

Play is the most powerful way young children learn.

- Every time you play, sing or read with young children they are learning about language.
- The following activities have been designed for early childhood professionals to use as a starting point for developing children's early literacy skills through play.
- Please feel free to adapt them for the home and with children of different ages.
- Don't forget to record your own ideas, activities that worked really well, relevant songs and rhymes in the Notes section opposite.
- Visit our website www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au for more fun printable activities based on this book.

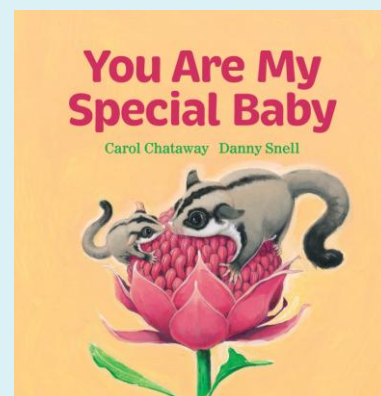
Engaging with Language and Literacy

"A new baby is like the beginning of all things-wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities." - Eda J Le Shan

Reading with babies is a great way to form a strong bond with them. This book is perfect for reading with babies and celebrating the relationship between a baby and their carers. Try and incorporate activities into your daily play and routine that recognise and strengthen this bond.

When Reading The Story:

- This is great story to read with one child on your lap or with small group snuggled up on some pillows.
- Introduce the book to the children by talking about the animals on the front cover. *"Can you see the Mummy/Daddy? Look at the baby? I wonder what they are doing?"*
- When reading the story use a low a quiet voice to create the intimacy.
- Talk about the illustrations, *"Look the mummy koala is giving the baby koala hugs, she has got her arms around the baby koala"* and *"I think the baby koala likes hugs, she's putting her paw on the Mummy's face"*
- On the first page the phrase *I love you so!* is used. Instead of reading the story you could talk about the pictures and use this phrase, eg, *"Look the Daddy wombat is whispering I love you so! in the baby wombats ear"*



You Are My Special Baby

Carol Chataway & Danny Snell

Notes

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- Encourage the children to point to the parent and the babies. Older toddlers will be able to name the Mum/Dad and the baby.
- All of the animals in the story are found throughout Australia and many are native to Australia. You can find the names of all the animals on the Imprint Page (the last page in the book).
- Read other stories featuring Australian animals such as *Koala Lou* and *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox.

After Reading The Story:

- When you read the story over and over again the children will begin to anticipate the words and join in some of the actions like hugging, laughing and singing.
- Look closely at the animal's faces, focus on their emotions. *"Look how happy the baby dolphin looks, I think it is smiling!"*
- *You Are My Special Baby* is a great story for parents and grandparents to read with young children, you could organise a borrowing system for parents to take the book home to read with their child.
- Make a display of books featuring Mum's/Dads/Families and babies, both animal and people. Magazines and calendars often have great photos to use in a display.

Discovering Sensory Play

Cuddly Babies

- Make a collection of small and large soft toys
- Encourage the children to find the matching Mum/Dad and baby.
- Provide face washers, towels and pillows for the children to make homes for the families.

Collage Animal

- Draw an outline of some of the animals from the story, toddlers will love the opportunity to collage the outlines with materials such as cotton wool, feathers, faux fur.

Australian Animal Puzzles

More Feel Good Stories:

My Mum's the Best by Rosie Smith

Little Humpty by Margaret Wild

Samuel's Kisses by Karen Coolum

Count My Kisses, Little One by

Ruthie May

Guess How Much I Love You by

Sam McBratney

Useful websites:

For printable activities:

www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au

- Laminate pictures of Australian animals from magazines or calendars and cut into three or four pieces to make simple puzzles for the children.

Exploring Our World

Sand Play With Natural Materials

- The illustrations feature several Australian plants including bottlebrush flowers, banksia flowers and gum leaves.
- Ask families to bring native flowers and leaves for the children to use in the sand pit or tray.
- Or you could go for a walk and collect leaves and flowers to use in the sand tray.

Walk

- Go for walk around the neighbourhood and look for parents and babies. If you are lucky you might see some animal families like birds in a nest or a duck and ducklings.

Enjoying Music and Dramatic Play

Doll/Home Corner

Provide the children with dolls, beds, blankets, bowls, and spoons etc for them to have fun playing parents and babies.

Many traditional nursery rhymes feature babies such as:

- Rock A Bye Baby
- Hush Little Baby

Songs and Rhymes

Rock A Bye Baby

Rock-a-bye baby, in the treetop
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall
And down will come baby, cradle and all

Hush Little Baby

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Hush, little baby, don't say a word.
Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird
And if that mockingbird won't sing,
Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring

And if that diamond ring turns brass,
Papa's gonna buy you a looking glass
And if that looking glass gets broke,
Papa's gonna buy you a billy goat
And if that billy goat won't pull,
Papa's gonna buy you a cart and bull
And if that cart and bull fall down
You'll still be the sweetest little baby in town.

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