



Discovery Baskets



Discovery Baskets (What's Included!)

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Introduction: Discovery Baskets

Discovery baskets are versatile tools that foster exploration, curiosity, and sensory development. These baskets are carefully curated collections of open-ended materials designed to engage children in meaningful play experiences. Unlike traditional toys with specific functions, open-ended materials allow for endless possibilities, encouraging children to use their imagination and creativity.

When curating discovery baskets, less is often more. Too many materials can overwhelm children and detract from the depth of exploration. It's important to select a few high-quality, open-ended materials that offer a variety of sensory experiences. Choose items with different textures, weights, and shapes to provide diverse opportunities for exploration. This careful selection allows children to engage deeply with each material, fostering curiosity and creativity.

Another crucial aspect of discovery baskets is the concept of revisiting. Instead of constantly rotating materials, it's beneficial to allow children to explore the same items over multiple sessions. Revisiting familiar objects promotes deeper engagement and allows children to develop a deeper understanding of the materials. It also gives them the opportunity to experiment with new ways of playing with familiar objects, fostering creativity and problem-solving skills.

Developmental Benefits of Discovery Baskets



Sensory Development: Sensory exploration in discovery baskets engages children's senses, including touch, sight, smell, and sometimes taste. This stimulation is crucial for brain development, helping children understand the world around them and make sense of different textures, colors, and scents.

Motor Development: Manipulating objects in discovery baskets promotes the development of both fine and gross motor skills. As children grasp, pick up, and manipulate objects of various shapes, sizes, and textures, they strengthen their hand muscles and improve their coordination and dexterity. Additionally, exploring different objects encourages movement and physical activity, supporting the development of gross motor skills.



Cognitive Development: Engaging with objects in discovery baskets encourages cognitive development by fostering problem-solving skills and spatial awareness. Children explore how objects fit together, stack, or interact, developing their understanding of cause and effect and honing their spatial reasoning abilities.

Language Development: Adults can support language development by narrating the child's exploration of discovery baskets. Describing the objects, their properties, and how they can be used helps build children's vocabulary and language skills. Adults can also engage children in conversations about the objects, encouraging them to express their thoughts and observations.



Social-Emotional Development:

Discovery baskets provide opportunities for social-emotional development, allowing children to experience autonomy, build confidence, and regulate their emotions. As children explore independently or with adult support, they develop a sense of competence and self-esteem. Adults' responsive interactions during exploration help children feel supported and secure, fostering healthy attachment relationships.



20 Open-Ended Natural Materials

1. Pinecones
2. Seashells
3. Smooth stones
4. Twigs and branches
5. Leaves
6. Pine needles
7. Sand
8. Feathers
9. Soil
10. Tree bark
11. Logs
12. Moss
13. Driftwood
14. Flowers (non-toxic varieties)
15. Sponges
16. Recycled paper (e.g. paper towel rolls)
17. Sweet Gum Balls
18. Cotton balls
19. Hay or straw
20. Fruit (e.g., oranges, lemons, etc. for texture, taste, and scent exploration)



20 Open-Ended Plastic Materials

1. Building blocks
2. Stacking cups
3. Plastic cups
4. Plastic animals or figurines
5. Large Beverage Caps
6. Watering cans or scoops
7. Funnel sets
8. Plastic bowls or containers
9. Toy cars or vehicles
10. Plastic balls
11. Squeeze bottles
12. Teething rings
13. Rubber duckies
14. Plastic rings or chains
15. Plastic egg cartons
16. Straws
17. Hair rollers
18. PVC pipes
19. Rings/Curtain rods
20. CD's/DVD's & cases



20 Open-Ended Metal Materials

1. Metal spoons
2. Metal bowls or cups
3. Keys on a ring
4. Cookie cutters
5. Small metal bells
6. Metal chains
7. Metal lids
8. Metal rings
9. Metal muffin tins
10. Metal measuring cups or spoons
11. Metal containers with lids
12. Metal cookie sheets (for sensory play)
13. Metal whisks
14. Metal colanders
15. Metal clips or clasps
16. Metal strainers
17. Metal wind chimes
18. Metal gears
19. Magnets
20. Metal keys



