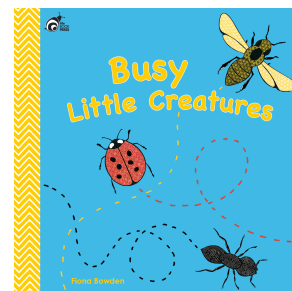


# LEARNING TIME

## Busy Little Creatures

By Fiona Bowden and Raising Literacy Australia

*This is an engaging book full of busy little creatures sure to delight and fascinate both children and adults. A fun way to explore movement, colours, patterns, sizes and numbers whilst supporting your child's learning and encouraging outdoor play and adventure.*



### Key Message for Parents | Children are born ready to use and learn mathematics

Support parents/carers understanding of how they can help babies and toddlers develop their natural mathematical abilities. Some ideas to share with parents/carers are:

- Everyday experiences allow children to explore mathematical concepts. These experiences like getting dressed, eating, cooking, discovering bugs in the garden and even sorting the washing provide opportunities to play together; counting, sorting, naming colours, shape and talking about patterns all around us
- Sing nursery rhymes that have numbers, counting and lots of repetition such as 'Round and Round the Garden', 'Hickory Dickory Dock', 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' and '5 Little Ducks'.
- Read number books that are illustrated with familiar objects and bold numbers to enhance vocabulary
- Many picture books also explore number within a story for example, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.

### Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

We can help young children to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment by:

- Using play to investigate and explore new ideas
- Allowing time in the day for play, song and stories
- Developing an awareness of the impact of human activity on the environment and the interdependence of living things

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## Welcome

Ask parents/carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

## Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

### Good Morning

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning everybody*

*and welcome to you!*



## Song

### Yellow Butterfly

(tune: Frère Jacques)

*Yellow butterfly, yellow butterfly*

*Spread your wings, spread your wings*

*Fly around the garden, Fly around the garden*

*We're watching, we're watching!*



### Sing Tip:

Sing more verses using other colours, **orange**, **purple**, **violet**, **scarlett**.

Two syllable words work best with the tune of this song!

## Before Reading

When you first open the book point out all the beautiful insects on the endpapers (the endpapers are the inside front cover, first page and inside back cover and last page).

Spend time chatting about the different insects, asking children about their experiences.

Talk about the different parts of the insects, point out wings, antennae, abdomen, and thorax. Follow the child's lead and their interest, chat for a long as the interest is there – don't rush.

### During Reading

When you are reading, hold up the corresponding number of fingers to match the insects on each page.

Talk about the colour of each insect and see if you can match that colour to clothing, toys or other objects close by. Count out loud the insects on each page, encouraging the children to join in. You could discuss size, and look at 'big' and 'little' – counting just the 'big' insect and then the 'little' insects.

**TIP:** Children need many opportunities to hear and practise counting.

Touching objects as you count them helps children understand that numbers represent quantities.

This is called one-to-one correspondence and is an important mathematical skill.

### After Reading

This book has some rich, unusual vocabulary that describes each insect. Some children may not have heard these words before. One of the many benefits of books is the way new language can be introduced in a fun, enjoyable way where discussions can be had about meanings. A rich vocabulary in turn builds strong reading and writing skills later at school.

Have some fun describing each insect and then get up and move! Can you **leap** like a grasshopper, or **flutter** like a butterfly, or **march** like an ant? Getting up and moving is really important as when young children are doing, moving, acting, and interacting it changes the way the brain works and can accelerate the learning process.

### Song

*One little, two little, three little ants,  
Four little, five little, six little ants,  
Seven little, eight little, nine little ants,  
Ten little marching ants.*

*Ten little, nine little, eight little ants,  
Seven little, six little, five little ants,  
Four little, three little, two little ants,  
One little marching ant.*

### Additional verses:

Ten little **wagging** bees,  
Ten little **crawling** beetles,  
Ten little **scurrying** slaters or  
Ten little **speedy** flies

### Action Tip:

Move about while singing to practise different actions such as,

- marching,
- wagging,
- crawling,
- scurrying, and
- speeding.

Alternatively sit and use hands to count up from 1 to 10 and back down again.



## Activity Time

### Cloud Dough Play

#### What you need:

- 1 cup of baby oil
- 8 cups of flour
- Tray/s
- Plastic insects or print and laminate pictures of the insects from this book (see template at the end of this Learning time)



#### What to do:

- Simply add the baby oil to 8 cups of flour.
- Stir well and place in a tray/s. (You can add brown powdered paint to make it look like dirt or add glitter, different spices or essential oils if you want more sensory awareness. If you're dealing with small children though, just make sure they don't get any in their mouths. Baby oil and flour isn't dangerous, but paint and glitter added into the mix may not be any fun.)
- Hide the insects in the cloud dough.
- Encourage discussions about what they've found as the insects are discovered in the cloud dough.

**TIP:** If you have access to the outdoors, you could use mud in trays instead of cloud dough.

#### Extension Ideas

- Go on an insect hunt in their gardens or at the park. Take time to safely look for bugs and insects in the garden. If you have a magnifying glass look closely at flowers and leaves – notice the patterns, what can you see?
- Take photos of what they find and later spend time talking about their found objects. Talk about different shapes and patterns that you can see. Try to draw or recreate what you have found. Be mindful that simply talking about an object and seeing and touching it may be enough for some children.
- Collect fallen leaves and do some crayon rubbings. Place a blank sheet of paper over the leaves and rub a crayon over the leaf to create a print.



### STEM Focus

It is essential for young children to participate in activities that are meaningful and relevant within the context of their current lives – this includes mathematical ideas and concepts. Research shows that young children’s thinking is surprisingly sophisticated. Young children can use a wide range of reasoning processes that form the underpinnings of scientific thinking.

When given the time to freely explore and engage in discussions with caring adults, children raise many questions which involve both mathematical and scientific thinking. Encourage ‘I wonder why ....’ type questions. Young children are curious about their world. Identifying problems and finding solutions are an integral part of PLAY.

### Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. The Little Big Book Club suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- **Spot Can Count** by Eric Hill
- **Grug 1 2 3** by Ted Prior
- **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** by Eric Carle
- **Mad About Minibeasts** by Giles Andreae and David Wojtowyc
- **Small, Smaller, Smallest** by Corina Fletcher and Natalie Marshall

An Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

### Goodbye Song

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child’s name in the place of ‘you’ as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush) or your preferred choice.

### Goodbye

*This is the way we say goodbye (use a waving action) Say goodbye, say goodbye*

*This is the way we say goodbye*

*To all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!*





## Activity Time

Sensory element for cloud dough.

### What to do:

- Print Insects onto card or paper
- Cut out around dotted line
- If printed on paper you might like to laminate each disc
- Add to sensory cloud dough mix

