

#6.2 - Pets: Cats

Before You Begin

- Review Introduction and Preparation for the Focus Area – Animals in Our World
- Refer to Developing Weekly Activities Plans for Adventures for Toddlers for information on how to develop your plans.

Big Ideas

Here are some big ideas about toddlers and their pets that you can help them explore:

- We can have cats as pets.
- We can help take care of our cats.
- Cats are different colors.
- Cats purr and meow.
- Some cats have beds.

Materials to Collect and Make

Featured Books

Three Little Kittens by Paul Galdone
Mama Cat Has Three Kittens by Denise Fleming
Cat's Colors by Jane Cabrera

Mother Goose Books

Key: (BB) – Available in Board Book only
(+BB) – Also available in Board Book

Note: See the **Book List** section for additional books that can be used if some of the featured books are unavailable and as supplemental books to read with children.

Storytelling Figures and Mother Goose Rhyme Charts

- Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the book and the story, *Three Little Kittens* (See Attachment: [Three Little Kittens](#))
- Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the Mother Goose Rhyme, "Hey Diddle Diddle" (See Attachment: [Hey Diddle Diddle](#))
- Illustrated Mother Goose Rhyme Chart for "Hey Diddle Diddle"

Additional Materials

- Mittens (adult or child size)
- Color cats from construction paper or cardstock (brown, gray, yellow, orange, white) (See Attachment: [Cats of Many Colors](#))
- Kitten and four mittens (blue, red, yellow, green) (See Attachment: [Three Little Mittens](#))

Book List

Featured Books

Three Little Kittens by Paul Galdone

Mama Cat Has Three Kittens by Denise Fleming

Cat's Colors by Jane Cabrera

Additional Books

Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Felicia Bond (also available in Spanish)

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr., illustrated by Eric Carle (also available in Spanish)

The Farmer in the Dell by Pam Adams

I Went Walking by Sue Williams, illustrated by Julie Vivas

Kittens First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes

The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone

Mr. Gumpy's Outing by John Burningham

This is the Farmer by Nancy Tafuri

Reading Books with Toddlers

Teacher's Note: Review the section in *Curriculum Tips and Techniques* on *Reading Books with Children*, for suggestions on how to use books with children.

Learning Goals:

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

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences

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

Book: *Three Little Kittens* by Paul Galdone (**YT & OT**)

First Reading of *Three Little Kittens*

- Take several pairs of adult or child size mittens to the book area and begin to say the rhyme, "Three little kittens, they lost their mittens and they began to cry..."
- Invite children to examine the mittens. Respond to their comments or ask questions to gain an understanding of what they know about mittens. Say, "These are mittens. Do you have mittens? When do you wear your mittens? Do your mittens look like these?"
- Collect the mittens from the children.
- Show the cover of the book and state the title.
- Call attention to the mittens the kittens are wearing. Point to each kitten in turn and say, "This kitten has on red mittens. This one has green mittens and this one has on blue mittens."
- Read the story with the children. Vary your voice and facial expressions to reflect the emotions of the characters in the story. For example, use a scolding voice for the mother when she says, "What! Lost your mittens, you naughty kittens."
- Continue with the story to the end.
- Follow up the reading of the story by showing some of the pictures and inviting children to discuss whether or not the kittens have their mittens. Encourage children to discuss why or why not the kittens have their mittens.

Second Reading of *Three Little Kittens*

- Begin to say the rhyme, “Three Little Kittens” as you go to the book area.
- Show the cover of the book and state the title.
- Encourage children to make comments about the pictures.
- Involve them in repeating “Meow, meow, meow” when the kittens do.
- Follow up the reading of the story by showing the pictures and inviting children to describe what is happening in the pictures. Support the children by asking prompt questions such as “How did the three little kittens get their mittens dirty? How did the three little kittens get their mittens clean?”