20 Open-Ended Fabric Materials

1. Soft blankets or cloths
2. Silk scarves
3. Velvet ribbons
4. Felt pieces
5. Cotton
6. Terry cloth squares
7. Denim scraps
8. Satin ribbons
9. Wool yarn
10. Flannel squares
11. Burlap pieces
12. Lace ribbons
13. Knitted or crocheted items
14. Chiffon fabric
15. Corduroy patches
16. Tulle fabric
17. Linen squares
18. Fleece blankets
19. Polyester ribbons
20. Organza fabric



DISCOVERY BASKETS





Everyday Treasures

Utilize these vocabulary words to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores the contents within their basket.

NOUNS

- Funnel
- Paper roll
- Cloth
- Ball
- Sponge
- Ribbon
- Pipe
- Cup
- Brush
- Hair roller

VERBS

- Squeeze
- Stack
- Roll
- Tap
- Toss
- Attach
- Shake
- Spin
- Drop
- Rub

ADJECTIVES

- Soft
- Smooth
- Bumpy
- Fuzzy
- Shiny
- Squishy
- Textured
- Colorful
- Noisy
- Spongy



Metal Treasures

Utilize these vocabulary words to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores the contents within their basket.

NOUNS

- Spoon
- Cup
- Whisk
- Cookie cutter
- Cookie sheet
- Lid
- Ladle
- Fork
- Spatula
- Strainer

VERBS

- Bang
- Tap
- Scratch
- Roll
- Stack
- Slide
- Spin
- Clank
- Bang
- Twist

ADJECTIVES

- Shiny
- Smooth
- Cold
- Hard
- Reflective
- Heavy
- Rusty
- Textured
- Metallic
- Durable



Wooden Treasures

Utilize these vocabulary words to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores the contents within their basket.

NOUNS

- Block
- Rolling pin
- Paper roll
- Popsicle sticks
- Small basket
- Mallet
- Wood slices
- Twigs
- Puzzle Piece
- Paper strips

VERBS

- Fold
- Tear
- Crumple
- Cut
- Roll
- Flatten
- Crease
- Bang
- Balance
- Stack

ADJECTIVES

- Smooth
- Rough
- Natural
- Brown
- Beige
- Sturdy
- Heavy
- Solid
- Hard
- Round



Rainbow Treasures

Utilize these vocabulary words to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores the contents within their basket.

NOUNS

- Ball
- Paper
- Stick
- Block
- Drum
- Scarf
- Cutting board
- Leaf
- Bowl
- Sponge

VERBS

- Stack
- Roll
- Tap
- Spin
- Shake
- Throw
- Squeeze
- Pinch
- Explore
- Examine

ADJECTIVES

- Color (e.g. pink drum)
- Bright
- Colorful
- Rainbow-colored
- Multicolored
- Round
- Hard
- Soft
- Crinkly
- Solid



Black and White (Contrasting) Treasures

Utilize these vocabulary words to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores the contents within their basket.

NOUNS

- Remote
- Hand towel
- Tissue Paper
- Spoon
- Block
- Hat
- Panda plush
- Coffee filter
- Cup
- Ball

VERBS

- Stack
- Roll
- Grab
- Grip
- Shake
- Tear
- Wear
- Hold
- Throw
- Push

ADJECTIVES

- Black
- White
- Bold
- Bumpy
- Smooth
- Rough
- Soft
- Hard
- Long
- Short



All Things Round Treasures

Utilize these vocabulary words to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores the contents within their basket.

