

NURSERY RHYME TIME



Little 
Acrobats™

PART OF THE
Children's Dance
Method™

Nursery Rhyme Time

TODDLER: AGES 1.5 TO 3, WITH A CAREGIVER

PRESCHOOL: AGES 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD

How to Begin Class

Begin your class by greeting your students. Ideally, they'll line up at your classroom door before class begins. When it's time for class, have them enter. You can give them a step to do to take their places for roll call, or simply have them walk to their places.

Next, take roll. Have a question of the day ready to ask your students. It can be something simple like, "What is your favorite color?" It can be theme-related like, "What's your favorite nursery rhyme?" Or it can be something more personal like, "Tell me one fun thing you did this week." The purpose of the question is to help you connect with your students.

Circle Stretch

For complete activity details, please refer to the [Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#).

Let's Blow Bubbles!

Wiggles and Wakeup

Peek-a-Boo Toes

Hamstring Stretch (Preschool Only)

The Itsy Bitsy Spider

Hide and Seek

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Rock and Roll (Preschool Only)

Humpty Dumpty

Butterfly

Row Row Row Your Boat

Straddle Stretch (Preschool Only)

London Bridge is Falling Down

Hands and Wrists

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Tabletop Bridge

Cat/Cow Pose (Preschool Only)

Three Little Kittens

Superhero Pose (Preschool Only)

Are You Sleeping?

Technique

For complete activity details, please refer to the [Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#).

Plié and Twirl (Toddlers Only)

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall (plié)

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall (plié)

All the king's horses and all the king's men (twirl right)

Couldn't put Humpty together again (twirl left)

Plié and Rise and Turn (Preschool Only)

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall (plié)

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall (plié)

All the king's horses & all the king's men (rise, lower)

Couldn't put Humpty together again (rise, turn right)

Repeat the entire combination with a turn to the left

Tendu (Preschool Only)

Hickory dickory dock. The mouse went up the clock.

(tendu right)

The clock struck one. The mouse went down. (tendu left)

Hickory dickory dock. (hold)

(Ask students to pick a new animal, such as a squirrel, snake, or chipmunk for our feet to be.)

Repeat with the new animal in place of the mouse.

Passé

Repeat Hickory Dickory Dock but with passés in place of tendus. For toddlers, do a mouse for one round and another animal for the other round. For preschoolers, let students choose two animals. You'll do passé right and left with one animal and then passé right and left with the other animal.

Sways

Let's sway side to side like a pendulum in an old grandfather clock.

Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. (Sways)

Say "Dong!" for preschool students to chassé.

Sautés and Échappés

Serious Version:

The Itsy Bitsy Spider crawled up the water spout (sauté)

Down came the rain, and washed the spider out (échappé to parallel 2nd)

Out came the sun, and dried up all the rain (jump returning to parallel 1st)

And the Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the spout again (sauté)

Silly version:

The Itsy Bitsy Spider crawled up the water spout (sauté)

Down came the rain, and washed the spider out (échappé to 2nd, then fall down)

Out came the sun, and dried up all the rain (sit up and port de bras through 5th and open 2nd)

And the Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the spout again (stand up and sauté)

Directional Hops

Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet, eating her curds eating and whey. (pretend to sit/chair pose and eat) Along came a spider who sat down beside her (look to one side surprised)

and frightened Miss Muffet away! (jump forward) Jump backwards to original place. The spider is still there! Jump backwards.

Jump forward to original place. The spider is still there! Jump to the side (away from the spider).

Jump to the side to original place. The spider is still there but on the other side of us now! Jump to the other side.

Jump to original place. Whew! I think he's gone!

Hops with Quarter Turns (Preschool only)

Look for the spider each time you jump and turn!

Fireworks Jumps

Head Shoulders Knees and Toes with a big fireworks jump added at the end!

Traveling

Please use the movement cards included at the end of this lesson plan.

Stations

Please use the station cards included at the end of this lesson.

Prop Time

For toddlers, "Prop Time" is simply a free dance with a prop of the teacher's choice. You may also do a freeze dance to reinforce listening skills.