Teacher Note: *The follow up suggestions for both the **First** and the **Second Readings** may be more appropriate for older toddlers.*

Book: *Mama Cat Has Three Kittens* by Denise Fleming (YT & OT)

First Reading of *Mama Cat Has Three Kittens*

- Go to the book area and say to children who join you, “I have another story about a mama cat and her three kittens.
 - Show the cover and state the title.
 - Begin to read the story, taking time to call attention to the details in the illustrations. For example, in the first double spread page, point to Mama Cat and each of the three kittens as you read their names.
 - Follow up the reading of the story by showing the first double spread pages and again naming the cats. Show the different pages, describe what Mama Cat is doing, turn the page and say that Fluffy and Skinny do what their mother has done. They wash their paws and walk the stone wall, for example.
 - Invite children to find Boris on each of the pages and ask, “Is Boris doing what Fluffy and Skinny are doing? What is Boris doing? That’s right, Boris is napping.”
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Second Reading of *Mama Cat Has Three Kittens*

- Invite children to join you in the book area to hear a story about Mama Cat and her three kittens.
- Show the cover and state the title.
- Show the first double spread page and name the cats.
- Read the story with the children. Invite children to make comments about the illustrations and/or the story.
- Follow up the reading by showing the page where Mama Cat is washing her paws. Invite children to look at the illustrations and describe what Mama Cat is doing.
- Turn the page and again invite children to look at the illustrations and describe what Fluffy and Skinny are doing.
- Invite children to find Boris on each of the pages and describe what Boris is doing.
- Continue with this until the end of the story.

Teacher Note: *The follow up suggestions for both the **First** and **Second** readings may be more appropriate for older toddlers.*

Book: *Cat's Colors* by Jane Cabrera

First Reading of *Cat's Colors* (OT)

- Invite children to join you to hear a story about a cat.
- Show the cover and give the title.
- Call children's attention to the color of the cat (orange with black stripes) and the cat's whiskers and claws. Encourage children's comments about their experiences with cats.
- Show the first page and read, "I'm Cat. What is my favorite color?" Name the colors of the stripes on the page, from top to bottom.
- Ask children, "Which color do you think is Cat's favorite?" Accept all answers. Say, "Let's read and find out Cat's favorite color."
- Read the story with the children, allowing children to make comments about the illustrations. For example, they may notice the cows walking in the green grass or the bees in the pink petals of the flowers.
- Follow up the reading by showing each double-spread page and asking, "Is Cat's favorite color green? Is it pink? Is it black? Is it red? Is it yellow? Is it purple? Is it brown? Is it blue? Is it white? Is it orange? Why is orange Cat's favorite color?"
- Show and read the text on the last double-spread page: "Orange is the color of my mother." Invite children to find Cat.

Second Reading of *Cat's Colors*

- Invite children to join you in the book area to read the story, *Cat's Colors*.
- Show the cover and state the title.
- Show the first page and read, "I'm Cat. What is my favorite color?" Name the colors of the stripes on the page.
- Say, "I'm going to name the colors again. Stop me when I get to Cat's favorite color." If children say "orange", say, "That's right. Orange is Cat's favorite color." If children say another color say, "Let's read and find out if red is Cat's favorite color."
- Read the book with the children. Invite children to notice the other animals that share each page with Cat. For example, cows are in the grass and bees are in the flowers.
- Follow up the reading by showing each double-spread page and inviting children to discuss what is happening on the page.
- Relate the colors on the page to the child's environment. For example, say, "We have green grass on our playground. Camilla has on a blue dress. Andrew's shirt is yellow."

Language and Literacy Activities

Learning Goals:

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

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences

Planned Activity: Storytelling (YT & OT)

Three Little Kittens (See Attachment: [Three Little Kittens](#))

How to begin:

- Make either felt or magnetic storytelling figures for the story.
- Read the book and the rhyme with children several times so that they are familiar with the characters and the order of events.
- Use the storytelling figures to tell the story.
- Involve children in placing figures on the storyboard when you feel they can do this.

Learning Goals:

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

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences

EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language (*rhyme*)

Planned Activity: Storytelling (YT & OT)

Color Mittens (See Attachment: [Three Little Kittens](#) for patterns that can be used)

How to begin:

- Make a kitten and four felt or magnetic mittens (blue, red, yellow, green) for the story, Color Mittens.
- Use the figures to tell the following story:

Color Mittens

My poor little kitten lost her mitten (Place kitten on storyboard)
And began to cry, “Boohoo.” (Pretend to cry)
So I helped my kitten look for her mitten (Cup hand above eye and glance around)
Her beautiful mitten of blue.

I found a mitten just right for a kitten
Under my mother’s bed. (Pretend to peek under bed)
But, alas, the mitten was not the right mitten, (Place red mitten on storyboard)
For it was colored red.

I found a mitten just right for a kitten
Under my father’s pillow. (Pretend to peek under pillow)
But alas, the mitten was not the right mitten (Place yellow mitten on the storyboard)
For it was colored yellow.