NOUNS

- Ball
- Wheel
- Toy car
- Metal ring
- Balloon (blown)
- Frisbee
- Plate
- Cup
- Pom-Poms
- Bottle

VERBS

- Roll
- Spin
- Bounce
- Toss
- Catch
- Rotate
- Balance
- Throw
- Drive
- Float

ADJECTIVES

- Round
- Circular
- Spherical
- Fuzzy
- Smooth
- Hard
- Heavy
- Light
- Curved
- Symmetrical

STORY BASKETS



Curating Story Baskets

Curating a story basket for children is probably more easy than you think. Simply collect materials that relate to one of your child's beloved book!



Step 1: Choose a book from your child's library.

Step 2: Choose any plush dolls that connect to the book.



Step 3: Choose additional corresponding toys or materials.



Step 4: Compile materials in a basket and present to your child.



Peek-a-Who?

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Mirror
- Owl
- Cow
- Zoo
- Train
- Ghost
- Baby
- Book
- Star
- Heart

VERBS

- Peek
- See
- Hide
- Look
- Turn
- Giggle
- Hoot
- Ride
- Scare
- Guess

ADJECTIVES

- Big
- Small
- Silly
- Playful
- Hidden
- Bright
- Shiny
- Spotted
- Reflective
- Hard



We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Grass
- River
- Mud
- Forest
- Cave
- Snowstorm
- Bear
- Family
- Adventure
- Hunt

VERBS

- Run
- Splash
- Swish
- Squelch
- Stumble
- Hike
- Tiptoe
- Trot
- Chase
- Escape

ADJECTIVES

- Tall
- Deep
- Wide
- Thick
- Cold
- Dark
- Scary
- Soft
- Freezing
- Frightening



Giraffes Can't Dance

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Giraffe
- Jungle
- Moon
- Stars
- Music
- Dance
- Animals
- Cricket
- Drum
- Tree

VERBS

- Dance
- Prance
- Spin
- Twirl
- Leap
- Strut
- Sway
- Sing
- Laugh
- Cheer

ADJECTIVES

- Tall
- Graceful
- Awkward
- Rhythmic
- Brave
- Proud
- Silly
- Colorful
- Joyful
- Magical



Goodnight Moon

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Moon
- Room
- Mouse
- Cow
- Clock
- Bed
- Chair
- Balloon
- Socks
- Bunny

VERBS

- Say
- Whisper
- Hush
- Rock
- Blink
- Wave
- Sleep
- Close
- Brush
- Smile

ADJECTIVES

- Quiet
- Cozy
- Peaceful
- Soft
- Sleepy
- Gentle
- Warm
- Bright
- Calm
- Comforting



Baby Bear Sees Blue

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Bear
- Bluebird
- Storm
- Stream
- Fish
- Butterfly
- Flower
- Tree
- Mama
- Sky

VERBS

- See
- Explore
- Walk
- Swim
- Flutter
- Blossom
- Sleep
- Cuddle
- Play
- Discover

ADJECTIVES

- Blue (+ other colors)
- Bright
- Shimmering
- Sunny
- Sparkling
- Gentle
- Cozy
- Peaceful
- Fuzzy
- Warm



Barnyard Dance

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Barn
- Cow
- Pig
- Sheep
- Duck
- Goose
- Horse
- Dog
- Cat
- Mouse

VERBS

- Dance
- Spin
- Clap
- Stomp
- Giggle
- Prance
- Waddle
- Roll
- Sway
- Trot

ADJECTIVES

- Silly
- Bouncy
- Playful
- Noisy
- Happy
- Lively
- Cheerful
- Rustic
- Whimsical
- Joyful



I am a Bunny

Utilize these vocabulary words based upon the recommended book to **inspire the materials you collect** and the **language you use** as your child explores their basket.

