



Pre-K Companion School Activities
Dog Days (2013)
by Karen English

Preschool classes can join in the fun by reading picture books on similar themes and doing activities inspired by *Dog Days*.

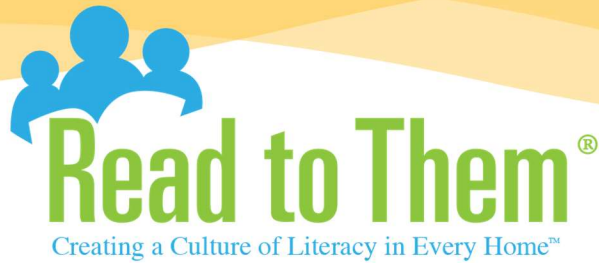
Reading List

Financial Literacy

The Penny Pot by Stuart J. Murphy, illustrated by Lynne Cravath
Rock, Brock, and the Savings Shock by Sheila Bair, illustrated by Barry Gott
Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday by Judith Viorst, illustrated by Ray Cruz
Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones
A Bike Like Sergio's by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones
Lemonade in Winter: A Book About Two Kids Counting Money by Emily Jenkins, illustrated by G. Brian Karas
Bunny Money by Rosemary Wells
A Chair for My Mother by Vera B. Williams
The Grasshopper and the Ants by Jerry Pinkney
Apple Farmer Annie by Monica Wellington
Sheep in a Shop by Nancy E. Shaw, illustrated by Margot Apple
Pigs Will Be Pigs by Amy Axelrod, illustrated by Sharon McGinty-Nally

Pets and Responsibility

I Want a Dog by Dayal Kaur Khalsa
If You Give a Dog a Donut by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Felicia Bond
Stormy by Guojing
A Ball for Daisy by Chris Raschka
Lola Gets a Cat by Anna McQuinn, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw
Dan and Diesel by Charlotte Hudson, illustrated by Lindsey Gardiner
The Wonderous Dinosaurium by John Condon, illustrated by Steve Brown
I Do Not Like Al's Hat by Erin McGill
No More Bows by Samantha Cotterill
Charlotte and the Rock by Stephen W. Martin, illustrated by Samantha Cotterill
Smelly Bill by Daniel Postgate
The Perfect Dog by Kevin O'Malley
Widget by Lyn Rossiter McFarland, illustrated by Jim McFarland



Fairness, Friendship, and Bullying

The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig, illustrated by Patrice Barton

One by Kathryn Otashi

Stick and Stone by Beth Ferry, illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld

Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Mantchev, illustrated by Taeun Yoo

We Don't Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. Higgins

The Bad Seed by Jory John, illustrated by Pete Oswald

Written by Karen English

Red Shoes illustrated by Ebony Glenn

Hot Days on Abbot Avenue illustrated by Javaka Steptoe

Nadia's Hands illustrated by Jonathan Weiner

Speak to Me (And I Will Listen Between the Lines) illustrated by Amy Bates

The *Nikki and Deja* series of early chapter books illustrated by Laura Freeman

Illustrated by Laura Freeman

Natalie's Hair Was Wild by Laura Freeman

Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race by Margot Lee Shetterly

Pies from Nowhere by Dee Romito

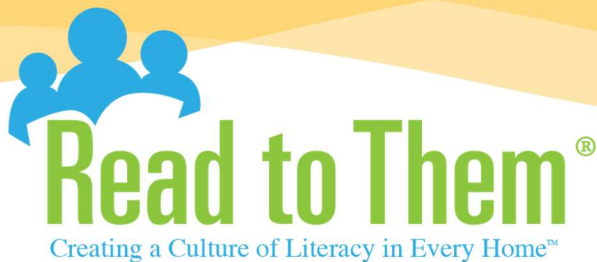
Ida B. Wells, Voice of Truth by Michelle Duster

Standing on Her Shoulders: A Celebration of Women by Monica Clark Robinson

Stompin' at the Savoy by Moira Rose Donahue

Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice by Nikki Grimes

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Financial Literacy

Coin Exploration – Put out a bowl of change for the children to explore. They can sort the different types of coins and put them in order from smallest to largest. Put out a balance scale and let them explore the weight of the different coins. Mount some on a clipboard with clear contact paper and let them do crayon rubbings. You can also use coins for patterning. (See *Coin Patterning* in this packet.)

