

LEARNING TIME

Backyard Beasties

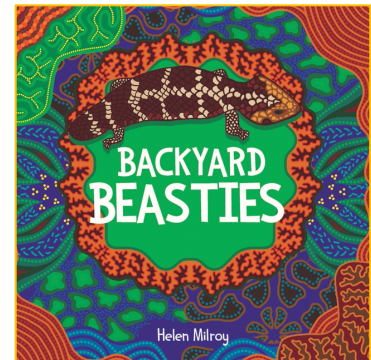
Helen Milroy

Wild and domestic animals are revealed one by one through beautiful Aboriginal art. Helen invites the reader to move, make noise, observe, and discover beasties all around!

Themes: Australian, animals, Aboriginal

Rare and interesting words/concepts: dawn, cluck, slip, venture, bound, beneath, frond,

Animals: Chicken, possum, bobtail, dog, turtle, gecko, bat, quenda, frog, cat.



Key Message for Parents | Children learn language by listening to it and using it

- Children learn best when their experiences are meaningful, and play based
- Provide opportunities to explore in non-structured ways. As often as possible to allow children to take the lead in their play.
- Allow lots of opportunity to try new things, visit new places and meet new people.
- Talk about what you see and do in everyday life, comment on anything and everything!
- Reward efforts to communicate and let the child lead the pace, all verbalisations are valid communication.
- Try “show me” if the words are not coming or focus on the other communication like body language, listening skills and attention.

Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Educators can support children’s learning to be open to new challenges and discoveries

- Be warm and welcome conversation with the child
- Providing resources that capture their interest and allow discovery and exploration
- Create situations that encourage children to use language to describe what they see or have seen
- Model language and show an interest in new words
- Intentionally explain the meanings of words and check for comprehension
- Listen carefully to the child, modeling the ‘serve and return’ interaction style
- providing a safe, predictable, and welcoming environment where the child is supported
- encouraging new experiences within the child’s own level of comfort, acknowledging fears and concerns, and offering emotional support with positive language and encouragement.

Welcome

Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

Good Morning

*Good morning to you
Good morning to you
Good morning everybody
and welcome to you!*



You may like to introduce the book at this stage or use a song to help prepare your group and introduce the upcoming story and activities.

Song

Five little speckled frogs

*Five little speckled frogs,
Sitting on a speckled log,
Eating the most delicious bugs...yum, yum.
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Then there were four speckled frogs.*

Continue counting down until only one frog is left

*One little speckled frog.
Sitting on a speckled log,
Eating the most delicious bugs...yum, yum.
He jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are no speckled frogs.*



Galumph Went the Little Green Frog

Galumph went the little green frog one day,
Galumph went the little green frog.
Galumph went the little green frog one day,
And they all went

Galumph Galumph Galumph

But we all know frogs go
La de dah de dah
La de dah de dah
La de dah de dah

We all know frogs go
La de dah de dah
They don't go

Galumph Galumph Galumph.



Before Reading

- You might want to research local aboriginal languages and try to greet families with a warm local welcome. Here is the Kurna greeting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKJC3y6tKmM>
- Think about the setting, is it suitable for the group. Check lighting, seating, ensuring comfort for all participants.
- Greet families and children by name if you can, ask them how they are, awaiting their responses and acknowledging them.
- Explain the format of the session, including the book you are reading, songs and activities. You may want to use a visual board to support diverse language and learning needs.
- Ask the children to sit where they can see the pictures, as you will need them to watch closely!
- Invite adult caregivers to be involved, staying close and guiding conversation and attention.

During Reading

- Introduce the name of the book, author, and illustrator.
- Have a look at the endpapers and discuss what the children think may happen in the book. Point out illustrations of each animal.
- Explain the illustrations are created by an Aboriginal artist. Notice the techniques used.
- Talk about the idea of finding things in the backyard.
- Be intrigued and model engagement with the text, through looking interested in what they discover and check the children are following along. You can ask – *what do you think we will find next? Do you ever see chickens in your backyard?*
- This book allows opportunities for the audience to identify common and uncommon creatures they may see. Allow time to linger on pages of interest.

After Reading

- Reflect on the animals revealed in the story.
- You might invite children to make their sounds or do the actions for those animals.
- Ponderings....
- What animals would they see in their backyard?
- Would children in other places see different animals?
- Are these Australian animals?
- How many animals did you see in the story?
- Provide sufficient time for children to express their experiences and thoughts. Communication skills include turn taking, eye contact, voice and expression, respectful responses, timing, explaining, and listening. These all need time to be practiced as a part of the literacy journey.

Resources for families

About Helen Milroy <https://fremantlepress.com.au/contributor/helen-milroy/>

Extension Ideas



Read

- Visit the Raising Literacy Australia website and find more book recommendations under Featured Stories. You can search by theme – Australian animals
- Borrow books about Australian animals from the library. Share non-fiction books to gather lots of facts. Many books are also freely available via Library subscriptions such as Libby and StoryBox Library for read aloud – making books accessible from home or when you are out and about. Ask your local library.
- Visit a new place and explore the brochures, signs and signage.

Sing

- Singing slows down language so enables sounds to be heard more easily. Phonemic Awareness knowledge (sounds) is a foundation to literacy competency.
- Spotify and YouTube have a huge variety of songs. We have a Spotify Playlist ‘ Raising Literacy Australia’ – Featured Stories
- Here are some song names you could try: Old McDonald, Five Little Ducks, BINGO
- Adapt your own from well-known tunes and your own made-up words.

Talk

- Talk about experiences seeing Australian animals
- Talk about what you see when you go for a walk to the park
- Discuss things that you wish you could see and wonder what they would be like.

Play

- Make a role play experience whereby children can play out finding things like toy animals
- Draw a picture representing Aboriginal symbols or the colours in the book.
- Use toys to act out the animal actions and noises. Borrow from a toy library.
- Use recycled materials to make a creature to discover in the backyard.
- Hide stuffed or plastic reptiles around your play area for the children to find.

STEM Focus. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Playdough creatures

- 2 cups of flour,
- 1 cup of salt,
- 1 tablespoon of cooking oil,
- 2 cups water.

What to do

1. Measure the flour and salt into a bowl.
2. Stir in the oil.
3. Slowly add in the water. (If you want coloured playdough, you need to add food colouring to the water and warm water will work best to dissolve the salt)
4. You can add other items like lavender heads or essential oils in you want to make a nice smell.
5. Stir all ingredients until there are no lumps.
6. Knead into a wooden board.
7. If it is too wet, add flour to the board until desired consistency is reached.
8. Playdough will go hard if left in air. Store in an airtight container.



Photo credit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls9Aaake86I>

Play ideas

<https://mothernatured.com/animal-play/animal-play-dough-play/>

<https://kidsinadelaidel.com.au/easy-playdough-recipes/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSLnh_k5tBw

Science: Measuring, predicting, trialing

Maths: Measurements

Engineering: Make your own creatures

Technology: Document with photos, create a video.

Language: mix, stir, knead, roll, flat, ball, blend.

Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. Raising Literacy Australia suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

Libraries can purchase bulk copies of our books at discounted rates. Visit Little Book Press at <https://littlebookpress.com.au/collections/books-for-toddlers>

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- **My First Baby Australian Animals** by Fiona Bowden (Little Book Press)
- **Backyard birds and Backyard bugs** by Helen Milroy
- **What do you call a baby?** by Kamsani Bin Salleh

An Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

Goodbye Song

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child's name in the place of 'you' as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (*Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*) or your choice.

Goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye (wave) say goodbye, say goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye to all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!

