

Activity Guide

For

Barnyard Banter

By

Denise Fleming

# Literacy Activities

## Tell the Story through Pictures

In picture books, the illustrations are just as important as the text. We often focus on the words in the book, yet much of the story can be gleaned by studying the illustrations themselves.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Look through the book without reading any of the text.
- Study the illustrations closely and talk about what is happening on each page.

Questions:

- What animals do you see on this page?
- What are the animals doing?

## Elements of Reading

One of the ways that children learn to read is by mimicking adults. They learn that books (in English) are read from left to right. They learn how to turn the pages. They learn how to hold a book correctly. Some elements, such as the fact that adults are reading the words on the page aren't as obvious. This element can be easily taught while reading aloud to children.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Read the book aloud to a group.
- Run your finger under each word as you read it. This helps the children learn that the words on a page have meaning.

## Letters Make Up Words

Kids learn their ABCs at a young age. Reinforce that knowledge by looking for particular letters in the book.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Choose one letter of the alphabet (Make sure it is a letter that is found in the book. If given a choice, many kids will pick the first letter of their name.)
- Show the child what that letter looks like. Either find it in the book or write it on a piece of paper.
- Look through the book together to find all the places that you can find that letter.

Questions:

- What does that letter sound like?
- What words start with that letter?

Extensions:

- Sing the ABC song together.
- Use a marker to write the letter on a piece of paper. Use up the whole piece of paper to create the letter. Trace the letter with your finger.
- Sometimes both the upper- and lower-case letter can be found in the book. One example is "P." Can you find both in the book?

### **Name the Animals**

Labeling things in your library or classroom can help children learn how to read. You can label very simple things like the door, window, a book, etc. Transfer that idea to the animals in *Barnyard Banter*.

Materials:

- A photograph of each of the animals found in *Barnyard Banter*.
- The name of each animal written very clearly on a piece of paper.

Directions:

- Post the photographs with the corresponding name beneath them on a bulletin board or wall.
- Explain that the letters below is the name of that animal.
- Encourage the children to look at and interact with the photographs and words.

Questions:

- What letters do you see in these words?

Extension:

- Make this an interactive activity.
  - Keep the words and photographs separate from each other.
  - Make sure all of the words are visible to the children (lay them out on a low table or tape them to a wall).

- Show the children the photograph of the cow and ask them to find the word that says “Cow.” You may want to say something like: “Cow starts with the letter C. Can you find a word that starts with C?”
- A child may pick the word “Cricket.” Say “Yes, that word does start with C. This word is cricket. Can you find another word that starts with C?”
- Continue until all of the photographs and words are matched.

### **What’s in the Pictures?**

As adults, we know that when we read “Cows in the pasture,” that the text is referring to the three black and white animals in the illustration. This is not as obvious for very young children. In fact, it is something that they learn about books. Help them with this skill through this activity.

Materials:

- Copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- As you read about each animal, pause the point to that animal on the page.
- Be sure to point to all of the illustrations of that animal (for example, all three cows).

Questions:

- What does the animal look like?
- What color is the animal?
- What sound does the animal make?

### **Read Slowly**

*Barnyard Banter* has a lovely, rhyming cadence. However, that doesn’t mean you need to read the book to a certain rhythm. Taking time with a book allows a child to interact with the illustrations at their own pace. Follow the cues of the child and linger on pages that interest them.

Materials:

- Copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Read the book together.
- Pause at the end of the text on each page to allow the child to point to things on the page, or perhaps say something or ask questions about the page.
- Wait for the child to be ready to turn to the next page.

## **Rhymes and Songs**

Sing these rhymes and songs together or make up your own.

### **Old MacDonald**

Instead of reading the book, sing this song along with the illustrations.

Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O  
And on that farm, he had a goose, E-I-E-I-O  
With a honk honk here  
And a honk honk there  
Here a honk, there a honk  
Everywhere a honk honk  
Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O

Continue with all of the animals in the book. The butterfly doesn't make a sound but it can "flap flap here" and "flap flap there."

See the "Books to Share" section for a fun book version of the song.

### **The Tractor on the Farm**

Everyone loves The Wheels on the Bus. Adapt the song to a barnyard theme.

