

A Day on the Farm: An Interactive Animal Adventure

Materials Needed:

- A bag or box ("Mystery Bag") that the child cannot see inside
- Toy farm animals (cow, sheep, pig, chicken, duck)
- A farm-themed picture book (e.g., "Big Red Barn" by Margaret Wise Brown or "Moo, Baa, La La La!" by Sandra Boynton)
- Two bins, baskets, or designated floor spaces. Label one with a simple drawing of a barn and the other with a simple drawing of a pond.
- **For Sheep Craft:** Paper plate, cotton balls, glue stick, black construction paper (for face and legs), googly eyes (optional)
- **For Muddy Pig Craft:** A small amount of chocolate pudding, a shallow dish, white paper with a pig outline, a spoon or paintbrush
- Towel or smock for craft time

Learning Objectives:

- **Identify & Name:** The child will be able to identify and name at least three farm animals (e.g., cow, pig, sheep).
- **Phonological Awareness:** The child will be able to imitate the sounds of at least three farm animals.
- **Sorting & Classifying:** The child will sort animals into two groups based on their habitat (barn vs. pond).
- **Fine Motor Skills:** The child will practice gluing and placing small objects (cotton balls) to create a craft.
- **Creative Expression:** The child will engage in imaginative play and create a unique piece of farm-themed art.

Lesson Plan: Step-by-Step

Part 1: The Mystery on the Farm (5-7 minutes - Engagement)

1. **Introduction:** Say, "Today, we're going to visit a farm! But first, I have a Mystery Bag with some secret farm animal friends inside. Can you help me guess who they are?"
2. **Sing a Song:** Start singing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." After the first verse, pause dramatically.
3. **The Reveal:** Reach into the Mystery Bag without looking. Describe the animal you are feeling. For example, "Hmm, this one feels woolly and soft. What animal is woolly?" Encourage the child to guess. Pull out the sheep!
4. **Sound Association:** Once the sheep is revealed, ask, "What sound does a sheep make?" Make the "Baa, baa" sound together.
5. **Repeat:** Continue this process with a cow ("It has horns and feels smooth") and a pig ("It has a funny curly tail and a snout"). Place each animal in front of you as it is revealed.

Part 2: Farm Story & Habitat Sort (7-10 minutes - Application & Cognition)

1. **Story Time:** Read a farm-themed picture book. As you encounter animals from the Mystery Bag, point to the toy animal and encourage the child to make its sound.

2. **Set up the Sort:** Introduce the two labeled bins/spaces. Say, "Now we need to help our animal friends find their homes. Some animals like to live in the cozy barn, and some like to swim in the cool pond."
3. **Guided Sorting:** Hold up the toy cow. Ask, "Does a cow like to swim in the pond or live in the barn?" Guide the child to place the cow in the barn bin. Praise their choice.
4. **Independent Sorting:** Hand the remaining animals to the child one by one (pig, sheep, chicken, duck). Ask, "Where does the duck live?" Let them place it in the correct bin. Provide gentle correction if needed ("A pig loves rolling in the mud, which is usually near the barn!").

Part 3: Farm Animal Moves (5 minutes - Gross Motor & Fun)

1. **Get Moving:** Announce, "Now that the animals are home, let's pretend to BE them!"
2. **Act it Out:** Call out different animals and perform the actions together.
 - "Let's waddle like a **duck!**" (waddle around the room)
 - "Let's stomp like a **cow!**" (stomp feet heavily)
 - "Let's roll in the mud like a **pig!**" (safely roll on the floor)
 - "Let's peck for food like a **chicken!**" (bend over and peck at the floor with fingers)

Part 4: Creative Farm Hands (10-15 minutes - Fine Motor & Creativity)

Offer a choice to give the child a sense of ownership. Say, "It's time to make a farm animal! Would you like to make a fluffy sheep or a muddy pig?"

- **If they choose the Fluffy Sheep:**

1. Give the child the paper plate.
2. Show them how to spread glue on the plate with the glue stick.
3. Let them stick cotton balls all over the plate to be the sheep's wool.
4. Help them glue on the pre-cut black paper face and legs. Add googly eyes for extra fun.

- **If they choose the Muddy Pig:**

1. Put a smock on the child. Place the paper with the pig outline on a protected surface.
2. Pour a small amount of chocolate pudding into the shallow dish.
3. Show them how they can use their fingers (or a spoon/brush) to dip in the "mud" (pudding) and paint the pig.
4. Encourage them to make the pig as "muddy" as they like! This is a wonderful sensory experience.

Part 5: Closing the Barn Doors (3-5 minutes - Closure & Review)

1. **Show and Tell:** Admire the child's finished artwork. Ask questions like, "Tell me about your sheep. Is it soft?" or "Your pig looks so happy in the mud! What sound does a pig make?"
2. **Clean Up Song:** Sing a simple clean-up song while putting the craft supplies away.
3. **Put the Farm to Bed:** Have the child help you put the toy animals back into their "barn" (the Mystery Bag). Say goodnight to each animal, making its sound one last time. ("Goodnight, cow! Moooooo.")

Differentiation and Inclusivity:

- **For Younger Learners (approaching 3):** Focus on only two animals (e.g., cow and sheep). Guide their hands more during the craft (hand-over-hand gluing). Focus more on the sensory and sound-making aspects than on correct sorting.
- **For Advanced Learners (approaching 4):** Introduce more animals or concepts. Ask follow-up questions like, "What do we get from a cow?" (milk) or "What color is the chicken?" Encourage them to tell a story about their finished craft animal. Challenge them to sort the animals by a different attribute, such as "animals with two legs" versus "animals with four

legs."

- **Sensory Considerations:** If the child is hesitant to touch the pudding, provide a paintbrush or spoon as an alternative tool. If they are sensitive to glue, use double-sided tape for the sheep craft.