FAMILY & COMMUNITY

How is "Family & Community" modeled in The Berenstain Bears?

For young children, *The Berenstain Bears* is a reflection of true family life that represents its joys, trials and tribulations. For parents, the series provides a nostalgic look at simple country life that reinforces values, a sense of community, and the universal circumstance of life: family.

One of the foundations of the series is its modeling of the positive bonds of family, including: communication; conflict resolution; working toward common family goals; and showing kindness, love and support to one another. Bonds between family and the community are also seen in areas such as accepting new neighbors and volunteering to work on a local community project.

Why is learning about "Family & Community" important?

Research shows that positive family interactions can play an important role in a child's healthy development and positive outlook. Yet, these are "trying" times for families on many different fronts. Increased work stresses, financial concerns, world changes, technology advances and an overwhelming selection of entertainment choices—all "pull" on family members' time and attention.

Although families are unique in their composition and beliefs—there are common elements that can strengthen them and help provide environments in which young children feel empowered, protected and happy. These include supporting the ideas that: families are a key source of love, protection, and identity for their members; all families have strengths and differences; and families are the building blocks for neighborhoods and communities.

A few notes about the activities in this section:

Note that in the following activities, the term "family" is not confined to a mother, father, sister and brother. It also encompasses members living outside of the home—as well as guardians, caregivers, mentors, close friends (and even pets)! Take care to be inclusive when talking with your class about what constitutes a family (particularly for students living in environments such as foster care, with non-blood relatives, or who are homeless, etc.)

The following activities provide opportunities for children to practice making their own choices and decisions. Note that learning areas and themes can be strengthened by first taping and showing the associated The Berenstain Bears episode (listed at the top of each page), reading and discussing any associated story or book – and then conducting the hands-on activity or lesson with children. Be sure to tie together the common themes of the show, book and activity with plenty of discussion and analysis!

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

OUR FAMILY FOREST

Exploring family diversity and making "Family" trees.

Learning Area(s): Family, Diversity

Episode: "Family Get-Together" Synopsis: At a picnic reunion, Brother and Sister learn to appreciate the diversity within the Bear family.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Discuss what "family" really means.
- * Listen to a story about family.
- * Explore the diversity of family types and configurations.
- * Draw pictures of their own family members.
- * Create a "Family" tree.

Grades: K-2

McRel Standard(s): Behavioral Studies - Standard 2.4, Knows that people tend to live in families and communities in which individuals have different roles.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

<u>Materials Needed:</u> large wall or other display space, marker, construction paper, scissors, stapler and/or tape, handout, crayons, glue

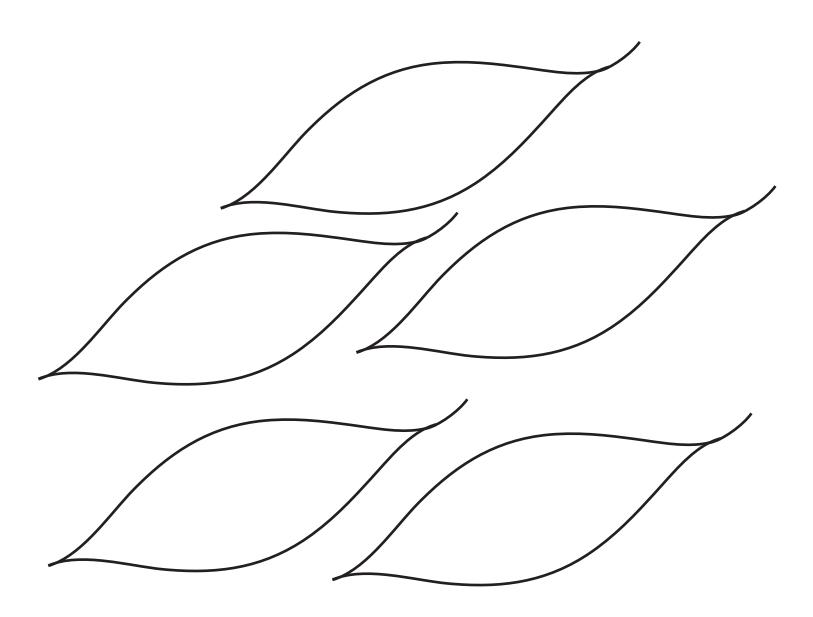
Think & Do Activity Preparation:

- 1. Draw a basic tree outline on a large piece of paper and write "______'s Family Tree" on top.
- 2. Create a bulletin board or display area titled, "Our Family Forest."
- 3. Photocopy the Bear Family Tree page onto construction paper (one per child).

