Teaching Your Child Using Princess Fairy Tales

Fairy tales have been told by cultures around the world for hundreds of years. With simple plots, strong characters, rich language, and clear lessons, they make fun parent-child read-aloud stories. Plus, they can help develop imagination and creativity. Albert Einstein thought they promoted intellectual development too. He famously said, “If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want your children to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.” This tip sheet is designed to provide activities to supplement your child’s learning experience with the fairy tale princesses in this set. From the optimistic Rapunzel to the kind Penelope, the princesses in this set have much to teach your child. Young children thrive in an environment where learning and play go hand-in-hand. The following hands-on activities will spark your child’s enthusiasm for learning and get them excited about reading.

Rapunzel Tower Craft
Create a storytelling prop.

Materials
- Empty oatmeal container
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Glue
- Yarn (in a color to simulate hair)

Making the Tower
1. Wrap the oatmeal container with the construction paper, gluing it in place.
2. Cut an arched window out of the tower toward the top.
3. Have your child decorate the tower to look like it is made from stone or brick.
4. Add a construction paper roof and encourage your child to draw shingles on it.
5. Have your child draw a picture of Rapunzel to add in the window. Glue it in place.
6. Cut three pieces of yarn that are longer than the distance from the window to the bottom of the tower. Tie them at one end.
7. Depending on the age and experience of your child, show him or her how to braid the yarn. When it is done, glue the braid in place and let it dry.

Use the tower for retellings of the story, letting the braid fall, “Down, down, down to the ground” or, re-create the story with an alternate ending or version!
How Strong Is Hair?

In the story, both the prince and the witch climbed up Rapunzel’s hair to the tower. See how strong hair really is. Take a strand of hair. Tape it to a variety of different small objects to see if it will hold them up. Some objects to try are: a paper clip, a pencil, a crayon, a ruler, a block, a small plastic animal figure, etc.

Headband Crown

Add to pretend play princess fun with a simple-to-create crown.

Materials

- Inexpensive plastic headband
- Material stiff enough to stand up (poster board, craft foam, Styrofoam®)
- Decorative stickers in geometric shapes, glitter, aluminum foil, or other decorative items
- Crepe paper streamers for “hair” (optional)
- Glue

Making The Crown

1. Cut a crown shape from the material.
2. Trace the curve of the headband onto the bottom edge of the crown. Cut the curve so the crown will fit perfectly.
3. Set out stickers and other “bling” for your child to decorate the crown.
4. Apply glue and attach the decorated crown to the headband.
5. If your child wishes, add crepe paper streamer “hair” to the headband. Let dry.

Handprint Castle

Use tempera or other water-based, washable paint to paint your child’s palm in his or her favorite color. Then, have him or her press it on a piece of construction paper. When it dries, have your child add a door, windows, turrets and other castle features such as banners, maybe even a moat.
**Princess Fairy Tale Activities**

**Princess and the Pea**

**Twenty is Plenty**

In the story, the queen commands that 20 mattresses and 20 quilts be placed on the princess’s bed. Practice counting to 20 with your child by having him or her make stacks of 20 objects. Here are some ideas: inexpensive sponges, blocks, boxes, books, and so on. Then, use the stacks to discuss different ways of making 20: 10 + 10, 15 + 5, 12 + 8, etc. For a giggle-inducing, gross motor activity, have your child pile cushions and pillows in a large area, safely away from furniture or breakables.

**The Princess’s Bed**

Your child can practice fine motor skills with this simple craft activity. Provide scrapbooking paper on which you have drawn straight lines to create one-inch strips. Have your child cut along the lines to create colorful mattresses for the princess’s bed. Next, set out a large sheet of construction paper on which you have drawn two bedposts. Have your child glue the mattresses one on top of the other from the bottom of the bedposts to the top. Then, have your child draw a princess on a separate sheet of paper and glue it to the top mattress. Finally, provide a dried pea (or a construction paper one) to add below the bottom mattress.

**The Queen Says!**

Queens and kings, like those in this story, are used to being obeyed. Use this fact to introduce your child to a game of “The Queen Says,” or “The King Says.” Find an area inside or outside where your child can move freely and safely. Then, play a Simon Says-style game that gives your child practice in both gross motor and listening skills. Commands might include: “The queen says march in place. The queen says walk on your tip toes. The queen says bow,” etc. Like in Simon Says, if you don’t say, “The queen says” and your child does the action, he or she is “out.” Begin the game slowly and gradually speed it up. For practice in giving instructions, reverse roles with your child and have him or her give the commands.

**Royal Scavenger Hunt**

In the story, the prince is on a quest to find a real princess. He travels all over the world looking for her. He brings back many treasures from his travels, but no princess. To sharpen your child’s observation skills and get some exercise, try a neighborhood quest or scavenger hunt to enjoy with your child. Make a list of items to find in your neighborhood. You can include items such as a stop sign, fire hydrant, red car, flower, bird, mailbox, and so on.
Animal Actions

This activity is a simple science lesson on animal movements as well as a catalyst to developing your child’s creative movement skills. Discuss how the frog in the story moves —flip, flop, flippety flop. Talk about how other animals move: snakes slither, elephants sway, rabbits hop, birds fly, horses gallop, fish swim, and more. Then, play a charades-style game with your child. Take turns moving like different animals and challenging one another to guess which animal is being portrayed.

Story Sparkers!

Use one or more of the following story sparkers to inspire some creative storytelling. Write your child’s words on a piece of paper and have him or her illustrate the story.

• Smooch, I kissed a frog and then...
• I promised that I would…but now...
• A witch turned me into a frog because...

Sink or Float?

In the story, the frog retrieved the princess’s ball from a well. Use this as the introduction to an experiment about sinking and floating. Set out a bucket or other large container filled with water. Provide small items made from different materials: plastic, metal, wood, etc. Divide a large sheet of paper into two columns. Write the word SINK in one column and the word FLOAT in the other column. Ask your child to predict whether an item will sink or float and record the item in that column. Then, test each item and compare the observations with the predictions.
Let’s Dance
Play different types of music from rock to reggae and dance! Be sure to play some music appropriate for your child to bow, twirl, and pirouette to his or her heart’s content.

Shoes, Shoes, Shoes!
Gather six or more pairs of shoes from family members. The more pairs you can gather, the better. Then, work with your child to categorize the shoes in different ways: color, size, material, laces or buckles, heels or flats, etc.

Leaf Rubbings
In the story, the soldier collects leaves from trees of silver, gold, and diamonds. Take a leaf collecting walk in your neighborhood to gather several different types of leaves. Provide lightweight paper, such as copier paper, and peeled crayons in different colors. Tape the leaves to a flat surface with the veined side of the leaf facing upwards. Show your child how to lay the paper over the leaf and use the side of the crayons to take a rubbing of the pattern formed by the leaf’s veins. When you have rubbings of the different leaves, discuss the patterns, noting similarities and differences.

Listen Carefully!
In the story, the youngest princess hears the soldier and warns her sisters that something is not right. They laugh at her because the soldier is invisible, and they don’t see him. Review the five senses with your child: taste, touch, hearing, sight, and smell. Then, focus on the sense of hearing by conducting this listening experiment. Sit outside together somewhere. Have your child close his or her eyes (or provide a lightweight blindfold) and just listen to the sounds in the environment. Any time your child hears a sound, such as a car driving by, a bird calling, someone speaking, etc., have him or her tell you. Write down the sound heard. See how many different sounds your child hears in a minute. Try this in different places and compare the results.

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