Play is the most powerful way babies and toddlers learn.

Every time you play, sing or read with babies and toddlers they are learning about language.

The following activities have been designed as a starting point for Child Care Centres however, they can easily be adapted to use in the home or other setting.

Don’t forget to visit our website www.thelittlebigbookclub.com for more fun printable activities.

It’s Bed Time

This month The Little Big Book Club is focussing on the importance of bed time routines.

Engaging with Language and Literacy

Children are learning all the time.

They do not wait until they start school to develop their language and literacy skills.

When you are reading the book:

Let the children cuddle a baby doll or soft toy animal while you are reading the story. Don’t forget to end with a kiss goodnight for the toy baby.

Talk about the animals that are in the book. Hearing lots of new words in context will help babies and toddlers learn to talk. You could:

- Count the animals on each page.
- Say what colours the animals are.
- Use the name of the parent and baby eg cat and kitten.
- Make the animal sounds together.
- Talk about what the animals eat, where they sleep, experiences the children may have had with similar animals, for example, “Here is a green fish. We have some fish in our aquarium. Let’s go and look at them.”
- Let the children choose the page they like and then talk about what is happening in the picture.

Other bed time stories that you can read include:

- Ten In The Bed by Penny Dale
- What Will Baby Do? By Mike Dumbleton
- Maisy Goes To Bed by Lucy Cousins
- Good Night, Spot by Eric Hill
- Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney
- Baby Bedtime by DK Books
- The Going To Bed Book by Sandra Boynton

Make a list of the children’s favourite bed time stories and share it with parents and caregivers.
Enjoying Music and Movement

- Sing *Old MacDonald Had A Farm*, using the animals from the book.
  Hold the book up while you sing so the children know which animal is going to come next in the song.
- Pretend to be an animal
  Toddlers are beginning to understand the world of pretend play.
  Let them choose an animal from the book and together pretend to be that animal. Move like the animal and make its sound.

Exploring Our World

Young children love imitating the adults in their lives. Provide opportunities around the bedtime theme for them to be the mummy or daddy:

**Bath the Babies**
- This is a great activity for a hot day.
- Fill a tub full of soapy water and fill it with plastic dolls and dolls clothes.
- Give the children sponges and face washers and let them give the babies a bath.
- Sing a song together while you play, for example,
  *This is the way we wash the babies,*
  *Wash the babies, wash the babies,*
  *This is the way we wash the babies*
  *On a sunny day*
- Have towels ready to dry off the babies (and children).
- Tie a string between two poles or trees and give the children pegs to hang up the clean clothes... manipulating pegs is great for fine motor development.

**It's Bed Time**
- Create an area where the children can put toys (or each other) to bed.
- Shoeboxes make great beds for baby dolls.
- Provide some pillows and blankets and don’t forget some cuddly toys and books for bedtime stories!
- Encourage the children to sing their babies to sleep with familiar lullabies:
  - *Twinkle twinkle little star*
  - *Hush Little Baby*
  - *Rock A Bye Baby*

*Did you know that boys enjoy dolls just as much as girls?*  
*All children can benefit from the social skills, role play and nurturing that playing with dolls can help develop.*