- 1. Ask children: "What is a family?" and "Who makes up a family?" Then read a story aloud about family diversity.
- 2. After listening to the story, encourage children to revisit their initial answers to the questions in #1. Do they have anything to add?
- 3. Share that: a) There are many different family types and make-ups (no one better than another). b) The basic ingredient in each family is love and caring for each member. c) Families may consist of: one caregiver, two parents, close friends, children and/or grand-parents, etc. d) Sometimes when parents don't live together, a child can even have two families.
- 4. Distribute the Bear Family Tree handout and instruct children to make "Family Trees" on which "leaves" represent family members.
- 5. Encourage children to draw small pictures of their individual family members on each leaf.
- 6. Next, children (or teacher) should cut out the leaves and paste them onto the child's tree. (If able to write, children label each drawing with the family member's name and relation.)
- 7. Staple or tape all Family Trees onto the "Our Family Forest" bulletin board display.
- 8. Encourage each child to share about his or her Family Tree, naming each member.

| Suggested Reading | Home Connections | Teacher Tips |
|--|---|---|
| "Families are Different" by Nina Pellegrini "Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers" by Mary Ann Hoberman | Have students take home the trees and discuss any additional family members that should be added! | Activity Expansion: Chart the number of members in each child's family, then create a graph for student evaluation. |

REPRODUCIBLE PAGE
OUR FAMILY FOREST



FAMILY & COMMUNITY/SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

FAMILY FRICTION

Using finger puppets to role-play family conflict/resolution situations.

Learning Area(s): Conflict Resolution, Family Roles and Relationships

Episode: The Trouble With Grownups" Synopsis: After the cubs put on a play about 'the trouble with parents,' Mama and Papa switch places with them and show that being an adult can be difficult. Each develops a clearer perspective on parent and child roles.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Listen to a story about family conflict and discuss problems/solutions.
- * Discuss simple problems that could happen with parents, siblings and caregivers.
- * Talk about strategies for resolving family conflicts.
- * Use Bear Family finger puppets to role-play "family friction."

Grades: K-2

McRel Standard(s): Behavioral Studies - Standard 4.1, Knows that disagreements are common, even between family members or friends.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

Materials Needed: finger puppet handout, scissors, crayons, glue, book involving family conflict

Think & Do Activity Preparation:

Photocopy The "Bear Family Finger Puppet" handout (one per student).

Think & Do Activity Description:

- 1. Read a story that depicts family conflict. Ask children: "What problems happened in the story? How/why did the problem start? Why was the parent or child mad? How were the problems resolved? Are there any other ways the problem(s) could have been resolved?"
- 2. Talk with children about simple problems that might happen with family members or care providers. For example: "How would you feel if your parent or caregiver said you couldn't do or buy something you wanted? What would you do if your brother or sister got mad and started yelling at you? How are problems like these settled?"
- 3. Explain that when these types of problems happen, it is best for the people who are upset to communicate with each other. Explain that communicating means: listening to how someone is feeling (mad or hurt, etc.), sharing how you feel about the problem and talking about how the problem can be solved.
- 4. Tell children that they will have an opportunity to practice communicating about problems using Bear Family finger puppets!

