair, have one child play a rabbit, the other a mirror. Each "rabbit" is to move in any way a rabbit might, as long as they stay in one spot, and each "mirror" is to copy the rabbit's movements as closely as possible. Rabbits and mirrors then switch roles.

Suggestion

To simplify this game, you can play the role of the rabbit and have all the children mirror your actions.

HIPPITY HOP

This is a fun and active game for children. It develops their concentration, teamwork, and listening skills.

Instructions

Have children sit in a circle. Divide them into two groups — the rabbits and the hares. When you call out "rabbits," all of the children who are rabbits will stand up, hop three times, and then sit back down. When you call out "hares," those children do the same. To challenge the children's concentration skills, call out the groups randomly instead of alternately.

Suggestion

To add more challenge, add other hopping animals such as frogs, grasshoppers, or kangaroos.



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MODELING CLAY FARM

The purpose of this activity is to help children improve their fine motor skills while they learn about the needs of farm animals.

Instructions

1. Ask children about farm animals. Which animals live on a farm. Where do those animals live? What do they eat? Explain that farm animals need food and water to be healthy. They also need a place to live that protects them from the rain, the cold and keeps them safe.
2. Tell children that together, they are going to make a farm out of modeling clay.
3. Let each child pick a farm animal of their choice. Cows, pigs, chickens, horses, ponies, donkeys, sheep, goats, honeybees, ducks, geese, turkeys, rabbits, dogs, cats, pheasants, quails and even elks, caribous, wild boars, buffalos, fishes (salmon and trout), ostriches and emus are all animals raised on Canadian farms.
4. Organize work stations where children have access to various colours of modeling clay. If you wish, you can add other building material such as popsicle sticks.
5. Ask children to use the clay to shape the farm animal of their choice, its shelter and the food it likes to eat (to the best of their knowledge). Children can work together to build a barn and/or make hay bales. They can build trees, fences, ponds or any structure they believe is part of a farm (tractors, scarecrow, gardens, flowers, houses, etc.)
6. Display the creations so that parents can see the work their children have done as a group.



FARM PLAY

Pretend play is important for a child's development. This fun game allows children to use their imagination and pretend they are their favourite farm animal, or perhaps even their favourite farmer.

Instructions

1. Ask children about farm animals. Which animals live on a farm. Which one do they like best?
2. Explain that you are going to play a farm animal game together. For the duration of the game, you, the educator/parent will pretend to be a farmer. The children get to pretend that they are their favourite farm animal.
3. Before you start the game, go over the behaviour of farm animals with the children. Ask each child how he or she will behave as a farm animal. This may allow you to avoid inappropriate behaviours such as a bull running into you or a dog biting. You may need to give them a few tips (i.e. a chicken says cluck, cluck, cluck and scratches the ground with its feet to look for seeds and worms).
4. Start playing the game. Go around and care for the animals by feeding them, bringing them to their pen or cage, petting them on the head, collecting the eggs, etc...
5. After the game, ask children if they liked pretending to be farm animals? What part did they like best?
6. Read a storybook about farm animals. Ask the children about the story. How does the farmer care for the animals? What are the animals' shelters like? What do farm animals eat? What sound do they make? Are they kept alone or with other farm animals?

Book suggestions:

Farmyard Tales, by Heather Amery and Steven Cartwright (published by Usborne)
The Grumpy Morning, by Pamela Duncan Edwards
What if? by A.H. Benjamin and Jane Chapman
Old Macdonald Had a Farm, by Pam Adams
Little Blue Truck, by Alice Schertie
Oink! Moo! How Do You Do? by Grace Maccarone
Barnyard Banter, by Denise Fleming
Farmer Joe Goes to Town, by Nancy Wilcox Richards
I Went to the Farm, by Ruth Miller



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