

Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom
Topic of Study: Animals on the Farm

My Farm Friends by Wendell Minor
Old Macdonald Had a Farm illustrated by Pam Adams
Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown, Illustrated by Felicia Bond

Introduction

In this guide children are engaged in activities that primarily support two domains in the *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months: Emergent Literacy and Science and Technology*. The **Learning Goals** (with **Strands**) that precede each activity relate to specific areas of development and learning that are the focus of the activities.

Through two storybooks and one informational book, children are introduced to animals on the farm. A CD is available with the book, *Old Macdonald Had a Farm*, illustrated by Pam Adams. This is a book with holes. As each animal is introduced, children can see that animal through a hole in the facing page. *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Felicia Bond, is a classic barnyard story with a lulling text and exquisite illustrations. The informational book, *My Farm Friends*, by Wendell Minor, provides children easy to understand information about each animal. This guide and the featured books would be appropriate for even the youngest preschoolers.

Connection to Adventures in Learning

This curriculum guide can stand alone or be used as a supplement to the following topic of study in **Adventures in Learning**:

- Focus Area: Animals – Topic of Study: Animals on the Farm

This curriculum guide can also be used with similar topics of study from any curriculum.

Materials to Collect and Make

- Use the attached pictures of farm animals to create cards to be used for activities within the curriculum guide. (See Attachment: [Mother and Baby Animal Pictures](#)) Laminate the pictures for durability.
- Make one set to be used for transitions. If necessary, make duplicates of some of the pictures so that you have at least one picture for each child in your group.
- Make one set, laminate and attach either felt or a magnetic strip to the back so that children can use the pictures to create and tell their own stories.
- Make a sorting mat (See Attachment: [Sorting Mat - Mother and Baby Animals](#))
- Make a duplicate copy of the attached picture of a barn. (See Attachment: [Barn](#)) Laminate both copies.
- Attach felt or magnetic strips to the back of one of the barn pictures so children can use it on the felt or magnetic board with the farm animal pictures.
- Attach the other copy to the Our Farm mural to which children will add pictures they draw or cut out of magazines.
- Collect magazines or other resources that have pictures of farm animals.
- Obtain a large appliance box so that children can create a barn. Cut out a large door and windows. Make sure you can easily see inside the barn.

Story Presentations

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension, informational texts*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*living things*)

Book: *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Felicia Bond

Procedures:

- Prepare to read the book, *Big Red Barn*.
- Show the cover and invite children to tell you what they see.
- Give the title, author and illustrator.
- Say to the children, "Let's read about the animals who live in the big red barn."
- Begin to read the story, allowing children to see the illustrations and make comments about what they see.
- Explain words that may be unfamiliar to children. For example, a weather vane shows the direction of the wind: north, south, east or west. A bantam rooster and a bantam hen are smaller than most roosters and hens. A clutch of eggs is a nest of eggs the hen has laid.
- Follow up the reading by showing the pages and invite children to discuss what they remember about what you read on each page.
- Explain to children that the book will be in the Library Center for them to look at on their own or read with a friend.
- State that you will be reading the story later with a small group of children.

Second Reading: *The Big Red Barn*

Procedures:

- Gather a small group of children (3 to 5) in the story reading area or the Library Center.
- Show the cover and invite children to say the name of the book. Give author and illustrator.
- Read the story with the children, allowing them to see the illustrations and make comments about what they say.
- Follow up the reading by inviting children to help you read the story. Begin to read, pointing to the animal that is being introduced and allow children to complete the sentences. For example, "There was a pink ____ (pig) who was beginning to squeal." "There was a great big ____ (horse) and a very little ____ (horse)" ""And on every barn is a weather vane, of course-a golden flying ____ (horse.)"
- Invite each child to tell you his/her favorite animal and tell you why he/she chose that one.

Teacher Note: *This process of allowing children to complete a sentence is called the cloze technique.*

Book: *Old Macdonald Had a Farm* illustrated by Pam Adams (CD included)

Procedures:

- Take book, CD and a CD player to the story reading area.
- Begin to play the CD and invite children to join in the singing.
- Show the cover, give the title and state that Pam Adams is the illustrator; she drew the pictures in the book.
- Read or sing the words as you show each page to the children.
- Allow children time to locate the picture of the animal that is being introduced.
- Follow up the reading by showing the two pages that introduce each animal, point to the words “bow wow” and say, “This animal says bow wow. Which animal is it?”
- Conclude the session by playing the CD and invite children to sing along.

Additional Learning Goals:

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

Book: *My Farm Friends* by Wendell Minor

Procedures:

- Take the three books, *Big Red Barn*, *Old Macdonald Had a Farm* and *My Farm Friends* to the story reading area.
- Show the first two books to the children and read the titles.
- Show the book, *My Farm Friends*, to the children and explain that this book has some of the same animals in it and they will learn interesting things about each one.
- Give the title and explain that Wendell Minor is both the author and the illustrator. He wrote the words and drew the pictures in the book.
- Show the double spread pages just before the title page. Invite children to describe what they see. Ask what time of day they think it is and to explain their answer.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up the reading by showing the first two pages and invite children to name the animals they see.
- Show the pages that introduce each animal. Run your fingers under the word Roosters and say to children, “This says Roosters. What does the rooster do?”
- Continue this process until all of the animals have been introduced.
- Show the pages titled “My Farm Friends Fun Facts”. Explain that here is more information about each animal and invite children who are interested to join you to learn more about the animals.

