

## Puddle Hunters

By **Kristy Murray and Karen Blair**

When the rain stops it's time to go puddle hunting. Ruby, Banjo and Mum go up the street, and into the park, over the bridge and down to the river flats where the puddles lie waiting... *Splash it, Ruby! Splash it, Banjo! Splash it, Mum!*

**Puddle Hunters** is a glorious celebration of splashing and squelching all the way home.



### Key Message for Parents | Children learn through being engaged and doing

Children are active, not passive learners and the most powerful way children learn is through play. Play allows and encourages children to be engaged. Through play children are able to be curious, imagine, pretend, create, talk, problem solve, negotiate, cooperate, reason and explain. When parents and carers play with children it makes them feel loved and secure; this develops their confidence which in turn helps them to be involved and learn new things.

Some ideas to share with parents are:

- Right from the time they are born babies respond to music and, in particular, singing. Our innate ability to recognise rhythms is something we as parents will innately tap into by using songs to soothe our babies. As our babies grow, music and song continue to be important for children and can help their development in a myriad of ways, particularly when combined with movement.
- Songs with actions enhance toddlers' development across a range of key skills. They help strengthen memory and recall, broaden vocabulary, assist in the development of fine and gross motor skills, enhance hand-eye coordination, encourage the ability to understand and comply with directions, promote social skills and cooperation and enhance bonding between the child and carer and between the child and his or her peers.
- Picture books can provide opportunities to stimulate meaningful and necessary play experiences for children. Activities that let children talk about and represent their ideas through music, movement, art and craft activities as well as imaginative play all help to develop important neural connections.

### Early Year Learning Framework | Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

As educators we can help young children become confident learners by

- Providing learning environments that are flexible and open-ended
- Listening carefully to children's ideas and discussing with them how these ideas might be developed
- Providing resources that offer challenge, intrigue and surprise; support their investigations and share their enjoyment
- Giving praise and recognizing all achievements, big and small.

Find booklists, tip sheets, nursery rhymes and activity and learning time sheets @

[thelittlebigbookclub.com.au](http://thelittlebigbookclub.com.au)     



## 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!*



## Rhyme

### Billy Blunder

*One rainy morning  
Without any warning  
A large umbrella crossed the street  
Big, black and shiny  
Covering someone tiny  
And all that we could see were two small feet*

*In and out the traffic  
Dodging here and there  
That umbrella went with a Don't-Care air  
I said in wonder  
Who is that down under  
Hugging that umbrella like a teddy bear*

*Horns started blaring  
Everyone was staring  
At that strange object in the street  
Big black and shiny  
And all that we could see were two small feet*

*Then a young policeman  
Called out from his beat  
"That umbrella there has a boy down deep"  
He swooped down under  
Pulled out Billy Blunder  
Just a tiny truant from his morning's sleep*

*Now Billy Blunder  
Who was once down under  
Recites by heart his safety code  
"When you are out  
In rain or hail or thunder  
Hold up your umbrella when you cross the road!"*



### Before Reading

Take time to look at the front cover of the book together. What can they see? Prediction is an early reading skill and talking about the front cover before reading the title also educates the parents about the importance of picture clues in anticipating what the written words might say later. You could have a large box on your lap with a pair of gumboots inside to give further clues about the story.

Sing the song 'What is hiding in my box? What is hiding in my box? What could it be? What could it be? What is hiding in my box?'

Introduce the title, and the author (the person who writes the words) and illustrator (who creates the pictures in the book). 'Today's story is called *Puddle Hunters* and is written by Kristy Murray and illustrated by Karen Blair. It's about two children called Ruby and Banjo who enjoy a fun activity that I bet you've all done after the rain.'

### During Reading

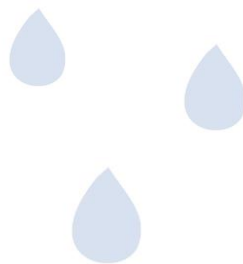
Look at the first page together and compare it to the front cover. 'It's the same couch the children are standing on and the same window they're looking out of but what's different?' (e.g. The rain has stopped.)

