

How- to- Kit



St or ysacks

A Guide to making a storysack



NWT Literacy Council



Other How-to-Kits & Literacy Activities

This *How-to-Kit* was developed to help organizations celebrate literacy in the NWT. It is one in a series of *How to Kits* that you can download from the NWT Literacy Council website at www.nwt.literacy.ca. You are welcome to photocopy and use the activities in your programs, or adapt them to your needs.

How To Kits Developed to Date:

- 1-2-3 Rhyme with Me
- Community Book Swap
- Family Reading Party
- Games Night
- Literacy Treasure Hunt
- Pyjamas and Book Party
- Reading Circles and Story Extenders
- Scattergories
- Storytime on the Radio
- Family Literacy Activities Night
- Book Making
- Literacy Games for Adults
- Get Caught Reading & Other Promotion Ideas
- Election
- Environmental Print Games
- More Literacy Games
- Read for 15
- Writing and Publishing Children's Books
- Involving Families in Children's Learning
- Literacy Activities for Holidays – Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, Birthdays
- Puppet Making
- Writing Contest
- Culture and Traditions
- Books in the Home
- Facilitating a Workshop
- Talking Books
- Readers Theatre
- Family Literacy Activities Night 2
- Books in the Home Kit – *Love You Forever*
- Word & Picture Bingos
- **Plan a Family Literacy Day Fair**
- **Storysacks**

New!

You will also find other activities on our website that you are welcome to download and use.

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Storysacks

This *How to Kit* provides information about Storysacks and how you can make and use them in your community. Storysacks are a great way to engage children and families in reading and sharing together.

In this *How to Kit*, you will find . . .

- What is a Storysack?
- Why make Storysacks?
- How to make a Storysack?
- How to plan for your Storysack?
- Patterns, Stencils and Games



What is a Storysack?

Storysacks are a hands-on family literacy activity that:

- Give parents a way to enjoy books and reading with their children
- Make reading fun and easy



You need a cloth sack large enough to hold the materials with the name of the storybook on the outside. You can either cut letters and sew them on the outside of the bag or print the book title in permanent pen.

The storysack has:

- A good quality Canadian children's book
- Scenery or back drop for the story
- Soft toys, masks or puppets of the main characters
- Props or items to tell the story
- A non-fiction book with the same theme as the story
- An audio tape of the book - read the story or buy an audio tape of the book
- An "idea card" with ideas for parents to develop their children's listening, reading and writing skills - you will find an example of an "idea card" in this package
- A game based on the book - the games can be quite simple: games of sequence, rhyme, matching etc



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- A guide that helps parents use the storysack
- A checklist of all the materials in the sack - this is very important for lending the Storysack to others

Why Storysacks?

Storysacks:

- Motivate and excite children about reading
- Encourage active participation in reading
- Encourage a desire to share books together, read aloud and listen to stories
- Give parents and care givers confidence to share stories
- Give parents and care givers an easy and enjoyable way to engage children in literacy
- Provide FUN and enjoyment





Who can use Storysacks?

- Parents and children at home
- Parents as part of family literacy projects
- Grandparents and other family members
- Teachers as a teaching tool
- Teachers of children with disabilities
- Playgroups
- Daycares
- Babysitters
- Social workers
- Hospitals
- Libraries
- Home visitors
- Family centers

Who can make Storysacks?

- Teachers
- Teacher's Assistants
- Parent groups
- Family literacy programs
- Daycare workers
- Librarians
- Library board
- Health care workers
- Parents
- Volunteer
- Elders
- Sewing or craft groups
- **EVERYONE**

What books should I Use?

The first question you have to ask yourself, "Is the book appropriate for a Storysack?"

Here are some guidelines to help you choose a good book:

- A strong story line





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- Nice pictures
- You can read the book easily
- The content is good for the age-group you are working with
- A children's classic book (Love You Forever, Goodnight Moon etc)
- Recommended by parents, teachers, librarians or children

Not every book can be used for a Storysack

A book can be hard to make into a Storysack if the book:

- Has too many central characters - the storysack might get too large and take too long to make
- Has too few props in the storyline to include in the sack or too many props - too many props makes it difficult to select the ones you want in the sack

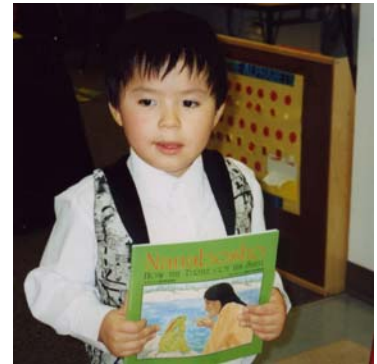


How to make a Storysack



Each storysack has:

1. A fiction and non-fiction book
2. Soft toy of the main character(s)
3. Items that can be used for props
4. A game based on the story
5. An audio tape
6. An idea card for parents
7. A guide for parents



1. A fiction and non-fiction book

A fiction book lets a child imagine and create images in their minds. The fiction book should have a theme that is interesting and relevant to children and a strong storyline. A non-fiction book gives different reading opportunities to children. Children at an early age are fascinated by facts and information. They want to know about the world around them. The non-fiction book should:

- Be relevant to the theme of the fiction book
- Have appropriate content for young children
- Have nice photos or pictures
- Interest young children



2. Main characters

Make or buy soft toy dolls for characters of the fiction book. You can do just the main character or do several characters.

The characters can be:

- Knitted
- Made of felt/and or fabric
- In puppet form
- Masks



3. Props

You can have lots of fun looking for and making items for props. They can be, handmade, bought at garage sales or flea markets and should be related to the story. Props can be toy cars, dolls, baby bottles, slippers or fur – anything that is related to the story.

4. Games

Games are important element to early learning and reading. Make sure the game you make has literacy activities like reading, singing, writing, talking etc. You will find more information about games at the end of this kit. Here is a list of some of the games you can make:



- Make a memory game with different items in the book. You can draw the pictures or use clip art on the computer. You will need to have two pictures of each item. Place the



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picture face down and pick two cards. When you get a match you keep the pair. The object is to get as many pairs as you can. Say the word when you pick up the picture. You can also do this with words.

- Make a bingo game with different items or words in the story. Draw or use clip art for the pictures.
- Make up a short crossword puzzle or word search.
- Play charades with different items from the story. Put pictures or words in a hat and act out the picture or word.
- Make word cards and play snap or go fish.
- Make a board game using the theme of the story.
- Make a sequence game where the child has to put the story back in the right order.

5. Audiotape

An audiotape allows the child to listen to the story again and again. Children love to hear a story over and over again, it helps them understand the story and re-tell a storyline. You can:



- Buy a commercially produced tape
- Make a home-made version

Record the information from the 'idea card' on side B.



