

Make your own puppets

Puppets have been used in early years for a long time, playing with puppets can support children's wellbeing as they can role-play difficult scenarios or express feelings in a safe way, as a puppet can take on a role as a non-judgemental listener. Puppets are also excellent for supporting children's expressive language. For some children, a conversation with a friendly puppet is easier than other conversations, and can build their confidence and their vocabulary, there is lots of value in both adult and children holding (and speaking as) the puppet to encourage conversation, puppets are for play not just for shows!

For babies, a simple sock puppet that can gently stroke their face and start conversations and sing songs is a great way of encouraging communication. For older children puppets can come in all shapes and sizes and can be part of a story or show!

Can you make your own puppet(s)?

You could make a character from a story you know, a monster, animal or your own special character! It can be made of anything!

Sock puppets – this can be as simple as drawing two eyes on an old sock with a marker pen, but if you have some good glue or sewing kit, you can get more creative! (see

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2011/09/26/sock-puppets/>)

Stick puppets - <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/puppets>

Wooden Spoon puppets - <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/wooden-spoon-crafts>

Or if you are feeling ambitious, **Shadow puppets** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL28SkHf1g>

Or make up your own kind of puppet – for loads of creative ideas for more unique puppets (for over 3s!) <https://littleangeltheatre.com/schools-and-community/at-home-resources/activities-ages-3-6/>

For some excellent **free online shows** by professional puppeteers, see Little Angel Puppet Theatre:

<https://www.youtube.com/thelittletheatre>

See also the attached ideas for using sock puppets for developing communication and language from the Speech and Language team, and for social interactions from the Incredible Years website.

More activity ideas for babies

Although we are trying to send activity ideas that can be adapted to work for all ages (including puppets!), a lot of websites and activity ideas online are aimed at slightly older children, so here's some ideas specifically aimed at babies!

50 activities for 1 year olds <https://www.mother.ly/child/sensory-activities-for-1-year-olds-play>

and 34 activities for under 1s! <https://www.mylittlemoppet.com/34-creative-play-activities-for-babies-below-1-year/>