For preschoolers, [choose one to three "Prop Time" activities from the Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#) for additional skill work.

Goodbye

You can (optionally) end your class with a brief free dance for students while you blow bubbles for them.

Finish your class by giving each student a sticker and telling them each something they did well in class that day. Focus on complimenting good effort, listening skills, and positive attitude more than skill accomplishments. Give each student a coloring page. These are a great way for students to bring a piece of dance class home with them for the week. Hand out certificates if it's the last week for the theme.

Music Playlist

You can find a music playlist with theme-inspired music for your acro dance class here:

[Nursery Rhyme Time Music Playlist in Spotify](#)



NURSERY RHYME TIME - MOVEMENT CARDS

There are SO MANY ways you can use movement cards in your dance classes. For toddlers, we typically do use movement cards for traveling across the room and occasionally the merry go round option. For preschoolers, we like to incorporate all of the following ways with traveling across the room and the merry go round option as the most common. You may incorporate any of these ways during the "traveling" portion of class.

Traveling Across the Room

This is what we typically design our movement cards for. (Although they certainly don't have to be limited to this!) Choose a movement card like you're picking a card from a deck of cards. Or, let one of your students pick the card. The anticipation of what the next card and movement will be will help to keep your students' attention during the traveling portion of class. Plus, they always like seeing what cute animal or picture is on the card chosen!

Merry Go Round

Place your movement cards in a pile face-down in the center of the room. Have your students make a large circle. Call on one student to pick a card from the center. They pick a card from the pile. Play music as all students do the chosen movement in a large circle around the room. Pause the music and your students freeze (like in freeze dance!). Call on another student to pick a card next. Repeat until all students have had a turn or all movement cards have been used.

Add-On

This is one of my favorite pre-choreography activities. Make a dance by playing "Add-On", but with movement cards! Hold the cards out face-down, like a deck of cards, for a student to pick one. Have all students do the movement in place a certain number of times. (For example, 3 hops in place.) Have another student pick a card. Add that movement to the choreography. (For example, if the second card chosen was twirls, you might have your students do 3 hops then a twirl.) Continue until all students have had a turn. By the end, you'll have a little dance your students helped to make up!

Free-Dance

Let your students free dance, and choose movements from the movement cards!

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Hey Diddle Diddle

TWIRLS

TODDLER

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WALKS

TODDLER

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RUNS IN A ZIG ZAG PATH
(LIKE A BOW MOVING ACROSS A FIDDLE)

TODDLER

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STEP OR LEAP OVER OBJECTS

TODDLER

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JUMP
(INTO HULA HOOPS LAID IN A PATH)

TODDLER

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DOWNWARD DOG WALKS

TODDLER

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WALKS
(BALANCING A PAPER PLATE ON YOUR HEAD)

TODDLER

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PASSÉ WALKS
(TO MAKE A SPOON SHAPE)

TODDLER

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Hey Diddle Diddle

HOPS ON TWO FEET

PRESCHOOL

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WALKS

(MOVING THROUGH THE FEET LIKE A CAT PADDING)

PRESCHOOL

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GALOPS IN A ZIG ZAG PATH

(LIKE A BOW MOVING ACROSS A FIDDLE)

PRESCHOOL

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LEAP OVER OBJECTS

PRESCHOOL

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TUCK JUMP
(INTO HULA HOOPS LAID IN A PATH)

PRESCHOOL

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DOWNWARD DOG WALKS

PRESCHOOL

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WALKS EN DEMI POINTE
(BALANCING A PAPER PLATE ON YOUR HEAD)

PRESCHOOL

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PASSÉ WALKS
(TO MAKE A SPOON SHAPE)

PRESCHOOL



NURSERY RHYME TIME - TODDLER STATION CARDS

Hey Diddle Diddle

Card 1. Students say "Hey Diddle Diddle" and step across three spot markers.

For toddlers, stepping along a pathway is a great way to develop balance, coordination, and independence. Allow caregivers to help students, particularly if they are younger toddlers. Students closer three years old will likely be able to walk across on their own. You can add difficulty by letting students hop in place of stepping.

