

The
Early Years Count
Literacy
Connection



**How to Get Your
Octopus to
School**

Written by Becky
Schamhorst
Illustrated by Jaclyn Sinquett

Preschool edition

Overview of Book

How do you prepare your octopus for their first day of school? What should they bring? What should they wear? What should you do if they are scared? This silly story has the answers you are looking for!

Genre: Picture

Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *How to Get Your Octopus to School* to introduce in your classroom:

ensemble nervous
suction cups camouflage

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*)

Mathematics Item S
(*Numbers and counting*)

Science & Technology
Item BB
(*Observing and classifying*)
Item DD
(*Natural and physical world*)

Reading Tips

Ask the children what they may know about octopuses and write down their responses. Ask them if they remember feeling "shy" or "nervous" when they started school. Let them know the octopus in the story feels this way. As you read ask questions like, "Do you get to choose your *ensemble* to wear to school?" and, "Do you hide to avoid going places sometimes, too?" Compare the children's and the octopus's experiences with being nervous to try something new, and how it turned out. Read a few of the "true facts" from the back of the book.

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.

Collect items from the room and other open-ended materials for children to create sets of 8 for **Small Group Time**. Encourage children to determine if they need one or 2 more, or if they have one or 2 too many to get to 8.

Pretend to be octopuses and play hide-and-seek at **Outside Time**.

Imitate octopuses and other sea creatures from the story for **Large Group Time**.

Around the Room

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

Add new dress-up items in the **House Area**. Encourage children to create a new *ensemble*.

Add non-fiction, and informational books about octopus' and other animals that are good at *camouflage* to the **Book Area**.

Paint with eight paintbrushes at once in the **Art Area**. Pretend the paint is octopus ink.

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 *How to Get Your Octopus to School*:

What would you do if you had 8 arms?

If you were friends with an octopus, what would you like to do?

Have you ever felt shy or nervous? What did you do?

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

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 *How to Get Your Octopus to School* with their child. Here's a sample message you can send:

As you read this with your child, compare how the octopus gets ready for school with your child's experiences with getting ready for school or any big event. Point out each time the girl in the story helps and encourages the octopus. She lets the octopus select what to wear, what to bring and what to have for breakfast. Point out that even though the octopus is taking a *very long time*, the girl continues to be supportive—even after he inks! Ask your child to tell you about any time they were nervous or felt shy and how they handled it. Then go play hide-and-seek!