The tractor on the farm goes round and round  
Round and round, round and round  
The tractor on the farm goes round and round  
All around the farm

Continue with the animals found in *Barnyard Banter*:

The cow on the farm goes moo, moo, moo...  
The rooster on the farm goes cock-a-doodle-doo...

### **Five Pigs So Squeaky Clean**

(Option to sing this to the tune of Five Green and Speckled Frogs)

Five pigs so squeaky clean  
Cleanest you've ever seen  
Wanted to go outside and play  
Oink! Oink!  
One jumped into the mud  
Landed with a big THUD  
Then there were four clean squeaky pigs!

### **Baa, Baa, Black Sheep**

There aren't any sheep in *Barnyard Banter* but you can talk about how they are also found on a farm.

You can change the color of the sheep to any color you want. Sing about a blue sheep then find something blue nearby.

Baa, baa, black sheep  
Have you any wool  
Yes sir, yes sir  
Three bags full  
One for my master  
And one for my dame  
And one for the little boy  
Who lives down the lane  
Baa, baa, black sheep  
Have you any wool  
Yes sir, yes sir  
Three bags full

### **Books to Share**

#### More Books by Denise Fleming

Ms. Fleming has written and illustrated many wonderful picture books. The ones listed below are especially good for the toddler age group and as partners to *Barnyard Banter*.

Fleming, Denise. *The Cow Who Clucked*.

206. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

When Cow wakes up, she discovers that she says “Cluck” instead of “Moo.” She wanders through the farmyard and talks to each animal until she discovers that Hen says “Moo.” Kids will love this book with lots of repetition and fun animal sounds.

Fleming, Denise. *In the Tall, Tall Grass*.

1991. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Fleming, Denise. *In the Small, Small Pond*.

1993. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Both of these books have the same illustration style as *Barnyard Banter*. Filled with onomatopoeic words, explore the animals you find in the grass and around a pond.

Fleming, Denise. *Mama Cat Has Three Kittens*.

1998. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Two of mama’s cats copy everything she is doing. Boris just naps; that is until everyone else wants to sleep. Two of the kittens look just like the ones in *Barnyard Banter*, perhaps Boris is just sleeping in that book, too?

Fleming, Denise. *Sleepy, Oh So Sleepy*.

2010. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

All sorts of baby wild animals are sleepy, but where is the baby I love best? This is an ideal bedtime or quiet time book as it ends with a sleepy human baby.

#### Board Books

Board books are perfect for this age group. The cardboard pages stand up to the wear and tear of curious little hands. The small trim size allows for the book to be easily held by a child.

*Baby Touch and Feel Farm.*

2008. New York: DK Publishing.

*Touch and Feel Farm.*

1998. New York: DK Publishing.

Touch and feel books add a tactile element to the experience. Visit the farm with one of these books.

Boynton, Sandra. *Barnyard Dance.*

1993. New York: Workman Publishing Company, Inc.

Dance along with the barnyard animals. This board book is perfect for little hands.

Boynton, Sandra. *Moo, Baa, La La La.*

1984. New York: Little Simon.

This rhyming board book features lot of fun animal sounds.

*Follow the Trail: Farm.*

2016. New York: DK Publishing.

Explore the farm together. This book has an added interactive element with finger trails to follow on each page.

Williams, Sue. *I Went Walking.*

1996. Illus., Julie Vivas. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

Lots of repetition as a child walks through a farmyard and sees a black cat, brown horse, red cow, green duck, pink pig, and yellow dog. This book is also available in a full-size edition.

#### More Fiction Books Related to *Barnyard Banter*

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Big Red Barn.*

1989. Illus., Felicia Bond. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Simple, rhythmic text introduces the reader to the animals and their day on the farm.

Carle, Eric. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar.*

The goose is chasing a butterfly throughout *Barnyard Banter*. Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* together to watch a caterpillar change into a butterfly. Note: This title is also available as a board book and as a bilingual English/Spanish book.

Dean, James. *Pete the Cat: Old MacDonald Had a Farm.*

2014. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Join Pete the Cat to sing 14 verses of the classic song. Bonus: The song ends with a goose.