6. Idea card



An idea card helps parents do different learning activities with their children. Reading everyday to your child is very important but parents should also do extended learning activities with books. The idea card should have:

- Comprehension questions
- Word fun
- Picture fun
- Extended learning activities

Comprehension Questions

- What did Peter do at school?

Word Fun

- What did Peter call his Grandmother?

Picture Fun

- Look at the illustrations and tell a different story.

Extended learning activities

- Make paper moccasins.



Example comprehension questions



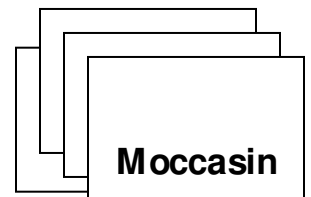
1. What do you think this book is about?
2. What do you think will happen next?
3. What happened in the story?
4. Why did?
5. What did he do when?
6. When did?
7. How did?
8. What was your favourite part?

Example word fun ideas

1. Ask your child to pick out certain words in the book.
2. Ask your child to pick out the words that they know. Write them down on cue cards. Ask them to pick out the words that they don't know. Write them down on cue cards. Practice the words together.
3. Ask your child to pick out nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

Example picture fun ideas

- Look at the pictures and tell a different story.
- Draw pictures while you read the story.
- Make a new ending to the story and draw pictures.





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- Talk about what you like about the pictures and what you do not like.

Example extended learning activities

1. Make crafts about the story.
2. Make a pictictionary with all the words in the book.
3. Draw pictures about the book.
4. Write a new ending to the book.
5. Write a sequel to the book.
6. Research information on the internet about the topic.



7. A guide for parents

Each storysack should have a guide for parents that includes information about storysacks, ideas for sharing a book, and information about why the extended learning activities are important for their children's learning. Use the guide included in this package or develop one suited to the needs of parents in your community.



A Guide for Parent

Storysacks give you ways to enjoy books and reading with your child. Not all of us find it easy to read stories. Reading is fun and easy with all the materials in the Storysack. This guide will help you use Storysacks with your children.

When you use a Storysack with your child, you help your child to:

- Love stories and reading
- Improve his confidence in reading
- Talk and learn new words
- Make sense of what she is reading
- Have fun with words and learning activities



What's in a Storysack?

1. A storybook and non-fiction book
2. Audio-tape
3. Main characters and props
4. Games
5. Idea Card

1. The Storybook and Non-fiction Book

There are two books in the Storysack. One is the storybook. The other book is non-fiction. This book is filled with facts about the theme of the storybook. Children don't always choose non-fiction

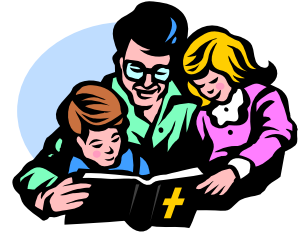


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books to read. Non-fiction books are important because they help children learn new things.

Some ideas for sharing a storybook:

- Read the book aloud to your child.
- Point to the words with your finger when you read.
- Talk to your child about the book. Look at the cover, title, author and illustration.
- Retell the story after you have read it once.
- Act out the story.
- Ask questions about the story
 - What do you think this book is about?
 - What has happened so far? What do you think will happen next?
 - Which was your favourite part? Why?
 - Did you like the story?



Some ideas for sharing a non-fiction book:

- Find out what your child knows about the topic.
- Ask them what they would like to learn.
- Talk about the table of contents and how he can use it to find what's in the book.
- Talk about the glossary and the index.



- Write down your child's favourite facts.
- Make up a quiz to share with friends about the topic.

2. Audio Tape of Story

Parents often ask the questions "Do you just play the tape again and again?" The answer is YES! Children love to hear the same story again and again.



Ways to use the tape:

- Stop the tape from time to time to ask questions.
- Follow the story as the tape plays. Use your finger to follow the words.
- Ask your child to read aloud with the tape.
- Make up voices and sound effects. Say them as you listen to the tape.
- Let your child read the story on a tape and then listen to it together.

3. Main Characters and Props

Your child will love to handle the toys and props. Give them time to play with them. It is fun and important. They help your child learn new words and really get to know the story characters. The props and characters will help your child understand the story.



You can use the characters and props to:



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- Act out the story
- Put on a puppet show
- Pretend play
- Make up new stories
- Ask questions about the story and characters
- Talk about the story and what other props they can make

4. Games

Each storysack has a game that is related to the story. Games teach new skills and expand children's vocabulary.



When you play the game, remember to:

- Read the directions
- Teach your child that it is okay to lose
- Talk as you play
- Play often
- Relate the game to the story
- Have fun

5. Idea Card

In every storysack there is an idea card. It will help you have fun with your child. Use the idea card to add to your own great ideas.



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The idea card has:

- A list of things in the storysack
- Questions to ask your child about the story
- Ways to play with words in the story
- Picture fun
- Fun learning activities you can do with your child

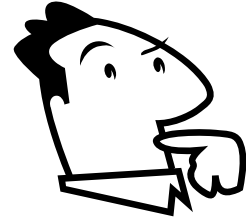
Enjoy Using Storysacks!



How to plan for your storysack?

Take the time to plan your storysack. The following pages give you ideas and planning sheets for a storysack.

1. Brainstorm Ideas
2. Planning Sheet
3. Example Parent Idea Card
4. Blank Parent Idea Card
5. Design, Safety and Copyright Tips
6. Funding
7. Ask Parents to Help





1. Brainstorm Ideas

Choose a book and brainstorm how you might make it into a Storysack.

Name of the Book: _____

1. Is the book appropriate (guidelines to follow)?

2. Decide on the main characters – how will you represent them?
(stuffed animals, knitted animals, masks, costume pieces, finger puppets, etc.)

3. Decide on the backdrop or mat.
 - What is a reasonable way to do this? What will it look like?
How many will you make?



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4. Make a game

- What will it look like? What skills do you hope to reinforce?

5. Make an 'idea' card – You can use the 'idea' card template

- Understanding the story: (Questions for comprehension)
- Word fun: (Ideas for playing with the words in the story)
- Picture fun: (Questions and ideas for examining the pictures)
- Things to do: (Extension ideas)



2. Planning Sheet for _____

Main Characters	Who will do it?
Props	Who will do it?
Scenery	Who will do it?
Non-fiction Book	Who will do it?



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Audio Tape	Who will do it?
Game	Who will do it?
Parent Idea Card	Who will do it?



3. Example Parent Idea Card - Peter's Moccasins

Questions

Pre-reading

- What do you think the book is going to be about?
- What does the picture on the front tell us?

During Reading

- What do you think will happen next?
- Why do you think Peter is embarrassed?
- Why do you think the kids think snaring an animal is cruel?

