

Suki Cat Discussion Guide

Using the Suki Cat Series with a Community Helpers Unit
in the Early Childhood Classroom



Illustrated by Grace Habib

Introduction

With their sturdy construction, colorful illustrations, and engaging rhymes, the Suki Cat books are the perfect addition to your unit on community jobs. This guide shows you how to use the books to support creative, play-based learning with your students. Developed by an experienced early childhood educator, the large group and learning center activities incorporate loose parts, classroom staples, and a hefty dose of fun into early literacy and STEM learning goals.

Large Group Activities

Reinforce rhyming skills with a Move to Rhyme game – Print and cut out the attached Move to Rhyme Cards (or make your own). The cards feature movement words that are easy to rhyme like Hop and Stomp. You will also need a large dice. Make one out of a square box, taping numbers onto each of the six sides.

One student chooses a Move to Rhyme card. You read the word and invite the student to come up with a rhyme for the word, either a real or nonsense word (Stomp, Zomp). A second student rolls the dice to see how many repetitions of the movement/rhyme you will do. Then you all chant the rhyming pair while doing the movement for the number of times shown on the dice. For example, if your pair is Stomp-Zomp, and the dice rolls a 3, you would all stomp your feet three times, chanting “Stomp-Zomp, Stomp-Zomp, Stomp-Zomp.” Once you learn the game, you can use it without the props as a transition time activity.

Sing a Suki Cat song – Adapt “The Wheels on the Bus” for the Suki Cat series:

Suki the baker bakes a cake, bakes a cake, bakes a cake.

Suki the baker bakes a cake all day long (pantomime stirring a big bowl).

Here are ideas for the rest of the books:

- Suki the astronaut blasts into space (jump).
- Suki the farmer fixes the fence (hammer).
- Suki the doctor mends your bones (wrap a bandage).
- Suki the unicorn sparkles and flies (flap wings).
- Suki the dinosaur stomps and roars (stomp).

Write and perform new Suki Cat stories – Over the course of your Community Helpers unit, invite each student to dictate a story about a job Suki Cat could do. Write the story down just as the child tells it. Later, during circle time, invite the authors to perform their stories as you read them aloud. You can cast other students in supporting roles. (This activity is based on the storytelling and story acting work of Vivian Gussin Paley.)

Learn about gravity – Use Suki Cat: Astronaut to introduce the concept of gravity. Demonstrate gravity with a magnet that has a picture of Earth taped to it. Explain that Earth has a pulling force, gravity, that works like a magnet to pull everything toward it. Have pictures or small toys with paper clips taped to them and use the Earth magnet to pull those items.

Go for a gravity walk outside. Talk about how, without gravity, everything would be floating around in the air rather than staying on the ground. Invite students to toss items into the air (balls, leaves, gloves) and watch gravity bring them down. Or go to the top of a climbing structure and drop items to the ground. Spread out a piece of bulletin board paper on the ground and have students use turkey basters to drop paint. Talk about what would happen to the paint without gravity. To add to the space theme, you can use black paper with white and silver paint, making a galaxy to hang up in your classroom.

Learning Center Activities

Table Games

Suki Cat Puzzles – Download the 2-Piece Suki Cat Puzzles included with this guide. Print them onto cardstock and cut each one in half. You can use them as puzzles where students match the top and bottom halves to make a complete Suki Cat. You can also flip them over and use them as a Memory Match game.

Get Suki Dressed – Print another set of the 2-Piece Suki Cat Puzzles. Cut out around Suki Cat in her overalls and tape her to a magnet board. Cut out the outfits from the rest of the puzzles and cut them in half. Put magnet tape on the back of each piece and children can get Suki Cat dressed. To extend this activity, add small loose parts: fabric scraps, flat florist marbles, buttons, small tiles, small stones, small wood or felt shapes, etc. Invite students to use them to create outfits for Suki Cat.

Art

Bright Palette – Put cover images on your art table as inspiration. Include collage materials in the color palette of the books. You can also add pre-cut shapes that could be collaged together to make Suki Cat and her costumes.

