

# Upper Hudson Library System & Mohawk Valley Library System

## “Management and Activity Ideas for Story Times”

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There are three things that impact the sensory system and keep us all calm and attentive.

Deep Pressure, movement, and muscle work

It's why we all like massages, rocking chairs and hammocks, and feel good after some exercise.....

In my world, when we have a child with sensory integration issues, we incorporate these three things into all activities....but they work for everybody!!

When you add the fourth...FUN....the magic happens.

### **Some basic behavior management techniques**

Fidget box full of manipulatives that children can hold during structured times like circle:

Rubber Bands

Koosh Balls

Rubber Gloves filled with beans, sand, toothpaste, etc.

Squishy balls (stress balls)

Hand Lotion to squirt on children's hands

Massagers

Bean Bags

Rice Bag for lap

Have spots/sensory things for children to sit upon during structured time. Gear these “circle spots” to your story, unit etc. (spiders, fish, clouds etc.) Box seats are a wonderful thing to have on hand. Even children’s rocking chairs

Create activities that are so reinforcing, so unique, and so fun, that even the most behaviorally challenged child in your group will sit on his or her hands just to take a turn. Don’t be afraid to be a bit silly, it is the one thing that will hold the attention of nearly any child.

Reinforce the children with subtle cues, such as: “I love how all my friends are sitting and ready” “I am going to close my eyes and I hope all my friends are sitting on their spots ready to go....”

The “Switcharoo” game – great way to start and manage circle  
The attendance calling game...”Molly are you here?.....Molly?....Molly, if you are here, stand up and clap your hands”.....There you are! A great way to capture their attention, and begin to have them follow simple directions.

Use music as often as possible! Sing everything! Do silly versions of old songs and capture their attention.

Use sensory movement before and when taking a turn.  
Think of new ways to take turns, or sitting at circle. Have them lay on their stomachs for a change, be creative. Crab walk, hop like a bunny....

Walk around when you read, even behind them ...

Incorporate that challenging child into your activity as often as possible...

Fluctuate your voice.....even whisper

The following are activities that can be tied into books and have either Movement, deep pressure, muscle work, incorporate behavior management techniques ...sometimes all four and are all FUN!!!!

### **Spiders:**

Contact paper sticky side up for circle spots

Contact paper sticky side up, rolled out in a long line for friends to try to walk across with their socks

Contact paper sticky side out, hung on wall. Each friend takes turns choosing something to throw at to see if it sticks.

Ball of black yarn, tossed around the circle friend to friend so as to create a spider web.

Contact paper sticky side up on a table with cotton balls, cue tips, etc.

### **Jan Brett – The Mitten, The Hat etc.**

Miss Brett has a wonderful website where you can print out masks for reenacting the story.

Read one of the stories, take two adult sleeping bags and zip them together, have friends who are wearing masks, go into the “Mitten” just like in the story. Count how many friends you can put in.

## **Dr. Seuss**

Have a Wacky Wednesday party. – rearrange the space, where mismatched clothing, different shoes, tape shoes on the walls, put pony tails on the top of your head, the list goes on and on.....then read the story.

Read Green Eggs and Ham and then Eat Green Eggs and Ham. – behavior management technique of incorporating that challenging child into your activity as much as possible.

## **Dinosaurs**

Tissue box dino feet! Read a dino story, make the feet and then go walking

“One little, two little, three little dinosaurs, five little, six little, seven little dinosaurs, eight little, nine little, 10 little dinosaurs all walking the earth/all stomping around/...all sitting down”  
(great way to end any song)

Let's be a paleontologist – use those cardboard boxes you can get at the garden center, and bury some rawhide dog bones in some dirt. Then give them paint brushes to find the bones. Add a little water to make mud and it becomes harder.