Needs vs. Wants – Read *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts to start a discussion about the difference between needs and wants. Make a class list together about what children need and what else they want. Put out some advertisements and have children cut out pictures of things they need and things they want to sort.

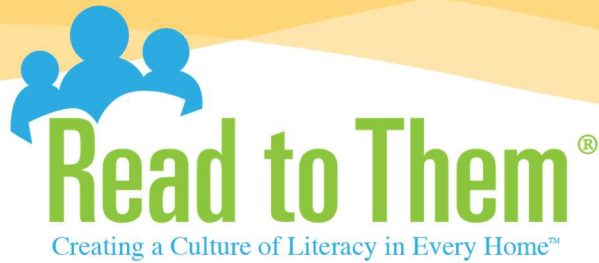
Classroom Economy – In *Dog Days*, Gavin takes care of his aunt’s dog to make money. Try having a classroom economy for a week where the children do helpful tasks in the classroom to earn classroom currency. Older students can help brainstorm the jobs and how much they should pay. Fun jobs should earn less than less desirable jobs. At the end of the week, they can use that currency to buy items from a classroom store – small trinkets, stickers, etc. You could set up the store so children can team up and buy something big for the class – popsicles, extra time outside, a dance party, pajama day, etc.

Dramatic Play

Pet Shop – Stock your dramatic play area with items you might find in a pet store. You can ask for donations or look in dollar stores for some supplies. You can also put out materials and let the children make pet toys to sell in the store. Supplies could include fabric scraps, ribbon, rope, bells, yarn, old tennis balls, etc.

Pet Spa – Drag out all of those sort of dingy plastic animals and have a Pet Spa. Fill one bin with soapy water and one with clean water. Add some old toothbrushes for scrubbing. Put out some towels and lengths of ribbon. The students can scrub, wash, rinse, and dry the animals. After they are all clean, they can tie fancy ribbons on them. Maybe they will have a pet parade with the newly-spiffy pets.

Fuzzy Friend Day – Allow each student to bring in one stuffed animal to spend the day (or part of the day) at school.



Art

Illustrator Inspiration – Laura Freeman did the expressive illustrations for *Dog Days*. Read one (or more) of the books listed above as illustrated by Laura Freeman, calling attention to the illustrations. Ask children what they notice about the pictures.

One thing to notice in Freeman’s illustrations is the expressiveness in the eyes of her characters. They show a great deal of emotion. Point out the expressive eyes to the students and have them mimic the faces.

Invite students to make self-portraits inspired by Freeman’s illustrations. At your art table, put out ovals of various skin tones and mirrors – preferably mirrors that can stand up on the table. Have a variety of drawing materials available for the children to use including crayons, colored pencils, markers, chalk pastels, oil pastels, and tempera sticks. You can also provide collage materials including yarn, jewels, fabric scraps, buttons, etc. You can prop up the Freeman-illustrated books for inspiration. Or, if you have access to a color printer, make a copy of several of the illustrations and put them in sheet protectors. Put those on the art table for inspiration.

Dog Portraits – George Rodrigue of New Orleans was famous for his paintings of Blue Dogs. These bold paintings done with simple shapes might inspire your young artists to paint some dog portraits of their own. There are some delightful picture books about Blue Dog, including *Why Is Blue Dog Blue?*

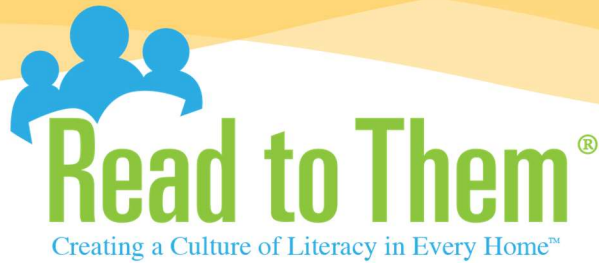
Paint with Paws – Put out some small plastic dogs and paint and let the children use the paws for stamping.