After Reading

- How is Peter feeling when he goes to school?
- What animals are Peter's Grandfather, Uncle and Father going to hunt?
- What did Ann and Vincent bring for show and tell? Why didn't Peter want to show his moccasins for show and tell?
- What does that teacher say?
- What are Peter's moccasins made of?
- Who made Peter's moccasins?
- Did you like the book? Why?

Illustrations

- Look through the story and see how many times you can find the moose hiding?
- Draw pictures about the story.

Word Fun

- What do you think the word "hai-hai" means?
- What are other word/names for moccasins?
- What does the word "cruel" mean?
- What does the word "miserable" mean.

Games

- Matching game (in the Storysack)
- Memory game (in the Storysack)
- Bingo (in the Storysack)
- I spy with my little eye
- Pick out 10 things and show them to your child. Now put them in a backpack. Have her try and remember what the things are.
- Play *Go Fish* or *Snap* with words from the story.



Extended Learning Activities

- Make a pair of paper moccasins.
- Make bannock with the recipe included.
- Have a show and tell with your family.
- Tell stories about the way things used to be.
- Talk to your child in your first language. Teach him some new words.
- Go hunting and trapping with your child.
- Make up flashcards with some of the hard words in the story. Use the flashcards as a memory game or matching game.
- Teach your child to sew traditional crafts.
- Tell your child that she is special. Name all the special things about her.
- Do the activities in *Let's Go Hunting* and *Let's Go Trapping*.

Bannock Recipe

Try this unique recipe!

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons butter or lard

1 cup mashed potatoes

1 cup milk

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (205°C).
2. In large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Add butter, cutting in with a pastry blender.
3. Stir in mashed potatoes. Add milk and stir with a fork to form a ball. Turn out onto lightly floured surface and knead about 10 times. Place on baking sheet. Do not grease. Pat down to 1-inch thick.
4. Bake about 20 minutes or until well browned

Add currents, blueberries, cranberries or any other kind of berry.



4. Blank Parent Idea Card

<p>Contents of Storysack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child's book –• Non-fiction book –• Main characters –• Props –• Audio tape of the story• Games• Craft activities• Backdrop scene of story• Parent prompt <p>Comprehension (questions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••• <p>Picture Fun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	<p>Word Fun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••• <p>Games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••• <p>Extended Learning Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
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5. Design Tips

- Make a storysack that is manageable – not too many items but enough characters to bring the story alive.
- Make items washable if possible.
- Use sturdy cards that will not bend in a sack.
- Do not make flimsy items that may easily get damaged.
- Do not include small pieces that will get lost.
- Store items within the sack in smaller bags labeled with their contents.
- Use permanent marker or inks.
- Laminate all card items.



Safety Issues

- Do not sew plastic eyes onto soft toy characters.
- Do not include any items in the sack that might be swallowed by a small child.
- Do not include items that are sharp.
- Use approved 'safety stuffing' to fill your toys.
- Attach your own clear safety warning label to your Storysack. It should say, **"This is not a toy. This is not for unsupervised children under the age of 3."**

Copyright Issues

- Do not photocopy or scan pictures from the books.
- Do not sell any handmade items based on characters from a published book.





6. Funding

Storysacks are cheap to make - each sack should only cost between \$ 50 – 75. The following suggestions can help you keep the costs down:



- Get stuff at garage sales or flea markets.
- Request donations from parents and/or community members.
- Ask your local store to donate items that you need for the Storysack.
- Ask your local bookstore for a discount on books.

Who will fund a Storysack?

- The NWT Literacy Council has family literacy funding for each community. We will fund Storysacks.
- The Healthy Children’s Initiative Program funds family literacy programs. They will fund the development of Storysacks.
- Education, Culture and Employment has funding for the Literacy Strategy. They fund family literacy activities.
- Schools and District Education Authorities may have funding for small projects.
- Ask your local Co-op or Northern to fund you. Tell them you will include their logo in the sack.
- NWT Libraries may be able to fund Storysacks for community libraries.



7. Ask Parents to Help

If you want to make lots of Storysacks – you will need help! Parents are a great resource. How can you get parents to help?



Step One Initial Meeting

Hold a meeting with parents that attend your family literacy activities or that are involved in the school. Ask a teacher or the principal to attend the meeting too. Show them your example Storysack. Tell them about Storysacks and how you want to use them in your community. Ask them if they are interested in working together to make more.

Step Two Planning Meeting

Hold a second meeting to plan for your storysacks. Show parents the books you have selected. If you have lots of parents – have them split into groups and give each group one book to work on. Go through the planning section in this guide with them. Ask parents to decide on what they would like to do. You may have parents that are good at sewing or making games.

Step Three Making the Storysack

Get together each week to work on the Storysacks. Groups may work together at someone's home or you can all come together and work as a large group. Make sure you have a finishing date. People often need a deadline to help them get motivated.



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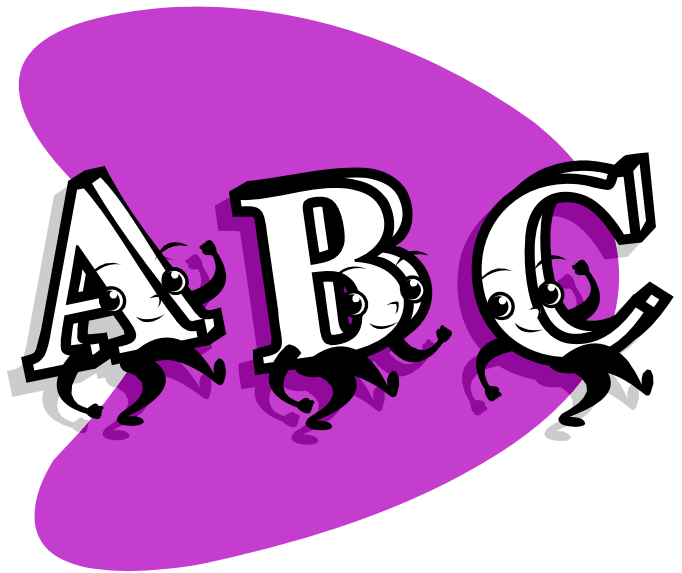
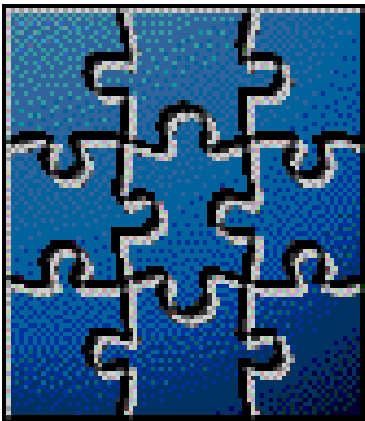
Step Four Check In

Make sure you check in with each group to see how they are coming along. They may need some ideas or help with their Storysack.



