Playing with Animal Sounds

Animals and their sounds fascinate children, but moo, baa and oink are not just fun sounds for children to make. They serve an important role in a child’s early literacy development.

Although animal sounds might not seem like actual words, they help children make a connection between a simple sound and an actual object or picture. Children are learning to associate the picture of a cow (a symbol) with “moo” (the sound). Learning and practicing the skill of hearing a specific sound and matching it with its source will help children associate letters (symbols) with their sounds as they begin to read.

Hearing and making animal sounds help children hear smaller sounds or parts of words. Being able to hear the smaller sounds in words (phonological awareness) helps children break down words into different parts.

Here are a few daily opportunities to have fun with animal sounds:
- Read picture books with animals in them and encourage children to name the animals and make their sounds.
- Play with animal puppets or toy animals to reinforce the connection between sounds and concrete objects.
- Pretend to be various animals and act out their movements and sounds.
- Sing songs, such as “Old MacDonald,” that have a variety of animal sounds.

Written by Liz Townsend, Early Literacy Assistant

Animal Sound Books

Find these and many other animal sound books at your neighborhood library branch.

**Bark George** by Jules Feiffer
A puppy tries to bark, but all that comes out are other animal sounds. His mother takes him to a vet who discovers the problem.

**Can An Aardvark Bark?** by Melissa Stewart
A non-fiction look at the sounds that animals make and the reasons behind them.

**Can You Growl Like a Bear?** by John Butler
In rhyming text, the reader is asked to mimic a variety of animal noises in preparation for a good night’s sleep.

**Can You Whoo, Too?** by Harriet Ziefert
Almost every animal has something to say. This book is a unique combination of language arts, science and noisy fun.

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**Chicken, Chicken, Duck!**
by Nadia Krilanovich
Easy-to-read, rhythmic text about a group of farm animals, led by a tenacious duck, who play a noisy game together.

**The Cow Said Meow**
by John Himmelman
On a drizzly day, a cow hears a cat meowing to be let into the house and gets an idea that spirals out of control.

**Duddle Puck: The Puddle Duck**
by Karma Wilson
A very odd duck that refuses to quack shocks and flusters animals all over the farm with his clucking, honking, oinking and neighing.

**The Farmers Away! Baa! Neigh!**
by Anne Kennedy
A rhythmic story features a noisy menagerie of mischievous animals who go picnicking, jet skiing and ballroom dancing in the farmer’s absence.

**Go Sleep in Your Own Bed**
by Candace Fleming
When Pig plops into his sty at bedtime, he finds Cow sleeping there and must send her off to her stall, setting off a chain reaction of animals being awakened to move to their own beds.

**Hiccupotamus**
by Steve Smallman
The jungle animals are having a musical celebration. Mouse squeaks, Bird tweets and Centipede taps his feet. More animals hear the music and want to join in, as Monkey, Warthog and Crocodile bring their own music-making talents to the group.

**I Spy on the Farm**
by Edwards Gibbs
Down on the farm there are many colorful and noisy animals all over, which you might spy. Look through the spy hole and use the clues to guess which one is next.

**Night Owl**
by Toni Yuly
A baby owl flies through the night, listening to different sounds as it tries to find its mom.

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**Library Shout Out: Thematic Book Bags**

The Fairfax County Public Library website recently got a makeover. Early literacy information is easy to find. Take a look at research.fairfaxcounty.gov/early-literacy. You will find tips on how to get children excited about books and reading, information about 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, book lists and much more.

Early childhood professionals can check out thematic book bags. Each bag includes 10-20 books on a particular theme, such as farms, seasons or transportation. Several bags focus on movement and include a CD to use along with the books in the kit.

To find the book bags, go to research.fairfaxcounty.gov/early-literacy/bookbags. These kits are not available at any branch; you must put them on hold.

To place a hold, click on a book bag’s title. This will take you to the kit’s information page in the library catalog. Click on “Place Hold” and enter your library card number. Select the branch where you want to pick up the book bag.