#5-7 Continued on next page

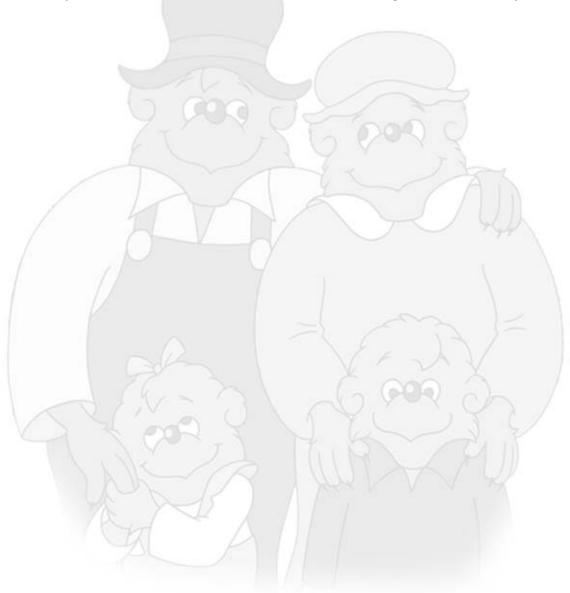
Suggested Reading

Teacher Tips

"No, David" by David Shannon
"Lizzy's Do's and Dont's" by Jessica Harper
"But I Want To!" by Karl Ruhmann
"Noisy Nora" by Rosemary Wells

Teachers may want to prepare family friction scenarios ahead of time. Scenarios can be typed onto strips of paper and placed in a "family friction" container. Groups can pull out a scenario from the container and role-play about that situation.

- 5. Instruct children to color, cut out, and then glue their Bear Family finger puppet. Help children to cut and fit the puppets around their fingers as needed.
- **6.** Break the class into groups of four and explain that children will take turns playing either the Mother, Father, Sister or Brother Bear characters in some "problem" scenarios:
 - a. Brother and Sister want to stay up past bedtime.
 - b. Brother finds out that Sister is playing with a toy he said she couldn't borrow.
 - c. Mama and Papa are working at home and don't have time to talk or play.
- 7. Allow children to problem-solve on their own. Remind them of communication guidelines, as necessary.

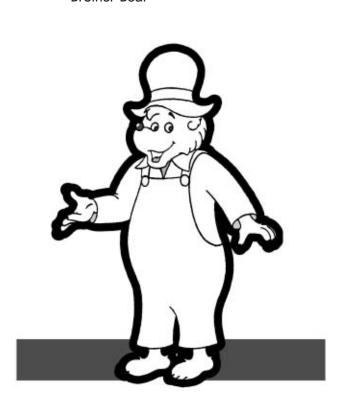


FAMILY & COMMUNITY/SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

REPRODUCIBLE PAGE FINGER PUPPETS



Brother Bear



Papa Bear



Sister Bear



Mama Bear

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

OUR FAMILIES

Learning about the diversity of families in the classroom.

Learning Area(s): Tolerance, Diversity, Similarities and Differences

Episode: "New Neighbors" Synopsis: The traditional-oriented Papa Bear is upset when new, "high-tech" Bears, who have very different tastes, move in next door. He comes to see that everybody is different in their own way...and to appreciate others for who they are.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Talk with their household about making a class "cultural background" presentation.
- * Ask questions about (and identify similarities and differences in) family presentations.
- * Help in making a Class Family Book.
- * Explore the value of embracing other people's culture.

Grades: PreK-1

McRel Standard(s): Behavioral Studies - Standard 1.1, Understands that people are alike in many ways and different in many ways.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies

<u>Materials Needed:</u> letters to children's families, books describing different cultures (especially those of relevance to the class's particular make-up), camera, film, paper, drawing and writing utensils, glue or tape

Think & Do Activity Preparation:

Write notes to the children's families/households asking them (if they are able) to sign up for a special day to share their cultures (music, stories, traditions, recipes, etc.). Explain that if they are unable to come to class, perhaps one or two items can be brought in and shared by their child(ren) that represent their culture (i.e., a recipe, story or picture).