Kutner, Merrily. *Down on the Farm.*

2004. Illus., Will Hillendbrand. New York: Holiday House.

Starting with the sun coming up, see all of the activities "Down on the farm" until the sun goes down. The phrase "Down the farm" is repeated twice on each page. Create a tune to sing that part of each page to encourage kids to "read along." Add another musical element by using shaky eggs as you sing the tune.

#### Nonfiction Books to Share

People often forget to consider nonfiction for young children. These books often feature attractive photographs and rich vocabulary. Try one of these titles to read along with *Barnyard Banter*.

Riggs, Kate. *Chickens*.

2017. Mankato, MN: Creative Education and Creative Paperbacks.

Learn some quick facts about chickens in this short, photograph-filled book. This title also includes many nonfiction book attributes including a table of contents and index.

Look for other books in this series including: *Butterflies*, *Cows*, *Crickets*, *Frogs*, and *Pigs*.

Rotner, Shelly. *I Like the Farm*.

2016. New York: Holiday House.

The stars of this book are the photographs of farm animals, many featuring a child holding the animal. The text is simple and repetitive.

### Poetry

Sharing poetry with children at a young age introduces them to rich and rhythmic language.

Archer, Micha. *Daniel Finds a Poem*.

2016. New York: Penguin Random House LLC.

This picture book about poetry has some unique comparisons to *Barnyard Banter*. In *Barnyard Banter*, the crickets are in the stone wall; in *Daniel Finds a Poem* there is a chipmunk that adores his home in a stone wall. There are frogs in a cool pool in both books. *Daniel Finds a Poem* is also the 2017 PA One Book; refer to the website for activities related directly to this title.

Lewis, J. Patrick (editor). *National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry: 200 Poems with Photographs that Squeak, Soar, and Roar*.

2012. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic.

Mesmerizing full-page photographs accompany poems by a variety of poets. Refer to these pages for poems and/or photographs about the animals in *Barnyard Banter*: Geese – 9, 60-61, 64, and 65; Butterflies: 11, 46-47, and 162-163; Cows: 20-21 and 129; Roosters: 72 and 138; Chickens (Hens): 9, 72, 138, and 152-153; Pigs: 132-133; Cats (Kittens): 136, 154-155, and 161; Pigeons: 70 and 153; Mice: 58; Donkeys: 144-145; Crows: 67 and 72; Crickets: 130-131; and Frogs: 52 and 126-127.

# Arts Activities

There are a variety of activities, questions, and extensions outlined below. Remember that the abilities and comprehension of babies and toddlers can vary greatly. Depending on the age of the children, the adults may need to assist more to successfully implement the activity. This is especially true for materials that need to be cut out with scissors. However, success can be found in many ways including just letting a child interact with the safe supplies. Also, feel free to ask the suggested questions and then verbalize your own answers out loud when working with a very young child. This will help increase the vocabulary of younger children. Children should always be supervised during these activities.

## Coloring Sheet and Paper Plate Crafts

The author's website has fun activities to go along with many of her books. For *Barnyard Banter*, you can create a paper plate puppet for each of the animals in the book or color your own farm scene for goose. Follow this link for activities related to the book: <http://www.denisefleming.com/pages/book-activities/barnyard-banter/activities.html>

## Handprint Goose

Materials:

- White paper
- A pencil
- Scissors
- Orange crayons
- Glue

Directions:

- Trace the child's hand on a piece of white paper. Make sure their fingers are all stretched wide.
- Cut out the traced hand.
- The thumb becomes the head of the goose. Color a small triangle orange and add it as a beak.
- Draw feet at the base of the palm.
- This website is in another language but you can see an image of the final result: [https://www.artexport.hu/otletek/Marton\\_napi\\_liba\\_dekoracio\\_egyszeruen](https://www.artexport.hu/otletek/Marton_napi_liba_dekoracio_egyszeruen)

Extensions:

- Hide the goose somewhere in the room so someone else can find it.
- Use white paint to do a handprint on colored paper to do a similar craft: <https://parentingpatch.com/g-geese-handprint-craft/>
- Follow this link to see an idea for a rooster hand print craft: <http://seewhatwedidtoday.blogspot.com/2010/03/hand-print-rooster-puppet.html>

## Udder Painting

Milk comes from cows. The milk comes out of the cow's udder. If you wish, watch a video about milking cows before doing the activity. This five-minute video, titled "Where Does Milk Come From?" features two young boys explaining the process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYFA2-4Zzhk>

This activity can be quite messy so do it outside if possible.

