

Dinosaurs!

Dinosaurs are a great theme any time of year, but we love to do it in May or June when we can get outside! There are so many fun ways to incorporate playful practice of foundational skills while learning about dinos!

Dino Themed Read-Alouds:

- If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur – *Linda Bailey*
- Dinosaurumpus – *Tony Mitton*
- One More Dino on the Floor – *Kelly Starling Lyons*
- Dinosaurs Galore! – *Giles Andreae*
- Bones, Bones, Dinosaur Bones – *Byron Barton*
- Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs – *Mo Willems*
- Dinosaur Rocket! – *Pennv Dale*

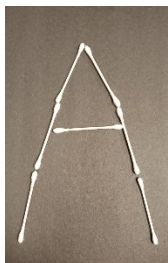


This theme has great potential for multi-sensory learning. Think sight words in sand, letters in “dino poop”, building letters with q-tip “bones”, and more! You can also do a lot with oral language as you describe the feeling and look of dinosaur eggs and predict when they will hatch. Have fun, get messy and always go back to those foundational skills!



Practice Centres/Games

Dino egg race: Borrow some balls from your equipment room. Using masking tape, add sight words to the balls. Place balls in a “dino nest” (hula hoop, chalk circle, anything to give a boundary). Students take turns running to the nest as velociraptors to steal a dino egg. They need to say the sight word and use the word in a sentence then take the egg back to their starting point.



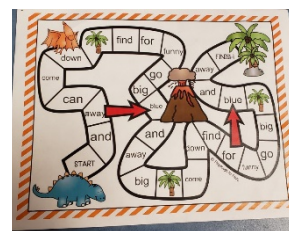
Alphabet bones: Use q-tips to build letters on black construction paper. You could have some with letter templates and some blank for students who are able to construct their own letters.

Beginning sound letter clip: Print off stegosaurus templates. Add a letter to the middle and pictures to each stegosaurus plate. Give students clothespins and ask them to clip the pictures that begin with the same letter in the middle.



Dinosaur stomp: Use masking tape to write sight words or letters on the ground. Make cardboard dinosaur feet or tissue box dinosaur feet. Have students take turns stomping on the words or letters! Don't forget to put the sight word in a sentence or say the letter sound/word that begins with that letter.

Board games: For a game option, you can make or find free board games online! We found an editable dinosaur sight word game from <https://www.playdoughtoplato.com/>. Students take turns rolling a die and saying the sight words as they go. If they get a palm tree, they have to build one of the sight words before or after the tree with playdough or write on a white board.



Microscope bones: Print some small bone shapes and laminate. Add some very small letters or sight words to the bones. Have students use microscopes to examine the bones closely...what letter or word can they find? Say the sound or use the word in a sentence! They can practice printing by recording their finds on very official clipboards!

Digging for letters: Use a sand table, bucket, or bin in the classroom for a sensory letter find. Have students use tools like mini paintbrushes or popsicle sticks to dig for letters. When they find a letter, they can remove it from the sand and record their find. You can easily do this with sight words. Make it EXTRA fun by going outside to your school sand pit! You can rope off quadrants for partners to search. You can even make real looking bones using a recipe from this website:

<http://kitchenfloorcrafts.blogspot.com/2014/07/homemade-dinosaur-bones.html>

Just add some sharpie letters to the bones and you are ready to go!



FUN ON THE FARM!

The farm theme is an exciting and engaging way to incorporate a cross-curricular approach to learning. Literacy practice centres can easily be adapted to tap into the natural curiosity and imagination of your students. There are endless storybooks that fit nicely into this theme as well, and you will find some listed below.

Farm Themed Read-Alouds:

- Mrs. Wishy-Washy's Farm – Joy Cowley



Group Activity – Phonemic

I wonder what's in the
big red barn,

I wonder what's in it
for me.

It starts with _____
and rhymes with _____

Oh what do you think
it could be?

