

B



3 - Let's talk about...

4 - Rhymes, songs and poems

5 - Storytelling

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Talk and school

When your child begins school, it is important to help her to get to know the classroom routine and to feel confident in the social expectations of classroom talk.

Help your child to know the classroom environment.

Before your child starts school, play school with her.

An older sibling is often very willing to be a teacher to a younger one.

Once your child starts school let her be the teacher and you or an older sibling be the student.

This will give your child a chance to act out her impressions of the teacher's role and expectations.

You could ask your child to draw a picture of the classroom or draw it together.

Ask about places:

Where do you sit?

Where is the toilet?

Where does your teacher sit?

Where do you put your coat and school bag?

Ask about time:

When do you have breaks?

What do you do?

Ask about language:

What do you say if you want to go to the toilet?

What do you call your teacher?

Ask about events:

What do you do first in the morning?

Ask about likes and dislikes:

What did you like about the story that your teacher read today?

Open and closed questions

A closed question requires a 'yes' or 'no' answer, or possibly a one word response:

'Did you have a good time in school today?'

'Would you like sausages for your tea?'

'Did you go to the shop?'

An open-ended question requires more information and encourages more thinking:

'What did you do at school today?'

'What would you like for dinner?'

'Where did we go today?'

'What can you tell me about your picture?'

When your child is asked an **open-ended question**, she has to use more words to answer you. This also means that she has to organise her thoughts before speaking.



Talking with your child

Take time to talk with your child. Encouraging your child's oral language skills is the first step in developing her reading skills.

Give your child lots of opportunities to put thoughts into words. Be aware that everything you do - playing games, going shopping, making buns - is an opportunity for talking.

Ask your child to explain actions, describe things, express opinions or ideas. Begin questions with who, what, when, where, why and how.

Teach your child the names of things. Ask her to point things out and name them back. Encourage your child to look at similarities and differences between things.

Teach your child words about location and direction, time, size and shape.

Above all, show that you value your child's talk by praising and encouraging her.

Talking with your child builds:

**vocabulary skills,
communication skills,
self-esteem.**

Finding good times to talk with your child is not always easy, and every family is different. Some parents have found that the best times are:

- meal time
- bath time
- in the car
- shopping
- bed time
- after homework
- going for a walk
- cooking

What are your best times?

How about listening?

Listening to your child is the best way to teach her good listening skills.

Here are some ideas:

- Maintain eye contact.
- Be patient.
- Give your child time to get her point across or to tell the story.
- Comment on what she has to say.
- Encourage your child to add details by asking open-ended questions.
- Ask your child to tell the story or to give the information to another family member.
- Encourage your child's curiosity.
- Ask for your child's opinions.
- Let her speak without interrupting.
- Praise your child when she waits her turn to speak.
- Thank your child for giving you some information.