Patterns, Stencils and Games


The following pages provide different patterns for dolls, puppets and stencils. There are also ideas for making different games. The patterns, stencils and games come from the Canadian National Storysacks Project.







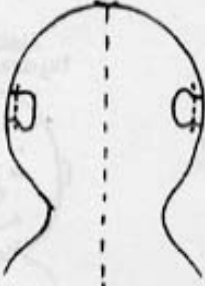
Patterns

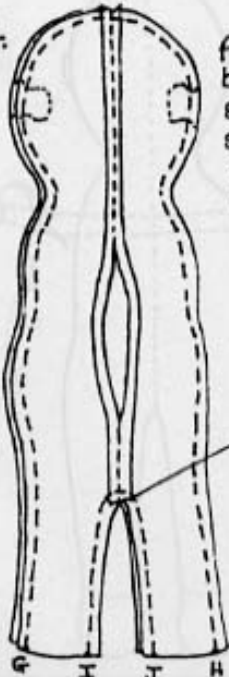
Basic Doll Sewing Instructions - page 1

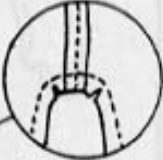
1.  stitch two body pieces together from A to B. This will be the front body.

2.  stitch other two body pieces together between C + D and E + F, leaving an opening between D + E for stuffing. This will be the back body.

3.  Stitch two ear pieces together and turn right side out. Other ear the same.


3a.  Open out front body right side up and place ears in position. Tack in place.


4.  Place front and back body pieces, right sides together and stitch from G round to H, and from I round to J.

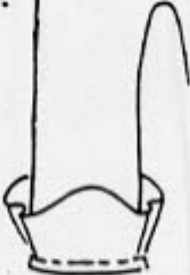
 Snip this area to allow ease before turning right side out.



Basic Doll Sewing Instructions - page 2.

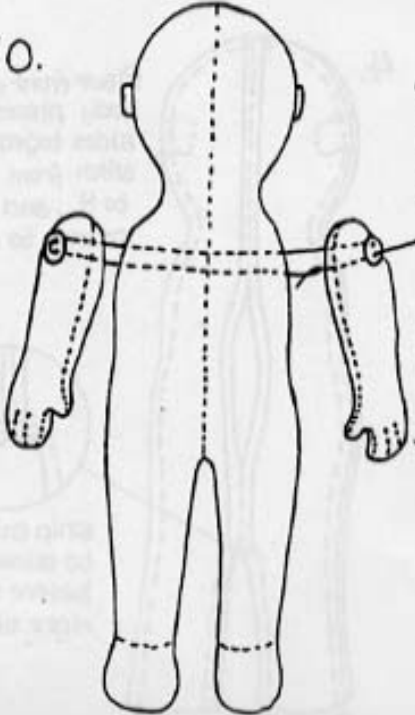
5.  Place two arm pieces together and stitch round leaving small opening for turning right way out and stuffing.
snip this area before turning right way out. Make other arm the same.

6.  Stitch top of foot piece as in diagram. (other foot the same)

7.  Turn body right side out and attach foot tops. (This may have to be done by hand)

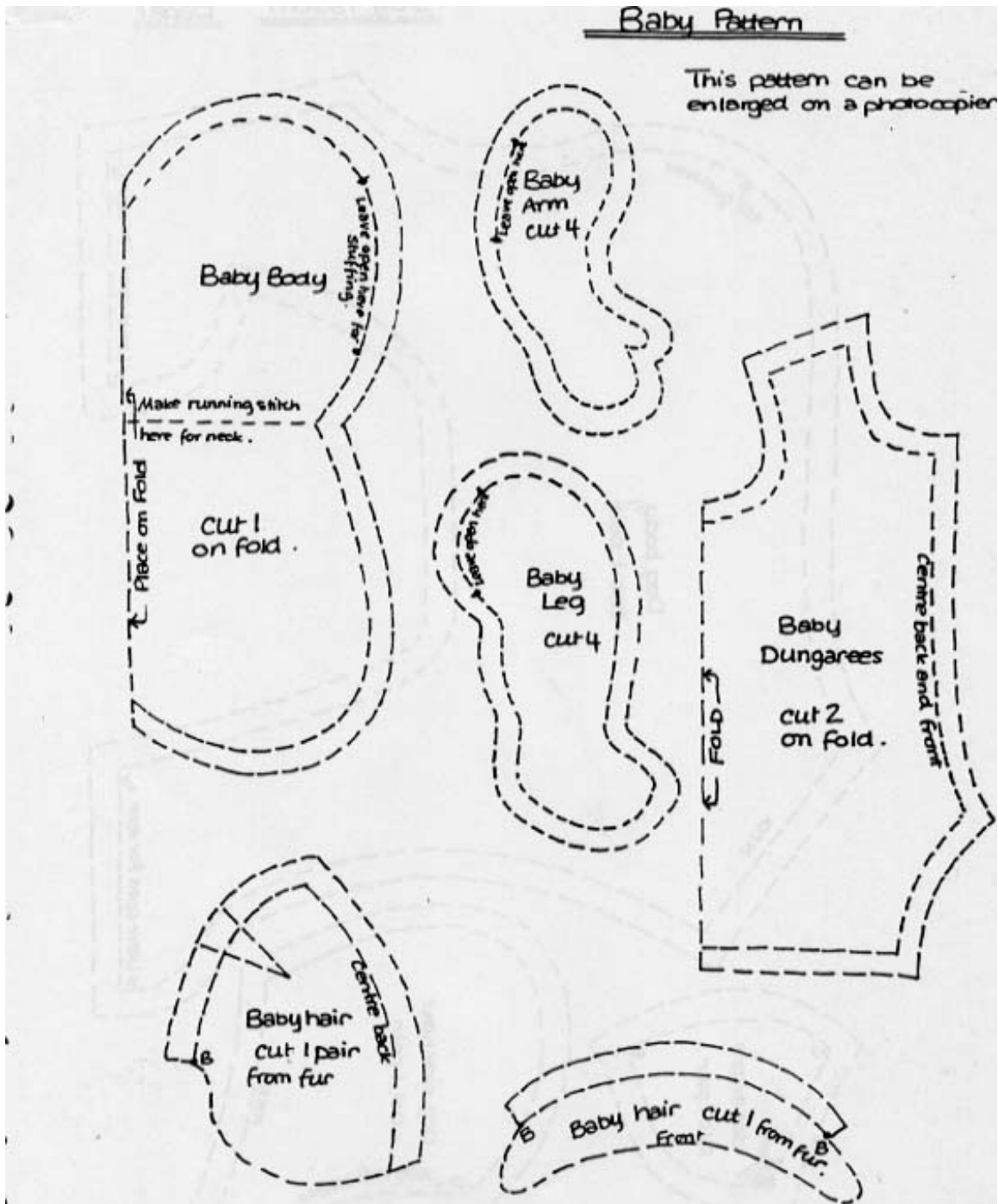
8. Turn whole doll the way way out again to attach soles.

