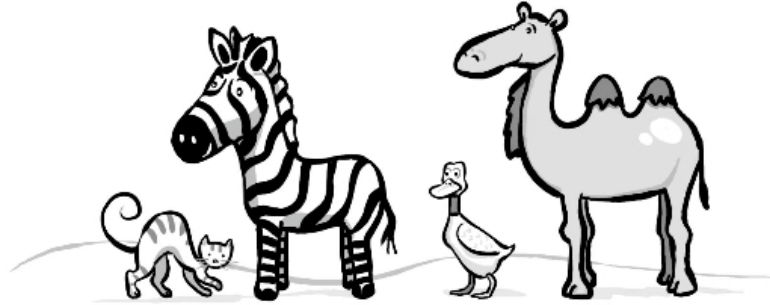


# 11. What animals can you see?

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*Pets and animals commonly found in children's stories*



The sentences in the "What animals can you see? DVD chapter will guide you as to which signs and words you would like to introduce and when you would like to introduce them, so why not have a look at them now?

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1. Dog
  2. Rabbit
  3. Fish
  4. Cat
  5. Mouse
  6. Bear
  7. Kangaroo
  8. Lion
  9. Tiger
  10. Zebra
  11. Crocodile
  12. Monkey
  13. Duck
  14. Bird
-

# 11. What animals can you see?

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*Pets and animals commonly found in children's stories*

Babies and young children are fascinated by animals which is why so many well-loved stories and rhymes feature animals as main characters. You can capitalise on this interest by helping your little one learn the names of animals through signs. Animal signs tend to relate to a characteristic of individual animals, the whiskers of a cat, the beak of a duck, the stripes of a zebra, the movement of a fish.

Making the sign as you say the word as you point to, or hold up, an animal picture, will help your child make the vital link between the sign, picture and word at a very early age. 'Ah, Dad's talking about a duck!' he thinks.

**Your tip for this chapter:** encourage your little one to join in the signing. If they are joining in, they are learning.

## Activity: Old MacDonald had a farm.

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This is a wonderful rhyme to share with your little one and you can easily adapt it to include your child's favourite animals. Repeat the signs for the sounds the animals and birds make. For example, 'duck' for the quacking of a duck.

Once you have learned the animal signs, you could practice the song in front of a full-length mirror. It will give you an insight into how much facial expression and body language you are using. Seeing what your baby sees, may be revealing. Our aim is enthusiasm and passion so that your baby will join in with enthusiasm and passion too! Enthusiasm and passion are life-enhancing qualities that will hold your child in good stead when forging future relationships.

### **What you will need:**

- The words for the Old MacDonald rhyme.
- Toy animals or pictures of animals in a bag.

As you sign/sing a verse of the song, take an animal out of the bag. In the first verse, it will be a 'duck'. Move your hand around to indicate 'a quack here, quack there, everywhere a quack, quack.'

Or you can let your child take an animal out of the bag. This animal will dictate the verse.

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### **Old MacDonald had a farm.**

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Old MacDonald had a farm, E.I.E.I.O (sign 'man' for MacDonald)  
And on that farm he had a duck, E.I.E.I.O  
With a quack, quack here and a quack, quack there (sign 'duck' repeated)  
Here a quack, there a quack  
Everywhere a quack, quack

Old MacDonald had a farm, E.I.E.I.O  
And on that farm he had a dog, E.I.E.I.O  
With a woof, woof here and a woof, woof there  
Here a woof, there a woof  
Everywhere a woof, woof

Old MacDonald had a farm, E.I.E.I.O  
And on that farm he had a mouse, E.I.E.I.O  
With a squeak, squeak here and a squeak, squeak  
there  
Here a squeak, there a squeak  
Everywhere a squeak, squeak

### Add extra verses for:

- cat – here a meow, there a meow .....
- bird – here a tweet, there a tweet.....
- rabbit - here a twitch, there a twitch.....
- fish – here a bubble, there a bubble .....