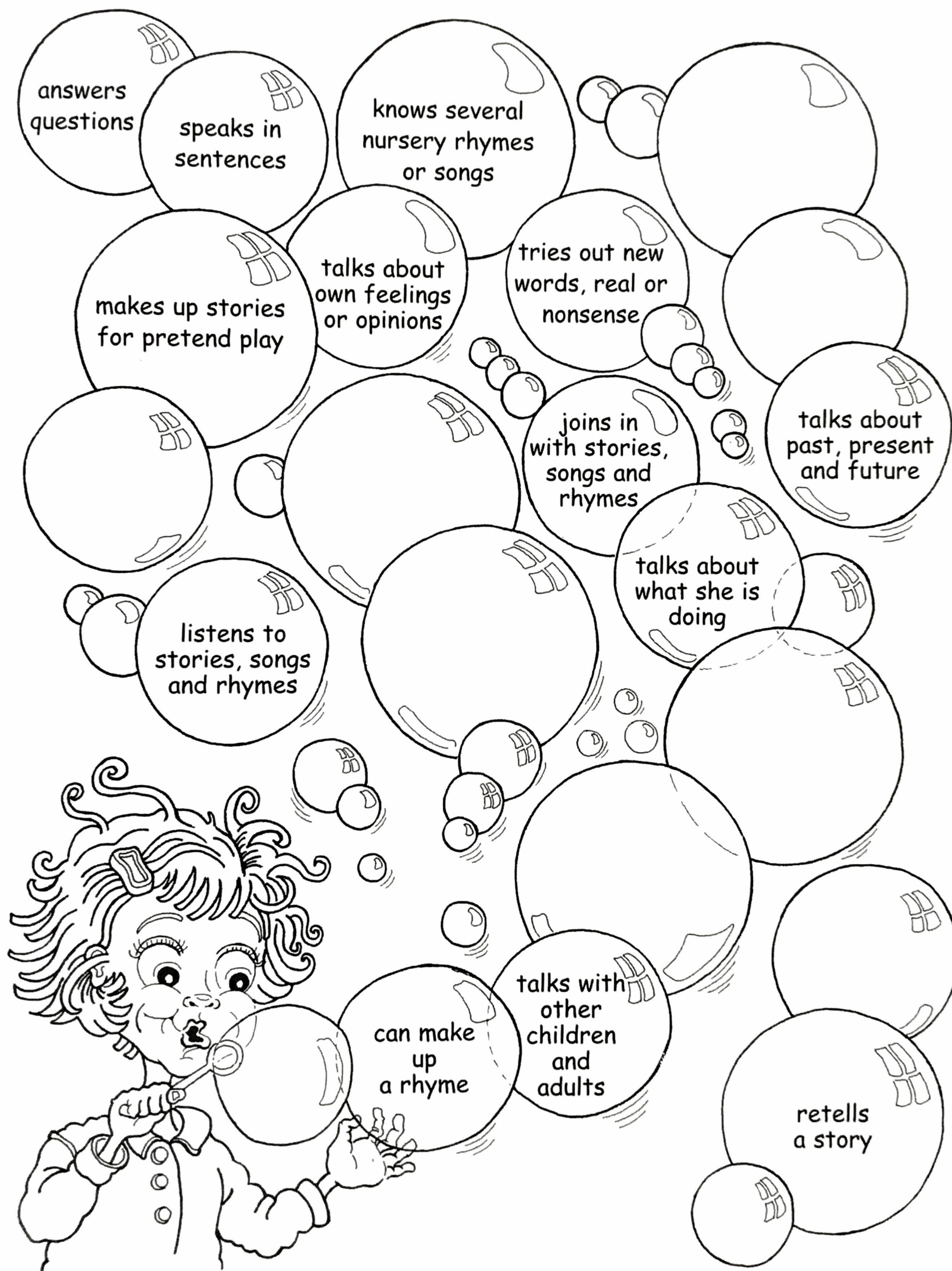
Your ideas:

Games for talking and listening

- I hear with my little ear
- I went to the shop to buy...
- I went to the zoo to see...
- Animal Alphabet
- Twenty Questions
- Go Fish
- Simon Says
- Giant Steps and Baby Steps
- Bingo
- Board Games

Your ideas:

Spotlight on talking and listening



Name _____

Age _____

Photocopy for each child as needed.



Talking and listening to your child

Choose one of these activities to try with your child during the week:

1. Open and closed questions
2. One of the games for talking and listening
3. Spotlight on talking and listening

Which activity did you choose?

When did you try this activity?

What did you learn about your child's talking and listening skills?

What did you and your child enjoy about the activity?



Do you remember these rhymes?

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.

...

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's
men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

...

Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet
Eating her curds and whey.
Along came a spider,
And sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

...

Hickory, dickory, dock
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory, dickory, dock.

...

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating his Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said, 'What a good boy am I!'

...

Hey diddle, diddle
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little boy laughed
To see such fun,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Great A, little a
Bouncing B
The Cat's in the cupboard
And can't see me.

...

One for sorrow
Two for joy
Three for a girl
Four for a boy
Five for silver
Six for gold
Seven for a secret
Never to be told.

...

Half a pound of tuppenny rice,
Half a pound of treacle,
Mix it up and make it nice,
Pop goes the weasel.

...

Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may
I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.

...

Jack be nimble,
Jack be quick,
Jack jump over the candlestick.

...