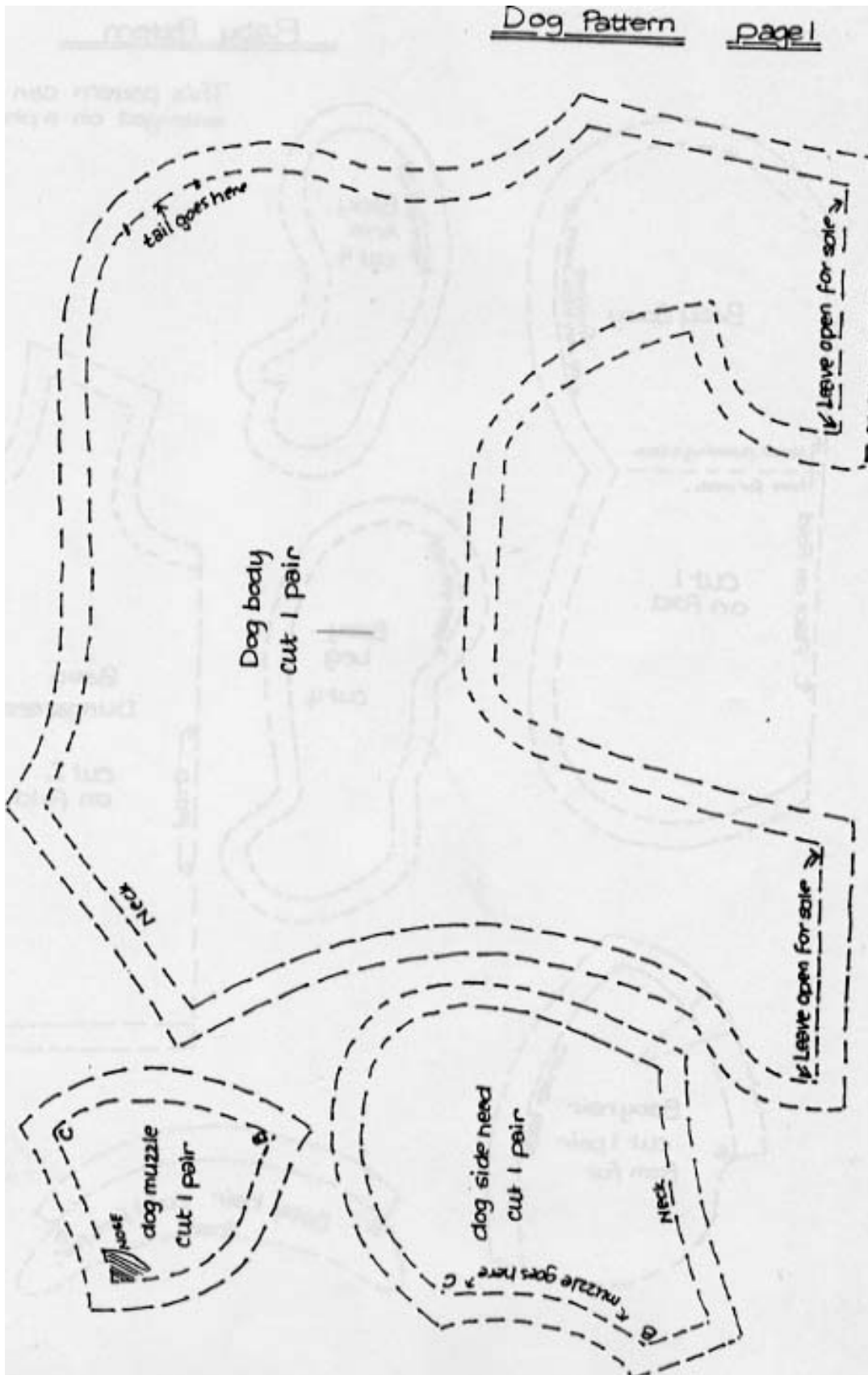
9. Once soles are stitched, turn doll right side out and stuff. Sew up back body between D and E.

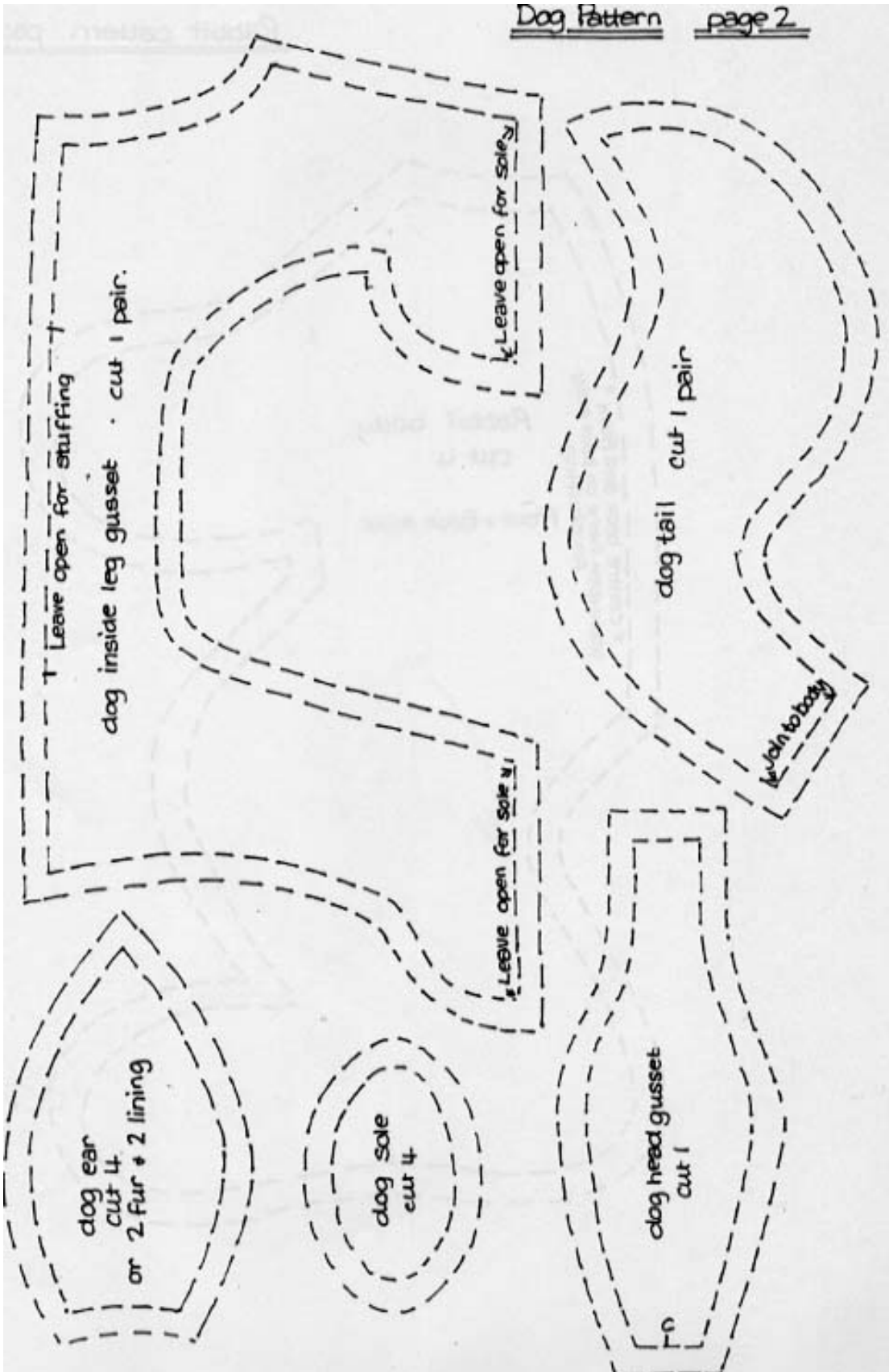
10.  Using long needle and strong thread, attach arms. Placing a button on the outside of each arm reinforces the fabric. Sewing arms on in this way enables them to move.
Make running stitches to show fingers

