The Beach Wombat
by Susannah Chambers and Mark Jackson

A wombat and her baby go for a walk through Wilsons Promontory National Park. They trundle over a sandy beach, past the trees and through some water before arriving home for dinner. Written in rhyme with gorgeous illustrations depicting Australian animals and landscapes.

Key Message for Parents | Children are born ready to learn

- Children are eager to learn and stories provide opportunities for children to learn new things.
- Hearing language used in a nurturing and meaningful ways helps to form connections in children’s brains.
- Story-time helps to develop strong bonds between adults and children.
- Warm, social experiences maximise children’s opportunities for brain development.
- Using questions encourages children to engage with stories and develops their thinking skills.

Early Years Learning Framework | Children have a strong sense of identity

We can support children to develop a strong sense of identity in many ways, including:

Children learn about themselves while being with family and community.

Children grow and learn when they feel safe with those who care for them.

When adults spend time reading, talking and playing with children, the children develop the confidence to explore new ideas.

When talking with children, provide opportunities for children to demonstrate/say what they already know about something and then extend their thinking by gently asking questions and sharing your own ideas.

Find booklists, tip sheets, nursery rhymes and activity and learning time sheets @ thelittlebigbookclub.com.au  

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Welcome
Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

Welcome Song (or your preferred song)
Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher’s paper for the adults to read and join in.

Good Morning
Good morning to you
Good morning to you
Good morning everybody
and welcome to you!

Song to introduce the story
Today’s book is about two animals that go for a walk.
As you sing the song model and encourage children and adults to use their index finger and middle finger as ‘legs’ that can go for a walk up and down their other arm. The adults may like to ‘walk’ on their child’s arm.

Let’s Go Walking  (a Play School song)
Let’s go walking, walking, walking
Let’s go walking far, far away.
Let’s walk back again, back again, back again
Let’s walk home again, back the same way
Let’s go walking, walking, walking
Let’s go walking far, far away.
Let’s walk back again, back again, back again
Let’s walk home again, back the same way
**Before Reading**
Show the children the cover of the book and ask them what they can see.

Ask the children how many wombats they can see and count them.

Ask the children about who the little wombat might be (the baby) and who the big wombat might be (the mummy, or daddy, grandma etc.)

Tell the children the wombats are going for a walk. Ask - Where do you think they will walk?

Read the title of the book and the names of the author and illustrator.

**During Reading**
Read the book from start to finish, taking time to notice aspects of the book as suggested below.

- After reading a page that mentions an animal search for the animal and point to it. eg. Sun on the squeaky sand.
  
  Sun on the roo.
  
  Can you see the kangaroo? Can you point to it? Yes, there it is!
- On other pages, discuss other animals shown in the illustrations. I can see a butterfly. Can you see a butterfly? What animals can we see on this page?
- Throughout the reading encourage children to notice things about the beach – rocks, sand, water waves, seagulls. Children may have their own ideas and beach memories to share.
- Pause every few pages and ask the children, I wonder where the wombats might go next. Where do you think they will go next? Acknowledge the children’s responses.
- Use the map on the final endpapers to talk about some of the places the wombats went and point out some of the things they saw.

**After Reading – Song**
How do wombats walk?

Sing the *Let’s Go Walking* song again and ask the children (and adults if they’re willing) to walk/crawl like wombats as everyone sings the song. Think about other ways people and animals can walk and then sing the song using that action. You may like to use the animals in the book and refer back to the illustrations.

How do kangaroos move?

How do butterflies move?

How do crabs move?

*Let’s go bouncing, bouncing, bouncing*

*Let’s go flapping, flapping, flapping*

*Let’s go scuttling, scuttling, scuttling*
Extension Ideas
Taking Care of Others
Initiate a discussion with the question, “How does the wombat mum look after her baby?” Refer to the illustrations for ideas. (Shows the baby the way, feeds the baby, waits for the baby) Ask children who looks after them and what their carer do to look after them (give them food, help them get dressed, read them books etc). Talk with the child about what they do to help look after other people or a pet or a toy. Some of the ways they might look after others include, giving hugs, making presents (such as a drawing) helping with chores, sharing food or toys etc.

Drawing and mark making
Beach painting - Offer your child blue and yellow paint and introduce the idea of yellow for sand and blue for water. Then let your child experiment with the colours in any way they choose to create a piece of art.
- Variation – finger painting with yellow and blue paint. Create waves and other patterns. Notice what happens when the colours mix.
Wombats - help the children to draw wombats. If provided with an oblong oval, children may be able to make marks for eyes, nose and legs with support from their carers. Remind the adults to let the children try and not to do all the drawing for them. Children may like to glue on fur or whiskers with craft materials such as small lengths of wool.

Going for a walk
Go for a walk with your child and talk about where you are going and the things you can see. Let’s walk over the grass now. I can see a blue car over there. What can you see? Now we’re going under a tree. Where will we go next? You may like to play a make believe game and pretend the path is a river etc.

STEM FOCUS
Play provides the most engaging and memorable way for children to develop their vocabulary of positional language (up, down, over, under, through, here, there, right, left, etc). Toddlers can enjoy playing games that use coding/mapping skills where they can give directions and begin to use mathematical and positional language.

Small World Play
Using a toy wombat, or another animal figurine, doll or teddy bear, support and encourage your child to create a ‘walk’ for the animal.
Offer your child a selection of props such as shells, sticks, leaves and pebbles. You may like to use toys that you can find in a dolls house or train set such as trees, bridges, fences and buildings. If you don’t have toys handy you can simply use common household items instead. eg. a box can be a building or a bridge, an upturned bowl might be a hill and a piece of coloured fabric or a tea towel might be the water in a lake or the sea.
Place all of the items on the floor and sit on the ground with your child. Talk with your child about where the animal is going to go on its walk. Where would the wombat like to go for a walk? Shall the wombat go over the leaves? Where’s it going now? Through the water? Shall we make the wombat walk around the log? We could help the wombat over the hill. Only offer prompts when your child seems out of ideas and let them think up different ideas for items if they wish too.
When you have finished place all of the items in a box for your child to access again and again should they like to repeat the game.

Variations – Play this game in the sandpit for a beach-like setting. Or play it outside in a garden with natural materials.

**Goodbye**

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. The Little Big Book Club suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- **The Snow Wombat** by Susannah Chambers and Mark Wilson
- **Diary of a Wombat** by Jackie French and Bruce Watley
- **One, Woolly Wombat** by Kerry Argent
- **With Nan** by Tania Cox and Karen Blair

**Goodbye Song**

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child’s name in the place of ‘you’ as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush) or your preferred choice.

**Goodbye**

*This is the way we say goodbye (use a waving action)*  
Say goodbye, say goodbye  
This is the way we say goodbye  
To all our library friends (or) (to our friend......)!