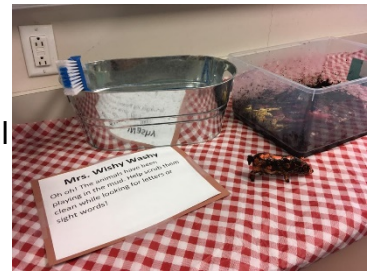


<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Big-Red-Barn-Rhyming-Activity-1717196?st=d38def92b43d48a84419934c5426a086>

Practice Centres

Mrs. Wishy Washy: Using plastic farm animals and a sharpie, print letters or sight words directly on the animals. Cover the animals in brown paint. Grab a tub of soapy water and some small sponges and have your students scrub the animals clean before identifying the letter/word. This is a wonderful follow-up activity to the story “Mrs. Wishy-Washy’s Farm”.

Additionally: Upper and lowercase animals could be matched. Or matching word families, etc.



Egg Kaboom: Using Styrofoam or plastic eggs and egg cartons, print Letters or sight words on the bottom of the eggs, with a few eggs having the word “Kaboom”. Students take turns picking an egg and identifying the letter/word. They then get to keep their egg. If they choose an egg with “Kaboom”, all their eggs have to go back on the carton.

Animal Pens: Combining dramatic play and literacy development, with the target skill being initial sound. Set up several pens, each labelled with a different letter. Set out a handful of plastic farm animals and a dog. Students play with the dog and round up the animals, leading them to their pens (pigs in the “p” pen, goats in the “g” pen, etc).



Word Family Harvest: Set up a play garden. The example in the picture was made using arched poster boards with holes cut in the top, and then covered in brown plastic table clothes, also with holes. You can make carrots by rolling orange construction paper cones and adding green tissue paper on top, or beets by covering Styrofoam balls in red tissue paper with green on top. On each vegetable, print the end to a word family (at, ug, in, etc). Students pick vegetables, and using a whiteboard, record as many words as they can think of in that word family.

Syllable Silos: Make two or three silos. You could use rolled red poster board. Cut a slot near the top of each silo and label the silos as “one syllable”, “two syllables”, or “three syllables”. Students will use picture cards and clap out syllables. They then place the card in the corresponding silo.

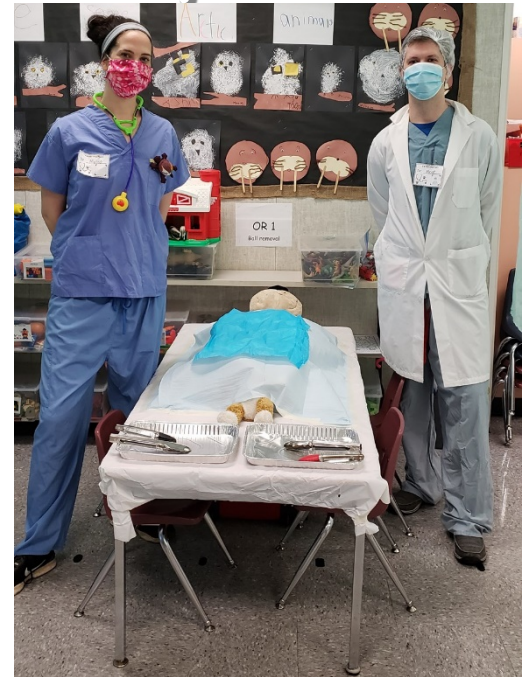


Veterinary Hospital

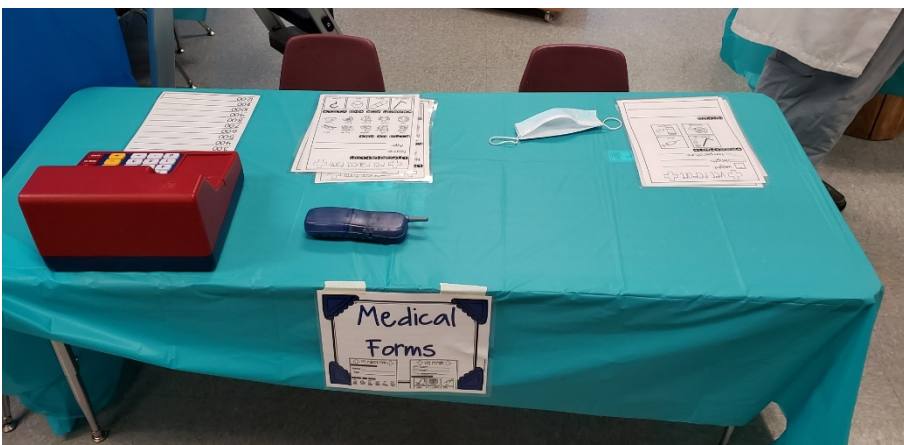
Some themes can be stretched out over a few weeks and some can be done over one special day. We chose to do our veterinary hospital on one day, however, we used stories and poetry throughout the week to get students excited! This is a way you can ease into themes!

