

Use dinosaur playing cards and a fun rhyme to encourage your children's language and counting skills

'Dinosaurs' is an exciting theme for young children to explore and can be used at home or in the early years setting to initiate a wide range of interesting play and craft activities. For example, language skills can be encouraged

by seeking opposite words such as giant/tiny, wide/narrow, tall/short and so on, creative skills can be developed by painting big and little creatures and skills in music can be encouraged by exploring loud and quiet sounds.

Colourful dinosaurs

Encourage your child's colour mixing skills by inviting them to mix five different shades of paint to decorate the ten dinosaurs on the 'Stamp and stomp' photocopiable sheet (see opposite). Help your child to cut out the pictures to create a set of playing cards for games such as 'Snap' and 'Pairs'.

Top tip: Use the playing cards for the following two activities.

One ran off!

Develop your child's counting skills by placing the colourful dinosaur pictures on a tray to represent ten dinosaurs in a swamp. Invite your child to move the dinosaurs around as you both say, 'Ten happy dinosaurs dance in the swamp'. Ask your child to mimic one dinosaur running away as you both say, 'One ran off with a stamp and a stomp!'. Ask your child to count how many dinosaurs are left on the tray, then continue the rhyme, 'Nine happy dinosaurs dance in the swamp, one ran off with a stamp and a stomp!'. Repeat this process until no dinosaurs are left on the tray.

Top tip: Count down in twos by singing 'two ran off' during each verse.

One came back!

Encourage your child's language skills by helping them to adapt the words in the rhyme 'Ten happy dinosaurs' while bringing the dinosaurs back one by one. Start with an empty tray to represent an empty swamp. Encourage your child to say, 'No fearsome dinosaurs paddling in the swamp, then one came back with a stamp and a stomp!'. Ask your child to replace one dinosaur picture on the tray, then continue the rhyme until all ten dinosaurs are back in the swamp.

Top tip: Use two new words for each verse, for example, 'Two giant dinosaurs swimming in the swamp, then one came back with a stamp and a stomp!', 'Three green dinosaurs hopping in the swamp...', 'Four jolly dinosaurs trudging...' and so on until all ten dinosaurs are back.



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Useful books and resources

- *Little So-and-So and the Dinosaurs* by David Lloyd (Walker Books).
- *Harry and the Dinosaur say 'Raahh!'* by Ian Whybrow (Puffin Books).
- *Barney the Dinosaur* series of videos including 'Fun on the Farm' and 'Barney Goes to School', available from most video outlets.