



Five Little Pumpkins



Storytime can (and should!) happen in many different ways – not just when your child is sitting quietly in your lap listening to you read a book. This hands-on activity is a fun and interactive way to include your child in the storytelling experience.

Duration

This activity may range from five to 30 minutes or more depending upon your child's interest and mood.

Materials Required

- Five Little Pumpkins book (or printed poem at the end of this document)
- Five miniature pumpkins, called “Jack Be Little Pumpkins,” from the grocery store; or use objects to represent the pumpkins, e.g., pictures, felt or foam circles, mini-plastic pumpkins, orange pompoms
- Cookie sheet with piece of black paper or felt inserted into it
- Popsicle sticks to make a gate



Activity Steps

1. Start by simply reading the story to your child. Watch for any expressions or signs that your child may like a particular word or sound (smiling when you say “oooo went the

wind”). You can also try bouncing your child in your lap or rocking in the same rhythm as you say the words.

2. After you’ve read the story a few times, position your child so he or she can look at and/or feel the pumpkins with hands or feet. It may be easiest to sit behind your child to offer support. Point to each pumpkin or use hand under hand to guide his or her tactual exploration of the pumpkins while you tell the story.
3. As you read the poem, show your child how to remove each pumpkin from the gate and place it at the bottom of the cookie sheet. When you say, “The first one said ‘Oh, my, it’s getting late,’” take off the first pumpkin and move it to the bottom of the cookie sheet. At the end of the story when you say, “The five little pumpkins rolled out of sight,” move or “roll” the pumpkins off the cookie sheet.
4. Repetition is very important - you will become tired of the story long before your child does! Re-tell it many times (over the course of days or weeks) so they can become familiar with the words and start to anticipate “what happens next.”
5. As your child becomes familiar with the rhythm of the poem, pause while reading and wait for them to make a sound or move their body as an indicator for you to continue. Say, “Oh, you’re telling me you want more pumpkin story!”
6. Try leaving the last word off of a phrase. “The second one said, ‘There are witches in the ____.’” Give your child plenty of time (up to 30 seconds) to make a sound or say the word.
7. Once you’ve read the poem several times, pause while reading and let your child tell you with words, gestures or the pumpkins “what happens next.” You might say, “Your turn!” or “Here comes the wind!” to give him a hint.
8. It’s OK if your child isn’t sitting still or doing it “the right way”! Let your child play with the pumpkins while you tell the story. If he or she isn’t interested in playing with the pumpkins, that’s OK too. Read the story while your child is playing with something else – they’re still listening!
9. Give your child opportunities to make choices and communicate – do they want to listen to the story while playing with the pumpkins or bounce to the rhythm on your lap? Try offering choices between two different stories.

Communication Tips

Be sensitive to your child’s body movements, vocalizations and facial expressions. Is your child smiling and engaged? Turning away?

Use different voices for each of the pumpkins that match their facial expression in the picture.

Talk about the jack-o-lanterns' facial expressions and/or emotions. "This pumpkin is smiling – she's happy!" or "He's worried because it's getting late."

Five Little Pumpkins

Five little pumpkins sitting on the gate.

The first one said, "Oh, my, it's getting late."

The second one said, "There are witches in the air."

The third one said, "But I don't care."

The fourth one said, "Let's run and run and run."

The fifth one said, "I'm ready for some fun."

Ooooo! Went the wind, and out went the light.

And the five little pumpkins rolled out of sight!