



# **Dot, Squiggle and Rest Activity Pack**



The following notes are designed as a starting point for practitioners or parents wishing to explore themes that might arise from the performance of *Dot, Squiggle and Rest*.

There are numerous ways in which children might explore the vast play potential within the production and naturally 'play out' their experience of the show. The following notes give some ideas of themes and activities that we feel might particularly resonate with early years children.

The broad Early Years Foundation Stage headings are noted below each suggested activity and at the end of this pack, we have included more specific references that might apply to the overall experience of watching the show and exploring follow up play ideas.

The performance of *Dot, Squiggle and Rest* uses dance, puppetry, song and live music and so our suggested activities use these art forms as a starting point. There are also huge visual art opportunities, which we have also referred to as extension activities where appropriate – lots of opportunity to explore with messy play and paint!

We hope that you and the children enjoy the show!



Images: Naomi Booth



### Show design:

A large cardboard cube with cut-out shapes in the sides and back, a front gauze screen that lifts to reveal the interior.

The narrative takes place over the course of a day, in sections: morning, day, evening and night.

### Awakening:

*Rustling sounds of materials.*

The first section of *Dot Squiggle and Rest* depicts the performers waking up. Here is an example of how you might explore 'waking up' as a movement activity in your setting.

Create an inviting, clear space on the floor for the children to gather on. Perhaps set up some mats, or gather on a rug that you use for circle time, a spread of cushions can also be used as further invitation. Ask the children to show you how they sleep (practitioners can lie down with the children, so that you are on a level). Allow the group to settle, quietly. You might also want to play some gentle background music to create the atmosphere.

Ask the children to show you another 'sleepy shape' and allow them to wriggle into finding a new sleeping position. Practitioners can mirror the children's shapes or create their own. As a group, continue explore other sleepy shapes, with a practitioner giving a gentle verbal or physical cue for the children to find another 'sleepy shape' each time.

Come up to sitting and take some deep breaths in and out, stretching the arms up and down as you do so. Imagery can be used here, such as the 'sunshine waking up' – you could explore yawning and ask the children to show you 'stretchy shapes' to wake up fully. This might then lead into shaking out different body parts, taking the cue from the children – 'what shall we shake first?' Everyone in the group can follow a suggestion from the children – shake the hands, legs, arms and so on.

This is a great focusing activity to get the group calm, settled and also awake!

EYFS: This introductory exercise encourages the **Unique Child**, by valuing individual ideas and ways of sleeping. It can also encourage **Positive Relationships** by adults and children being on the same level and children listening to and accepting other ideas. By setting up this movement space, we have **Enabled** a new **Environment** for the children, from which all aspects of **Learning and Development** can be explored, in particular Physical Development, Communication and Language and Expressive Arts and Design.

## Dots:

In the next part of the show, dots are projected using lights, as if they are rain drops on a window pane. The performers chase the raindrops in a playful way.

## Activity

A game of 'chasing raindrops' – with either imaginary droplets or using simple props, such as tissue paper cut into droplet shapes, which can be thrown into the air and watch them fall. If catching imaginary raindrops, the children might explore catching raindrops using different parts of their bodies, for example, their hands, tongues, tops of their heads or backs. Children can also use their fingers in a pitter-patter gesture to feel the rain drops from the tops of their heads, over their faces, shoulders and all the way down to their toes. Appropriate music can be used to give the suggestion of raindrops.

The children could also explore different word sounds and rhythms to give the suggestion of raindrops and creating their own rhythm together. For example:

*Drop, plop, splish, splash, pitter-patter, pitter-patter*  
*Drop, plop, splish, splash, pitter-patter, pitter-patter*  
*Pitter-patter, pitter-patter, drop, drop, drop*  
*Pitter-patter, pitter-patter, drop, drop, drop*  
*Pitter-patter, splosh, pitter, splash, pitter, plop,*  
*Pitter-patter, splosh, pitter, splash, pitter, plop,*  
*Splish, splash, splosh, pitter*  
*Splish, splash, splosh*  
*Splish, splash, splosh, pitter*  
*Splish, splash, splosh*  
*Splish, splash, splosh, pitter*  
*Splish, splash, splosh*  
*Splish, splash, splosh, pitter*  
*Splishy, splashy, splur!!*



Children could create rhythms using their bodies, to accompany such sounds. For example, by tapping their knees, tapping their heads, stamping feet and so on.

On a rainy day, children could watch the droplets on the windows and explore similar light tapping rhythms with their fingers on the window panes.

Watery paint, or simply water, can also be used, inside or outside, on long rolls or giant sheets of paper, or onto tarmac. Children can use any mark making tools and say words as they make their marks: 'splash, splosh' and so on. Music can also be played to accompany their mark making.

EYFS: In a similar way to the awakening exercise, this exercise encourages the **Unique Child**, by valuing individual words and sounds relating to the words. It can also encourage **Positive Relationships** between adults and children, by sustained shared thinking. This activity **enables** a new rhythmic and imaginary **environment** for the children, from which all aspects of **Learning and Development** can be explored, in particular fine motor skills within Physical Development, Communication and Language and Expressive Arts and Design.