Little Boy Blue,
Come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow,
The cow's in the corn.

Hearing sound patterns

When children learn to hear the sounds that letters make in words, they develop sound pattern awareness. When they recognise similar sound patterns, particularly beginning and ending sounds, it helps them to make the connection with letter patterns. This is an important skill for learning to read and spell.

Ideas for encouraging your child's sound pattern awareness:

- Help your child to learn and say rhymes.
- Point out beginning and ending sound patterns in words that your child sees and hears every day, for example, television or radio jingles.
- Read or tell nursery rhymes and poems often.
- Sing or listen to songs - 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star', 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat'.
- Encourage your child to rhyme his name and make up rhymes with real words or nonsense words.
- Use rhyming words in storytelling: 'Splish, splosh, splash,' went the duck in the water. 'Mish, mash, mush,' said the little pig in the mud.

Ideas for rhyming games:

- Say a word and ask your child to rhyme another word with it.
- Say or sing a rhyme leaving out a rhyming word and see if your child can fill it in, for example:

'Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to ____.'

- Say the wrong word and see if your child can spot the mistake, for example:
 'I'm a little a teapot
 Short and stout
 Here is my handle
 Here is my bellybutton.'
- Play 'I Spy With My Little Eye, something that begins with or rhymes with...'

Action songs and rhymes

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
Round and round,
Round and round,
The wheels on the bus go round and round,
All through the town.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish,
swish,
Swish, swish, swish,
Swish, swish, swish,
The wipers on the bus go swish, swish,
swish,
All through the town.

Continue on with as many verses as you like:
The driver on the bus says, 'Move on back,'
The horn on the bus goes, beep, beep, beep,
The baby on the bus goes, 'Wah, wah, wah.'

...