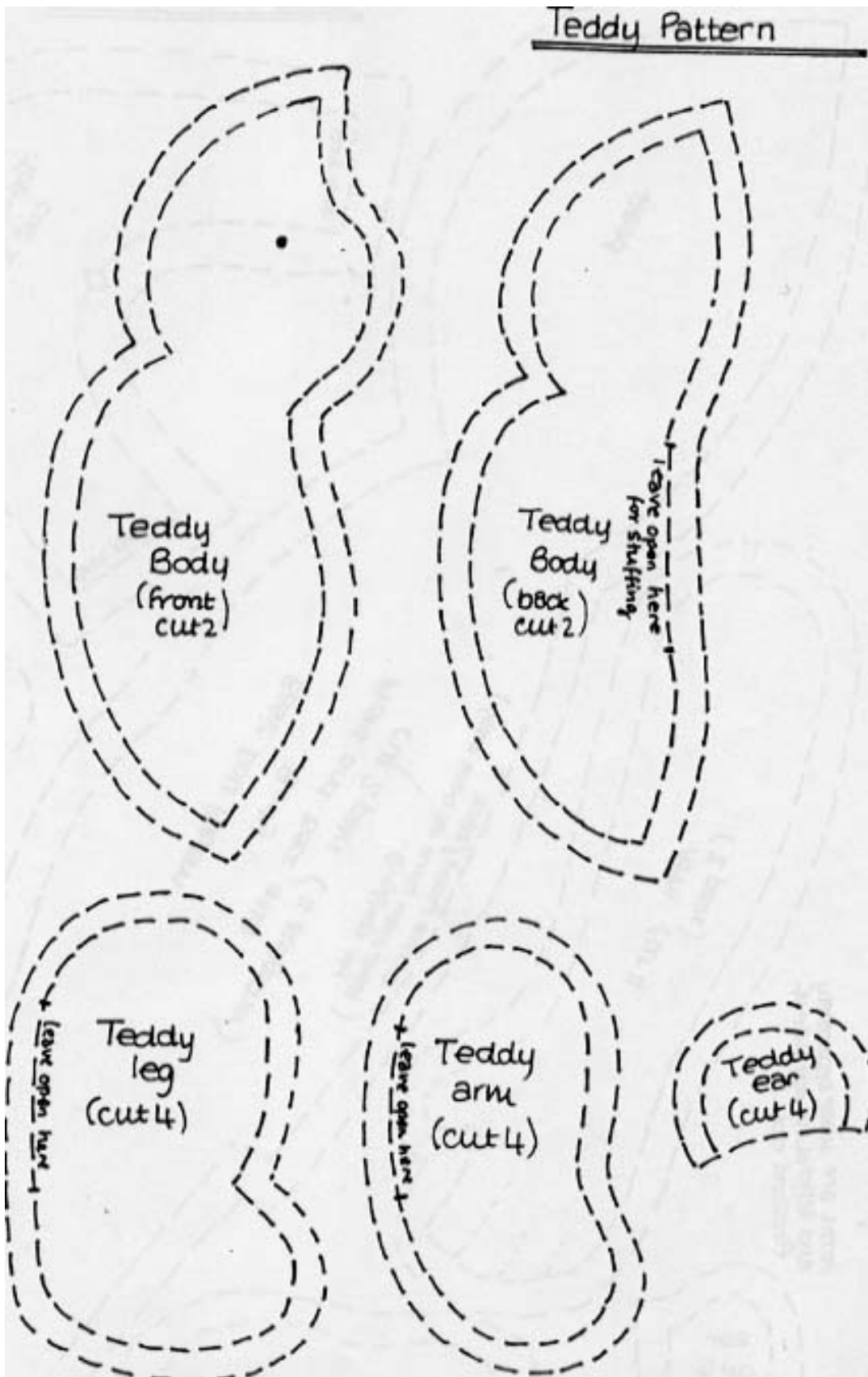
Make eyes and mouth by drawing with fabric pen.