Think & Do Activity Description:

- 1. Explain to children (and to families in the take-home note) that this week, each of their households or families will have 1/2 hour of one day to tell about their background! They may show pictures, play a video, sing a song, teach a dance, share a cultural or family dish, or demonstrate how to do a craft, etc. (Give a personal example to help their understanding.)
- 2. Create a sign-up sheet so that a pre-determined family presentation order can be set and send home the family note.
- 3. Make sure that children understand that it's okay if their family can't come in. They may still participate by asking questions and telling or showing something about their family.
- 4. As families come to class, take pictures of them during their presentations.
- **5.** Have the other students gather to listen to each family. Encourage them to ask questions or comment on how their own family does something similarly or differently.
- 6. Later, ask the class what they learned today about someone's family or culture.

#7-8 Continued on next page

Suggested Reading

Home Connections

"Nice New Neighbors" by Franz Brandenberg, "The New Kid on the Block" by Jack Prelutsky, "City Mouse -- Country Mouse (And two more mouse tales from Aesop)" by John Wallner, "The Witch Next Door" by Norman Bridwell

During the week of family presentations, reinforce the idea of developing tolerance and acceptance for those who are different through reading books about families, cultures and accepting new or different people.

- 7. Make a class book with a section for each family (including ones that didn't make a presentation). Younger children may draw a picture of what they learned about a family (and have their words dictated). First graders may write their own stories about the family and also draw a picture. Any photos taken should also be added to the book.
- **8.** Frequently review the book, making contrasts and comparisons between families. Relate the contents to the class curriculum, when and where possible.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY

MY FAMILY ELDERS

Creating print and oral reports on family elders.

Learning Area(s): Respect, Appreciation, Family

Episode: "Week at Grandma's" Synopsis: Although first reluctant to spend time with their grandparents, Brother and Sister wind up developing a new respect for the fun to be had with "older people."

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Discuss fun times spent with grandparents or other elderly relatives or friends.
- * Draw pictures of their grandparents or other family elder(s) and give a short oral report about them.
- * Write or dictate key points from their oral reports onto the back of each picture.
- * Have their pages stapled under a cover sheet to make "My Family Elders" booklets.

Grades: PreK-2

McRel Standard(s): Behavioral Studies - Standard 2.4, Knows that people tend to live in families and communities in which individuals have different roles.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

Materials Needed: white paper, marker, paper, crayons, stapler, colored construction paper

Think & Do Activity Preparation:

Write the title MY FAMILY ELDERS on the top or in the middle of a piece of white paper. Photocopy this onto colorful sheets of construction paper.

Think & Do Activity Description:

- 1. Explain to students that an elder family member is one that is much older like grandma, grandpa or an uncle or aunt. An elder family member can actually be anyone who we care about who also cares about us, like a good friend, caregiver, guardian, mentor, etc.
- 2. Ask students to share fun times they've spent with an elderly family member.
- 3. Encourage children to draw pictures of any elder family member(s) that they've had fun with.
- **4.** Ask them to individually share with the class: the name of the person(s) that they drew, their role(s) (i.e., grandma, aunt, friend, mentor, etc.) and a fun time shared with them.
- 5. As each student gives his or her report, write key information onto the back of the pictures and staple them under the "My Family Elders" cover sheets. Be sure to also write the child's name on the front cover of his or her booklet! (Or, if children are old enough, they should write this information onto the pages themselves.)

Suggested Reading

Home Connections

| "Bigmama's" by Donald Crews |
|---|
| "Song and Dance Man" by Karen Ackerman |
| "Little Bear's Visit" by Else Holmelund Minarik |

Tie this activity to Oral History by having children talk with grandparents or an elderly family member, friend or caregiver about what it was like growing up when they were a child. How was it different from today? Then have students share these stories with the class.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

FAMILY TREASURES

Learning to treasure family members, family identity and family history.

Learning Area(s): Family, Oral History

Episode: "Birthday Boy" Synopsis: Through shooting a video school report on Brother, Sister learns that there are many special talents, interests and characteristics about him that she never knew. She develops a newfound respect for her big brother.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Identify a family member, friend or caregiver that they'd like to learn more about.
- * Create a Family Treasure Box.
- * Interview a family member and have them loan a few personal "treasures."
- * Give reports on their Family Treasure Box items and the person they represent.