Paint with Wheels – In *Dog Days*, Gavin loves to skateboard. Have fun with paints and wheels, running wheeled toys through paint and then on paper to make painted tracks.

Table Activities

Wild Animal vs. Pet Sorting – Have plastic animals or animal cards available for sorting.

Mommy and Baby Animal Matching – Use or make cards with animals and their corresponding babies for matching. Younger children can match the cards face up. Older children can use them for a memory matching game.



Mindfulness

Starfish Breathing – In *Dog Days*, Gavin tries hard to stay calm when dealing with his aunt’s little dog. All of us can find it difficult to calm down our bodies and minds. You can teach your children Starfish Breathing as a calming tool. Hold up your left hand with fingers splayed out wide. Note that your hand looks like a starfish. Use the index finger of the right hand to trace along the arms of the starfish as you breathe slowly in and out. Inhale as your right index finger goes up the outside of the left thumb, and exhale as you go down the thumb. Inhale as you trace up the left index finger, and exhale as you go down. Continue, ending on the outside of your left pinky. The combination of the deep, slow breaths with the tactile sensation is very soothing and helps settle the brain. See if your class can sync up your breathing and all calm together. (This is a great strategy to share with families.)

Music

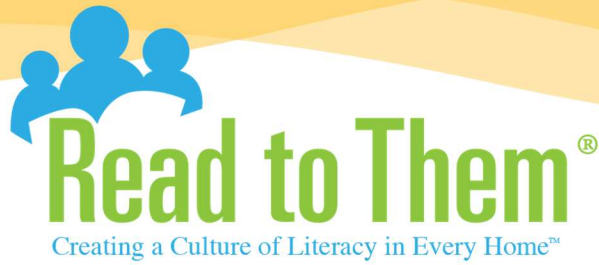
Learn a Song about Dogs – My Dog Rags a fun one with hand motions. Here’s a video of it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjiH_pj1_Lw

Math

Weighing Animals – Put out a balance scale with an assortment of plastic animals. You can add unifix cubes or other small manipulatives. Students can see how many cubes it takes to balance the scale for different sized animals.

Dog Bone Math – Use dog treats shaped like bones for your math manipulatives. Use them to practice counting.

Graphing Pets – Make a class graph showing which pets are owned by your students. You can also make a graph of what pet students would most like to own. Put out cards with pictures of various animals: dog, cat, fish, bird, lizard, hedgehog, horse, goat. You can be as silly as you want and include animals like elephants and monkeys, too. Put the cards out in a row. Give children time to think about which animal they would most like to have. Then have them walk to the card showing their choice, forming a line at each card and a human graph. Count heads in each row together and figure out which animal is the most popular and which is the least. (This graphing technique works great when you need children to choose one from a set. It keeps them from voting more than once.)



STEM and Sensory

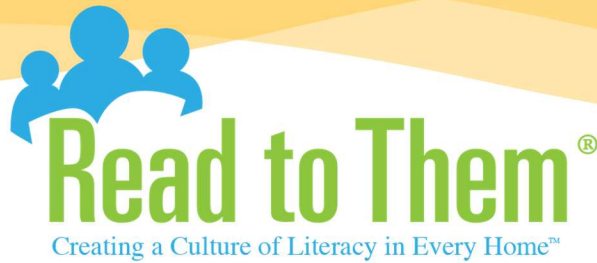
Dog Themed Sensory Bin – Use dog food as your filler and add plastic dogs, small food bowls, dog toys, and bone-shaped treats.

Build the Best Dog Park – Put out some plastic dogs with your blocks and challenge the students to build the best dog park ever. You can add some other loose parts like small mirrors to be water features, craft sticks and clothespins to make fences, green felt for grass, stones, flat florist marbles, sticks, etc.