Read through the story, stopping on Page 4 to listen to what Banjo calls puddles. 'Why might he say "buddles" instead of "puddles"? Do you know the name for words that sound the same? Yes! They're rhyming words. Can you be rhyming detectives and let me know if you hear any more as we continue with the story?'

Continue on with the book, stopping to discuss anything that may be of interest to the children. Alternatively read the story through without discussion the first time, and then have another read through later.

On page 13 when Ruby spins, you could ask the children to stand up and spin around. 'What happens? How many spins does it take to make you dizzy?' (The brain is a bustling hub of energy during a child's earliest years as one million new brain connections are formed every second. Movement increases blood and oxygen flow to the respiratory system and the brain, leading to improved focus and attention.)

There is some lovely descriptive language throughout the book which you could mention and perhaps try to find alternative words that mean the same. (e.g. glisten, whirling, squelchy, froth, etc)





### After Reading

The following song /rhyme is an excellent opportunity for imaginative movement. 'I bet you've all jumped in puddles before.' Tell the children to put their pretend wellie boots and raincoats on, and their imaginary umbrellas up over their heads and stamp around the room as you all sing the song as boisterously as you can! The rhyme has 'mummy' in it – you can replace with your name or a child's name from the group or rotate through mummy, daddy, granny, pop, etc.

*Splashing in the puddles, (stamp around the room)*

*Splashing in the puddles, (stamp around the room)*

*Splashing in the puddles, (stamp around the room)*

*But don't let Mummy see! (finger to lips like a secret)*

*Walking through the raindrops, (pretend to hold umbrellas over head)*

*Walking through the raindrops, (pretend to hold umbrellas over head)*

*Walking through the raindrops, (pretend to hold umbrellas overhead)*

*Let's hope we don't get wet! (wag one finger)*

*Stamping in the gutters, (stamp along in a line)*

*Stamping in the gutters, (stamp along in a line)*

*Stamping in the gutters, (stamp along in a line)*

*But don't let Mummy see! (finger to lips like a secret)*

**Encourage any further improvised verses that children might suggest!**





## Activity Time

### Parachute Play

#### What you need:

- Parachute (or large cotton sheet)
- Small plastic balls (enough for each child)

#### What to do:

- Ask children to stand in a circle holding a plastic ball
- Place sheet or parachute in the middle of the circle
- Children can all pick up a side of the sheet or parachute
- Throw all the balls into the parachute /sheet
- Children need to collaborate so that none fall out



### Another way to play

Play without the balls. Call out a child's name and everyone lifts up the parachute so the child can run under to the opposite side. You can add more children running underneath for extra fun. You could pretend it is raining and those on the outside holding onto the sheet / parachute could make the sound of rain (pitter, patter).

### Extension Ideas

Give parents / carers the some ideas for rainy day activities.

- Construct a mini town using cardboard boxes and recycled objects.
- Build a fort/cubby or cave with blankets and pillows.
- Indoor treasure hunt. ...
- Music time! Make your own instruments or have a dance party
- Play board games.

### STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths

For young children, we focus on STEM through exploration, play, and building curiosity about the natural world and the way things work. STEM learning is important for everyone and can happen anytime, anywhere. The real-life skills that people develop when learning STEM help make everyone better problem-solvers and learners.

Children are natural scientists, and it's never too early to start learning basic science skills like observation and prediction. Encourage toddlers to use all their senses as they observe and explore the natural world. While outside, ask open-ended questions as they explore nature like, "What does it look like? Feel like? Smell like? Sound like?" Or, "I wonder what those ants are doing? Let's take a closer look."

Jumping in puddles may be a great opportunity to talk, sing and play together, wondering where the water came from but mostly just having fun jumping and seeing what happens to the water!



## 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:

- **Mr Gumpy's Outing** by John Birmingham
- **Colour With Splosh** by David Melling
- **Puddles are for Jumping** by Kylie Dunstan
- **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.....)!*