Materials:

- Latex gloves
- Tempura paint
- Construction paper
- Pin to make a hole in the glove finger

Directions:

- Fill a glove with paint and tie the open end shut.
- Use the pin to poke a hole in one of the fingers.
- Let the child squeeze the finger to get paint out onto the construction paper.

Questions:

- Tell me about your painting.

Extensions:

- Denise Fleming sometimes uses tactile objects in her illustrations. For example, the kittens page appears to have real pieces of hay in the illustration. The mice page appears to have real pieces of grain in the illustration. What tactile things can you add your udder painting? Try gluing on rice, ribbon, leaves, etc.
- Fill the glove with water for a less messy experiment. This gives children the opportunity to pretend to milk a cow.

## Muddy Pig Painting

When doing craft materials with children, remember that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to complete the activity. For this particular activity, a child may choose to color only a small part of the pig using the pink marker. They may put "mud" on top of the pig's head only. All of this is part of the creative process and should be celebrated.

Materials:

- Pig coloring sheets (several can be found by doing a basic Google search)
- Pink crayons
- Brown finger paint

Directions:

- First color in the pig using the pink crayon.

- Put a bit of finger paint on the child's fingers and let them smooch it all over the page creating mud for the pig.

Questions:

- Why do you think pigs roll around in mud?
- We colored our pig with a pink crayon, what other colors can pigs be?

Extensions:

- This activity is based on an idea found online. Follow this link: <https://kiddiecrafts365.wordpress.com/page/27/> to create your own pig using construction paper.
- Prepare to get dirty and messy and go play in the mud. You can go outside after a rainfall and get really dirty. You can also try to keep the mess to a minimum by making your own mud with dirt and water in a bucket. Ask questions about what the mud feels like. Let the mud dry on your hands and talk about how it feels different from wet mud.
- Instead of finger painting, use a sponge and brown paint to add mud to the pig picture.

### **Paint with Hay**

Materials:

- Hay (considering using fake hay from a craft store because of allergies)
- Washable paint
- Paint bowls or containers
- Thick paper
- Tape

Directions:

- Tape a few pieces of hay together to create a thick paintbrush.
- Explore painting with your paintbrushes.
- You may choose to draw a barn or other farm scene on the paper or just let everyone be creative.

Extensions:

- Compare painting with hay and a real paintbrush. Which is easier and why? Which do you like better and why?

### **Painting with Tractors and Animals**

Materials:

- Large handheld plastic farm animals
- Tractors and other farm vehicle toys (especially those with textured wheels)

- Washable paint
- Butcher paper
- Paint trays

Directions:

- Cover a child size table with butcher paper.
- Pour paint into the paint trays.
- Let everyone experiment with “stamping” the butcher paper using the animal feet or rolling paint on the paper using the tractors.

Questions:

- What animal or vehicle do you painting with?

Extension:

- Use soapy water and sponges to clean all of the animals and vehicles once you are done painting. Make this fun by telling everyone it’s time to play farmer and clean the animals.

### **Farmyard Puppet Show**

Telling a story with puppets boosts creativity. It also develops storytelling skills which is a part of literacy.

Materials:

- Farm yard animal puppets. Note: You don’t have to use a bunch of puppets. One or two will be just fine.
- A “puppet stage.” You don’t need a real puppet theater, you can use a large box, the back of the sofa, even an empty bathtub can work.

Directions:

- Use one of the puppets and start telling a story about the animal. Maybe the animal goes to the store. Maybe it is reading a book. Maybe it’s just making noises. The “story” can be about anything.
- Encourage the child/children to play along with their own puppets.

Extension:

- If you have a puppet for each of the animals in the book (you can also make your own paper puppets using animal pictures and popsicle sticks), put on your own puppet show of the book. This is a great way to interact with the story in a different way.