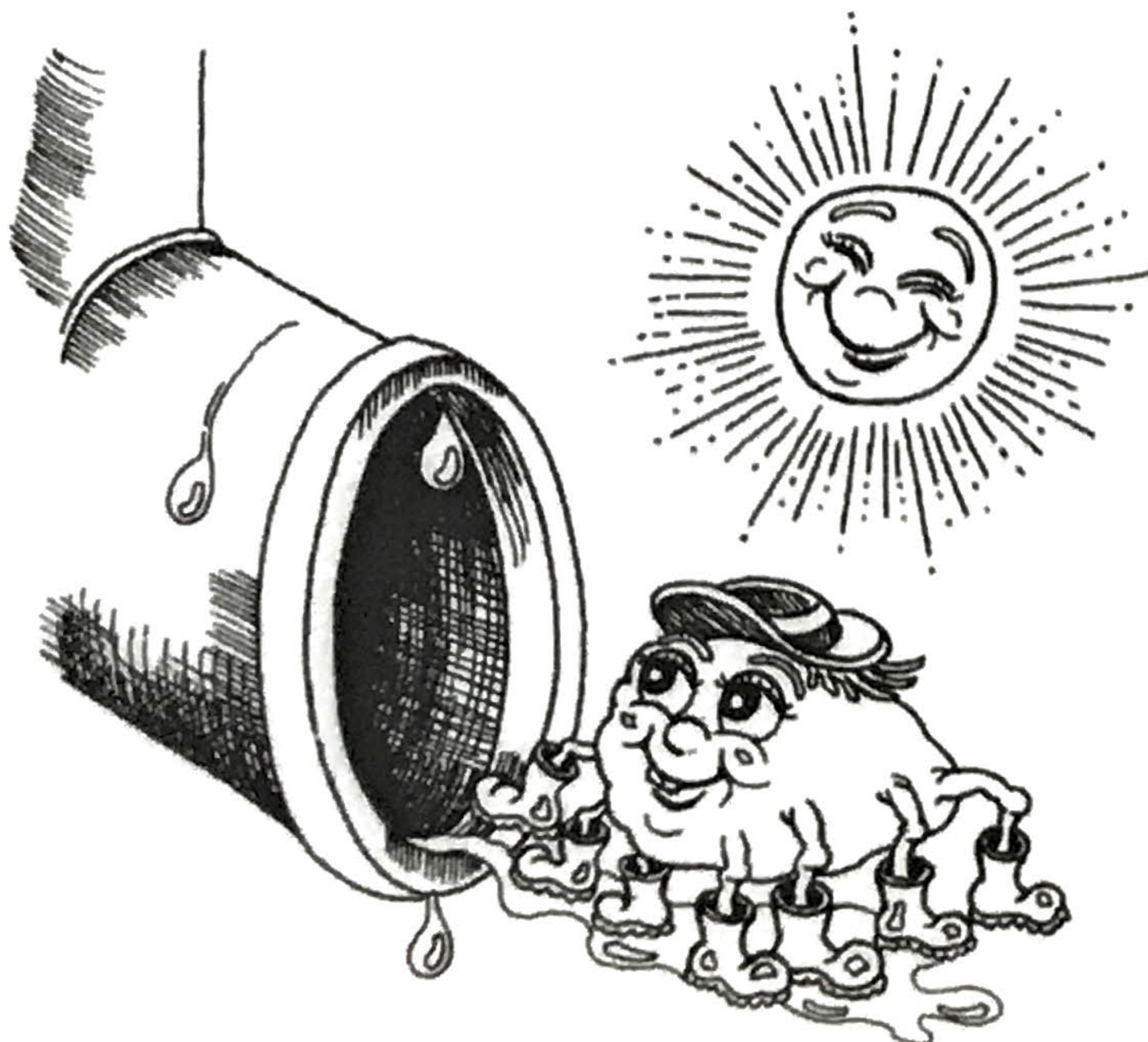
I'm A Little Teapot

I'm a little teapot, short and stout,
Here is my handle,
Here is my spout,
When I start to boil you'll hear me shout,
'Tip me over and pour me out.'

...

Incy Wincy Spider

The incy wincy spider went up the
waterspout,
Down came the rain and washed the spider
out,
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain,
And the incy wincy spider went up the
spout again.



Here Is the Church

Here is the church,
Here is the steeple,
Open the doors,
And see all the people.

...

If You're Happy And You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your
hands,
If you're happy and you know it, clap your
hands,
If you're happy and you know it,
And you really want to show it,
If you're happy and you know it, clap your
hands.

If you're cross and you know it, stamp your
feet,
If you're cross and you know it, stamp your
feet,
If you're cross and you know it,
And you really want to show it,
If you're cross and you know it, stamp your
feet.

Other verses:

If you're sad and you know it, cry a lot.
If you're silly and you know it, laugh a lot.

...

Pat-A-Coke

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake
Baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Roll it and prick it
And mark it with (first letter of child's
name)
And throw it in the oven for (child's name)
and me.



Have fun with rhymes

Choose a rhyming activity from the page **Hearing sound patterns**.

Which activity did you choose?

What did your child enjoy about the activity?

What radio or TV jingles is your child familiar with?

Can you name some other examples of rhyme in your home?



Recipe for a story

There are many recipes for storytelling. Here's one we'd like to share with you...

1. Start by telling your audience what's cooking.

(There are plenty of off the shelf story starters available... Once upon a time... Long, long, ago... There once was a... I remember when...)

Did you hear what happened to Matilda Muffet?

2. Blend together carefully selected amounts of who, what, when and where.

(We're using Miss Muffet doing spring-cleaning on a Saturday in her cottage. But feel free to experiment.)

You remember Miss Muffet, small, fussy woman always complaining about children running through her garden? She lives in that small cottage near Mother Goose's Cross. Well, last Saturday she was doing her spring-cleaning. House proud? There's no one as fussy as Matilda. She spent the whole day washing walls, scraping tiles, cleaning presses, dusting cobwebs, beating rugs, polishing furniture, wiping finger prints off the light switches. Every room in that house was under assault from Matilda's mops and cloths and sprays.

It was evening by the time she finished, and after all that hard work, Matilda decided to reward herself with a treat. Know what that was? Curds and whey. I know, I know. Curds and whey? But that was Matilda. She was going to sit down on her tuffet, turn on '**Coronation Street**' and enjoy a nice hot bowl of steaming curds and whey...

