## Play is the most powerful way young children learn.

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

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

- Retell stories through dramatic play.
- Enjoy a variety of culturally appropriate experiences.
- Explore their world through creative and imaginative play.

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

# Teaching Notes

## Children learn best through meaningful, hands-on experiences.

Accessing and consulting with a local Aboriginal person:

- Can provide you with an excellent source of ideas and knowledge to ensure that your experiences are appropriate, purposeful and relevant for the children.
- Will ensure that your curriculum has an Indigenous Australian perspective.

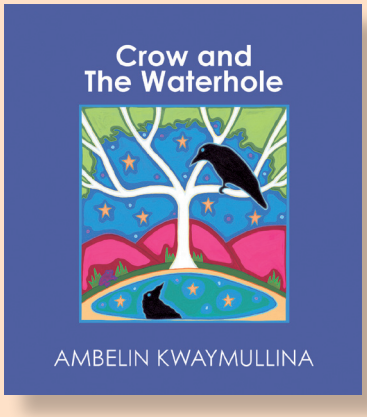
Contact your District based Aboriginal Education personnel or www.dreamtime.net.au/teachers/links.cfm#education

**Although this particular story is not a Dreaming Story it is still important to explain to children what Aboriginal Dreaming Stories are and why they exist.**

"… Dreaming Stories are not fairytales; they are not fictions made up to entertain children. One original purpose for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional stories was to lay down rules for living. Dreaming Stories also carry knowledge from one generation to another about the world, the Law, society, and the life and death of people.

They are serious pieces of communication, with a serious purpose. Accordingly, educators have a responsibility to treat the stories with the same respect that they receive in Indigenous communities."

*Connor, J 2007, Dreaming Stories: A springboard for learning, Early Childhood Australia, ACT*




# Crow and the Waterhole

by Ambelin Kwaymullina

**Notes**



For more book suggestions, tip sheets, nursery rhymes, songs and fun things to make and do please visit:
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Notes

# Engaging With Language and Literacy

- When reading stories to young children it is important to remember:
  - You can tell the story without having to read all the words
  - You can simplify the words to suit the child's needs.
  - You can tell the story by talking about what is happening in the pictures
  - It is ok to read books with a small group of interested children, it does not always have to be the whole group.
  - The entire story does not have to be finished in one sitting.

## Book Introduction

You may want to introduce the story in the following way:

- Tell the children the title of the book and talk about the cover illustration.
- Make a crow puppet with the children.

  Let the children draw a crow or provide them with a picture, cut it out and stick it to a straw or pop stick. You may want to add wings by either sticking on craft feathers or folding paper into a fan.
- If possible provide the children with a small hand mirror. (Hand mirrors can be purchased from most "Two Dollar" shops.) When using mirrors always make sure there are no sharp edges that the children can cut themselves on.
- Look at the book with the children and show them how the crow is looking at his reflection in the waterhole.
- Let the children play with their mirrors, making reflections of themselves and their puppets.
- If the children are still focussed and enthusiastic you may want to continue by sharing with them the main points of the story or you can do this another time.



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## Book Overview

When you read stories to young children it is ok to abbreviate the text as long as you keep the main ideas.

For example:

Page 1:
There once was a crow that lived in a tree by a waterhole. Crow was very unhappy. Everyday she looked in the waterhole and saw another crow looking back at her. She thought it was the most wonderful bird she had ever seen. One day the crow decided to go on an adventure to see if she could become as wonderful as the Crow-in-the-waterhole.

Page 2:
First she came upon a fire. A little gum tree asked her to save him from the fire.

Page 3:
The crow was afraid of the fire but she flew down, rescued Little Gum and took him to a safe place by a river.

## Sand Stories

Gather a small group of children around the sandpit or sand tray .

As you read the book or tell a condensed version of the story, draw simple pictures of what is happening in the sand.

Encourage the children to draw their own pictures as they are listening to you.

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# Enjoying Dramatic Play

## Retelling the story through play will not only increase the children's understanding of the story but also their understanding of how stories work.

- Involve the children in the fun of revisiting and retelling the story through play with masks, puppets or toys.
- Recreate the setting of the story with a group of interested children.

  Discuss with the children where the story took place and what it looked like.