## Peekaboo Barn

### Materials:

- Coloring sheet of a barn from the side with doors. Here are a couple links for possibilities: <http://www.colorluna.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/How-to-Draw-a-Barn-Coloring-Page.jpg> or [http://www.coloringpages101.com/coloring-pages/Royal-Family/barn\\_dwrxs.gif](http://www.coloringpages101.com/coloring-pages/Royal-Family/barn_dwrxs.gif)
- Crayons
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Photographs/images of farm animals

### Directions:

- Color the barn image
- Tape or glue the farm animal image over the door of the barn
- Use the construction paper to create doors that can open (like a flap book)
- Tape or glue the doors over the animal
- Open the doors to see the animal in the barn
- This activity is based on the one found here: <https://www.allkidsnetwork.com/crafts/animals/farm/barn-animals.asp>

### Extensions:

- If every child has a different animal in their barn, you can use the images to sing Old MacDonald.
- Turn this into a version of a matching game. If you have multiple different animal images, ask which animal says "Moo?" Then open the different barn doors until you find the cow. Continue with the other animals.

## Build a Barn

The animals need a place to live. Help them out with this simple craft.

### Materials:

- A simple coloring sheet that is the outline of a barn
- Red crayons (because barns are often red, however, you can use whatever colors you like)
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue

### Directions:

- Color the barn.
- Build the barn by gluing popsicle sticks as "wood."

- Remember that this doesn't have to be perfect. Kids can glue two popsicle sticks or 12. They can be in a row or haphazard. Either way is perfect.
- See an example of this craft here: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/239957486377034030/>

### **Pin the Feather on the Goose**

Like the popular children's party game, Pin the Tail on the Donkey, this activity can be modified for very young children.

Materials:

- Large drawing/photograph/image of a goose
- Feathers
- Tape

Directions:

- Give everyone a chance to add a feather onto the goose image using tape to secure it.
- Note: If you laminate the goose, you can do this activity over and over again.

Extensions:

- Create a white felt cow and let children add black felt spots to the cow. Because you are using felt, the spots can be added and removed over and over again.
- Create a pink felt pig. Cut out brown felt "mud" spots to add to the pig.
- Create a felt goose and a felt butterfly. The goose chases the butterfly throughout the book. Put the goose on the flannel board then let the children add the butterfly to act out the story.

### **Paper Plate Peacocks**

Materials:

- White paper plates
- Crayons
- Blue construction paper
- Glue
- Scissors

Directions:

- Color one side of the paper plate. Be sure to fill it with color.
- Cut out a peacock body using the blue construction paper. The body will roughly resemble a bowling pin.
- Glue the body onto the plate to make a peacock.
- Use crayons to add eyes and a beak to the peacock.
- This idea is based on the first craft featured on this page: <https://artscraftsymom.com/20-stunning-peacock-crafts-for-kids/>

Questions:

- What colors did you use to create the peacock feathers?

Extensions:

- Create a group peacock together. Cut out a large peacock body in the same shape suggested above. Cut out long pieces of white paper in the shape of a feather. Give every child one feather to color. Glue all of the feathers to the back of the peacock body to create a very colorful bird.

# STEM Activities

There are a variety of activities, questions, and extensions outlined below. Remember that the abilities and comprehension of babies and toddlers can vary greatly. Depending on the age of the children, the adults may need to assist more to successfully implement the activity. However, success can be found in many ways including just letting a child interact with the supplies. Also, feel free to ask the suggested questions and then verbalize your own answers out loud when working with a very young child. This will help increase the vocabulary of younger children. Children should always be supervised during these activities.

## How Many Animals?

Counting together is a good way to build knowledge of numbers.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Each page talks about a particular animal in the barnyard. Count how many of that animal you see in the illustration. Be sure to look closely; sometimes you only see part of an animal.

Questions:

- What page has the most animals?

Extension:

- What else can you count in the book? (letters, words, pages)

## Where Is Goose?

Good observation skills are an important core to STEM work. This book provides a great way to practice observation skills.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Goose can be found on every page of the book. Sometimes you see goose's entire body. Sometimes just a small part such as the beak.
- Find the goose on every page together.