Vet/Pet Themed Read-Alouds:

- Harry the Dirty Dog – *Gene Zion*
- Paula the Vet – *Julia Donaldson*
- I Don't Want a Cool Cat – *Emma Dodd*
- They All Saw a Cat – *Brendan Wenzel*
- Cookie's Week – *Cindy Ward*



Begin by engaging students through stories, poetry and brainstorming ideas (talk about dressing up)! Set the stage by incorporating children's art and your own decorations. Incorporate writing/printing into your play centres – like medical check-in forms for the pets! Fill the day or weeks with practice centres and games revolving around the foundational skills.



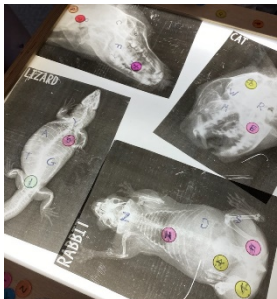
Practice Centres

Animal surgery: Place two stuffed animals on a table with a bin in between. Cover the bodies so that one head shows and one set of legs shows. Fill the bin with red shredded paper or spaghetti. Add small Styrofoam balls with sight words written on them with sharpie. Draw a heart on a few of the balls. Have students take turns using tongs to pick out balls to help the animal. When they pick a ball, they say the sight word out loud. If they get a heart...all of the balls have to go back!!



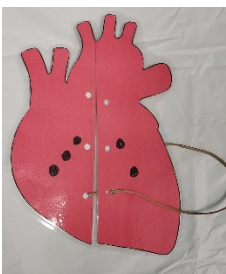
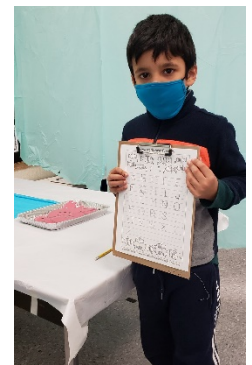
Orthopedic surgery...broken bones: Draw or print bone shapes on white cardstock. Write uppercase letters on one side of the bones and lower case on the other. Laminate the bones and cut them in half. Add Velcro circles to each side. Laminate bandaids and add Velcro circles. Students work together to match the uppercase and lowercase letters together by attaching the bones with a bandaid. You could also do this with parts of sight words or word families!

Letter surgery: Print thick letters on cardstock (I like to use different colours) and laminate. Cut them in half! Have students work to put letter halves together to make real letters. Practice saying the letter, the sound, and a word that begins with that letter. Have students print their letters in a "patient chart" for extra practice.



Animal x-rays: Print animal x-rays on transparency paper. Add uppercase or lowercase letters to the pictures with a sharpie. Have students use a light table for this activity. Give students bingo chips with uppercase or lowercase letters. They can take turns picking a bingo chip and matching it to the x-ray!

Animal check-in, letter hunt: Place animal letter cards all over the room. Give each student a clipboard with alphabet in a printing template format. Students walk around the room searching for all the letters. When they find a letter, they trace the corresponding letter on their clipboard, say the sound and come up with a word that begins with that letter. The kids ALWAYS love a scavenger hunt!!



Cardiac surgery (ways to incorporate math into the theme): Create hearts using red construction paper. Cut in half and add dots to either side. Grab some string or twine and you are ready! Students work together to "stitch" the hearts back together. You can have them make math equations by adding the dots on both side of the heart. To practice ways to make 5, have students try to only make heart combinations that add to 5!