Build a Skate Park – In Dog Days, Gavin loves to skateboard. Put out some toy skateboards and challenge your students to build a skateboard park in your block area.

Story Retelling

Story Basket – Choose one of the suggested titles to highlight. Read it to the class and then put it out with a basket of props to use in retelling the story. Include small dolls, animals, pieces of felt, and loose parts that can be used as props.

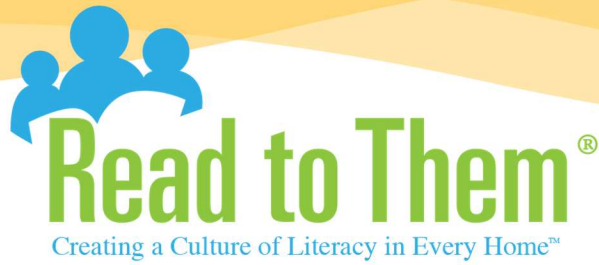


Sharing Stories Outside

Any activity you do inside can be done outside – bigger, louder, messier, and more fun. (See *Sharing Stories Outside* in this packet for tips on making your outside day a success and every trip to the playground more fun.)

Here are some activity ideas to get you started for a Sharing Stories Outside day inspired by *Dog Days*:

- Collaborative Art – Make your painting projects BIG. Draw an outline of a dog in black Sharpie on a piece of poster board. The Blue Dog by George Rodrigue (see Art activity above) is easy to draw. Attach the poster board to a fence or put it on a sturdy easel. Squirt each primary color of paint, mixed with clear dish soap, on sheet pans set back from the poster board. To keep from ending up with “Preschool Brown,” put each color on a separate tray. Add sponge balls or bath scrubbers. Have children dip the sponge balls or scrubbers in the paint and then throw them at the poster board. As they throw the paint balls, look for spontaneous paint mixing. After it dries, cut out the dog and you will have a collaborative art masterpiece.
- Rolling Through Paint – If your school has scooter boards, take them outside. Lay out a big piece of cardboard, a sheet of plywood, or a canvas drop cloth. Squirt some paint mixed with clear dish soap in some large sheet pans. Have children dip the wheels of their scooter board in the paint, set it on the cardboard or drop cloth, and scooter around to leave paint tracks. (If using a drop cloth, secure the edges with heavy boards, rocks, or logs so it doesn’t bunch up.) You can also set up a ramp, cover it in bulletin board paper, and use toy cars.
- Build the Best Skateboard Park – In *Dog Days*, Gavin loves to skateboard. If your school has scooter boards and a big area to use them, have them build a scooter board park using cardboard boxes, pieces of plywood, large blocks of wood – whatever you have around that could be an obstacle.
- Outdoor Sensory – One great way to raise money like Gavin is to have a car wash, and that makes a great outdoor sensory activity. Gather up all the cars, including Cozy Coupes from the playground. Put out big bins of soapy water, big carwash sponges cut in half, watering cans with clear water, and old towels and let the kids wash the cars. (This would be a great way to get your scooter boards clean after you use them for painting in the above activity.) If you are game, you can park your car near your outside area and let them wash it!
- Wash the animals – Take your Pet Spa (see Dramatic Play above) outside.
- Picnic Snack – Have some foods inspired by the books you read.



- Construction – Save cardboard boxes to be used outside for building. Challenge students to build a fun place for pets to play.
- Animal Walks – Practice moving like different animals. Have all the students start at one end of the play area. Call out an animal and have them move like that animal across to the other side. (This game is more challenging – and fun – if you have a hill they can go up and down.) Some animals to try:
 - Puppy – crawling and barking with some tail-wagging
 - Cat – crawling more delicately with some back-arching and meowing
 - Bear – on hands and feet with knees off the ground
 - Snake – slithering along the ground
 - Horse – galloping
 - Giraffe – stretched up tall on tiptoes
 - Elephant – waving a trunk and stomping feet
 - Fox – prancing with careful feet

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