

# The Early Years Count Literacy Connection



## The Animal Song

Written and illustrated by  
Jonty Howley

*Infant/Toddler edition*

### Overview of Book

Bear, Croc and Weasel are the forest band that plays and sings for all the animals! They sure have the beat! Until Winter, when they are asked to stop, be quiet, the animals are sleeping. But- Bear, Croc and Weasel don't want to stop playing their music! They have heard that the CITY never sleeps, so....

Genre: Picture book

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *The Animal Song* to introduce in your room:

thump	strum
steady	rhythm
gather	exhausted

Each time you read the book, highlight 2 or 3 words.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or refer to the illustrations to help children understand each word's meaning.

Use the new words throughout the day, reminding children, "That's a word from our story!"

### Connecting with HighScope Curriculum

#### COR Advantage 1.5

Creative Arts Item Y  
(Music), Item Z  
(Movement), Item AA  
(Pretend play)

Language, Literacy  
and Communication  
Item N (Phonological  
awareness)

Mathematics Item V  
(Patterns)

### Reading Tips

Read with a slow but steady upbeat tone and emphasize the sound effects. Notice the cadence and rhymes and ask the children to clap along if they want. Stop to ask questions like, "Look- they aren't having fun anymore. It says they are exhausted and their paws are sore. Why are they exhausted? What does that mean?" At the end ask, "How will the animals hear music if bear, Croc and Weasel are sleeping?"

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. During each reading the adult can introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

### Throughout the Routine

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Play a variety of instrumental music clips in different genres for children to dance or move by for **Large Group Time**.

Make cards with the animals from the story. Encourage children to choose how to move around the room for **transitions**.

Use the instruments to encourage children to make musical patterns (*Snap-poom-jingle-jangle*) at **Greeting** or **Small Group Time**.

### Around the Room

Highlight the book's content and build on the children's excitement in a variety of locations.

Add to the classroom instruments and make the **Music Area** a focus for exploration.

Add various versions of "The Bremen Town Musicians" to the **Book Area** for comparison.

Add photos of the animals from the story to the **Block Area**. Add the animals to the toy animal bin to encourage acting out the story.

### Open-ended Questions

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These "wondering aloud" questions support children's developing focus and attention as they encourage young children's capacity to make connections and see possibilities.

Here are some questions you might ask for *The Animal Song*:

*How did Bear, Croc and Weasel learn how to make music?*

*What will the animals do while Bear, Croc and Weasel sleep?*

*If you could play an instrument, what instrument would you choose?*

*For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact **The Family Connection**:*

website—  
[www.famconn.org](http://www.famconn.org)

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phone—  
574-237-9740

### @ Home

Since many children in our county will have this book at home, use it to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *The Animal Song* with their children. Here's a sample message you can send:

As you read this story with your child, gently and slowly sway to the cadence of the rhyme. Create movements for the sounds (clap, slap your leg, snap fingers for example) to help your child hear the pattern and play along with the animals. Ask questions like, "I wonder how Bear learned how to play that upright bass?" Ask your child to make predictions like, "If the forest animals are going for their winter sleep, what will the band do?" As the band members play in the "city", have a silly conversation with your child like, "Imagine us going downtown and seeing this animal band! What would you do?" Together sing, "Snap-poom-jingle-jangle" in the car, or while getting ready for bed!