

# The Early Years Count **Literacy** Connection



## Lily's Cat Mask

Written and Illustrated by  
Julie Fortenberry

*Preschool edition*  
June 2018

### Overview of Book

Lily is anxious about starting school. When her dad says she can get a cat mask at the store, she is overjoyed. She can hide her face behind the mask when she's grumpy and she can "meow" if she's not in the mood to talk. At school her teacher allows her to wear it only at recess, but before long her mask helps her find a friend.

Genre: Fiction

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some from *Lily's Cat Mask* to introduce in your classroom:

unusual	invisible
noticed	disguise
distraction	announce

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

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or the illustrations to help children gain an understanding of each word's meaning.

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

### Connecting with the HighScope Curriculum

*COR Advantage 1.5*

Social and Emotional  
Development  
Item D  
(Emotions)

Item F  
(Building relationships  
with other children)

Creative Arts  
Item X  
(Art)

Item AA  
(Pretend play)

### Reading Tips

Look for ways to include the children in Lily's experiences. For example, when Lily's dad says "yes" to the cat mask, ask children to share their experiences and feelings when they hear "Yes" while out shopping.

Wonder out loud and listen for children's comments. For example, when Lily and her dad first meet her teacher, ask "I wonder why Lily is wearing the cat mask now?" Or at the end, ask "I wonder what her wish was?" Ask children what they know about cats.

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. Each reading provides an opportunity to 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.

During **Transitions** have children move as if they were cats, using words like prowl, prance, or sneak.

At **Greeting Time**, ask the children to use “meows” instead of “hellos” to greet one another.

In **Large Group**, sing their favorite song saying “meow” instead of actual lyrics.

Provide white crayons and watercolors for **Small Group** to create “invisible” pictures.

### **Around the Room**

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

Collect magazines and keep them with scissors and tape in the **Art Area**. Create wall space where children can tape any cat pictures they find.

In addition to *Lily's Cat Mask*, add cat books in different genres to the **Book Area**. Some examples include *Puss in Boots*, *The Cat in the Hat*, and *The Cat Encyclopedia*.

Add masks, hats, wigs, and other costume items to the **House Area**.

### **Open-ended Questions**

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These questions encourage children to explain why or how things happen, make predictions, or brainstorm possibilities rather than give one “right” answer.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Lily's Cat Mask*:

What are some other reasons to wear a mask?

How do you think Lily feels when she can't wear the cat mask inside the school?

Why do you think the boy wore the cat mask to the party?

Can you think of other ways to make a disguise?

*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)

Facebook—  
@famconnsjc

phone—  
574-237-9740

### **@ Home**

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

*Lily's Cat Mask*, the book we've been reading recently, is about a little girl who is anxious about starting school. Some of the new words from the story that we've been using throughout the day are “unusual,” “noticed,” “invisible,” and “disguise.” We've been moving like cats and “meowing” our favorite songs. Lily's cat mask gives her confidence, just like a superhero's cape. Think about the things that give you confidence, like a special outfit or pair of shoes. Then consider asking your child if there's something special that helps him or her feel more confident and why it does.