

# Fine Motor Fun: Animal Rescue Adventure

## Materials Needed:

- A collection of small-to-medium plastic toy animals (e.g., farm animals, dinosaurs)
- Painter's tape or masking tape
- A tray or a designated flat surface on the floor

---

## Lesson Plan Details

### 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, Oliver, Mila, and Reggie will:

- Practice using their pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger) to peel tape.
- Improve hand-eye coordination by targeting the edge of the tape.
- Develop problem-solving skills as they figure out how to "free" their animals.
- Strengthen the small muscles in their hands and fingers.

### 2. Preparation (5 minutes)

Before the children begin, take the toy animals and tape them down to the tray or floor. Criss-cross the tape over the animals' backs, legs, and bodies. For an easier start, fold over the very end of each piece of tape to create a small, non-sticky tab that is easier to grab.

### 3. Instructional Strategy: The 3 'E's (Engage, Explore, Explain)

#### Part A: Engage - Warm-Up Song (2 minutes)

Gather the children and get their hands ready with a fun song. This signals that it's time to learn and warms up their finger muscles.

- Sing "Open, Shut Them" together, doing the hand motions:
- *"Open, shut them, open, shut them, give a little clap, clap, clap."* (Open and close hands, then clap)
- *"Open, shut them, open, shut them, put them in your lap, lap, lap."* (Open and close hands, then place on lap)
- *"Creep them, crawl them, creep them, crawl them, right up to your chin, chin, chin."* (Wiggle fingers up arms to chin)
- *"Open up your little mouth, but do not let them in!"* (Open mouth wide, then hide hands behind back)

#### Part B: Explore - The Animal Rescue! (10-15 minutes)

This is the core of the activity. Let the children lead the discovery process with your gentle guidance.

1. **Introduce the Challenge:** Bring out the tray of taped-up animals. Use an engaging tone: "Oh no! Look! The animals are all stuck! They are trapped in sticky tape! Can you help me rescue them?"
2. **Demonstrate a Rescue:** Show them how it's done. Slowly and deliberately, use your thumb and pointer finger to find the edge of one piece of tape. Say, "I'm going to use my strong fingers to peel the tape. Peel, peel, peel... Yay! The sheep is free!"
3. **Let Them Try:** Encourage Oliver, Mila, and Reggie to choose an animal to rescue. Let them explore. They might pull, pat, or poke at the tape first. This is part of the learning process.

4. **Offer Support:** If a child is struggling, guide their finger to the lifted tab you created. You can also start peeling a piece of tape for them and let them pull the rest of the way off. The goal is participation and effort, not perfection.

#### Part C: Explain & Wrap-Up (3 minutes)

Once all (or most) of the animals are free, celebrate their success and reinforce the concept.

- **Celebrate:** "Hooray! You did it! Look at all the animals you saved. You have such strong helper hands!"
- **Play:** Let them have a minute or two of free play with the rescued animals. Make animal sounds together. This rewards their hard work with a fun payoff.
- **Clean-Up Game:** Turn clean-up into a final fine motor task. Ask them to help you take all the peeled tape and stick it onto a single piece of paper to make "tape art" or scrunch it into a ball.

#### 4. Differentiation and Inclusivity

Adapt the activity to meet each child's unique needs and abilities:

- **For a child like Reggie, who may need more support:** Use only one piece of tape per animal and make sure the "starter tab" is large and obvious. The primary goal is for him to feel successful just by pulling the tape off, even if you start it for him.
- **For a child like Oliver, who is developing typically:** The standard setup with a few pieces of tape per animal is perfect. Encourage him to try to find the edge himself before offering help.
- **For a child like Mila, who may be ready for a challenge:** Use more pieces of tape per animal or use a stronger (but still safe) tape. You can also challenge her to stick the tape she peels onto a shape drawn on paper, adding an element of precision.

#### 5. Assessment (Informal Observation)

During the activity, observe and make mental notes:

- **Grasp:** Are they attempting a pincer grasp, or are they using their whole hand to pull?
- **Persistence:** How long do they try before getting frustrated or asking for help?
- **Coordination:** Are they able to visually locate the tape edge and coordinate their fingers to grab it?
- **Engagement:** Are they excited by the "rescue" theme? Are they enjoying the sensory aspect of the sticky tape?

This isn't a test. These observations simply help you understand where each child is in their development and what kind of fine motor activities to plan for next.