

TODDLER STORYPLAY

THE THREE BEARS

Activity: Retell the story of the Three Bears, using props easily found in your house. The focus of the activity is the interaction between the adult and child, the child's growing concept of story, and the exploration of play materials.

Materials [have the child gather up the following items]:

3 Stuffed Animals or Puppets of Different Sizes – you can also use paper cut-outs.

3 Spoons of Different Sizes – example: a baby/toddler spoon, a metal silverware spoon, and a wooden cooking spoon. Make sure everything is safe without sharp edges or splinters, and strong enough for play. (Thin plastic spoons can break easily.)

3 Non-Glass Bowls of Different types – example: a Tupperware container, a plastic cereal bowl, and a metal mixer bowl.

3 Pillows or Cushions of Different types – example: a throw pillow, a bed pillow, and a couch cushion. You can also use real chairs in 3 sizes!

3 Cloths of Different types – example: a washcloth, a bath towel, and a beach towel. If you have beds of 3 sizes you can use them instead!

1 Action Figure or Doll – to represent the explorer character

Set Up [adults, follow these steps for a successful activity]:

- Gather Story Materials in Bag or decide on your route around the house if using real chairs and/or beds
- Review Story and Songs
- Pick a time when your child is relaxed but not hungry or sleepy
- Enlist siblings or others in the house to help by being a character in the story, going on the walk, or singing the songs.

Story Review:

- "Once upon a time..." is a great way to begin a story for toddlers. They are just learning what about stories, and this helps them understand you are starting something different and fun!
- The basic story is that 3 Bears are hungry, and decide to make porridge. (You can also say "oatmeal" for toddlers if that is something that they eat.) The porridge is too hot, so they go for a walk in the woods until it cools down.
- While they are gone, someone comes to the house.
 - ◇ The visitor tries all 3 bowls of porridge, naming 1 too hot, 1 too cold, and 1 just right.
 - ◇ Then the visitor tries 3 cushions or chairs, calling one too soft, one too hard, and one just right. The visitor sat on the chair and ate all the just right porridge! Then the chair fell apart, and the visitor fell gently to the ground.
 - ◇ The visitor was tired, and soon found 3 beds with covers. One cover was too scratchy for her, one cover was too smooth, and one was just right. The visitor fell asleep.
- When the bears returned home...
 - ◇ One said, "Someone has tasted my porridge." The second one said, "Someone has tasted my porridge." The third one said, "Someone has tasted my porridge and ate it all up!"
 - ◇ Then they see the chair and repeat with "Someone has been sitting in my chair" and concluding with "Someone has been sitting in my chair and broke it!"
 - ◇ The bears go to their beds and repeat with "Someone has been sleeping in my bed" and concluding with "Someone has been sleeping in my bed and here is that someone!"
- Our adventurer wakes up, sees the bears, says "Sorry" for what they did, and runs home!
- End the story with the simple phrase "The End"

Story Songs:

Encourage toddlers to touch stuffed animals/puppets gently, to the tune of "London Bridge"

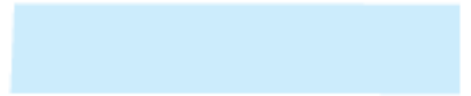
"I can use a gentle touch, a genet touch, a gentle touch.

I can use a gentle touch, with my fingers."

Encourage toddlers to make stirring motions with a spoon with this chant

"Stirring stirring, stirring fast!" (making fast motions with spoon)

"Stirring stirring, stirring slowly!" (making slow motions with spoon)



Story Songs [continued]:

To encourage children to pretend to walk in the woods, to the tune of “Where is Thumbkin?”

“We are walking, we are walking. In the woods, in the woods.

Look here is a tree now! Look here is a tree now! Let’s climb up! Let’s climb up!”

(Pick your toddler up and help them “climb an imaginary tree. Then look out and see everything before “climbing” down again.)

Repeat with more verses: hopping over a stream, picking flowers, sliding down a hill. Do the movements holding your child or next to them. You can make up any activity for pretending in this song, so if there is something your toddler likes to do in the park you can add it in!

Story Notes:

- Characters – Don’t feel like you must keep to bears and Goldilocks! Any family can be represented – Grandpa, Mom, Daughter; Mom, Big Sister, Little Sister – and any animal can be used instead of bears, such as 3 bunnies. You can mix animals together, too. After all, not all family have members that look alike! You can also use paper cut-outs, use what you have or can make easily. Older siblings can help make puppets, too!
- Try to use 3 different voices for the animals – lower, middle, and high. Use a child voice for the Goldilocks or visitor character.
- Traditionally, the visitor is called Goldilocks, but I like to use Lovelilocks. You can use a male name, too, and create your own character name!

Extended Materials Play [encourage independent play]:

- Allow toddlers to play with story materials. Encourage them to pretend to cook and eat with the bowls and spoons. They can cook for the stuffed animals or for you or a sibling!
- Extend the play by asking what else the animals would do after dinner. Brush their teeth? Take a bath? Read a book? Sing a lullaby? Go to sleep? Pretend to do these with the stuffed animals. Wrap them in the cloths as blankets when they go to sleep!
- Model for toddlers how to make different sounds by using the different kinds of spoons on the different kinds of bowls. Let them create their own beats!