



Busy Trucks on the Go

by Eric Ode, illustrated by Kent Culotta

Many of these activities are for children in a preschool setting with learning centers, but they can easily be used at home as well.

Tire Track Art

Cover a table with newspaper, then put manila or construction paper out for each child. Pour a thin layer of paint in a shallow pan or cafeteria tray. Children take a toy truck, run it through the paint, and then move the truck back and forth on their paper to make tire track designs. Creativity rules!

Variation: Provide different sizes and types of trucks.

Crayon Tracks

Tape a crayon on the front of a toy truck, allowing the crayon to touch the paper. Put different colored crayons on different trucks. The children will move the car around the paper, making colored lines and designs as they go.

Magnetic Attraction – Science & Discovery

Put toy metal vehicles in the sand. (If you don't have a sand table, you can use any large container.) Provide large, handled magnets. Show children how to drag the magnet across the sand to make the vehicles come to the surface.

Variation: Instead of sand, use shredded or torn paper, cotton balls, grass clippings, or potting soil.

Wheeled Vehicles

In the Block Area, provide a variety of trucks and other wheeled vehicles for children to incorporate into their constructions.

Variation: Provide a rug or mat with roads, or make your own from butcher paper.

Music & Movement

Set up a few chairs in rows, and make a cardboard steering wheel. Have the children act out the song "The Wheels on the Bus" as they sing it. Leave the chairs and steering wheel set up during free choice play time for the children to reenact in small groups if they wish.

Sights and Sounds

When playing outdoors, watch for trucks. If you can't see a street or a road, then listen for the sounds of trucks. Let the children describe what they see or hear. This is an informal activity that can be done all year with one child or a small group. It is not a formal, large-group activity. Two other examples of informal, spontaneous activities: when there is a truck working near you, allow time for children to watch the bulldozer, concrete mixer, garbage truck, or tow truck in action; when you hear a siren, see if it's an ambulance, or a paramedic truck as it's referred to in the book *Busy Trucks on the Go*, and talk about why sirens are needed.



Seeing Trucks in Person

- (1) Visit a fire station, or invite firefighters to bring the fire truck to you.
- (2) Invite a school bus driver to bring the bus to you.
- (3) With parent chaperones, take a ride on a city bus.

Writing Center

- (1) Provide crayons or markers along with paper circles (to represent wheel shapes) for children to write or draw on. If a child chooses, you may write what he/she says about it on the circle.
- (2) Provide paper with circle shapes you've drawn ahead of time, then let the children cut around the shapes. Being able to write requires all hand muscles to be strengthened, and using scissors is an excellent way to develop that skill. So cutting is a legitimate pre-writing activity.

Literacy

Sit down with one child and give him/her the book *Busy Trucks on the Go*. The child chooses one of the trucks in the book, looks at the illustration, and then tells you a story about what he/she sees. Expanding on what's on the page is encouraged! You write down what they say (their dictation), and then read it back to them. Many children need practice with this, as they are used to having the adult tell the story. But this is an excellent way for them to develop their language skills, which is a part of literacy. (The three components of literacy are reading, writing, and language: expressive language [speaking] and receptive language [listening].)