The Cat and the Fiddle

Card 2. Cat/Cow Pose.

This pose is perfect for developing abdominal strength and back strength and flexibility. It can aid with forward rolls and bridges too. For our toddler age group, have caregivers show them the correct movement to do. Some students may simply get on their hands and knees if they are fully participating. That's totally fine for this age group.

Card 3. Walk across the bow of a fiddle (aka the balance beam!).

Balance beam walks are great for balance, as well as inner thigh and ankle strength. Allow caregivers to help students if needed.

The Cow Jumped Over the Moon

Card 4. Cartwheel Preparation: Have students stand so their tummy faces "front" (if their tummies are facing a wall, mirrors, or something tangible, this can be helpful). Place one hand down then the other hand on a thick block or stack of mats. Hop one leg over, then the other, and stand tall with the tummy facing "front" again.

For older toddlers, the goal here is coordination. For younger toddlers, if all they can do is crawl over the block or mat stack, that is more than fine. Encourage them to place their hands on the correct places on the mat as 1st priority. As they get that part down, you can focus on the legs. After that, focus on tummies facing the front at the beginning and end.

If you are aiding your students on any one station, this is the station to do so. Make sure they are following the appropriate steps in order. For older students, pay more attention to form.

The Little Dog Laughed to See Such a Sight

Card 5. Make a downward dog pose and walk on all fours to the next station (aka bear crawls).

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body, abdominals, and back muscles.

And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon

Card 6. Students make a tabletop position and place a paper plate on their tummy. Tabletop walk to the next station.

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body and abs.

Card 7. Place round spot markers or paper plates in a row. Optionally, place a plastic spoon next to each plate. Have students step or leap over each plate.

Younger toddlers may need to step over the plates. Encourage older toddlers to leap over the plates.



NURSERY RHYME TIME - PRESCHOOL STATION CARDS

Hey Diddle Diddle

Card 1. Students say "Hey Diddle Diddle" and hop 3x.

Hopping on two feet develops strength in the lower leg muscles, helping students with jumping and also simple things like pushing off into a handstand, cartwheel, and later, back walkovers and roundoffs. The list is really endless!

The Cat and the Fiddle

Card 2. Cat/Cow Pose 3x.

This pose is perfect for developing abdominal strength and back strength and flexibility. It can aid with forward rolls and bridges too.

Card 3. Walk across the bow of a fiddle (aka the balance beam!).

Balance beam walks are great for balance, as well as inner thigh and ankle strength. For added difficulty, have students walk across on demi pointe or with passé walks.

The Cow Jumped Over the Moon

Card 4. Cartwheel Preparation: Have students stand so their tummy faces "front" (if their tummies are facing a wall, mirrors, or something tangible, this can be helpful). Place one hand down then the other hand on a thick block or stack or mats. Hop one leg over, then the other, and stand tall with the tummy facing "front" again.

For younger preschoolers, the goal here is coordination. For older preschoolers who have the coordination down, you can have them do a pre-cartwheel. They will follow the same steps, but aim for their torso and legs to be perpendicular to the floor and their legs stretched.

If you are aiding your students on any one station, this is the station to do so. Make sure they are following the appropriate steps in order. For older students, pay more attention to form.

The Little Dog Laughed to See Such a Sight

Card 5. Make a downward dog pose and walk on all fours to the next station (aka bear crawls).

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body, abdominals, and back muscles.

And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon

Card 6. Students make a tabletop position and place a paper plate on their tummy. Tabletop walk to the next station.

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body and abs.

Card 7. Place a round spot marker in between two plastic spoons that are 2 to 3 feet apart. The student crouches down on the spot marker, then does a fireworks jump (jumping to make a big X in the air and landing in that X position). They should land with their feet just in between the spoons. Next, the student reaches their right arm down and across toward the spoon by their left foot. They come back to the X shape. Then they reach their left arm down and across toward the spoon by their right foot.

Optional: Set up several of these round spot marker / plastic spoon sets in a row to have your students repeat the movement.