Grades: 1-2

McRel Standard(s): Behavioral Studies - Standard 2.2, Knows unique features of different groups to which she or he belongs and also features of these groups that overlap with other groups.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

<u>Materials Needed:</u> old shoe or gift boxes, box decorations such as: [crayons, paint, stamps/stamp pads, stickers, glitter, ribbon, bows, markers], note to parents

Think & Do Activity Preparation:

- 1. Gather a collection of old shoe and gift boxes with lids.
- 2. Write a short note to parents and caregivers asking them to help their child identify a family member (involving close friends, mentors, care providers, etc.) to interview and collect a few items representing that person's past and present (photos, items from their job or birthplace, etc.) Caution them not to include breakable or valuable objects.

Think & Do Activity Description:

- 1. Talk with the children about what a "treasure" it is to learn about family history. One way of doing this is by finding out more about different family members. Explain that "family" can include: brothers, sisters, cousins, close friends, caregivers, mentors, pets -- anyone we care about who also cares about us!
- 2. Discuss children's families. Is there someone they'd like to know more about?
- 3. Brainstorm different questions they could ask this person about their childhood, background, schooling, interests, job, etc. Explain that along with interviewing them, they are to borrow a few things that represent their past and present like photos, hobby collectibles, an item from their job, something from their birthplace, etc.
- 4. Explain that they will put these family member "treasures" into "Family Treasure Boxes."
- 5. Encourage children to decorate their own Family Treasure Box any way they'd like.

#6-7 Continued on next page

| Suggested Reading | Home Connections | Teacher Tips | |
|--|------------------|---|--|
| "Brothers and Sisters" by Ellen B. Senisi "Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers" by Mary Ann Hoberman | | During oral reports, be sure to ask questions about box contents to help children incorporate them into their presentation. | |

- **6.** Distribute notes for students to take home with them. Ask that they conduct their family interview and collect family treasures during the current week.
- 7. The following week, ask children to show and tell about Family Treasure Box contents as part of a short oral report on the family member interviewed.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY

VACATION POSTCARDS

Learning about different types of family vacations.

Learning Area(s): Family, Diversity

Episode: "Too Much Vacation" Synopsis: During a catastrophe-ridden vacation, the Bear family learns that the best part of a trip is just spending time together.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Share about different vacations they've taken (or would like to take).
- * Discuss past and future vacations with parents or caregivers.
- * Make vacation "postcards."
- * Share postcards, addressing both good and bad highlights of the trips.

Grades: K-2

McRel Standard(s): Behavioral Studies - Standard 2.2, Knows unique features of different groups to which she or he belongs and also features of these groups that overlap with other groups.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

Materials Needed: note to parents, old postcards, tag board, scissors, glue, magazines, crayons

Think & Do Activity Preparation:

- 1. Write a note to parents and caregivers asking them to talk with their children about a family vacation they have taken or would like to take.
- 2. Gather old travel magazines and brochures with plenty of pictures.

- 1. Talk with the children about vacations that they would like to take, i.e.: to an amusement or theme park, to an island, camping, etc. Explain that vacations are important because they are a part of a family's history. They are experiences that can remain in our memories forever.
- 2. Pass out parent notes and instruct children to talk with their parents, guardians or caregivers about special vacations they've taken or would like to take. They should be able to identify the destination, activities done, what they saw and learned, the fun times, and the "not-so-happy" events.
- 3. Share postcards that you have received from friends and family members. Explain that postcards help us remember vacations by showing and telling about them.
- **4.** After children have had time to talk with people in their families, pass out tag board, crayons and travel-themed magazines and brochures. Provide an opportunity for the children to make postcards about their trip. (If they have no vacation memory to document, they should create a postcard about a "wish vacation.")
- 5. Encourage students to cut out and/or draw pictures of their vacation on one side of the tag board. On the other side, they should write (or dictate to an adult) a few things that describe the trip: the location, how long it was, who came along, a good event, a bad event, a special memory. When complete, ask children to share about their Vacation Postcards (and the trip that it describes and illustrates)!

