

The Early Years Count **Literacy** Connection



The Little Excavator

Written and Illustrated by
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Infant/Toddler edition
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Overview of Book

Here come the BIG RIGS rolling down the street.
Thumpa-thumpa bumpa-bumpa BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

There's Loader and Dump Truck, Backhoe and Crane. They're ready to transform a vacant lot into a neighborhood park. Little Excavator wants to help most of all, but are there any jobs for someone so small?

Genre: Fiction

Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some from *The Little Excavator* to introduce in your classroom:

excavator	big rigs
bulldozer	loader
dump truck	back hoe
crane	

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

Language, Literacy
and Communication
Item M (Listening and
comprehension)

Language, Literacy
and Communication
Item N (Phonological
awareness)

Science and
Technology Item EE
(Tools and technology)

Reading Tips

This book has a predictable cadence and rhyme sequence. There is a pattern of four repeated words, then three repeated words (usually sound effects). Let the children know they will help read by clapping when there are three things in a row. For example, "Thunka, thunka, thunka, thunka—Chug, Chug, Chug!" You might say, "Let's all clap at the chug, chug, chug!" In the initial read-aloud, have fun discovering the rhymes with the children. In other reading opportunities, let the children fill in the rhyme.

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.

Clean up time: Have the children pick a Big Rig from the book and pretend to drive it around the classroom as everyone cleans up.

Large Group: Ask, "Can you move your body like a BIG crane?" Make sure to do it with them, modeling big movements with your body. Then ask, "Can you move your body like a LITTLE excavator?" Again imitate an excavator with your body.

Around the Room

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

Sand table: Add blocks and trucks to the sand table.

Bring trucks and blocks outside to use during **Outside** time.

Add instruments to the **Block area** so that children can make the sounds of the trucks.

Put *The Little Excavator* on display in the book area so the children can easily find it on their own.

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 Little Excavator*:

*Where do you think the Big Rigs are going?
What do you think they are going to do?*

How do you think Little Excavator felt as he was trying to help the big trucks? Do you ever feel like that when you are helping an adult?

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

website—
www.famconn.org

Facebook—
[@famconnsjc](https://www.facebook.com/famconnsjc)

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 Little Excavator* with their children. Here's a sample message you can send: After hearing *The Little Excavator*, the children in our classroom have been doing a lot of pretending, from driving big rigs to building skyscrapers. We've been learning about the different "jobs" that are done by cranes, bulldozers, backhoes, loaders and excavators.

As you are out and about with your child, be on the lookout for construction vehicles or sites. Ask "Where is he going today? What do you think they are building?" Give your child time to make up a story; ask questions like, "Is another construction vehicle there to help?" These questions help your child add to their version of the story of Little Excavator.