1. Try singing the song using *silent* signs for the animals as a way to increase your child's concentration and involvement. And watch his enjoyment! You could use the signs for 'your turn' to great effect.
2. Once your child is familiar with the song, try falling silent when it comes to the animal noises to encourage him to fill in the gap.
3. By placing the plastic animals or pictures in the bag and pulling them out one at a time, you can take it in turns with your child to imaginatively be; a barking dog, a cuddled up cat, a galloping horse, a flying bird ... Dramatise and exaggerate your efforts and you will be rewarded with a fully involved, happy giggly child.
4. Your local library will have a picture book of Old MacDonald to share with your child. You will find lots to talk about in the pictures and lots of questions to answer - your questions, her questions. See how much language one little old rhyme has stimulated.
5. Best of all, there are dogs in the park, cats in the garden, birds in the air, horses, sheep, pigs, cows, rabbits in the field, lions, camels, monkeys, in the zoo and fish in the river. Go on a journey of exploration with your child and afterwards you will find that toy animals and pictures of animals in books mean so much more to him than before. He has experienced the real thing. Living breathing animals. Having an appreciation of the real thing, he can progress to imaginative stories in books like the 'Tiger who came to tea'!

In addition, if you have taken photo's you can make your very own **Animal Picture Book** to talk about all you saw over and over again.

## Benefits of sharing the Old MacDonald song:

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- Children learn how to play with sound through experimentation with the vowels E.I.E.I.O. and animal noises.
- Children begin to recognise that words are made up of sounds.
- The song follows a repetitive pattern which will help your little one predict what is coming next. Predicting is a skill children need when they start to learn to read.
- Making up verses and animal noises extends your little ones imagination.
- Movement promotes physical development and co-ordination.
- Signing promotes manual dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination.

## Extension activities:

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### 1. Rhymes and songs

There are loads of other rhymes and songs with animal themes to be found in books, DVD's and on the internet; Never Smile at a Crocodile! Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chicken. Down in the Jungle. Five Green and Speckled Frogs. I Love Little Pussy ... The list is endless. Sing them for enjoyment's sake. Sing. Sing. Sing.

### 2. Make your own zoo or farm.

Your little one can have hours of fun with a home-made zoo or farm. All you need is a large, *shallow* cardboard box from the supermarket to make the base. You can help your child draw the outlines of fields or enclosures and colour them with wax crayons or glued on coloured paper. Draw paths and make houses for the animals from smaller boxes, cutting out doors and windows. Finally, a pack of farm or zoo animals and away you go! A great project to do together with endless opportunities for talking – with your child making all the important decisions!

Using a role-play activity such as this will help your little one develop her imagination, expand her thinking and problem solving skills as well as her communication and language skills. How much better can one game get?

### 3. Finding out about pets.

If you have pets at home, your little one will soon learn the signs – later followed by words - for 'dog, cat' or 'mouse'. Why do they learn so quickly? They learn quickly because they are fascinated by animals and animal antics. We all learn quickly when we are interested and motivated.

If you don't have pets, you could visit a pet shop or garden centre to see 'rabbits', 'mice, fish' and 'birds', for instance:

- "Where does the mouse go to sleep? "Does he like apple, do you think?"
- "How many rabbits can you see? Which one do you think is mummy rabbit?"
- "What colour is that fish? Yes, it's gold."

You can help your little one start to understand that pets need lots of care, space, food and equipment. You could even borrow a simple pet care book from the library to help your little one find out more about their favourite pet. They would enjoy that! Thanks Mum. Thanks Dad.

## Great books to share

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The following books are super for sharing and can be read again and again. Signing allows your child to be involved in a meaningful way much earlier than would usually happen. Do write and tell us if this is true for you.

- 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, what do you see?' by Bill Martin and Eric Carle.
- 'Dear Zoo' by Rod Campbell.
- 'Handa's Surprise' by Eileen Browne.
- 'Animal Hide and Seek' by Stephen Cartwright (Farmyard tales touchy-feely).
- 'Farm Animals' by Katie Daynes (Usbourne Beginners).
- 'Mog and Bunny' by Judith Kerr.