Fireworks jumps are great for engaging the upper leg muscles—which are really your powerhouse muscles when it comes to jumping and getting off the ground. Reaching down and across develops flexibility needed in handstands and cartwheels. Crossing the medial line of the body enhances learning, coordination, and even brain development.

Hey
Diddle
Diddle

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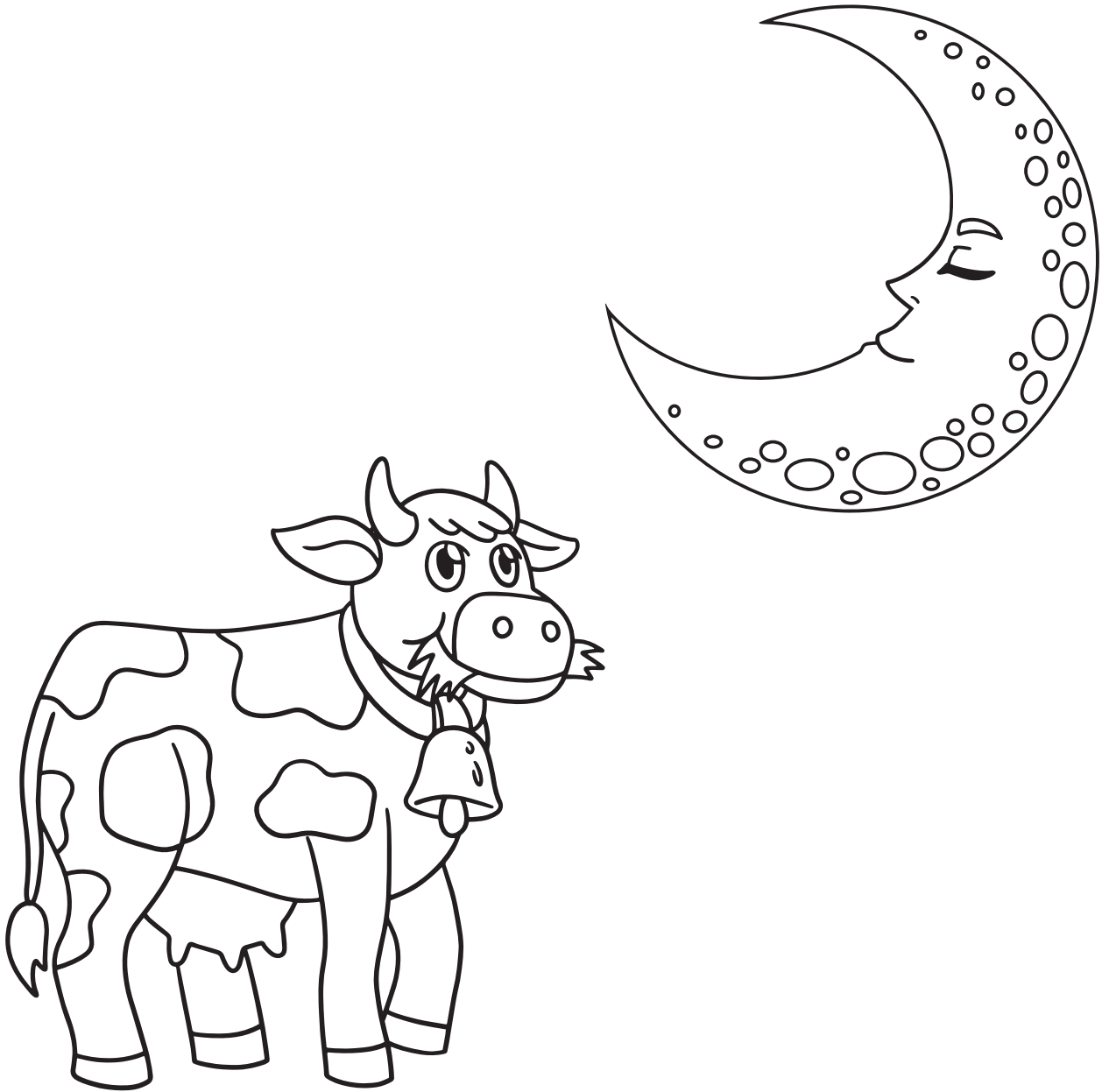