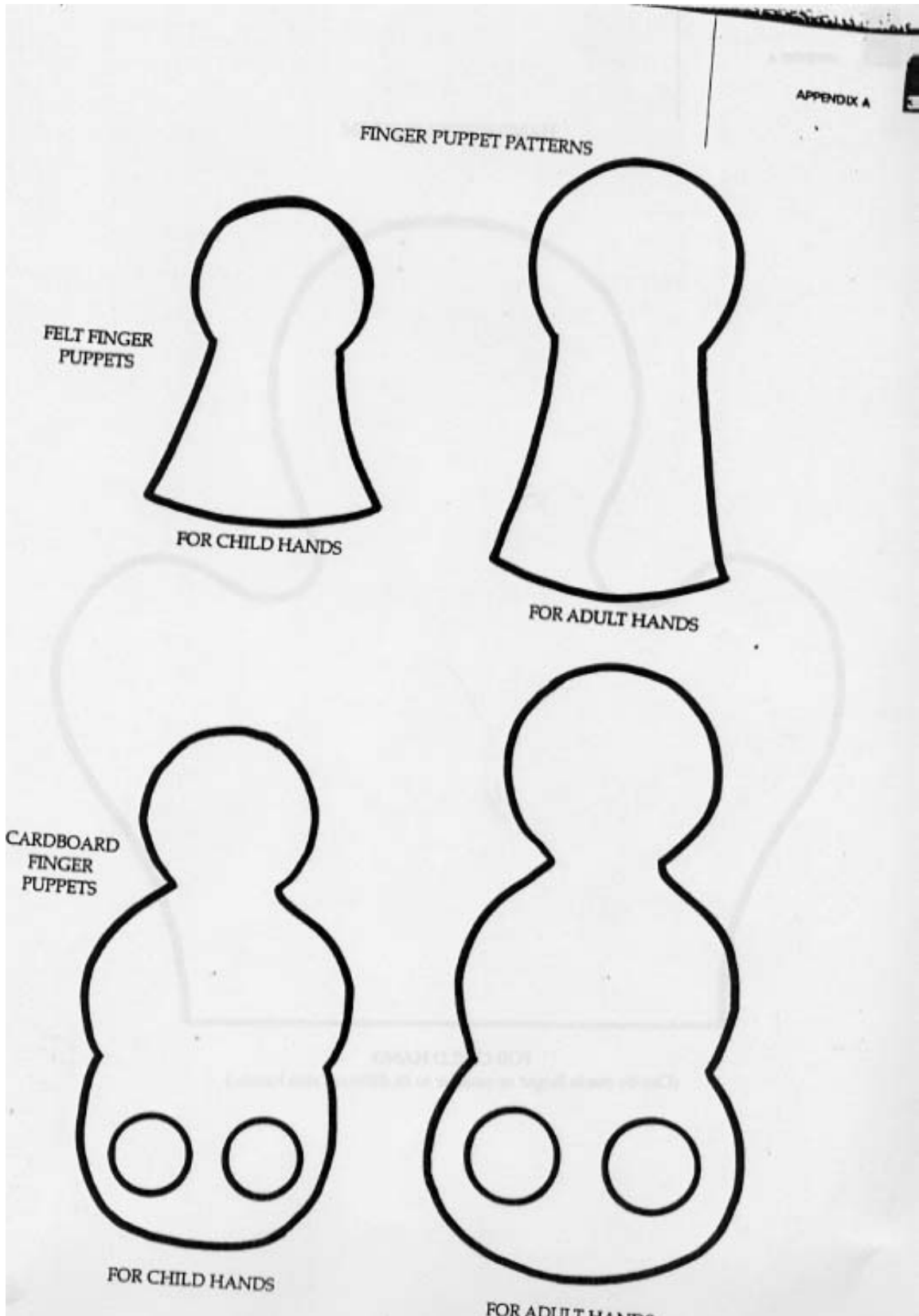
To finish off, make running stitch around neck and draw up + secure.
Make running stitch around nose piece, draw up, add a little stuffing, and stitch to face.

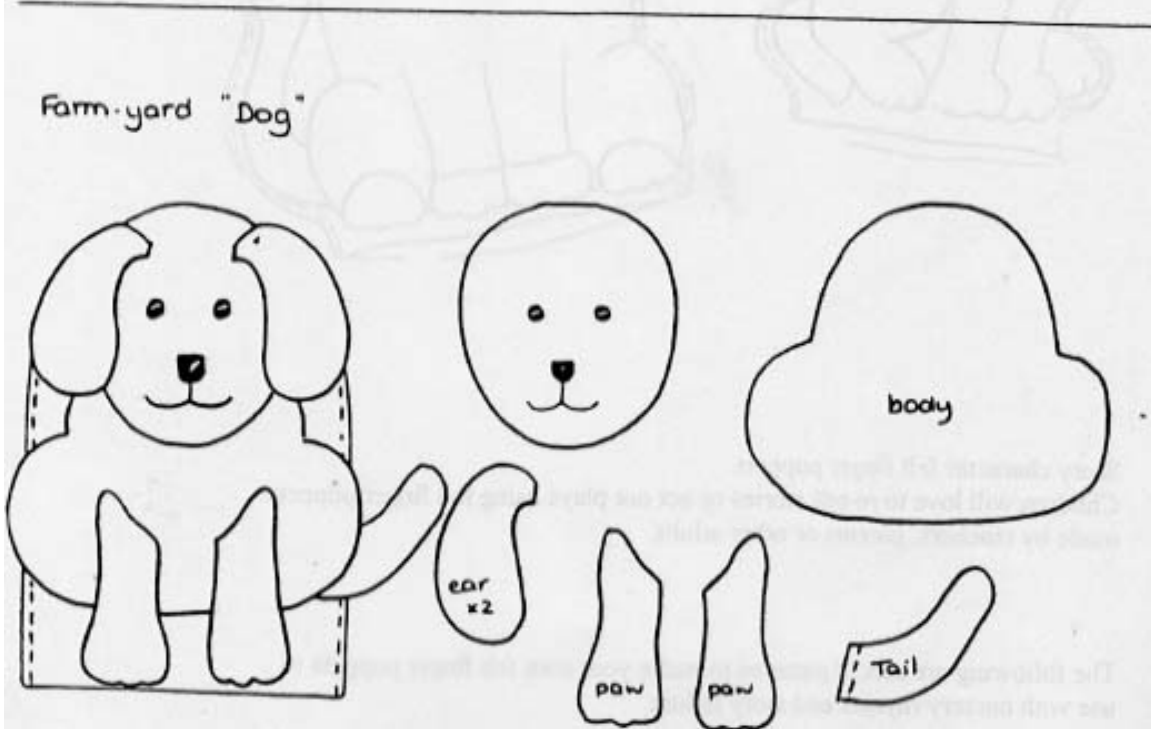
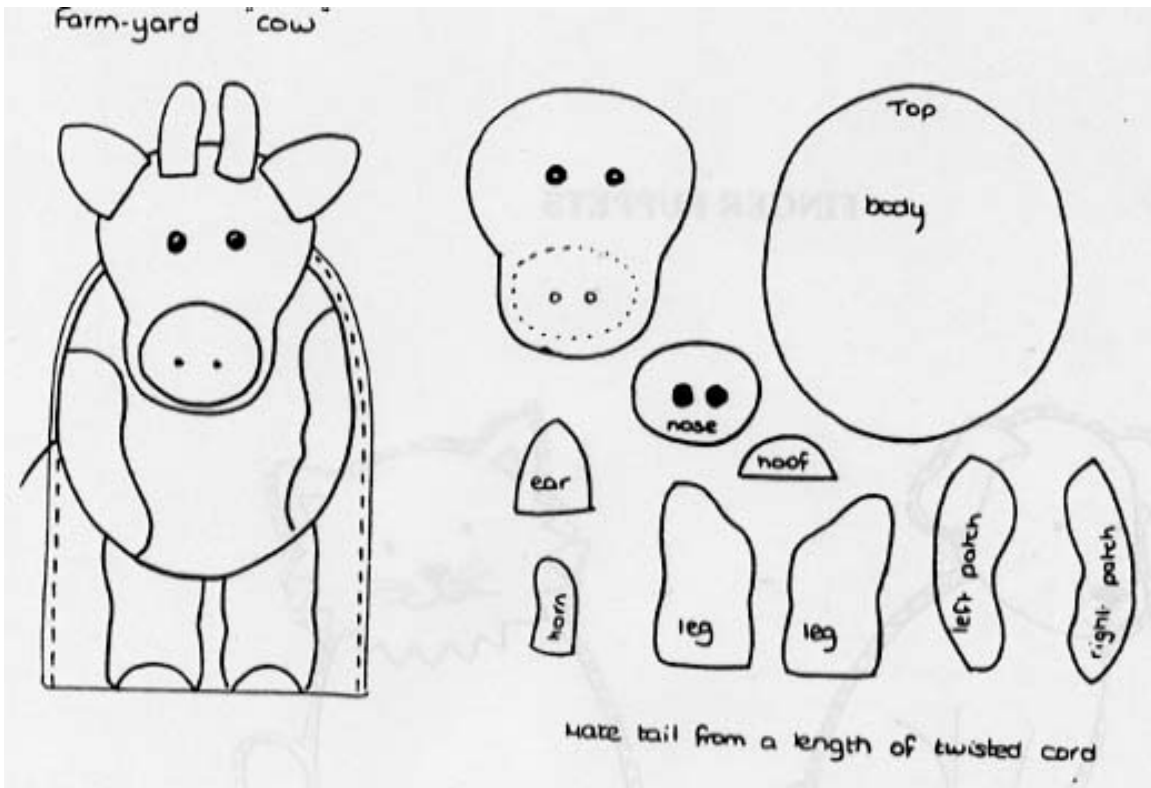