  Refer to the illustrations for ideas. You may want to create the following scenes:

  - The tree by the waterhole.
  - The fire.
  - The river.
  - The rock pool.
  - The storm.
  - The puddle.

### Paint a mural with the children

- Help the children draw an outline for each of the scenes and then let the children paint them.
- The paintings can be hung in sequence to make a backdrop for the children to re-enact the story.

### Make a 3D setting with some of the following props:

- Construct a tree for the crow's home by finding an old branch and putting it in a bucket of wet sand or setting it in plaster of Paris.

  Cut out leaf shapes from green tissue paper. Punch a hole in the leaves so the children can thread them and hang them from the branches.
- The waterhole can be created with either a piece of blue material, some silver foil attached to a large cardboard circle or a child safe mirror.
- Make a fire out of red, yellow and orange cellophane.

  Cut out flame shapes from the cellophane and stick them to old boxes so that they stay upright.
- Paint small boxes brown to make the rocks for the rock pool and place them around some blue material.



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- Cut out cloud and lightning shapes for the children to paint. When they are dry hang them from the ceiling.

  Listen carefully to the children while you are creating your setting. They will probably have some good ideas of their own.

  If the weather is suitable you could consider setting up the play area outside.

  Help the children to act out the story by referring to the pictures and text in the book and reinforcing the main ideas of the story.

Take photos of the children while they are acting out the story.

- Stick the photos into a scrapbook and ask the children to tell you what is happening in their play.
- Use their ideas as the text of the book.

## Puppets can give children additional confidence to express their ideas and feelings.

- Some children may prefer to retell the story with puppets or small figurines rather than act it out themselves.

  Help the children to make puppets of the characters or use small figurines.

  Create the setting in the sand tray or the block area.

  Ask the children what materials could be used in these play areas to recreate the setting, eg, blue tissue paper for the water, small tree branches, pebbles to make the rock pool, cellophane for the fire etc.

  Once the setting has been created and you have spent time with the children re-enacting the story, give them the opportunity for some free play.

  Free play is important as it gives the children the opportunity to:

  - Practice new ideas in a safe environment.
  - Choose what they want to play and what is going to happen in their play.

## By observing children's free play we can find out what things they are interested in, what they are learning and what they are ready to learn next.

**Notes**



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**Notes** List any other books, rhymes or activities the children have enjoyed.

## Being Creative Through Play

### Playing With Natural Materials

- Take the children outside for a treasure hunt of natural objects, eg, leaves, gumnuts, pine cones, small twigs, petals, seed pods etc…
- Use the materials to make individual or group collages.
- You may want to extend this activity by encouraging the children to bring in natural objects from around their home.
- Natural materials can also be used for sorting and counting activities and additions to sand, block and imaginative play.
- Present an assortment of natural materials to the children and see what interesting ways they play with them.

### Clay Characters

- Provide the children with clay and encourage them to make Crow, Paperbark or other characters from the story.
- Add some natural materials, craft feathers, pop sticks etc… for the children to use with their creations.

## Exploring Our World

Play is most valuable to the child when it is led by the child.

- Have another look at the book with the children.
- Talk to the children about who wrote the book and explain that this author is an Aboriginal person.
- Ask the children what they know about Aboriginal people.
- Before you start to set up play experiences, spend some time observing and listening to the children.
  - Where they interested in the story?
  - How involved were they in retelling the story?
  - What are the children talking about when they play?
  - Do they have a lot or little prior knowledge and experiences?
  - What themes are occurring during their play?
  - What ideas interest them?



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- Use the children's prior knowledge and experiences and your observations of their play as a starting point for play activities. You may want to use some of the following ideas:
  - Aboriginal Artwork

    Make a display of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal artwork.

    You can source examples of artwork from books, the Internet, families, your local Art Gallery or Museum, greeting cards etc…

    Through researching with the children discover the diversity of traditional Aboriginal art from different parts of Australia, eg, 'dot' paintings were originally done on the ground in Central Australia, while 'x-ray' paintings were from Arnhem Land.

    Children could explore ground drawings, wood burnings/carvings, message sticks/poles etc…

    Provide children with materials to create their own artworks using similar styles and techniques.

    A visit to a local art gallery or museum would allow children to experience Aboriginal art and artefacts first hand.
  - Find out about symbols used in Aboriginal art.