### The Cut-Out Garden:

In the show, a sensory garden is created using light, shadow, puppetry and sound. Within the garden, we encounter the following creatures and their related sounds:

- Butterfly - *flutter fly*
- Owl/Long-eyed creature - *Hoo hoo who? Who are you?*
- Grasshopper - *crr crr*
- Grass - *green green grass is very very tasty. Tasty?*
- Fish - *ah um ah um*
- Rabbit - *bib bib bob bib bob bib bib bib*
- Bird - *coo coo*

In a similar way to the raindrop rhythms activity above, the sounds of the creatures can be used to create rhythm and rhyme with the children, using fingers to represent the movement of the various creatures. Pipe cleaners, pegs and small pieces of fabric are also great tools for creating hand-held representations of creatures, which can be used as miniature puppets, whilst speaking the rhymes.

EYFS: In this exercise, encourage the children's own ideas (**Unique Child**), allowing the children to choose and create their own creatures. Their creatures might extend beyond the above list and they might wish to create their own fantastical creatures. The exercise can also strengthen **Positive Relationships** between adults and children and child peer relationships, through sustained shared thinking, creating ideas together and the potential interactions between creatures. We have again **enabled** a new rhythmic and imaginary **environment** for the children, from which all aspects of **Learning and Development** can be explored, in particular fine motor skills within Physical Development, Communication and Language and Expressive Arts and Design.



### Footprints:

Also within the *Dot, Squiggle and Rest* garden, a game of chasing the footprints around the space ensues.

### Activity

At home or within your setting, you might draw around the children's feet, then cut-out paper or cardboard footprints. The children can place the footprints in a pathway of their choice around the space, then follow the footprints, walking, hopping, jumping, skipping, onto the footprints and off, over and around. The children can continually re-arrange the footprints, as they wish. This activity could take place inside or outside and the children might also suggest imaginary landscapes.

EYFS: Allowing the children to create their own pathways, modes of direction and travel encourages the **Unique Child** and **Positive Relationships** between adults and children, by sustained shared thinking and creating ideas together. We have again **Enabled** a new rhythmic and imaginary **Environment** for the children, from which all aspects of **Learning and Development** can be explored, in particular fine motor skills within Physical Development, Communication and Language and Expressive Arts and Design. Mathematics can also be explored in this exercise, using positional vocabulary (such as on and off, forward and backwards and so on) and counting the footsteps, (1, 2, 3, 4; 2, 4, 6, 8).

### On the Fence - Dot, Squiggle and Rest:

During this section of the show, elastic is stretched across the stage like musical staves or a garden fence. Sound, image and movement combine in a playful interaction, with hands plucking and playing the strings and the performers speak-singing words such as "boing" in a variety of tempos, volumes and dynamics.

### Activity

Elastic is a great creative tool for all sorts of imaginary adventures. A long stretch of elastic can be purchased from any haberdashery. It is recommended that a knot be tied using the two ends of the elastic and that the elastic be 4.5 - 6 metres in length, depending on the group size and the setting. The elastic can then be stretched in all directions, in a circle, on the floor, creating doorways, webs and tramlines. Elastic is a great activity for children who enjoy straight lines (trajectory schema) and is a great way to establish clear boundaries and define the space.

### Section 4: Night sky:

At the end of the play, there is a sequence in which the performers transform from

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chrysalises into moths that fly up into the night sky; there is a sense of going on to a new adventure, full of freedom and excitement!

### Activity

Give the children individual torches to represent the night moths, or the stars. The children can create patterns on the ceiling, on the floor, on the walls, on mirrors, underneath fabric and so on.

This can also be made into a soothing relaxation activity, where the children lie on the floor, on mats or cushions and look up to the 'sky' and create images on the ceiling.

### ***Moths in the Night Sky song:***

*We are light we are dust, we chase shadows through the sky  
Up, up up into the night  
Up, up, up, drawn towards a distant flicker  
float, float away*

EYFS: Encourage the children to explore individually with their torches (**Unique Child**). **Positive Relationships** between adults and children - sustained shared thinking and creating ideas together. We have again **Enabled** a new rhythmic and imaginary **Environment** for the children, from which all aspects of **Learning and Development** can be explored, in particular fine motor skills within Physical Development, Communication and Language and Expressive Arts and Design.



## Specific references in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2012)

### Physical Development – Moving and Handling

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- Use music to stimulate exploration with rhythmic movements
- Provide different arrangements of toys and soft play materials to encourage crawling, tumbling, rolling and climbing
- Value the ways children choose to move
- Give as much opportunity as possible for children to move freely between indoors and outdoors

### Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials

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- Provide space and time for movement and dance, both indoors and outdoors
- Help children to listen to music and watch dance when opportunities arise, encouraging them to focus on how sound and movement develop from feelings and ideas
- Invite dancers and musicians from theatre groups, the locality or nearby school, so that children begin to experience live performances.
- Draw on a wide range of musicians and story tellers from a variety of cultural backgrounds to extend children's experiences and to reflect their cultural heritages

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- Lead imaginative movement sessions based on children's current interests such as space travel, zoo animals or shadows.
- Plan imaginative active experiences, such as 'Going on a bear hunt.' Help them remember the actions of the story and think about the different ways of moving

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- Pretend that one object represents another, especially when objects have characteristics in common

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