

TALK to me!



Learning through play is a great way to learn, and what better way to play than with hand puppets!

Puppets stimulate imaginative and creative play and they can also be a powerful way to aid speech development and boost early literacy. Any puppet – no matter how simple – can encourage even the shyest child to start talking. Communicating through puppets can also help children discuss sensitive issues – the puppet provides a focus for role play, and the child feels comfortable talking to it. Puppets can also help a child work through fears (with puppets of scary animals, for example) and frustrations (by using the puppet as a proxy).

They are a great source of fun. Plus, storytelling with hand puppets enhances reading, comprehension and vocabulary skills. Get inspired by picking out a few age-appropriate books from the library that you can enact with puppets at home.



STICK PUPPETS

(5 mins)

Cut out some face or animal shapes from magazines and glue these onto a piece of cardboard that's been trimmed to the same shape. Glue the shape to a wooden popsicle stick and voila – a stick puppet!

SOCK PUPPETS

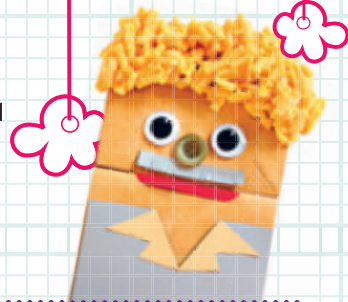
(20 mins)

These are easy to make with some basic sewing skills – all you need are old socks, scraps of cloth and glue-on wiggly eyes. Use contrasting thread and/or scrap materials to sew on facial details – a nose, mouth or ears, for example. Try:
 ✂ **A caterpillar sock puppet:** Use a striped sock and add pipe cleaners for feelers.
 ✂ **Sock puppet children:** Sew on colourful yarn to create hair.

PAPER BAG ANIMAL PUPPETS

(15 mins)

Brown paper bag puppets are great – the bottom of the bag functions as a mouth/head for the puppet, making conversations and role play even more fun. Cut out face shapes using a template (surf the Internet for inspiration) and glue onto the bag. Use markers to colour in the features like eyebrows, hooves and mouth.



GOING ON STAGE

Now that you've got your puppets, create a stage for them to play on. For an impromptu performance, a small table turned on its side or even an open umbrella will work. For something a little fancier, make a stage out of cloth.

METHOD

- 1 Mount the shower rod in an open doorway or hallway.
- 2 Drape the cloth over the rod.
- 3 Use the clothespins or binder clips to secure the cloth.

For more stage ideas, including larger structures, visit www.victricialmalicia.com/index_files/stages.pdf.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Spring-loaded shower rod or chin-up bar
- Cloth (try looking for red velvet or something similar, but anything long and thick will do)
- Clothes pins or binder clips



Fun Fact

Do you know the life cycle of a plant?

✂ Seed, seedling, young plant, flower.