I found a mitten just right for a kitten
Under the laundry so clean. (Pretend to peek under folded laundry)
But, alas, the mitten was not the right mitten (Place green mitten on the storyboard)
For it was colored green.

I found a mitten just right for a kitten
Inside my favorite shoe. (Pretend to peek inside shoe)
And this time the mitten was just the right mitten, (Place blue mitten on storyboard next
For it was colored blue. to kitten)

Extensions:

- Make enough mittens of the different colors for each child to have one.
- Read the story and invite children to hold up the correct mitten when you say the color word and to say the word.
- Read the story at another time and invite children to fill in the rhyming word, which would be the color words.

Teacher Notes:

- *The **Extension** activities may be more appropriate for older toddlers.*
- ***Color Mittens** is from the Arkansas Children’s Week booklet, “Tell Me a Story.”*

Learning Goals:

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*)

Planned Activity: Storytelling (YT & OT)

Mother Goose Rhyme, "Hey Diddle Diddle" (See Attachment: [Hey Diddle Diddle](#))

- Make felt or magnetic felt storytelling figures for the rhyme.
- Read the rhyme with the children from a Mother Goose book that has one rhyme per page so that children can see illustrations more clearly.
- Use the storytelling figures to say the rhyme.
- Involve children in placing figures on the storyboard when you feel they can do this.

Planned Activity: Illustrated Mother Goose Rhyme Chart (YT & OT)

"Mother Goose Rhyme, "Hey Diddle Diddle" (See Attachment: [Hey Diddle Diddle](#))

- Make an illustrated rhyme chart for the rhyme. Laminate or cover the chart with clear self-adhesive paper for durability. (Refer to Tips and Techniques: Making Charts, for information on making charts).
- Read the rhyme at another time, again using a Mother Goose book.
- Show the rhyme chart and again read the rhyme with the children.
- Post the rhyme chart on the wall at children's eye level. Observe children and, if they notice the chart, join them in saying the rhyme.

Planned Activity: Cats of Many Colors (YT & OT)

Materials: construction paper or cardstock cats in five colors: brown, gray, yellow, orange, white (3 of each color), storyboard (See Attachment: [Cats of Many Colors](#))

How to begin:

- Make three sets of cats in five colors: brown, gray, yellow, orange, and white.
- Laminate or cover the cats in clear self-adhesive paper for durability.
- Place a strip of magnetic tape or felt on the back of each cat
- Saw the following as you place the appropriate color cat on the storyboard:

I went walking,
And what did I see?
I saw a gray cat
Walking toward me.

- Continue with all of the colors.

Extension:

- Invite each child to select a color cat.
- Say the poem and invite children to place the appropriate color cat on the storyboard when you feel children are ready for this.

Teacher Note: *More than one child may have the same color cat. Invite the children with matching cats to place their cats on the board together.*

Self, Social and Emotional Activities

Learning Goals:

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

PH2.1 Demonstrates fine-motor strength, control and coordination (*hand-eye coordination*)

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*variety of tools*)

Planned Activity: Our Book of Pets (YT & OT)

Materials: pictures of cats, glue in small containers, craft sticks for spreading glue, **Our Book of Pets** from the previous Toddler Topic: Pets: Dogs

How to begin:

- Refer to the Toddler Topic: #6.1 - Dogs, **Planned Experience:** Our Book of Pets
- Have pictures of cats cut from magazines.
- Display the pictures of cats on a tray or on the table so children can easily choose one.
- Invite each child to select one of the cats to be his or her pet.
- Talk the child through the steps: turn the picture face down, use the craft stick to spread glue on the back of the picture, place the picture glue-side down and place on the child's page.

Extensions:

- Read the book when it is completed. Show each page and say whose page it is. Invite the child to name the pets on his or her page.
- Place the book in the book area for children to look at independently. Observe to see if they recognize their own page.
- Suggest that children share the book with their families.

Teacher Note: *Provide pictures of other pets such as fish, birds, hamsters, or gerbils for children who may have those pets at home.*

Planned Activity: What Did You See? (OT)

Materials: color cats from the **Planned Experience: Cats of Many Colors**, container, storyboard

How to begin:

- Place the cats in a container.
- Invite each child to select a cat.
- Begin to say the following:

Joel went walking
Joel, what did you see?
I saw a black cat
Walking toward me.

- Child places black cat on the storyboard.
- Continue this experience with each child having a turn placing his or her cat on the board.