3. Cook up a bit of trouble and allow to simmer.

(Nothing goes smoothly in stories, that's what keeps us listening. So while Matilda looks forward to her evening off, we look forward to what's going to happen...)

It was half seven when she finally sat down on her tuffet to sample her favourite treat. She turned on '**Coronation Street**'. Deirdre was still whimpering about how she'd been betrayed by a cunning lover and ended up in prison. 'Tut tut,' Miss Muffet clucked, 'If that woman did half the work I do, it's far from love affairs and knaves of the heart she'd be.'

Recipe for a story

Just then Matilda became aware of a presence in the room. Something she couldn't put her hand on, but it made her nervous all the same... She sensed that she was being approached. Someone was drawing near...

In a minute a dark figure came into view looking menacingly, first at Miss Muffet, then at her curds and whey...

Then a voice said, 'So you think you've a mighty day's work done do you? Did you ever think that your day's work has just destroyed my entire family and left me homeless?'

4. Shake in a solution.

(We know, of course, that the dark stranger is a spider, but what do we want to happen? Do we want Miss Muffet to clout the spider and go back to 'Coronation Street'? Or do we think the spider has a point?)

Miss Muffet stared numbly at the spider, hardly believing what she was seeing, let alone hearing. All of a sudden, she jumped up, toppling her bowl as she did, and bolted out the door.

5. Taste, and if necessary, adjust the solution.

(I think we'll just stick with tradition here...)

She didn't look back. She didn't see the curds and whey ooze out from under the broken bowl onto the just waxed floor.

6. Remove from flame and serve up a happy ending.

(For the spider anyway...)

But the spider did, and taking some degree of satisfaction from this small revenge, settled onto the tuffet to watch the end of 'Coronation Street' in splendid comfort.

(Well, the spider turns this around. But don't be fooled. Miss Muffet's probably gone off to sign up for a karate course at her local adult education centre. She'll be back!)

The End

Story box

CHARACTER	Who is the hero or heroine?
OPPOSING CHARACTER	Who else is in the story? Who is the 'bad guy'?
TIME	When does the story take place?
PLACE/SETTING	Where does the story take place?
MAIN ACTION	What is supposed to happen?
PROBLEM	What goes wrong?
RESOLUTION	How is this solved? Happy ending? Sad ending?

Helping your child to retell a story

Choose a story you both know well.	'Can you tell me about Goldilocks and the Three Bears?'
Start your child at the beginning.	'Once upon a time there were three bears.'
Direct her attention to particular details.	'What was Goldilocks doing when she came to the three bears' cottage?'
Ask questions to help her remember the story.	'And what happened when she sat on Baby Bear's chair?'
Give prompts when she gets confused.	'The chair broke, didn't it? And then Goldilocks went upstairs to the bedrooms. Whose bed did she lie on first?'
Redirect the story when necessary.	'But the bears didn't come home right away, did they? What happened first?'
Give lots of praise and encouragement.	'That was a great story. Thank you for telling it to me.'

Fractured fairy tales

Children love the humour and playful quality of this type of storytelling. To 'fracture' a fairy tale, you simply take a familiar fairy tale and change it around to suit your purpose.

- Characters might become animals, space aliens, or people in your family.
- New characters can be added.
- The plot can be twisted in various directions.
- The setting can be completely altered.
- The story can be told from another perspective.

For example:

'The Three Little Pigs' could take place under the sea. The three little pigs could be the three little codfish, or how about merpigs? The big bad wolf could be the awesome awful octopus. They could try to build houses out of seaweed, shells, or timber from a sunken ship...

'The Frog Prince' could become the 'The Spider Prince' or the 'The Martian Prince'. Instead of the princess kissing him, and turning him into a prince, turn it around, the frog kisses her and she turns into a frog.