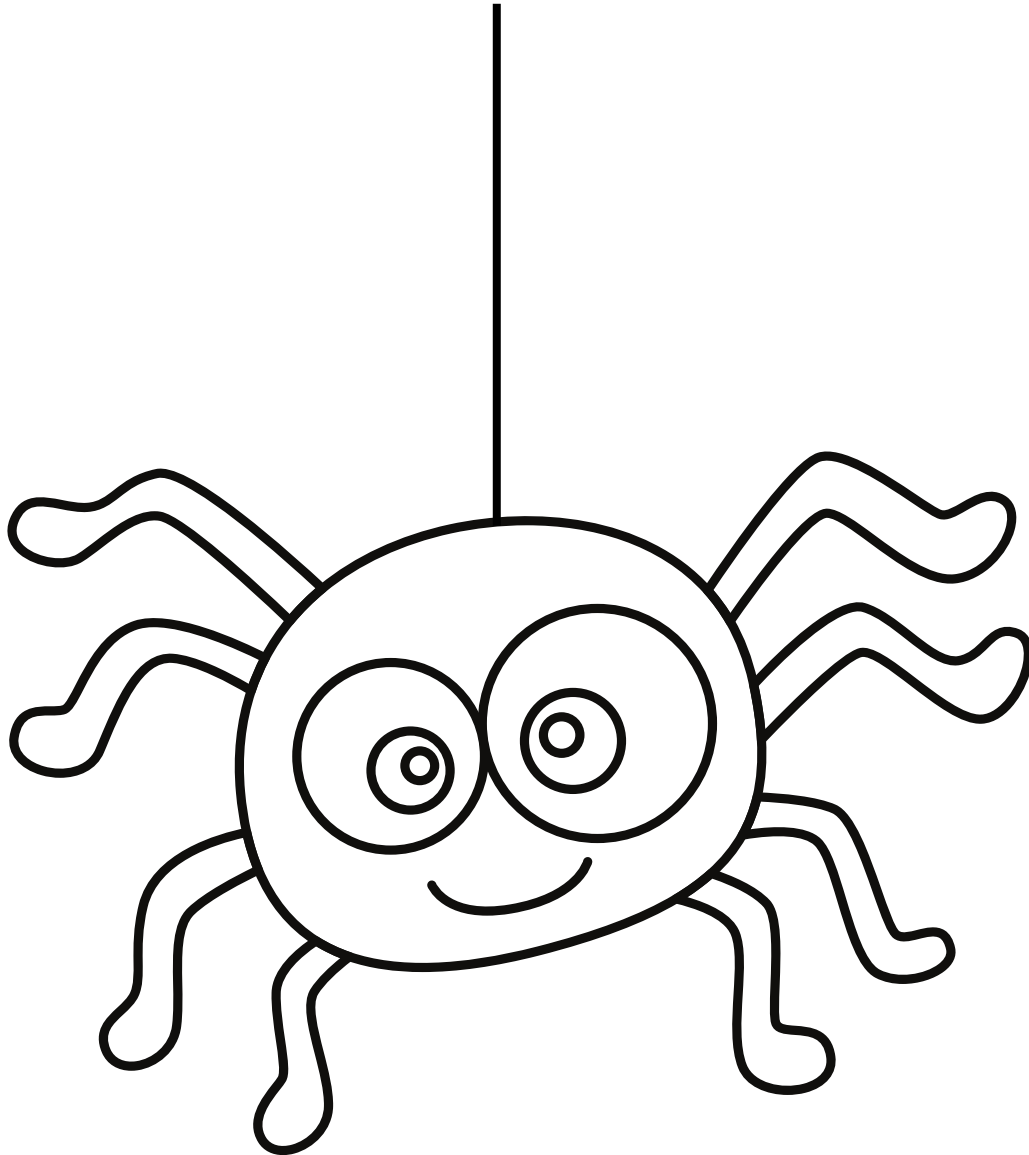
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