

Learning through... Puppetry!

Making puppets is one of our favorite Bubbler activities. We have learned a lot about what kind of learning happens when children make and play with a Puppet. Using the [Exploratorium's Learning Dimension Framework](#) as an observational tool, here are some of the learning themes you could expect to see:

Engagement

When you are making a puppet, you are creating a character with a distinctive personality. This invites:

- Showing emotions like pride, excitement, and joy in making
- Exploring different materials to achieve desired looks and character traits
- Making more puppets - again and again to create more characters
- Telling stories about their creations in creative play

Social Scaffolding

Puppets are interactive, and a room full of puppets invites a lot of collaboration. We regularly observe:

- Offering ideas and suggestions for improving on designs
- Talking about each other's work and being inspired to incorporate other's ideas into each other's designs.
- Making puppets that interact with each other in the same story, or creating an inclusive story

Initiative

Creating characters invites initiative and intentionality, and allowing space for kids to interact with each other and each other's creations invites:

- Setting goals for what they want to make - "I want to make a spooky puppet!"
- Actively seeking inspiration from materials and each other's work
- Persisting through setbacks to achieve their goals
- Stating intentions to keep making or playing with their puppets after the activity is over



Paper Puppets Maker Kit Facilitation Guide

Our paper puppets kit is a Bubbler favorite. A great way for kids to engage with creative storytelling by creating their own character and dialogue through play. It is one of the most engaging activities we have found!

- preschool to 5th grade
- Low facilitation
- .5 hrs (longer with a storytelling extension)
- Get for Drop ins or workshops
- Large and Small groups

Materials in this kit:

- Construction Paper
- Glue Sticks
- White Glue
- Construction Paper Crayons
- Glitter Crayons
- Google Eyes
- Feathers
- Pipecleaners
- Pom Poms
- Foam Shapes
- White paper (for drawing habitats)
- Markers
- Any other art supplies
- Puppet Theater Curtains

Things to know:

Say Yes!

Kids don't just want to make 1 puppet, they want to make 2 or 3. Plan to have enough supplies on hand and encourage them to make as many puppets as they need to complete the narratives they are creating as they play.

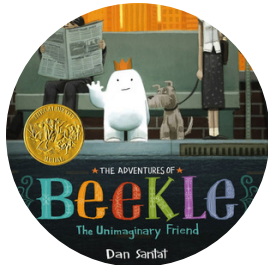
Encourage Play

Plan in time for kids to play with their puppets. Provide a "theater" set up or space for them to move around the room as they interact. Playing with their puppets often encourages more making as they dream up props or other characters they want to create.

Extend the Activity

Ask kids to draw where their puppet lives. Encourage them to write down their stories. Talk to kids about what makes their puppet so great. For older groups - make a puppet video with a green screen or record a video on a device of their play.

Inspirational texts



The Adventures of Beekle: the unimaginary friend
by Dan Santat



Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?
by Bill Martin Jr.



Alan's Big Scary Teeth
by Jarvis

Making Paper Puppets

Skills to model:

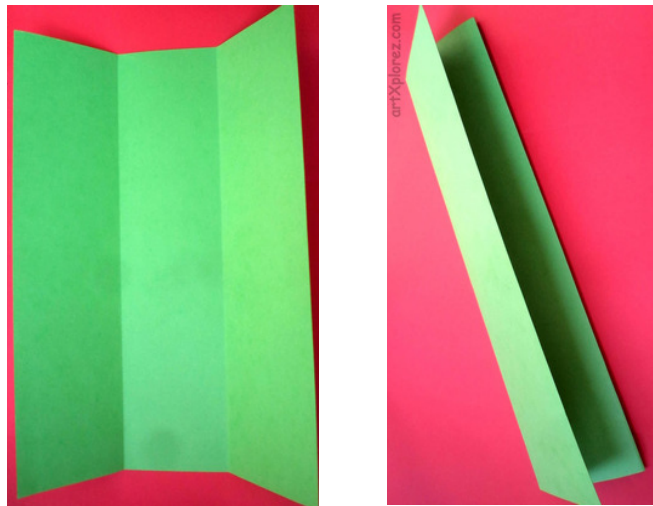
Creative Brainstorming

A child's puppet can be anything! And they can tell any story, however, sometimes it's hard to get started.