Questions:

- What part of goose do you see on this page?
- What else can be seen on almost every page of the book? (the butterfly)

Extension:

- Do you travel by a pond or farmhouse during your day? Do you see any geese?
- Hide a picture of a goose in every room in your library/house/center/school. Take a walk together to find the goose in every room.

### **Sing Old MacDonald**

Songs like “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” feature repetition. Singing songs with repetitive verses can help children learn about patterns.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Sing a verse of “Old MacDonald” for every page in the book. For example:
  - Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O  
And on that farm he had some cows, E-I-E-I-O  
With a moo-moo here  
And a moo-moo there  
Here a moo, there a moo  
Everywhere a moo-moo  
Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O
- Look at the corresponding page in the book as you sing. You do not need to read the actual words in the book.
- Note: You may want to change the Pig page and say Oink instead of “muck.”

Questions:

- Are there animals found on a farm that are not featured in this book? What sound do they make? (Examples for adults leading the activity: horse, duck, and dog.)

Extension:

- Sing the song using puppets or photographs of animals.
- Sing the song using an app such as the one created by Duck Duck Moose. See the “Using Technology” section for more information.

## Comparing Size

Young kids can start learning about size differences. Be sure to use words like: smaller, smallest, bigger, largest, etc. Talking about sizes is an early math skill.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*

Directions:

- Look at a few pages in the book. Talk about the animals you see on each page. Which animal is smallest? Which is largest?
- Note: Some pages work better than others for this activity. For example, it is difficult to talk about size different on the page with the hens. The cow page is great because one cow is clearly much larger than the others.

Extensions:

- Compare sizes of other objects. Do you have a collection of different sizes balls? Can you collect rocks and talk about which one is biggest or smallest? Do you have stuffed animals of different sizes?

## Visit a Farm

Bring the book to life by seeing some of the animals in person.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter* (This is optional. If you choose to bring the book with you, refer to the pages with the animals you see at the farm.)

Directions:

- Many local farms have visiting hours. Visitors may be able to pick fresh food, see the animals, or even interact with the animals.
- Find a farm near you to visit. Local Harvest (<https://www.localharvest.org/organic-farms/visiting.html>) is a good place to start if you are not familiar with any local farms. You can search the site by zip code. This site also has helpful tips for making your farm visit a success. Yelp may also be a helpful resource for finding a farm near you.
- Pay special attention to the sounds you hear at the farm. Are any of those sounds found in the book?

Questions:

- What sounds did you hear at the farm?
- What animal was your favorite? Why?

- Encourage use of the five senses at the farm. What do you smell? What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? What do you taste?

### **Build a Farm**

Blocks, whether they be wooden or soft, are a very versatile toy. You can use them to create almost anything. Building with blocks is an early engineering skill.

Materials:

- A large collection of blocks.

Directions:

- Use the blocks to build something you see on a farm (barn, pig sty, horse stall, etc.)
- With younger children, you may want to model how to build with blocks. Talk through the process: "I am building a wall for my barn," "This block will make a nice roof," etc.

Questions:

- Tell me about what you built.

Extension:

- Do you have any stuffed animals from the farm? Can you build a tower with blocks that is as tall as one of the animals?

### **Build a Stone Wall**

"Crickets in the stone wall, chirp, chirp, chirp."

Materials:

- Rocks or another type of building material.

Directions:

- Build a wall for the crickets together.
- Make sure to leave some open spaces for the crickets to hide.

Questions:

- Why do the crickets like to live near the wall?

Extension:

- See if you can find some crickets outside. Where are they living? What protection is around them?

### **What Does the Farm Feel Like?**

Babies and toddlers are using all of their senses to learn about the world around them. Offer as many of the tactile opportunities below as possible to assist in that development.

Materials:

- Tubs or buckets that can be filled with or contain the materials below:
  - Grass (for the cows in the pasture)
  - Mud (for the pigs in the wallow)
  - Hay (for the kittens in the hayloft)
  - Grain (for the mice in the grain bin)
  - Uncooked corn (for the crows in the cornfield)
  - Stones (for the crickets in the stone wall)
  - Water (for the frogs in the farm pond)

Directions:

- Supervise the children as they interact with the different tubs.
- Don't be afraid to let everyone get messy.

