



Mini Puppet Stage

Episode 31

Introduction

Did you know that playing pretend helps develop literacy skills? Through creative play, your child can explore the world in a safe space, and by playing pretend, your child can practice telling stories. The ability to tell a story, aka narrative skills, is an essential pre-literacy skill.

This mini puppet stage (plus some simple puppets) is easy to make, uses items you already have at home, and will have your child creating stories in no time!



Supplies

- Shoe box (the bigger the better)
- White paper/cardstock
- Permanent marker
- Flat piece of Styrofoam (optional)
- Glue/tape
- Scissors
- Toothpicks or popsicle sticks
- Box cutter (optional)

Instructions

1. Cut the box: Cut out a large rectangular opening in the bottom of your shoe box—use a box cutter if you have one. This should be done by an adult!
 2. Decorate the box: This can be as simple or fancy as you'd like! We used the extra cardboard to add cardboard cut-outs around the sides, then made a small stage curtain with a wooden skewer and some scrap fabric.
- Find clipart: Find pictures that would make for good story characters. We found ours by searching for "storybook-" and "fairy tale clipart sets" online.

Additional Resources

Visit Plano Public Library's official [YouTube channel](#) to view this activity and other Library Make videos

Check out our blog post about this activity at [Plano Library Learns](#)

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Instructions, continued

4. Make puppets: Print and cut out the clipart (cardstock is best). Tape or glue your pictures to toothpicks or popsicle sticks.
 - Tip: Add styrofoam to make puppets pose-able—If you're using toothpicks and have a flat scrap of Styrofoam lying around, add it to the bottom of your puppet stage so the puppets can be stuck and posed in the foam.



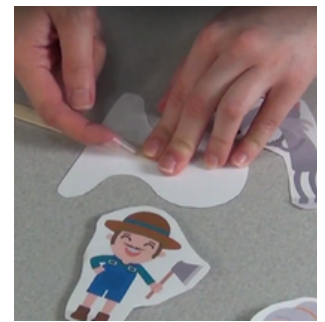
Cut a large rectangle out of the bottom of the box.



Decorate the box; our box has some scroll-like cardboard cutouts.



We also added a little stage curtain made of scrap fabric and a skewer.



Cut out clipart and tape toothpicks or popsicle sticks to the back.

How to Use Your Mini Puppet Stage

To get started, try playing together! Using the puppets and stage, tell stories to your child, tell stories WITH your child, and let them tell stories to you. By participating in their play, you're setting an example and letting them know that stories are important. What's important to you will be important to them—and it's a great step towards knowing the importance of reading.

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