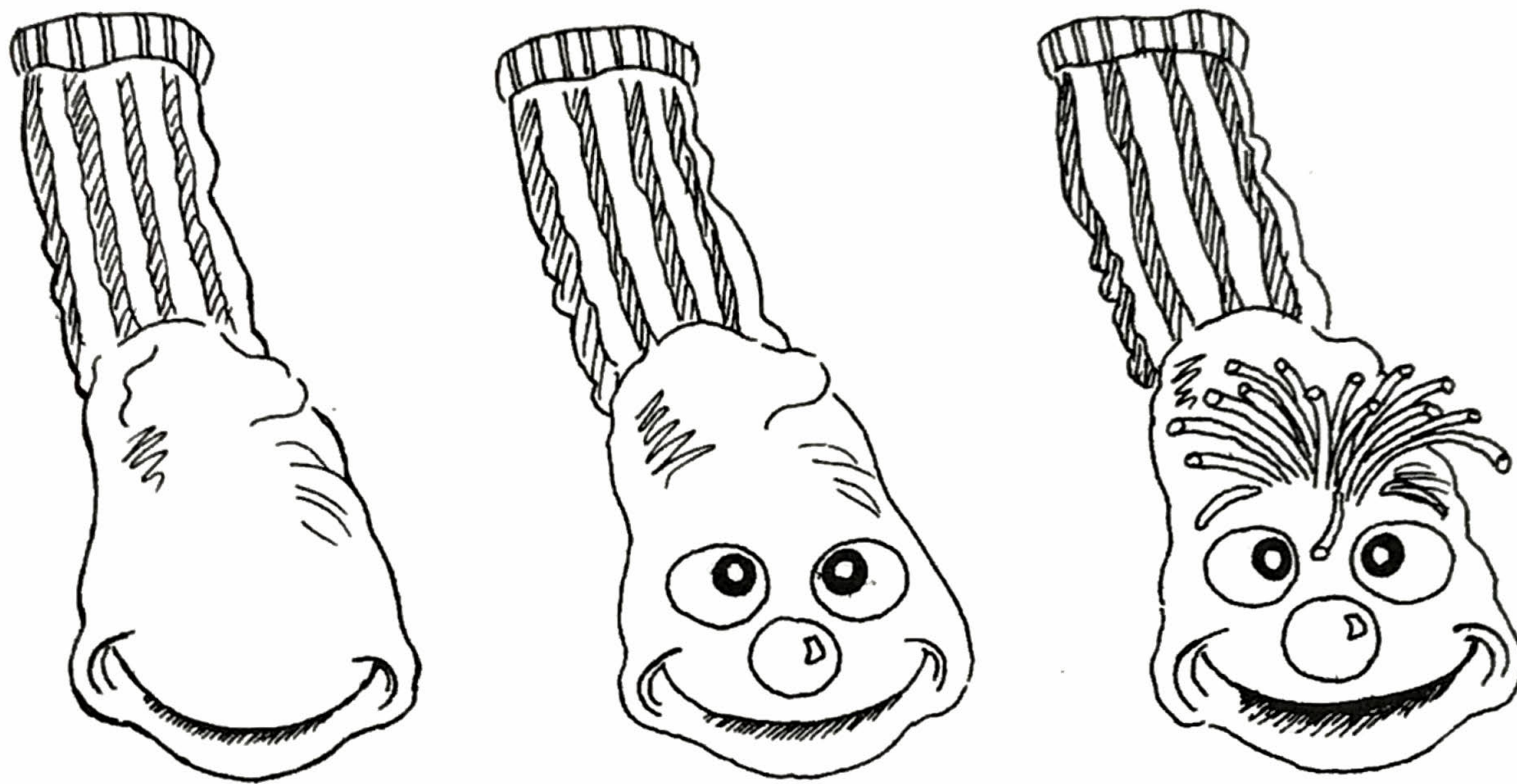
'Sleeping Beauty' could be changed to 'Sneezing Beauty' or 'Snoring Beauty'.