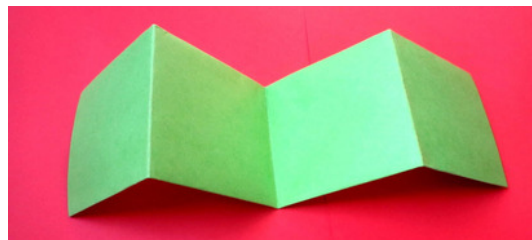
- ✦ Read one of the on the list that includes a cast of whimsical or varied characters
- ✦ Take some time to draw an imaginary friend or an animal costume together. What would it include?
- ✦ Put supplies out in eye catching ways to give inspiration.

Folding a Paper Puppet

Start with a piece of construction paper. Fold it length-wise into thirds, creating a pocket in the middle.



Fold this long pocket in half, and then fold the ends back in half again to make a W or an M shape.



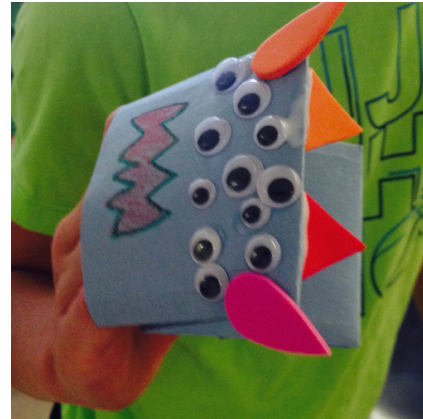
Place your fingers in the back pouches to make your puppet talk!

Decorate it to come to life!

Facilitation Best Practices

The bigger the variety of materials, the better to make your puppet come to life and have a unique personality.

Google Eyes



Feathers



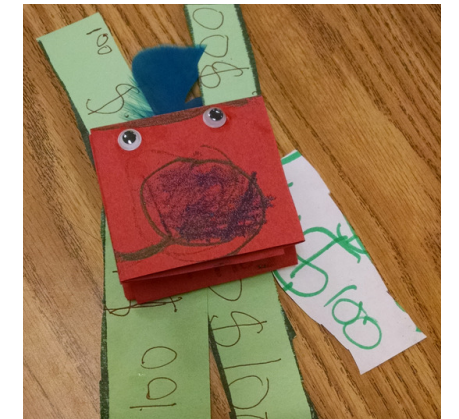
Glitter Crayons



Patterned Paper



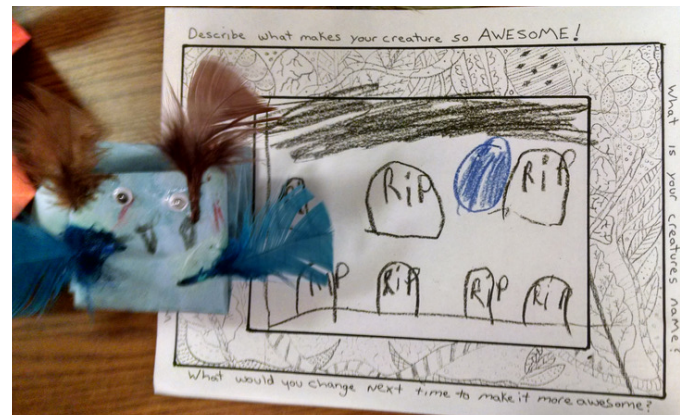
Money?



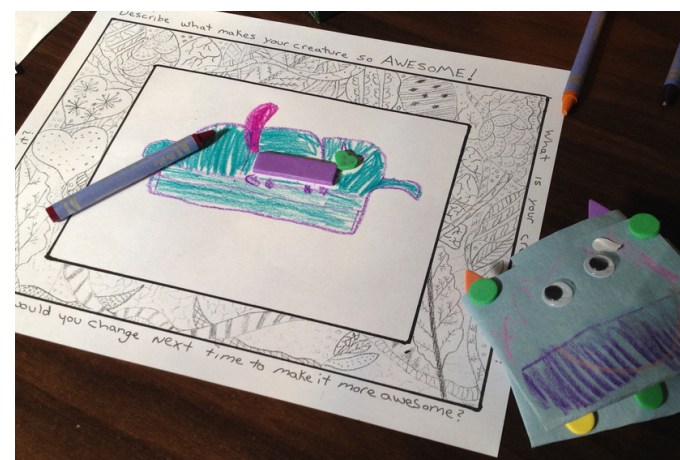
Extend the Activity for Storytelling

Draw your puppet's habitat:

Spooky bats live in spooky graveyards.



Lazy Cat puppets live on couches.



Create a play: With...



...or without a curtain or stage.



Make a Movie: With a free green screen app