NOUNS

- Bunny
- Tree
- Flower
- Pinecone
- Stream
- Frog
- Butterfly
- Bee
- Bird
- Squirrel

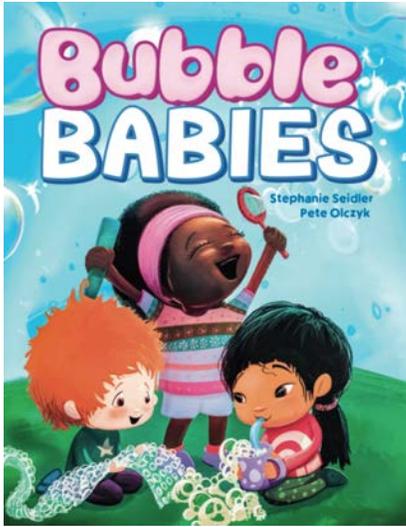
VERBS

- Hop
- Explore
- Watch
- Sniff
- Chase
- Flutter
- Buzz
- Sing
- Sleep
- Dream

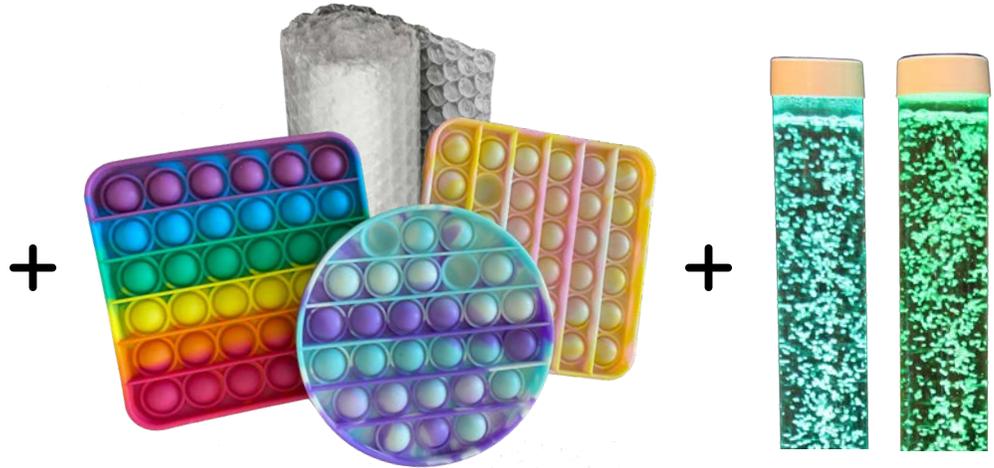
ADJECTIVES

- Furry
- Curious
- Playful
- Tiny
- Gentle
- Beautiful
- Busy
- Bright
- Peaceful
- Sleepy

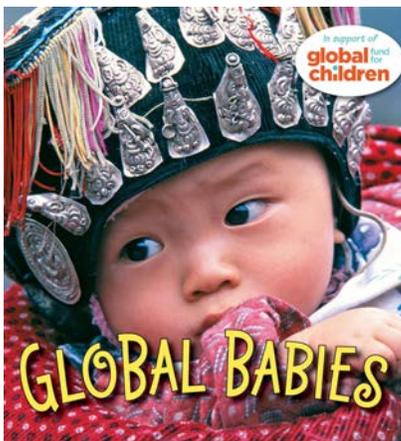
Additional Books & Materials for Story Baskets



Bubble Babies,
by Stephanie Seidler



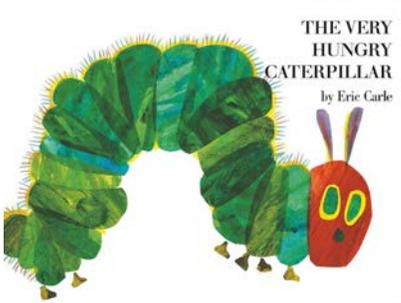
Pair with sensory pop-its, bubble wrap, sensory bottles (water and oil to make bubbles), and bubble wands. Flip on the bubble machine during play for an extended, sensory-rich experience!



Global Babies, by The
Global Fund for Children



Pair with multicultural dolls or toy figures, various traditional fabrics, textiles, and clothing from different cultures, country flags, etc.



**The Very Hungry
Caterpillar,** by Eric Carle



Pair with various toy foods (plastic and/or cloth), branches, leaves (real or synthetic), plush caterpillar and/or butterfly.



MADE FOR CHILDREN. DESIGNED FOR YOU.

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