Play is the most powerful way babies learn.

Every time you play, sing or read to babies they are learning about language.

By sharing this book and play activities with them they will have the opportunity to:

- Learn that books provide fun times with special people.
- Explore concepts including shape and colour.
- Build their vocabulary by hearing lots of language in playful situations.

We hope these activities will provide you with a starting point for fun play with babies.

Engaging with Language and Literacy

Welcome To The Big Top

- You can set the scene for this book by cutting rolls of brightly coloured crepe paper into long strips.
- Attach one end of each strip to a hoop and hang the hoop from a centre point in the ceiling.
- Take the ends of the crepe paper out to the walls, attach it and let the ends hang down.
- Ensure the ends are not long enough to pose a risk for children.

When you are reading to babies:

- Find a comfortable place where the babies feel safe and secure.
- Choose a time when the babies are not tired or restless. It’s ok to put a book down and come back to it later if the baby becomes unsettled or distracted.
- Be enthusiastic when you read. Babies will pick up on your cues; if you are having fun they will too.
- Try and read to babies several times a day. Have regular reading times and make the most of spontaneous opportunities.
Help the babies learn while you read:

- Point out the pictures and name new objects.
- Relate the books to aspects of the baby's life, eg, “Spot is a dog, you have a dog at your house too”.
- Use opportunities to help develop new concepts, eg, colours, shape, opposites etc...

Read more adventures of Spot the Dog by Eric Hill.

If the babies are old enough you may want to visit www.funwithspot.com and enter the play site. You can introduce them to Spot's family and friends, play games with Spot and watch some of Spot's adventures.

Enjoying Imaginative Play

Help develop babies’ imaginations by playing with toy animals:

- If possible use animals that featured in the book.
- If you don’t have any similar animals you can draw a picture of an animal, cut it out and stick it on a pop-stick to make a puppet.
- When you are talking to the baby make connections between the animal you are playing with and the book.
- The babies will enjoy hearing the toy talk to them. This is a great opportunity to talk to babies and show them how conversations work.

Discovering Sensory Play

In the story Spot was looking for his ball.

Have fun exploring balls, balloons and other round objects:

- Babies will enjoy rolling a soft ball back and forth with you. Watching the balls journey is a good tracking activity for babies.
- Give babies a variety of size and weight balls to play with. Heavier balls are good for developing upper body strength while smaller balls help develop fine motor control.
- Give babies a suitable box or basket so they can put the balls in and take them out again.
• Play hide and seek with a ball. Hide a ball under a small blanket and encourage the babies to find it. Use repetitive language with the babies to reinforce new words and concepts.

• Play with balloons but keep in mind that some babies may get a fright if they pop.

Babies will enjoy the bold, colourful illustrations in the book.

Provide experiences for the babies that will develop their awareness of colour:

• Find the colourful stars with the babies in the book and then make a star mobile for them to watch.

• Make a colourful flag for the babies to hold and wave. Help them to find the flags in the book.

• Provide toys that are all the same colour for the babies to play with. Swap colours when they begin to lose interest.

• There are many simple board books about colours available that the babies will enjoy or make your own.

Having Fun with Music and Movement

Learn some finger plays about circuses and clowns:

• The Little Clown
  • Draw faces on your fingertips or use finger puppets for something different.
  • Circus Elephant

For more book suggestions, tip sheets, nursery rhymes, songs and fun things to make and do please visit: thelittlebigbookclub.com.au
Other books to try:

Other Spot books by Eric Hill

Where's Spot
Spot Loves His Dad
Spot Goes to the Park
Spot Goes to the Farm
Spot’s Birthday Party

Songs & Rhymes:

The Little Clown
This little clown is fat and gray (hold up thumb)
This little clown does tricks all day (hold up next finger)
This little clown is tall and strong (hold up next finger)
This little clown is wee and small (hold up next finger)
And this little clown can do anything at all (hold up little finger)

Circus Elephant
A circus elephant I went to see
(Hold hand over eyes like binoculars)
He had four legs and was bigger than me
(Hold up four fingers and then point to self)
He had two ears big and round
(Show two fingers and make a circle with hands)
And one long nose that made a sound errrrr
(Make elephant trunk with arm)
Play is the most powerful way toddlers learn.

Every time you play, sing or read to toddlers they are learning about language.

By sharing this book and play activities with them they will have the opportunity to:

- Learn that books provide fun times with special people.
- Build their vocabulary by hearing lots of language in playful situations.
- Explore concepts including shape and spatial awareness.

We hope these activities will provide you with a starting point for fun play with toddlers.

Engaging with Language and Literacy

Welcome To The Big Top

- You can set the scene for this book by cutting rolls of brightly coloured crepe paper into long strips.
- Attach one end of each strip to a hoop and hang the hoop from a centre point in the ceiling.
- Take the ends of the crepe paper out to the walls, attach it and let the ends hang down.
- Ensure the ends are not long enough to pose a risk for children.

Reading Corner

- Make a smaller Big Top using strips of red and white material attached to a hoop.
- Construct and hang in the reading corner with a sign that says “Roll Up Roll Up to the Amazing Reading Tent!”
- Make a circus train with the children using old, strong boxes, paint, collage and other recycled materials.
- Use the carriages of the train to display books for the children to read.

Providing background information before reading the book can enhance children’s understanding and enjoyment of the story.

Spot Goes To The Circus
by Eric Hill

Make reading a fun experience. When toddlers enjoy being read to they will grow to love books and want to learn to read themselves.

For more book suggestions, tip sheets, nursery rhymes, songs and fun things to make and do please visit: thelittlebigbookclub.com.au
Before reading the book you can:
- Look at the pictures in the book and talk about them.
- Talk about circuses and look at other circus pictures. Search Google Images for suitable pictures.