Making puppets

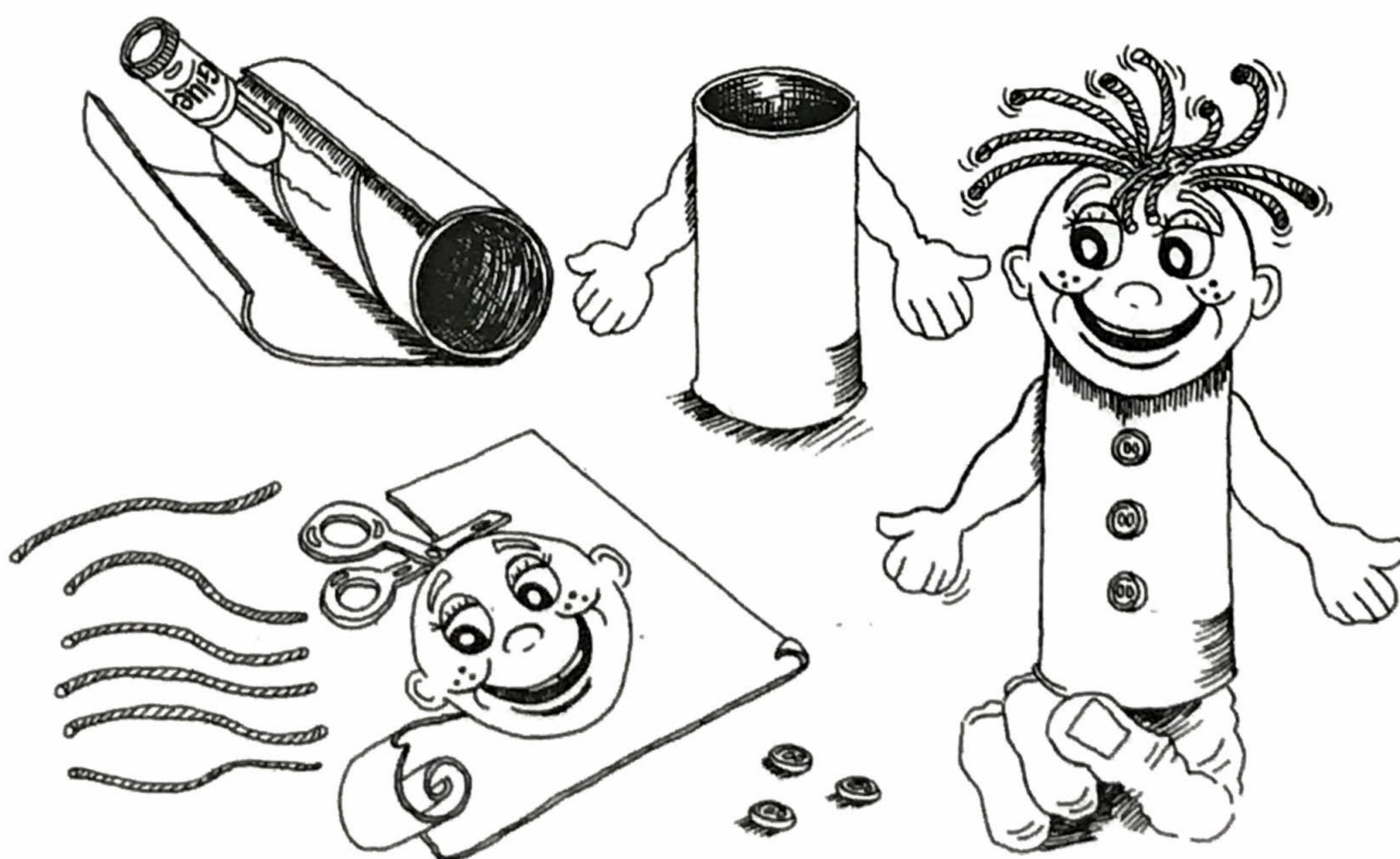
Sock puppet:

1. For eyes and nose, glue buttons or small circles of coloured paper onto a sock.
2. Cut out a tongue or mouth out of paper.
3. Glue on some wool for hair or fur.



Cardboard tube puppet:

1. Use cello tape or glue to cover the toilet roll with coloured paper for a body.
2. Draw or cut and paste details as desired.
3. Using paper, cut out a large circle for a head and draw on a face.
4. Glue the head onto the tube.
5. Add extras such as wool for hair, glitter...





Storytelling

During the week, try to make time to share a storytelling activity with your child. You could experiment with telling a story such as a fractured fairy tale or The but story.

What stories do you like telling to your child?

What are your child's favourite stories?

