

Lesson Plans for **TODDLERS**



Ellie, the littlest elephant, is in a big hurry. She's just learned to swim, and she's excited to get to the water. But as she crashes through the jungle, Ellie doesn't stop to see all the creatures she's knocked out of the way. Until...she steps on a tiger tail. AARRGH! Kate Read's *The Littlest Elephant* depicts a rich and lush setting, which hosts a delightfully colorful cast of friendly animals. This social-emotional tale is an excellent pick for introducing young ones to concepts of shared spaces and boundaries as well as opportunities for all learning centers.

Literacy

Reading and re-reading familiar stories to young children is not only enjoyable for them but important to their early literacy development. Each time a child hears a book read to them, they learn more about the story itself. Each pass through the text or illustrations allows them to dive deeper into the story's meaning, preparing them for more complex narratives down the road.

Picture Walk: Before reading the book, take a picture walk with a small group of children. Without reading the text, discuss the illustrations, note the activity of the characters and the emotions they express. Ask the children questions and repeat their answers elaborating with descriptive words and vocabulary. Now you are ready to read the story.

Story Box: Create a Story Box for *The Littlest Elephant* similar to the one pictured. Mount the scenery used for your age group's safety (i.e. glue the blue gems to together). Add animals you have in your classroom that resemble those in the book for the children to use when retelling/acting out the story.



Animal Photos: During another reading of this book, pass out the animal photos provided at the end of this lesson and encourage the children to raise their hand or stand or wave their picture when the animal on their card appears in the story. Discuss some characteristics of each animal as you go through them. (Make multiple copies if needed for the class and laminate photos before using for extended use.)

Gross Motor Play

Animal Movement: Cut out and assemble the animal die at the end of this lesson. For durability, cover the entire square with packing tape once assembled. Die can also be cut apart and put into the sleeves of a soft pocket die.

Children take turns rolling the die and then move like the animal they land on. For extra movement, make tape tracks with masking tape or painter's tape on the floor (zig zag, circle, etc.) and they have to move like the animal along the path.

Sensory Play and Math

Water Table: Add jungle animals or any animals to the water table so they can practice their swimming. Strategically put similar objects of varied sizes in the water. As the children play, begin a math conversation with them. Questions may include: Which elephant is the smallest? Which one is the biggest? How many elephants are there? Which type of animal do we have the most of? How many animals will fit on the island? Add few items that sink and float for some STEM/science talk as well!

Song

Bubbles Everywhere: Join the Littlest Elephant as she blows bubbles singing this song to the tune of If Your Happy and You Know It:

There are bubbles in the air, in the air.
There are bubbles in the air, in the air.
There are bubbles in the air, there are bubbles in your hair.
There are bubbles in the air, in the air!

There are bubbles way up high, way up high.
There are bubbles way up high, way up high.
There are bubbles way up high, there are bubbles in the sky.
There are bubbles way up high, way up high!

There are bubbles way down low, way down low.
There are bubbles way down low, way down low.
There are bubbles way down low, there are bubbles on your toe.
There are bubbles way down low, way down low!

<https://youtu.be/BftiOEVcbwQ?si=NefsHxIkf8zR2kV3>

Art

Elephant Art: For this process project, offer children black and white paint and a piece of paper. (Even recycled, printed paper will work for this.) Allow them to experiment with the two colors as gray begins to appear. Encourage them to cover the whole page with this new color which happens to be the color of an elephant. Once the page is dry add pre-cut ears, eyes and a trunk out of construction paper.



Social Emotional

Patience Is a Virtue: The Littlest Elephant is not a very patient critter, and neither are toddlers at times. This story offers a lesson in patience and kindness towards others. Discuss the elephant's excitement and how his friends feel as she rushes through the jungle. Offer scenarios your kiddos might encounter and how they would feel if a friend was rude, impatient or unkind.