When you are reading to toddlers:
- Find a comfortable place where they feel safe and secure.
- If you are reading to a small group make sure everyone can see the pictures.
- Choose a time when the toddlers are not tired or restless. It’s ok to put a book down and come back to it later if they become unsettled or distracted.
- Be enthusiastic when you read. Toddlers will pick up on your cues, if you are having fun they will too.
- Try and read to toddlers several times a day. Have regular reading times and make the most of spontaneous opportunities. Toddlers like routines so start or end each day with a book. Reading after active play times can be a good settling activity.

Help the toddlers learn while you read:
- Point out the pictures and name new objects.
- Relate the books to aspects of the toddler’s life, eg, “Spot is a dog, you have a dog at your house too”.
- Use opportunities to help reinforce new concepts, eg, colours, shape, opposites etc...

Read more adventures of Spot the Dog by Eric Hill.
Visit www.funwithspot.com and enter the play site. You can introduce the toddlers to Spot’s family and friends, play games with Spot and watch some of Spot’s adventures.
Enjoying Imaginative Play

Circus Dress Ups
- Many toddlers will be beginning to enjoy dressing up, especially as they are learning the necessary skills to do it themselves.
- Add wigs, top hats, adult shoes, capes etc... to the dramatic play area.
- Provide the children with hula hoops, soft balls, toy circus animals and let them explore.

Circus Tent
- Some toddlers will enjoy playing inside a “tent”.
- You can make your own by hanging a blanket over a table or attaching material to a hoop and hanging it from the ceiling.
- You may want to consider purchasing a mosquito net or small tent that can be reused in a variety of imaginative play settings.
- In the tent you can:
  - Provide the toddlers with toy animals so that they can play “circuses”.
  - Provide props so that they can retell the story with you.
  - Play peek-a-boo.
  - Have a special reading time.
  - Play with familiar toys.
  - Experiment with torches.

Discovering Sensory Play

Play Pin the Nose On the Clown
- Draw a large face of a clown with the nose missing.
- Make noses out of red coloured card with double sided tape or blu tak on the back. You may want to write each child’s name on a nose.
- Stick the poster to a wall.
- Depending on the toddler’s age, turn them around 2-3 times and point them in the right direction.
Can you count how many balloons the elephant in the story had?

- Play with balloons but keep in mind that some toddlers may get a fright if they pop.
- Show the toddlers what happens if you blow up a balloon and let it go without tying a knot in it.
- Blow up a balloon and then make it “sing” by slowly releasing the air out of it.
- Rub the balloon on the toddlers hair and see what happens.
- Make a balloon clown by tying strands of colourful wool around the knot of the balloon. Use permanent markers or stickers to make the face.

Make a balloon lotto game.

- Draw a six square grid on a piece of cardboard.
- Cut out balloon shapes from patterned or coloured paper.
- You will need two balloons from each pattern or colour.
- Stick one balloon onto the grid and use the other for matching.
- Make more grids and balloons so more children can play.

Fish for Spot’s Ball

- Blow up some balloons so they are about the size of an orange.
- Put them in the water play.
- Provide the children with wire food strainers or large ladles and ask them to catch Spot’s ball.
- Remember to always supervise children’s water play.
Exploring Our World

Clowning Around

- Lay each child down on a piece of butcher paper and trace around them with a texta.
- Draw a clown suit on them by adding stripes on their chest, ruffles around their necks, wrists and feet and a clown hat on their head.
- Provide the children with textas, crayons, paint and collage materials to decorate their clown suits.
- Display the finished clowns under the Big Top.

In the story Spot was looking for his ball.

Have fun exploring balls, balloons and other round objects:

- Toddlers will enjoy rolling a soft ball back and forth with you.
- Make a simple bowling game by using clean, empty milk cartons as the pins.
- Give toddlers a variety of size and weight balls to play with. Heavier balls are good for developing upper body strength while smaller balls help develop fine motor control.
- Provide a large open space where the toddlers can safely experiment with throwing and kicking.
- Show the toddlers how to make a ball shape out of play dough. How many balls can they make?
- Cut out different sized circles out of old wrapping paper and help the toddlers order them by size. You can also have fun doing this activity with lids of different sizes.

Pay Hide and Seek With a Ball

- Hide a ball from the toddlers.
- Use positional language to give them clues for finding it, eg, look under the cushion, look on top of the chair etc...

For more book suggestions, tip sheets, nursery rhymes, songs and fun things to make and do please visit: thelittlebigbookclub.com.au
Having Fun with Music and Movement

Musical Circles

- Cut circles out of coloured paper or card and tape them to the floor.
- Play music while the toddlers march around the circles.
- When the music stops the toddlers have to stand on a circle.
- Help them to name the colour of their circle before playing the music again.

Toddle on the Tightrope

- Use masking tape or similar on the floor to make a tightrope for the toddlers to walk along.
- If you have a small umbrella let them hold that so they can be like the pig in the story.
- If the toddlers find it easy give them a beanbag to balance on their head.

Learn some finger plays about circuses and clowns:

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  - Draw faces on your fingertips or use finger puppets for something different.
- Circus Elephant

Other books to try:

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This little clown is wee and small (hold up next finger)
And this little clown can do anything at all (hold up little finger)

**Circus Elephant**
A circus elephant I went to see
(Hold hand over eyes like binoculars)
He had four legs and was bigger than me
(Hold up four fingers and then point to self)
He had two ears big and round
(Show two fingers and make a circle with hands)
And one long nose that made a sound errrrr
(Make elephant trunk with arm)