

This book features colorful illustrations and simple, repetitive text to encourage children to pretend to be different animals.

CORE SKILL OBJECTIVES

INTENTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES

REGULATE



Children will:

- Show flexibility in problem-solving by trying more than one approach

Teachers will:

- Narrate cognitive flexibility

TEACHING TIP

Young children are just beginning to develop their cognitive flexibility. Cognitive flexibility is being able to adjust one's own thinking to meet the demands of the environment. Most young children need support to shift their mindset about rules, routines, plans, and people. When faced with a change, they may experience strong emotions which further reduces their capacities to think flexibility. One way to help children build cognitive flexibility is to share books that prompt them to pretend or take on a variety of roles. While reading, you can give children the extra time and attention they need to practice "shifting gears" in a playful and engaging way.

1. INTRODUCE

- "This book is called *From Head to Toe*. As we read, we're going to see a different animal on every page. Let's move our bodies to pretend to be the animals we see."

2. READ THE BOOK

- Pause occasionally to narrate your thinking and actions as you pretend to be each animal.
- Give children enough time as they shift from pretending to be one animal to the next.

Narrate Cognitive Flexibility



Read: "I am a giraffe and I bend my neck. Can you do it? I can do it!"

Narrate: "We were pretending to be penguins and now we're going to be giraffes. I'm going to stop turning my head (*model*) and now I'm stretching and bending my neck instead (*model*)."

Narrate: "I see (Child) bending their neck. And (Child) is stretching their neck up high. That's another way to pretend to be a giraffe."

Read: "I am cat and I arch my back. Can you do it? I can do it!"

Narrate: "Now we're going to pretend to be a cat. Cats move on four legs so I'm going to bend over and round my back. Let me see how you move like a cat in your own way."

Narrate: "Oh! I see (Child) is scratching their paws on the carpets. Can you show us another way that cats can move?"

Read: "I am an elephant and I stomp my foot. Can you do it? I can do it!"

Narrate: "Let's pretend to be elephants in our own way. How do elephants move?"

Narrate: "I see (Child) is holding their arms like the elephant's floppy ears. I see (Child) is raising their arm to pretend it is the elephant's trunk. I hear (Child) trumpeting. There are lots of ways to pretend to be an elephant!"

3. REVIEW

- "Now let's turn back into people! Pretending to be animals is so much fun. We can pretend to be anything we want!"

4. KEEP IT GOING

- Music is a great tool for supporting the development of cognitive flexibility. Play music with varying tempos, or speeds. Encourage children to move in a way that corresponds with the music (i.e., when the music is fast, they move fast). Narrate as children change their movements to reflect the new tempo. Sing songs that encourage children to come up with new ideas to keep the song going (e.g., "Down by the Bay," "The Wheels on the Bus") or change familiar songs (e.g., change the actions or emotions for "If You're Happy and You Know It").