Questions:

- What does it (water, mud, grain, etc.) feel like?
- Is it wet?
- Is it smooth?
- Is it sticky?
- Does it smell like anything?

### **Will It Sink? Will It Float?**

The frogs in the book swim in the farm pond. Use that page as an opportunity to explore water and items that sink and float.

Materials:

- Bucket or other container of water. If possible, use a clear container so that kids can see items that have sunk more easily.
- A variety of objects – rock, feather, leaf, toy boat, toy car. The options are endless.

Directions:

- One by one, put the different objects in the water to see if they sink or float.
- Before putting each object in the water, you can talk through whether or not it will float. With younger children, consider saying your own thoughts out loud before putting the object in the water. For example: "This rock is heavy. I think it will sink."

Questions:

- Do you think this rock/feather/toy/etc. will sink or float? Why do you think that?

Extensions:

- Create a chart to track which items sink and which ones float.

	Sink	Float
Rock		
Feather		

Put a check mark in the correct column as you investigate each item.

- Simply playing with water leads to scientific discovery. Put an empty bucket next to the one filled with water. Let children use measuring cups to transfer water back and forth between the buckets. This activity is best done outside since a lot of water will end up on the floor and on the children.

## Barnyard Animals

One of the ways that very young children learn about spatial sense is by touching and carrying around objects. Give them an opportunity to "interact" with the animals in *Barnyard Banter*.

Materials:

- Stuffed animals or toys: goose, butterfly, cow, rooster, hen, pig, kitten, pigeon, mice, peacock, donkey, crow, cricket, and frog.
- Note: Some of the animals may be harder than others to get as toys. Use as many as you are able to acquire.

Directions:

- After reading the book, put the animals out in an open space so that kids can interact with them.
- Let them touch the animals. Carry the animals. Talk to the animals.

Questions:

- What animal do you have? What does that animal do?
- What does that animal eat?

- What does that animal sound like?
- How does that animal move?

Extensions:

- Young children are learning to put smaller objects inside bigger objects. When the activity is done, have the children help put all of the animals back in the “barn” (a box or tub).
- After letting the kids play with the stuffed animals independently, hide one of the animals. Ask questions such as “What animal says MOO?” to help the children identify the missing animal. Once the missing animal is guessed correctly, bring that animal out of hiding and hide another.

### **In and Around the Barn**

Learning about directional terms such as up and down are part of spatial learning. They are early math concepts for young children.

Materials:

- Toy barn or something you can pretend is a barn (such as a box)
- Toy farm animal

Directions:

- Either direct the child or assist the child in putting the animal on top of the barn, under the barn, inside the barn, behind the barn, above the barn, in front of the barn, near the barn, and far away from the barn.
- Be sure to use directional terms as you are playing the game.

Extensions:

- If you have a large enough “barn,” ask the child to play the game with their own body. Can they sit in the barn? Can they stand behind the barn? Can they stand in front of the barn? Can they walk around the barn?
- Create a farm obstacle course for children to navigate. Possible obstacles include:
  - Go under the fence (table or use a broom handle balanced on chairs)
  - Go around the pond (a piece of blue paper or felt on the ground)
  - Go inside the barn (large box)
  - Stay far away from the kicking donkey (stuffed donkey)
  - Walk over the crickets (toy crickets or photographs of crickets)

## Tractor Races

Many kids probably know this, however, explain that a tractor is a vehicle that is often found on a farm. Then have fun creating different size and height ramps for racing tractors. This builds both engineering and math skills.

Materials:

- At least two small toy tractors
- Wood planks or something else to build ramps
- A variety of objects for creating ramps (books stacked to different heights can be perfect for this)

Directions:

- Build two different height ramps
- Hold one toy tractor at the top of each ramp
- Let both tractors go at the same time and see which one goes further and/or faster

Questions:

- Why did this tractor go further?
- Before racing the tractors, ask kids what they think will happen.