    The following website explains how symbols within art communicate a story or message. It also has examples of some traditional symbols, useful information about contemporary and traditional art and a gallery of paintings. www.aboriginalartonline.com/culture/symbols.php

    Look carefully at the book for examples of symbols in the illustrations.

    Encourage children to include symbols in their paintings and to talk about what they represent.
  - Didgeridoos

    Explain to the children that traditionally only men played the didgeridoo.

    Collect some pictures of didgeridoos to show the children.

    Give the children a cardboard roll, appropriate colour paints and fine paintbrushes to decorate their didgeridoo.

    Encourage girls to make tapping sticks by decorating pieces of dowel or sticks they have found.

**Notes**



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Notes

- The Aboriginal Flag

  One way the children can make an Aboriginal flag is by painting the children's' fingers and top half of their hand red and their thumb and bottom half of their hand black. Make a handprint on paper with their hand and then paint a yellow circle in the middle of the handprint.

  Discuss with the children the meaning behind the flag:

  *The top half of the flag is black and represents the Aboriginal people. The bottom half of the flag is red which represents "Our Mother Earth".*

  *The yellow circle in the centre represents the sun.*

  Provide the children with a selection of other materials, eg, crepe paper, paint, straws etc so they can create a variety of flags.
- If you have received a copy of *Dreaming Stories: A springboard for learning*, you may want to watch the DVD with the children.
- Read other Dreaming Stories with the children and make books available for the children to explore independently.
- www.dreamtime.net.au/ has a selection of Dreaming Stories that can be viewed as text, audio or video as well as many other useful ideas.

# Having Fun with Music and Movement

- Listen to traditional Aboriginal Music.

  Provide the children with instruments to play along with.

  You may want to investigate Aboriginal instruments and make some of your own.
- Encourage the children to move like Crow and sound like Crow.

  Do the same with other animals in the book.
- As you play with the children sing familiar songs that are relevant to the themes in the book, eg,
  - *Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree*
  - *Let's Go Walking*
  - *I Hear Thunder*
  - *Incy Wincy Spider*



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# Other books to try:

*The Cocky, The Crow and The Hawk*
Matingali Napanangka Mudgedell & the children of Luurnpa Catholic School
Edited by Christine Nicholls

*The Two Wallabies: A Dreaming Narrative*
Henry Cook Jakamarra & the children of Lajamanu Community Education Centre
Edited by Christine Nicholls

*The Pangkarlangu and the Lost Child*
Molly Tasman Napurrurla & the children of Lajamanu Community Education Centre
Edited by Christine Nicholls

*The Magic Fire at Warlukurlangu*
Dolly Granites Nampijinpa & the children of Yuendumu Community Education Centre
Edited by Christine Nicholls

*The Spotted Cat*
Molly Tasman Napurrurla & the children of Yuendumu Community Education Centre
Edited by Christine Nicholls

*Luurnpa The Magical Kingfisher*
Bai Bai Napangarti & the children of Luurnpa Catholic School
Edited by Christine Nicholls

*Possum Magic* by Mem Fox

*Koala Lou* by Mem Fox

*Wombat Stew* by Marcia K Vaughan

*One Wooly Wombat* by Kerry Argent

*The Smallest Bilby and the Midnight Star* by Nette Hilton

*Bobby Dazzler* by Margaret Wild

*Hunwicks Egg* by Mem Fox

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## Songs & Rhymes:

### Kookaburra Sits In The Old Gum Tree

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree
Merry merry king of the bush is he
Laugh kookaburra laugh
Kookaburra, gay your life must be

### Let's Go Walking

Let's go walking, walking, walking
Let's go walking far, far away
Lets walk back again, back again, back again
Lets walk back again
Back the same way

Let's go flying…

Let's go swimming…

Let's go running…. Etc…

### I Hear Thunder

I hear thunder
I hear thunder
So do I
So do I
Pitter-patter raindrops
Pitter-patter raindrops
I'm all dry
So am I

I hear thunder
I hear thunder
Hark, don't you
Hark, don't you
Pitter-patter raindrops
Pitter-patter raindrops
I'm wet through
So are you

### Incy Wincy Spider

Incy wincy spider
Climbed up the water spout
Down came the rain
And washed poor Incy out
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
So the incy wincy spider
Climbed up the spout again



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