

The Early Years Count Literacy Connection



Raccoon On His Own

Written and illustrated by
Jim Arnosky

Preschool edition

Overview of Book

A family of raccoons forages in the mud for food, but one baby is more curious than hungry. He climbs into an empty boat and, suddenly, he is on an unexpected adventure! What was that? Who was that? And where is his mommy?

Genre: Picture book / fiction

Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Raccoon On His Own* to introduce in your classroom:

dawned	nudged	crawfish
sticky	float	sturdy
reflection	crunchy	glided
merganser	warbler	

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

Approaches To Learning
Item C (*Reflection*)

Social and Emotional
Development
Item D (*Emotions*)

Physical Development
and Health
Item I (*Gross motor*)

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

Reading Tips

Take a "book walk" before starting the story. Notice all the different animals. Let the group know, "These are animals that live in a swamp or a forest." Before you begin, add, "Let's find out why it is called *Raccoon On His Own*." As you read to the children, pause and ask questions like, "How is the little raccoon feeling here?" and, "What do you think his mommy and sisters are thinking?" When all are reunited, ask, "What part do you think was the scariest for little raccoon? Why?"

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.

Explore painting with glue and sand at **Small Group Time**. Encourage children to recall how *sticky* the mud was in the story.

Read the story at **Large Group Time**. Encourage the children to do the movements in the story: reaching (pretending to climb), crouching/ducking, swimming, paddling, and running.

Replace raccoons with monkeys and sing "5 little raccoons...teasing Mr. Alligator..."

Around the Room

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

Invite children to make mud in the **Sand and Water Area**. Have sand as well as soil for comparison.

Add *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter to the **Book Area**. Compare how the characters get into trouble. Are the reasons similar?

Add animal figures, photos of real animals, and informational books to the **Toy Area**. Encourage children to look up the different animals from the story.

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 *Raccoon On His Own*:

What do you think it would be like to be a raccoon?

What are your favorite animals from the story? Why?

How would you spend your day if you lived in the swamp?

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

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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 *Raccoon On His Own* with their child. Here's a sample message you can send:

As you and your child read this story, notice how scared the little raccoon is as he realizes he's separated from his family. Notice several pages where the mommy and other baby raccoons follow the boat and are never really far from the little raccoon, though he does not see them. Talk about these feelings and reassure your child that, like the raccoon mommy (or daddy), you will always be there. Ask your child what they think about the little raccoon's accidental adventure. Ask questions like, "What did he do to try and get back to his family?" and, "What would you do?"