Extensions:

- For slightly older children, try racing on different surfaces such as carpet, a table, or a dirt path. Talk about the different surfaces. Which one will let the tractor go the furthest?
- Download the Peep Family Science: Ramps app for more activities with ramps. Created by WGBH (Boston's PBS Station), the app offers four weeks of shared activity ideas in both English and Spanish. ([peepandthebigwideworld.com/peepfamilyscience](http://peepandthebigwideworld.com/peepfamilyscience))

## Explore a "Pasture"

The "cows [are] in the pasture" in *Barnyard Banter*. Find your own pasture (a field or yard of grass) and pretend to be a cow. This is also a great opportunity to explore the grass. Talk about what it feels like. Look for bugs in the grass.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*
- A field or yard of grass

Directions:

- Share the page in the book with the cows. Explain that a pasture is a large field of grass.
- Explain that we all are all going to pretend to be cows.

- Walk out into the yard, preferably without shoes on.
- Explore the yard to see what you can find.

Questions:

- What does the grass feel like?
- What do you smell?
- Can you find any bugs in the grass?

Extensions:

- Explore the “field” on a dry day and on a wet, rainy day. Does the grass feel different?
- If there is a muddy area, you can also explore like the “pigs in the wallow.”

### Identifying Colors

Learning how to identify colors is one of the first things we teach children. Reinforce that knowledge using all of the vibrant colors in *Barnyard Banter*.

Materials:

- A copy of *Barnyard Banter*
- A piece of colored paper or felt or other object for each color in the activity

Directions:

- Show a piece of red paper and talk about the color. Ask the children to identify the color.
- Then ask the children to find the color red in the book.
- Continue with other colors.
- Note: The color yellow can be found on every page in the book. Can you find it on every page?

Questions:

- What is your favorite color? Is that color in this book?
- Can you find something that is red (or whichever color you are currently focusing on) in the room? Outside? In another book?

Extension:

- Mix paint together to create new colors. If possible, use finger paint to allow the children to do the mixing themselves.
  - Mix red and yellow to make orange
  - Mix red and blue to make purple
  - Mix yellow and blue to make green

## Sort the Eggs

Sorting is an important early math skill.

Materials:

- Empty egg carton
- Something that can be sorted by color (beads, M&Ms, jelly beans, etc. Please supervise young children with this activity.)

Directions:

- Put all of the beads in one pile and ask the child to sort them by color.
- For younger children, you may ask them to find all the blue beads. Then have them put those beads in one section of the egg carton. Then do the same with another color.
- You can also try putting one of each color in the egg carton and then ask the child to play a matching game.

Questions:

- How many blue beads are there?
- How many different colors do we have?

## Using Technology

Old MacDonald by Duck Duck Moose

- Free app available for iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch
- Kids can interact with a playful, humorous video of the classic song.
- A bonus feature is the ability to change the language of the song and record your own version.

Zoola Animals

- Free “lite” version available for iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android, and Kindle Fire. (The full version has a fee of \$2.99.)
- Children can tap on a photograph of an animal to see a male, female, and baby animal. Each photograph also has the corresponding animal sound.
- The “Farm” section features a dog, cat, cow, horse, sheep, rabbit, pig, donkey, chicken, goat, peacock, and goose.

My Very Hungry Caterpillar

- \$4.99 (There is a free-to-try version for Android).
- Based on the popular book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, this app allows kids to learn a little about the life cycle of a caterpillar to butterfly.
- Note: The caterpillar plays with toys and sails in a boat, so it’s not all realistic. However, the book version has the caterpillar eating food that a caterpillar would not eat.

- Use this app after talking about the fact that the goose is chasing a butterfly throughout *Barnyard Banter*.

#### Peekaboo Barn

- \$1.99. Available for iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android, and Kindle Fire.
- Simple peekaboo game is accessible to very young children.
- As kids cycle through the animals, they will hear the name of the animal and see the word on the screen.
- Language options include English, Spanish, Cantonese, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, or Swedish.

#### Denise Fleming Book Trailers

Many of the books written and illustrated by Denise Fleming have book trailers on her website. Watch a trailer together to decide if you want to read the whole book. Scroll through her booklist here:

<http://www.denisefleming.com/pages/booklist/booklist.html#gsc.tab=0>