Does your child ever join in with the storytelling?

Is your child able to retell the story?

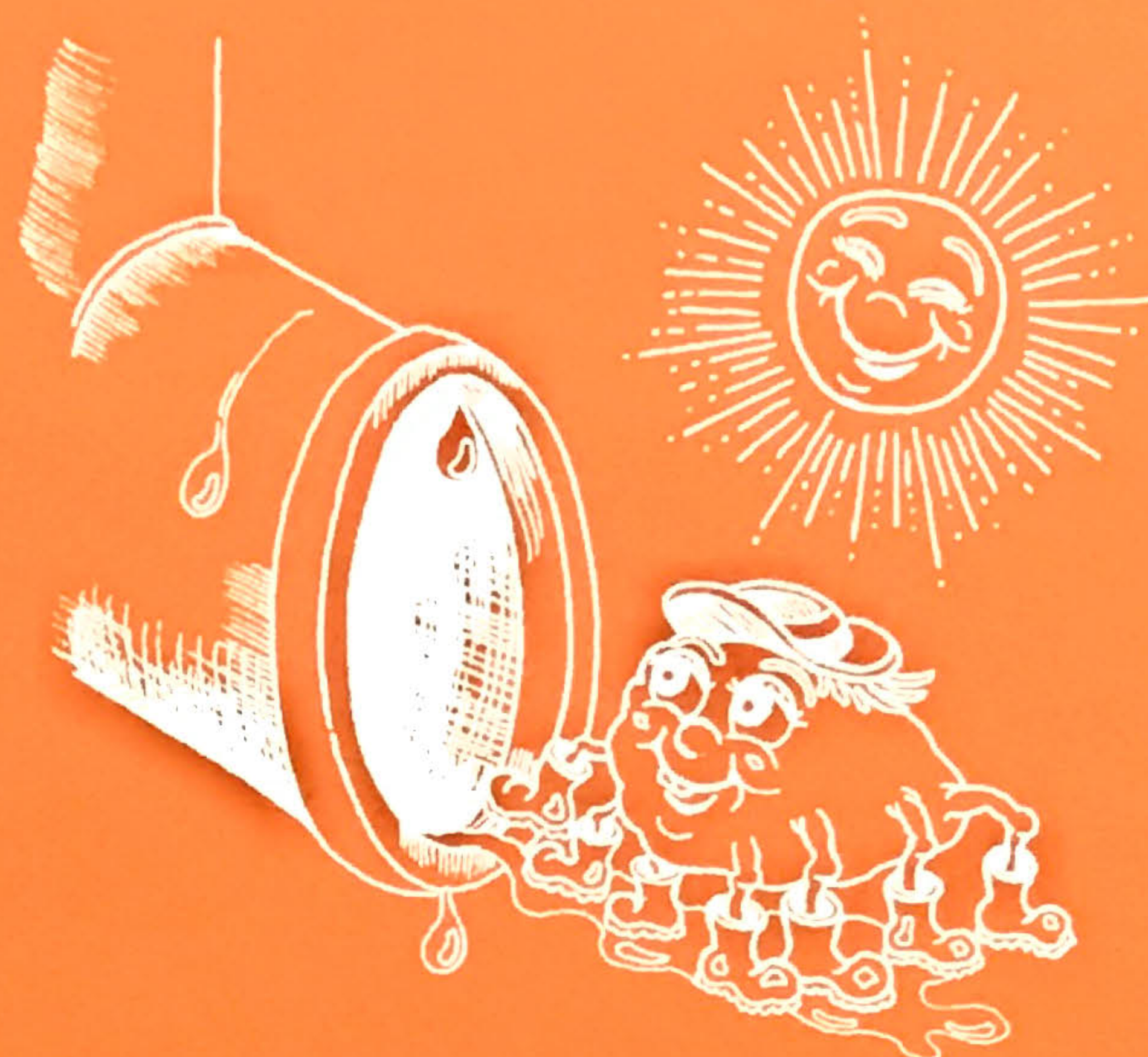
Who are your child's favourite characters?

Can your child talk about the beginning, middle and end of the story?



Match the shadows





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