Suki Cat Stencil – Use the 2-Piece Suki Cat Puzzles as stencils. Print onto cardstock, and cut around the outside of Suki Cat in her overalls to make a stencil of the character. You can also make stencils out of the outfits from the puzzles.

Dramatic Play

Stock your dramatic play corner with community helper costumes and props. Add some loose parts. Large items like scarves and other large pieces of fabric, lengths of ribbon, various sizes of cardboard boxes, masking tape, wood scraps, and buckets can be used to construct scenes. Smaller loose parts like pompoms, tiles, small fabric scraps, flat florist marbles, and buttons can be used as seeds for a farmer or ingredients for a baker.

Blocks

Make Suki Cat blocks by printing a set of the 2-Piece Suki Cat Puzzles onto cardstock and taping them onto unit blocks with clear tape. Add small loose parts to your block area to extend the creative play. Add a basket with the Suki Cat books for story retelling.

Play Dough

Use Suki Cat: Baker as inspiration for your play dough table. Make a batch of vanilla-scented play dough. (See included recipe.) Put out muffin tins, muffin papers or silicone muffin cups, beads, florist marbles, birthday candles, ice cream scoopers, bowls, small pie tins, small plastic plates, etc. to encourage creative play.

Science

Enhance your gravity lesson with magnet play. Some ideas:

- Build with magnetic building toys.
- Create a magnet sensory bucket with magnetic wands and a variety of items for students to investigate, some that are magnetic and some that are not.
- Provide magnets for students to investigate your classroom for magnetic surfaces.



Recipe for Homemade Play Dough

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup regular table salt
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
4 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cups water

Combine flour, salt, and cream of tartar in a heavy saucepan. Whisk in vegetable oil and water. Heat over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a rubber spatula or large spoon as the mixture cooks and forms a stiff dough. Cook until all raw look is completely gone. It will be difficult to stir as your dough finishes cooking.

Turn dough out onto a clean board and cool slightly. As soon as it is cool enough to handle, knead dough until it is nice and smooth. Store in a ziplock bag.

Recipe can be doubled – just use a big pot so you can stir easily. You can also add extracts (like vanilla or lemon) or food coloring with the water and oil if desired. Gel colors (found in the cake decorating section of the craft store) or liquid watercolors give nice, vibrant colors. To make cinnamon dough, substitute two tablespoons of cinnamon for two tablespoons of flour.

Read on for *Suki Cat* Move to Rhyme Cards! →

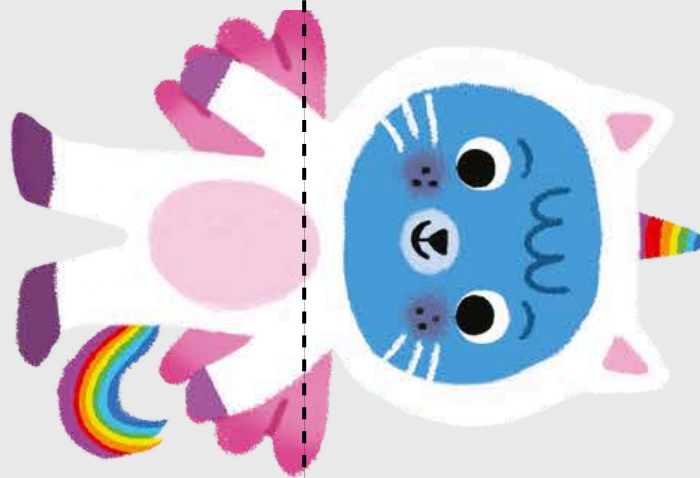
Suki Cat Move to Rhyme Cards

Stomp	Hop	Turn
Slide	Wiggle	Jump
Skate	Dance	Shake
Bend	March	Melt
Lean	Reach	Twist
Wave	Kick	Tap
Flop	Squat	Shimmy
Spin	Run	Sit

Suki Cat Puzzles



Suki Cat Puzzles



Suki Cat Puzzles

