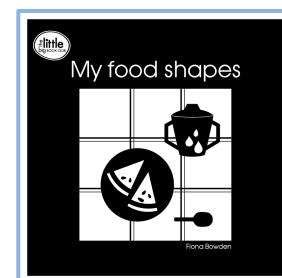


LEARNING TIME

My Food Shapes

By Fiona Bowden and Raising Literacy Australia

A high contrast black and white board book specifically designed to help babies focus on simple shapes and every day images. This book is suitable for children from birth to 2 years of age and is a great way for families to introduce every day shapes and every day foods. Oval - an egg, semi-circle - a slice of watermelon, rectangle or a loaf of bread.



Researchers have repeatedly shown that newborns prefer to look at black and white geometric shapes, rather than bright colours or pastels and are more likely to engage in the experience for longer periods of time.

Key Message for Parents | Children Are Born Ready To Learn

It is important to support parents' understanding of how they can help babies develop their natural ability to learn. Some ideas to share with parents are:

- Babies' brains are a work in progress and it is the early experiences (both positive and negative) that impacts on how they develop.
- A baby is born with most of its neurons formed; however they are not yet connected and positive experiences are required to form and reinforce connections.
- Positive experiences are nurturing, warm, consistent and predictable.

Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities. This process starts from birth and through effective and thoughtful planning, we can help babies to develop a strong sense of identity by:

- Providing open ended play activities which foster curiosity and engagement
- Allowing time in the day for talk, play, song and stories
- Providing a safe environment where they can explore their world through their senses

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Welcome

Ask 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!

Songs

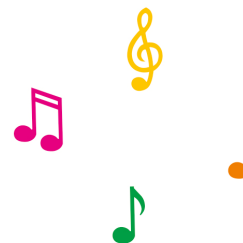
Little Miss Muffet

You could have a doll on your lap as *Little Miss Muffet* with a bowl and spoon and a pipe cleaner spider (from Extension Ideas) and act out the nursery rhyme as you sing.

Mem Fox says that children who know eight nursery rhymes by the time they are four years old, will be better readers by the time they're eight years old. It is the exposure to rhyming words and games that helps build a child's phonological awareness, and through that, his or her pre-reading skills.

*Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet
Eating her curds and whey,
Along came a spider, who sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away!*

*Little Miss Muffet came back to her tuffet,
To finish her curds and whey,
And back came the spider, who sat down beside her
And gave her a lovely bouquet!*



Five Little Apples

Five little apples, hanging in the tree

(hold 5 fingers up high in the air)

Five little apples, looking down at me

I shook that tree as hard as I could

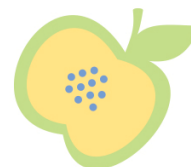
(wrap your arms around your body and gently shake from side to side)

Down came an apple,

(hold up 1 finger and float it down towards the ground)

mmmm it was good!

(rub your tummy and smile!)



Repeat for 4, 3, 2, 1 apples.

Before Reading

Establish a routine within your sessions, this will allow parents to become familiar the format of group time and will help you to build a rapport with them. Before sharing the story together have some props or items for babies to explore with their families. Make sure they are safe for babies to look at and to put in their mouth. This is how babies explore and learn.

Some babies in your group may be eating solids. You might like to have a range of plastic or soft toy foods of different shapes and sizes handy for families to look at and touch and feel before sharing the story together.

During Reading

Have enough copies of the book for each person in your group. Encourage parents to hold their baby in their lap. You could have a doll or teddy yourself to role model

- Ways to hold the book to that they can look at the book together,
- How to interact with the story - gently pointing to them as you talk about the foods and the shapes.

Reading stories together is a wonderful way to bond with babies and holding them close makes them feel safe and secure. They also learn from looking at your mouth to see the shapes you are making when you talk to them. Make suggestions for your families;

- Encourage baby to feel the book,
- Let your baby try to open and close the book, turn the pages.
- Tell them not to worry if baby tries to taste the book! Repeat and repeat while baby is interested.
- Talk about the foods on each page. Look at the shape, trace your finger around the shape.

- Add extra words – this book lends itself beautifully to additional language. Talk in home languages and translate the words, or add descriptive words such as the small cracked egg, delicious and juicy watermelon.

After Reading

You might like to read the story more than once. On the second read encourage parents to make up their own stories from the pictures. Share with your families the importance of talking with their baby as much as possible. The more words baby hears, the more words they will learn and be able to use.

Include opportunities for tummy time and play. Have black and white images spread out on the floor to engage and captivate babies' attention. Role model to parents, showing them ways to interact and play with their baby. For example:

- Get down on the floor alongside their baby
- Point out images and talk about what you are looking at
- Count the sides of the shapes, describe the shapes – smooth round circle, or sharp and pointy triangle.

Activity Time

We're Going to the Market.

Singing songs together as a group is a way for babies to hear many words over and over again in fun and meaningful ways. Sing **We're Going to the Market** as a group.

What you need:

- Have images or toys/props of different foods in this book to use during the song
Egg/s, watermelon, water, bread, cheese and pumpkin. You might like to have a set for each parent or use the book.

What to do:

- Sitting in a circle encourage parents to hold their baby or lay them down on the floor so they can see each other's faces.
- This song works well as 'Chant and repeat'. You can sing/chant the line and your parents repeat after you, singing to their baby.

We're Going to the Market

We're going to the market

We're going to the shop

When we find some {Eggs, bread, etc.}

Then we're going to stop.

Repeat with a range of foods.



STEM Focus (delete if not required)

From birth children are inquisitive. You can nurture early science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts and skills through daily routines and play and exploration activities that you provide for the babies and children in your program. By talking, reading, singing, playing, signing, or using other ways to communicate – whatever works best for your infants and toddlers – you can help them purposefully develop STEM skills. It's never too early to start!

Children are naturally curious. Children learn best through play. Teach children spatial awareness skills by playing simple games like peek-a-boo. Teach them about the position of their own bodies in relation to others (e.g., next to, in front of, above, behind, etc.).

Children are enquirers and observers when they wonder why and how things work (even when they can't talk yet) and when they watch closely the things around them and listen to what others are saying.

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:

- **My Every Day Shapes** by Fiona Bowden
- **My First Shapes** by Fiona Bowden
- **My First Coloured Shapes** by Fiona Bowden

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.....)!