| Suggested Reading | Home Connections | Teacher Tips |
|---|------------------|--|
| "Just Me and My Dad" by Mercer Mayer "Stella and Roy Go Camping" by Ashley Wolff "What a Trip, Amber Brown" by Paula Danziger "Pickles to Pittsburgh" by Judi Barrett | | If time allows, each child could make a second postcard which describes a family trip they would like to take in the future. |

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

THOSE CARING THINGS YOU DO!

Identifying caring acts and acknowledging them with cards.

Learning Area(s): Caring, Appreciation, Acknowledgment

Episode: "Mama's New Job" Synopsis: It's not until Mother Bear starts a new job that Papa, Brother and Sister realize how much she does for their family. In a show of support, they take over many of her household responsibilities.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Discuss some of the caring acts that different providers perform.
- * Construct, draw and/or write "Those Caring Things You Do" cards.
- * Identify one special thing to do for a care provider to say "thank you."
- * Perform and then talk about the caring deed.

Grades: K-2

McRel Standard(s): Life Skills-Working With Others-Standard 4.15, Acknowledges the strengths of others.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

Materials Needed: handout on following page, scissors, crayons, writing utensils, family magazines

Think & Do Activity Preparation:

- 1. Collect family magazines.
- 2. Photocopy the Those Caring Things You Do card-creation handout one per child.

- 1. Ask the children to look through magazines and find pictures of things their parents, baby-sitters and other caregivers do to take care of them. Point out a couple of sample pictures to get them started.
- 2. Encourage children to talk about the caring things parents and caregivers do for them, such as: drive them to school, buy them clothes and toys, cook meals, play with them, read storybooks, tuck them into bed at night, etc
- 3. Pass out the Those Caring Things You Do! card-creation handout and ask children to draw and write some of the caring things that a care provider does for them.
- 4. Then ask children to write or draw a caring thing they'd like to do for that care provider. (Help with suggestions, as needed.)
- 5. Have children take the cards home with them to present to the provider. Ask that they actually do the caring deed within the next few days.
- 6. After a few days, have a circle time and talk with the class about how it feels to perform a caring deed for someone else.

| Suggested Reading | Home Connections | Teacher Tips | |
|---|------------------|---|--|
| "A Chair for My Mother" by Vera B. Williams "Erandi's Braids" by Antonio Hernandez Madriga "Flower Garden" by Eve Bunting | | This is a great activity to do for Mother's or Father's Day! | |

REPRODUCIBLE PAGE THOSE CARING THINGS YOU DO!

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FAMILY & COMMUNITY/SOCIO-EMOTIONAL

DOCTOR DUTIES

Exploring physician's duties and what happens during a visit to the doctor.

Learning Area(s): Community Professions, New Situations

Episode: "Go to the Doctor" Synopsis: Sister helps a younger cub learn that going to the doctor's office for a check-up is nothing to fear.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Listen to a story about going to the doctor.
- * Talk about: what it's like going for a doctor appointment, different types of doctors and different workers found at a doctor's office.
- * Set up a doctor's office in the dramatic play area and experiment with "doctor visit roles."

Grades: Pre-K-2

McRel Standard(s): Health Standards - Standard 1.1, Knows community health service providers and their roles.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

<u>Materials Needed:</u> book about a visit to the doctor's office, chalkboard, chalk, "doctor's office"/medical play props, art materials to create additional medical props

Think & Do Activity Description:

- 1. Read a fiction or non-fiction book to children about visiting the doctor's office.
- 2. Talk with students about: times they've gone to the doctor, what happens during a doctor visit, and how doctors can help us feel better.
- 3. Explain that there are many types of doctors who treat different sorts of problems. Ask if the class can think of some: eye doctors/ophthalmologists, heart doctors/cardiologists, children's doctors/pediatricians, animal doctors/veterinarians, etc.

