

Big Brown Bear

Song Bag Song

Big Brown Bear is a circle game suitable for up to ten children, and can be played anywhere at any time.

The main benefits of the song are connected to speech and language development, but there are many more besides, including sequence learning and PSED benefits, such as eye contact, sharing, turn-taking and waiting.

Armed with only a drawstring bag and a few soft toys, song bag songs are a great way of encouraging even the most resistant child into sociable group exercises; they are often enticed by possibilities of what is inside and will enjoy using creative thought and imagination to guess, which will also challenge their vocabulary. It is a great way to practise and encourage activities that promote sharing, turn taking and choice making.

Areas of learning & development

Communication and language:

- Speaking
- Understanding

Preparation for literacy:

- Reading

Resources

1. A drawstring bag
2. A brown teddy bear
3. A few toy animals chosen for their alliterative potential, for example pink pig, big bug etc.

Song words

Big brown bear

Sitting on a chair

You 1 it, you 2 it

You 3 it, you 4 it

You 5 it, you 6 it

You 7 it, you 8 it!

Audio: 3-1 Big Brown Bear
Full song

How to...

1. Introduce song bag to the group and pull out the Big Brown Bear.
2. Teach the group the first line of the song, "Big Brown Bear Sitting on a chair".
3. When they have this, practice passing the bear round the circle to a beat clap.

Audio: 3-2 Big Brown Bear
Steady beat

4. Teach the second section of the song, "You 1 it" etc.
5. Pass the bear round the circle again, this time passing it every time another number is sung.
6. On the line "You 8 it!" whoever is holding the bear at the time throws it across the circle to a friend, and the game starts again.

Extension & development

1. This song provides great scope for explaining and practising rhyming and alliteration, so once the children know the song and enjoy it, point out that bear and chair rhyme and ask the group if there are any other words that rhyme with bear. If they get stuck, offer some examples.
2. Remind the group of the basic principle of alliteration by repeatedly saying the first letter of bear. Practise saying it high/low/fast/slow, with the children joining in.

Audio: 3-3 Big Brown Bear
Alliteration

3. Pick another animal (e.g. a pig) and repeat the game again, then encourage them to think of words starting with the first letter of the animal (e.g. pink, pretty, etc).

Audio: 3-4 Big Brown Bear
Additional verse

4. Re-introduce the rhyming section. Having done this for Bear, they will be familiar with the concept by now. Over time, the children will be able to create a new verse for every animal that comes out of the bag.

Learning outcomes

Communication and language: Understanding

Early learning goals

1. Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
2. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Activity contribution to goals

The activity requires an understanding of several stages and sequences.

The song requires an understanding of rhyming and alliteration in order to work.

Communication and language: Speaking

Early learning goals

1. Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.
2. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.
3. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Activity contribution to goals

Children practise vocabulary, alliterations and rhyming words.

Children are asked to suggest vocabulary to put into the story.

Preparation for literacy: Reading

Early learning goals

1. Children read and understand simple sentences.
2. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words.
3. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

Activity contribution to goals

Children get the opportunity to pre-empt the lyrics as they follow a repetitive structure.

The activity requires an understanding of several stages and sequences.