Teacher Note: *Involve children who are interested in learning more about the animals as follows: Show the animal as it is introduced in the story, then turn to the “My Farm Friends Fun Facts” and read the information about that animal. Encourage children to discuss what was read and to ask questions.*

Second Reading: *My Farm Friends*

Procedures:

- Show the cover and give title and author/illustrator.
- Read the story with the children, allowing them to make comments about what they see and hear.
- Follow up the reading by showing the last page that shows the baby animals and explaining to the children that each of the baby animals has a special name.
- Point to the kitten and say, "Baby cats are called kittens."
- Continue with the other animals as follows: "Baby chickens are called chicks. Baby sheep are called lambs. Baby pigs are called piglets. Baby cows are called calves. Baby ducks are called ducklings. Baby goats are called kids. Baby horses are called colts. Baby turkeys are called poults."

Additional Language and Literacy Activities

Learning Goals:

SE3.1 Shows awareness of self as unique individual (*preferences*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension, follows directions*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)





MT1.1 Demonstrates number sense and an understanding of quantity (*number names and count sequence, comparison of quantity, connection of number, numeral and quantity*)

Activity: My Favorite Farm Animal

Directions:

- Prepare a graph with columns for four animals found on the farm: horse, cow, sheep, and pig. Use a picture of each with the name written on it.
- Make name cards for each child in a size that will fit on the graph.
- Go over the chart with the children, explaining that they will decide which animal they like best by placing their name card in the correct column.
- Allow each child a turn to say which animal he/she likes best, tell why, and place his/her name card in the correct column.
- Invite the children to count the number of children who like each animal.

Our Favorite Animal on the Farm

5				
4		George		
3	Beckett	Hayden		Emmett
2	Maria	LaTonya	Taylor	Olivia
1	Lucy	Peyton	Juan	Lane
	 Horse	 Cow	 Sheep	 Pig

- Involve children in writing a summary story as follows.
- Read the story back to the children.

Our Favorite Animal on the Farm

Four children like the cow the best. Three children like the horse and the pig the best. Two children like the sheep the best.

Learning Environment

Library Center

- Add the books, *Big Red Barn* and *My Farm Friends*
- Add a set of magnetic or felt farm animal pictures and the barn picture and a felt or magnetic board

Discovery Center

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension, follows directions*)

ST3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things, the earth's environment, and physical objects and materials (*living things*)

Activity: **Mother and Baby Farm Animal Match**

- Place sorting mat and the pictures of mother and baby animals on the table.
- Invite a small group of children to join you in the center.
- Show the pictures to the children and ask one child at a time to find two pictures that go together; pictures of a mother and baby animal and to name the mother and the baby.
- Invite each child to look at the sorting mat and place his/her picture in the correct column.
- Allow children to play with the pictures and the sorting mat on their own.
- Suggest that children invite others to play the game.

Block Center

- Add farm animal figurers, small tractors and trucks to the block center
- Add a sign that reads: **Old Macdonald's Farm**

Water Center

- Add rubber farm animal figures and small brushes to the water play center

Art Center

Learning Goals:

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*writing and drawing tools, scissors*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Activity: **Our Farm Animals Mural**

- Label a large sheet of butcher paper **Our Farm Animals**.
- Add the picture of a barn
- Suggest that children draw pictures of farm animals, cut them out and add them to the scene.
- Provide magazines or other resources with pictures of farm animals from which children can cut out pictures and add them to the mural.
- Accept all pictures children add to the mural

Teacher Note: *Place a copy of *The Big Red Barn* and *My Farm Friends* in or near the art center.*

Activity: **Painting the Barn**

- Provide a large appliance box, red paint and large paint brushes.
- Invite children to help paint the barn.
- Make sure each child who wants to help paint the barn has a turn.
- Allow the barn to dry.
- Involve children in deciding where to place the barn; either indoors or outdoors.
- Guide children to set guidelines for how to incorporate the barn into their activities. For example, if it is to be used as a quiet area, a couple of soft pillows and farm animal books may be added, and one child at a time may be in the barn.

Teacher Note: *Painting of the barn can take place either indoors or outdoors. Have children wear paint shirts. Guide them in how to use the brushes.*

Transition Activities

CD2.2 Shows flexibility in adjusting thinking and behavior to different contexts (*flexible thinking*)

Name Your Mother and Baby Farm Animal

- Give each child a picture card of a mother or baby farm animal. Make sure you have matching pictures.
- Invite one child at a time to stand, show his or her picture and say, "This horse is looking for her baby colt." Child with matching picture stands, shows picture and says, "Here is your baby colt." The two children transition to the next activity.
- Continue this until each child has transitioned.

Family Connection and Engagement

- Send home a note explaining that the children are learning about animals on the farm.
- Include in the note the names of the animals in the books, *Big Red Barn*, *My Farm Friends* and *Old Macdonald Had a Farm*.
- Suggest that families visit their local library with their child and ask the librarian to help them locate and check out the three books and/or other books about farm animals. Read the books with the children.
- Suggest that families, with their children, do a google search for photos and information about the various farm animals and discuss the photos they see as well as information in which their children seem to be interested.

Additional Books

Barn Dance by Bill Martin, Jr., and John Archambault, illustrated by Ted Rand

Moo, Baa, La La La by Sandra Boynton

Mrs. Wishy-Washy's Farm by Joy Cowley, illustrated by Elizabeth Fuller