## **Weather**

Make some wind by using different things like poster board, paper fan, blow through a straw, even an electric fan/blow dryer. Have fun blowing back some hair! Then have a variety of items of all different shapes, sizes and weight. Each child takes a turn seeing and predicting if that item will move from the wind. You can even chart the results – great math activity!

Cloud races - have children use a straw to blow a cotton ball across a table, or floor

Eric Carle - The Littlest Cloud – have paper with the various things the cloud turns into (sheep, tree, shark) and have them dip cotton balls into glue and fill in the drawn picture.

Throw clouds – hang paper or old shower curtain on a wall, preferably blue (it is the sky course) have a small Tupperware of water and a roll of toilet paper or tissue. Each friend takes a turn to take some paper or tissue, wad it up, dip in water and throw at the wall.....it sticks!

Mother Earth Story –pay attention.

Muddy Feet Book/Snowy Boots Book – have friends walk on paper with bare feet dipped in brown or white paint. Have another adult at the end with a Tupperware of soapy water to wash.

## **Our Bodies**

Paper chop game.....use news paper or any other paper type magazine like GVPM. Have friends come up and take turns chopping through the paper, with hands, feet, head, elbow, bottom etc. They love this one!

Read a story about healthy foods, vegetables, etc. then have the kids choose from a variety of veggies (broccoli, carrots with tops on, halved potatoes, etc.) and paint pictures using the veggies as brushes.

Johnny Jump Up!....or Johnny Sit Down!

## **Space**

Let's write and draw upside down like astronauts! Have friends lay under a table with paper taped to the underside, start drawing and writing like astronauts.

Hang some string between two tables, chairs etc. Tape pieces of paper to them and let them hang down. Friends use markers to draw and write, but may not hold the paper with the other hand – simulates writing in space.

Balloon Rocket – Place a plastic drinking straw on some string, then tie the string between two points in the room. Blow up a balloon, but do not tie it off. While pinching the balloon closed, carefully tape it under the straw.....3,2,1 blast off! The balloon will rocket across the string.

## **Sound**

This is a great auditory discrimination game and can be paired with nearly any book, such as farm animals, life sounds, St. Patrick's Day etc.

Get a small recording device, and tape five minutes of “here I am, I am over here, come find me, what is wrong with you, why can't you see me, look up, look down etc etc. Have friends cover their eyes and put their heads down and go hide the device. Have them search alone, or use their words to ask a friend. You can mimic the voice of any character you are reading about as well!

Record every life sound you can think of: doorbell, faucet, dog, cat, car horn, car starting, toilet flushing, shower or tub running, a bell, a clap, etc, etc. Have matching pictures for each of the sounds placed out on the floor. Play a sound and have friends pick the matching picture.

Get a large four or five foot piece of surgical tubing or use an old vacuum hose. Have friends hold one end to their ear while you barely whisper directions to them. For example, you read a book about farm animals, each friend puts the hose to their ear and you ask them to make a certain sound, complete an action etc. They love this one. Have them do social things as well like "find a friend wearing blue and shake their hand"

Whisper your entire activity.....they have to be quiet to hear!!!!

Quiet Time....massage ball and soft music

## **Ocean**

Read any book about the ocean and then have the kids make their own aquariums. Take a zip lock baggie and fill with blue gel toothpaste, then tape the top shut. Have the kids decorate the outside of the baggie with fish stickers! They then "mush" the gel around with their fingers!

## **Construction**

Blocks of Styrofoam, golf tees, plastic hammers.....stand back and watch

You can substitute pumpkins and watermelons during the season instead of Styrofoam.

## **Movement**

Pull them across the circle on the “magic blanket”

Musical Hula Hoops

## **Emotions**

Use a blanket or towel to hide your face, and then let them guess

## **Tactile Discrimination**

Pockets, Pockets, Pockets - apron with lots of pockets, have items from a story you read in the pockets – have children take turns reaching in and guessing what it is.

## **Ice Play**

Cubes, blocks, melting, hockey and more

**Have Fun, be animated and engage!!**