

LOL: Books and Transitions that Combine Laughter and Learning in Preschool

Bariaud (1989), basing his comments on McGhee’s stages of humor development, says that children between the ages 3 and 6 are amused by incongruities such as “a cartoon of a cow which scratches its back with a brush and whistles like a canary while taking a bath in a bathtub” (p. 26). This type of incongruity is based on the “violation of conceptual representations” (Bariaud, 1989, p. 26)

Humor in the classroom can capture children’s attention, reduce anxiety, and spark the imagination. It can promote divergent thinking and model problem-solving.

Traits common to the books selected for this presentation:

1. The unexpected (in action or outcome)
2. Word play/ rhyme
3. Funny, repetitive refrain (that are easily remembered and that invite participation)
4. Animals personified
5. Hyperbole/ exaggeration

Books that invite humor and joy:

Book Title	Author and ISBN	Summary	What children may learn or discover:
<i>Apple Pie ABC</i>	Alison Murray 978-1-4231-3694-1	A dog watches his child owner bake a pie and plots to get a sample to eat. (Despite the owner’s caution, the dog persists until successful.)	Letter recognition; Sounds of initial letters Perseverance
<i>LMNO Peas</i>	Keith Baker 978-1-4169-9141-0	Personified peas perform alliteration activities on large, colorful letters.	Letter recognition; Sounds of initial letters Vocabulary Word play
<i>Crazy Hair</i>	Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean 978-0-06-057909-8	A man with “crazy hair” explains the adventures to a girl who calls him out about his wild hair.	Rhyme Word play Vocabulary
<i>Some Bugs</i>	Angela Diterlizzi 978-1-4424-5880-2	A cat explores outside and finds a multitude of insects with rhyming jobs.	Characteristics of insects Vocabulary Rhyme
<i>One Big Pair of Underwear</i>	Laura Gehl and Tom Lichtenhead	Animals who hate to share learn that while sharing is difficult, it means all win (and have fun doing so).	Rhyme Benefits of Sharing Fairness Counting/ Number Sense
<i>Not Just a Dot</i>	Loryn Brantz 978-1-62914-622-5	This story explores why we need dots to make sense of our world. A dot matters!	Vocabulary Self-Worth Importance of uniqueness

<i>The Cow Who Clucked</i>	Denise Flemming 978-0-8050-7265-5	The cow has lost her moo and tours the farm to ask animals if they have found it. This uses a repetitive line at the end of each page.	Patterns in stories Names and sounds of farm animals Persistence (The cow searches from dawn to twilight for her moo.)
<i>Bark, George</i>	Jules Feiffer 978-0-06-205185-1	A worried mother dog takes her puppy who cannot bark to the vet. Children will be surprised at what the vet pulls out.	Names and sounds of farm animals Sequence of size (the extracted animals increase in size).
<i>Mice</i>	Rose Fylemann (illustrated by Lois Ehlert) 978-1-44-245684-6	This is a short rhyme with clever verses about why most people do not like mice (and why others appreciate them).	Rhymes (the way many are put on the next page encourages children to guess the rhyme). Vocabulary Point of view
<i>The Greedy Python</i>	Richard Buckley (illustrated by Eric Carle) 9780590462846	This books tells a rhyming story of a python who swallows animals of increasing size until he goes too far.	Rhyming words Graduation of size (small to large) Counting to ten Self-control
<i>Millions of Cats</i>	Wanda Ga'g	This book has a delightful repeating refrain and reminds us to be careful about what we wish for. A lonely couple desiring a pet get more than they bargained for.	(Suitable for older 4s and kindergarten age due to length) Problem solving Persistence Vocabulary
<i>Harry the Dirty Dog</i>	Gene Zion	A naughty dog runs away to escape his bath. After a day of getting dirty, he returns home so dirty that his owners do not recognize him, and he begs for them to give him a bath.	The importance of (and need for) hygiene and cleanliness and complying with rules.
<i>No Sleep for the Sheep!</i>	Karen Beaumont 978-0-15-204969-0	Catchy rhymes and a rhythmic refrain tell the story of animals that invade the rest of the sheep in the barn one evening.	Rhyming words Size sequence (from small to large)
<i>I Like Myself</i>	Karen Beaumont 978-0-15-202013-2	A little girl explains in rhyme why she likes herself, no matter what.	Rhyming words Opposites

<i>Crybaby</i>	Karen Beaumont 978-0-8050-8974-5	A new baby wakes up the whole house, and everyone tries to soothe the baby's tears.	Rhyming words Acknowledgement of the chaos that a new baby brings to the family
<i>Pretty Kitty</i>	Karen Beaumont 978-0-8050-9232-5	A lonely old man in the city attracts a string of stray cats to his apartment. What will he do?	Rhyming words Rational counting (number sense)
<i>Move Over, Rover!</i>	Karen Beaumont 978-0-15-201979-2	A storm brings a barrage of animal neighbors to Rover's dog house until the place is ridiculously crowded.	Rhyming words Sharing The importance of keeping one's personal space

Songs:

1. Sing the song, "Happy Birthday to You" replacing all consonants with the same sound as in alliteration (promotes phonemic awareness), such as Bappy Birthday Boo Boo..., Tappy Tirthday Too Too..., Wappy Wirthday Woo Woo...

2. Song-Tony Chestnut:

To (toe) –ny (knee)

Chest (chest) nut (clench fist)

Knows (nose) I (eye)

Love (Cross hands over chest) you (point out)

To (toe)-ny (knee) knows (nose)

To (toe)-ny (knee) knows (nose)

To (toe) –ny (knee)

Chest (chest) nut (clench fist)

Knows (nose) I (eye)

Love (Cross hands over chest) you (point out)

That's what To (toe)-ny (knee) knows (nose).

(Repeat, but take out one of the syllables and point to the body part only).

(This action song promotes motor planning, knowledge of body part names, and listening comprehension.)

3. Two Little Blackbirds

Two Little Blackbirds sitting on a hill (wave two index fingers at each other)

One named Jack (wiggle one)

And the other named Jill (wiggle the other)

Fly away, Jack (hide one pointer finger behind back),

Fly away, Jill (hide other pointer behind back)

Come back, Jack (bring back one pointer)

Come back, Jill (bring back the other pointer)

Two little blackbirds sitting on a hill, (wave two index fingers at each other)

One named Jack (wiggle one) and the other named Jill (wiggle the other).

(Repeat, making up new rhymes including the children's names.)

4. There's a Spider on the Floor by Raffi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWBkqDhDByY>

5. Green Eggs and Ham with Children's Names

As you read Green Eggs and Ham, add rhymes with the children's names, such as, "I would not eat them on a yam, I would not eat them with Pam" so that children listen for the names of each other.

#### References

Loizou, E. (2006). Young Children's Explanation of Pictorial Humor. *Early Childhood Education*

*Journal*, 33(6), 425–431. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-005-0053-z>

Miller, S. A. (2005). Piggety Wiggety. *Scholastic Parent & Child*, 12(5), 80.