(Write responses on the board.)

- **4.** Ask children if they can think of any other people they might find at a doctor's office: nurses, appointment-takers, patients, etc. (Write these on the board as well.)
- 5. Talk with children about what these different people do, i.e., eye doctors make sure that we're seeing okay; veterinarians help animals feel better; nurses take down patient information (such as temperature, blood pressure and weight), give shots, assist with operations, and sometimes perform the same kinds of tests as doctors; patients come in for general health check-ups or to get help with an illness.
- 6. Discuss who can perform these jobs. Can girls become doctors and boys be nurses?
- 7. Help children set up a doctor's office in the dramatic play area and encourage them to act out the different doctor, nurse, office and patient roles just discussed. Mention that one idea is to use dolls and animals as their patients.
- 8. As children play, ask what type of a doctor or nurse they are—and to show and tell how they'd treat different "illnesses."

Suggested Reading

Teacher Tips

"Froggy Goes to the Doctor" by Jonathan London, "Doctors Help People" by Amy Moses, "My Doctor" by Harlow Rockwell, "A Wonderful, Colorful Adventure at the Doctor's Office", by Dr. Bob Guinter "Barney & Baby Bop Go to the Doctor" by Margie Larsen "A Day in the Life of a Doctor" by Linda Hayward

1. A few fun and useful props that can easily be created for the "doctor's office" play area include: an eye chart, prescription slips, lab coats and a "The Doctor is In" sign. 2. Allow children to help make these items since they'll enjoy playing with things made with their own hands!

FAMILY & COMMUNITY/SOCIO-EMOTIONAL

GOING TO WORK

Exploring the feelings that children have about their parents "going to work."

Learning Area(s): New Situations, Feelings, Emotional Development

Episode: "Mama's New Job" Synopsis: After Mama takes on a new job, Papa, Brother and Sister initially find it hard not always having her around. In a show of support, they take over many of her household responsibilities.

Objectives:

Children will:

- * Talk about feelings associated with their parents going to work.
- * Draw (and write if able) about feelings when their parents go to work.
- * Role-play the experience of (and feelings about) parents going to work.

Grades: K-2

McRel Standard(s): Language Arts Standards: Listening and Speaking - 8.1, Makes contributions in class and group discussions. Writing - 1.6, Uses writing and other methods to describe familiar persons, places, objects or experiences. Health - Standard 4.1, Identifies and shares feelings in appropriate ways.

Core Curriculum Area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts

<u>Materials Needed:</u> scissors, paper, crayons or markers and pencils, misc. dramatic "getting ready for work" play props (alarm clock, "work" clothes, pretend shaver, pretend make-up, breakfast props, etc.)

Think & Do Activity Description:

- 1. Talk with children about what it's like when their parents or caregivers go to work. Ask questions such as: "How do you feel when your parent/care provider goes to work? What things do they do to get ready to for their job? How do they take care of you before leaving? What do they say to you before going? Who takes care of you when they're at work?"
- 2. Distribute paper, crayons or markers and pencils. Encourage Pre-K and Kindergartners to draw what it's like when parents/guardians go to work, such as: getting ready, saying goodbye to child, etc. Encourage First and Second-graders to write about how they feel to accompany their drawings.
- 3. Encourage children to show and explain their drawings
- **4.** Work with children in setting up a "getting ready for work" play area where they will have what they need to act out both the experience of getting ready for work and their feelings about parents leaving for their job.
- 5. After all children have had the opportunity to choose playing in the area at least once (for some children, multiple times), return to the discussion of parents getting ready for work/going to work, noticing if children's opinions about it have changed.

Suggested Reading

Home Connections

"When Mommy and Daddy Go to Work" by Joanna Cole, "My Day, Your Day" by Robin Ballard 1. Parents and caregivers can extend this activity by showing and talking with children about how they get ready for work and what they do on the job. 2. They can then help their children make comparisons between what's done to get ready for a daycare or school with what's done to prepare for work.