Sensory and Art Materials and Activities

CD1.1 Shows curiosity and a willingness to try new things (*exploration and investigation*)

CD3.1 Uses reasoning and planning ahead to so solve problems and reach goals (*problem solving*)

Planned Activity: Find the Animals (OT)

Materials: clean sand, container such as a small dish pan, small vinyl animals: cats and dogs

Hot to begin:

- Place about three inches of clean sand in a container.
- Hide four or five small cats and dogs in the sand.
- Place the container on a low table.
- Observe a child who is playing in the sand. If the child finds the animals, invite the child to tell you about the experience. Respond to what they tell you. For example, if a child shows you a cat and says, "Cat," say, "Isabella, you found a cat buried in the sand. I wonder if there is another animal in the sand."

Extension:

- Consider substituting clean hay/straw for the sand. (Be sure to check for allergies before using hay/straw)

Planned Activity: Find the Animals – Feely Box (YT& OT)

How to begin:

- Create a feely box by decorating a shoe box to look like a dog house and cut a hole in one end large enough for a child's hand to reach into the box.
- Place small figures of dogs and cats in the box.
- Invite younger toddlers to reach in and pull out an animal and name it.

Learning Goals:

SE1.2 Interacts with peers (*stages of play*)

PH2.1 Demonstrates fine motor strength, control, and coordination (*hand-eye coordination*)

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*variety of tools*)

Planned Activity: Pet Store Mural (YT & OT)

Materials: pictures of dogs, cats, pet birds, gold fish, and pet related items such as dog food, kitty litter, dog shampoo, dog or cat bed, dog leash, bird cage, fish bowl or aquarium, long sheet of butcher paper, glue in small containers, craft sticks for spreading glue

How to begin:

- Display the pictures in a flat container such as a cookie sheet so that children can see them.
- Tape a long sheet of butcher paper to a table.
- Write the words "Our Pet Store" across the top of the paper.
- Place the container with pictures, glue in small containers and the craft sticks on the table.
- Explain to children that they are going to create a pet store and that everyone who wants to can help with the picture.
- Invite children to select a picture to add to the pet store.
- Guide children to place the picture top side down on the table, use the craft stick to spread glue on the back of the picture, and place the picture in the spot of their choice on the butcher paper.
- Allow children to add more than one picture to the pet store.

Extensions:

- Extend this experience over several days so that children can add pictures on more than one day.
- Consider drawing an aquarium or fish bowls on the butcher paper for children to place fish.
- Invite older toddlers to tell you about some of the things on the mural such as the dog shampoo and dog leash.

Teacher Note: Allow children to do as much of this experience as they can, guiding and supporting as needed. All children **DO NOT** have to participate in this experience. This is a choice for children.

Movement, Music and Gross Motor Activities

Learning Goals:

PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills (*traveling*)

PH1.2 Shows stability and balance (*core stability*)

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

Planned Activity: Cat Moves (YT & OT)

Materials: none

How to begin:

- Model and invite children to move as directed in the following rhyme:

<p style="text-align: center;">Stretch, stretch, stretch, stretch Just like a cat. Stretch, stretch, stretch, stretch. Just like that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Walk on tiptoe, As softly as a cat. Walk on tiptoe Just like that.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Walk on four feet (crawl) Pretend you're a cat. Walk on four feet Just like that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Curl up in a ball Like a sleeping cat. Curl up in a ball Just like that.</p>
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Transition Times

Learning Goal:

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

Color Cats

- Use the cats from the **Planned Activity: Cats of Many Colors**.
- Keep one set of the cats and invite children to select a color cat.
- Show one of your cats and say, "Will all of the gray cats please go to....."
- Transition children with the same color cats to the next experience.

Extension:

- Use mittens from **Planned Experience: Color Mittens** to transition children to the next experience.

Teacher Note: *Adapt other finger plays previously listed as transitions to move children from one activity or place to another.*

Family Connection and Engagement

Send home a note to families stating that for the next few days, the children will be learning about pets. Include a list of children's books about cats. Suggest that families can be involved in the following ways:

- Send photos of their child's pet. Include photos of the child with his or her pet. Ask families to put the name of the pet on the back of the photo.
- Bring in pictures of pets from calendars and magazines, for example.
- Teach the caregivers how to say "cat" and the names for colors in their home language if it is not English.
- Check out books about cats from the local library to read with their child.