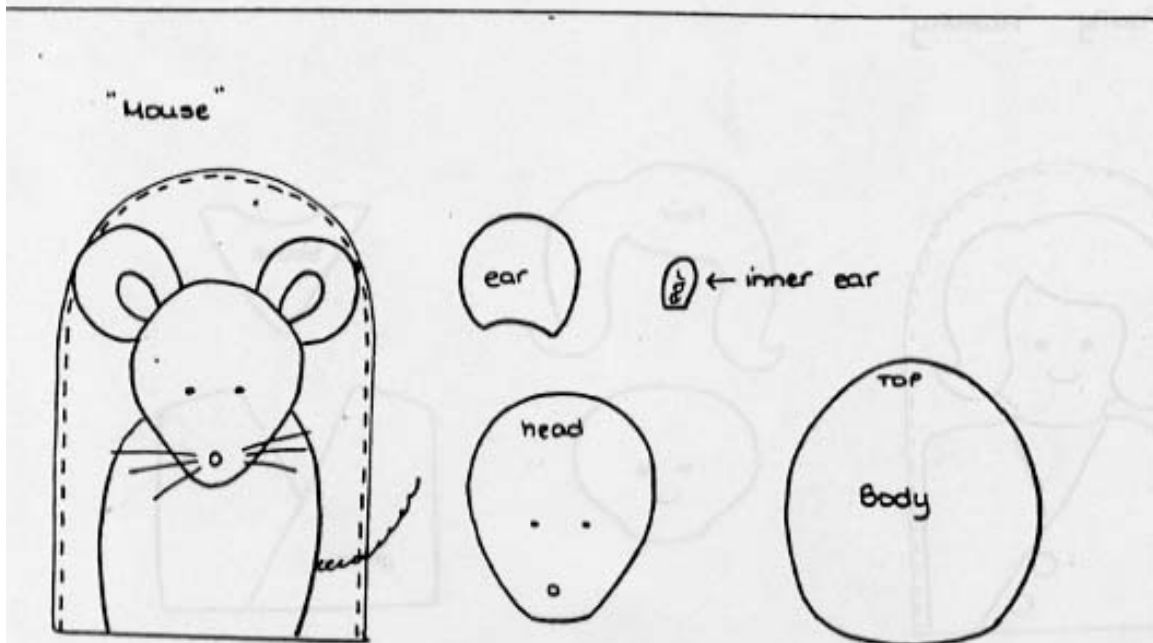
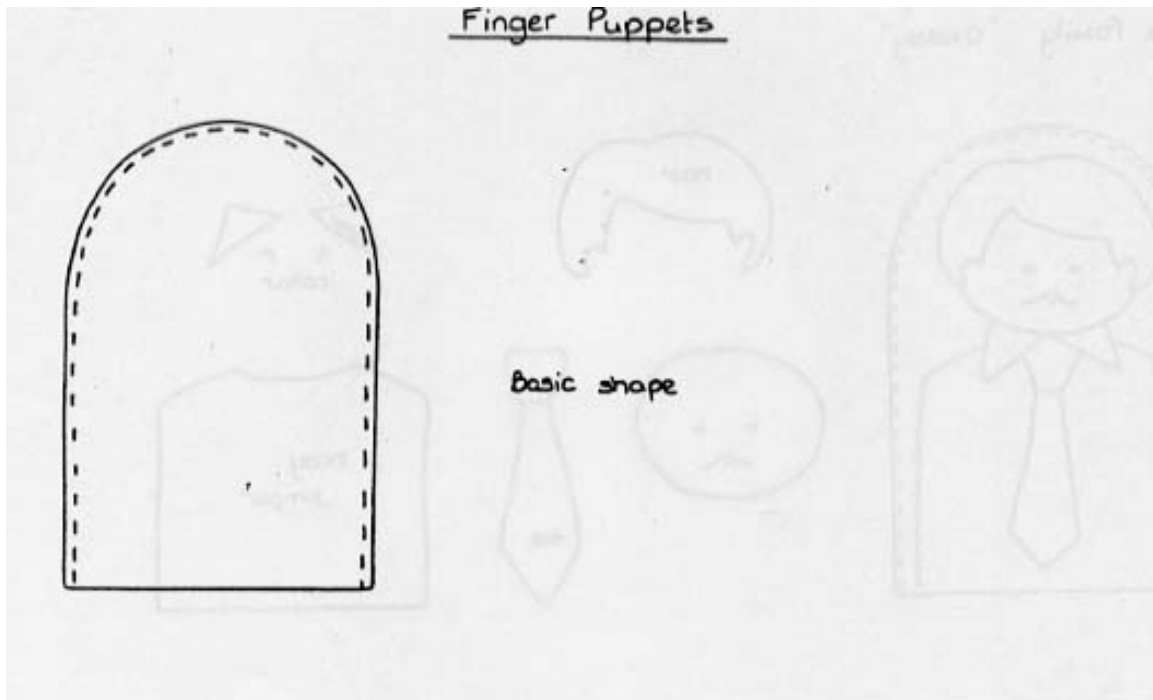






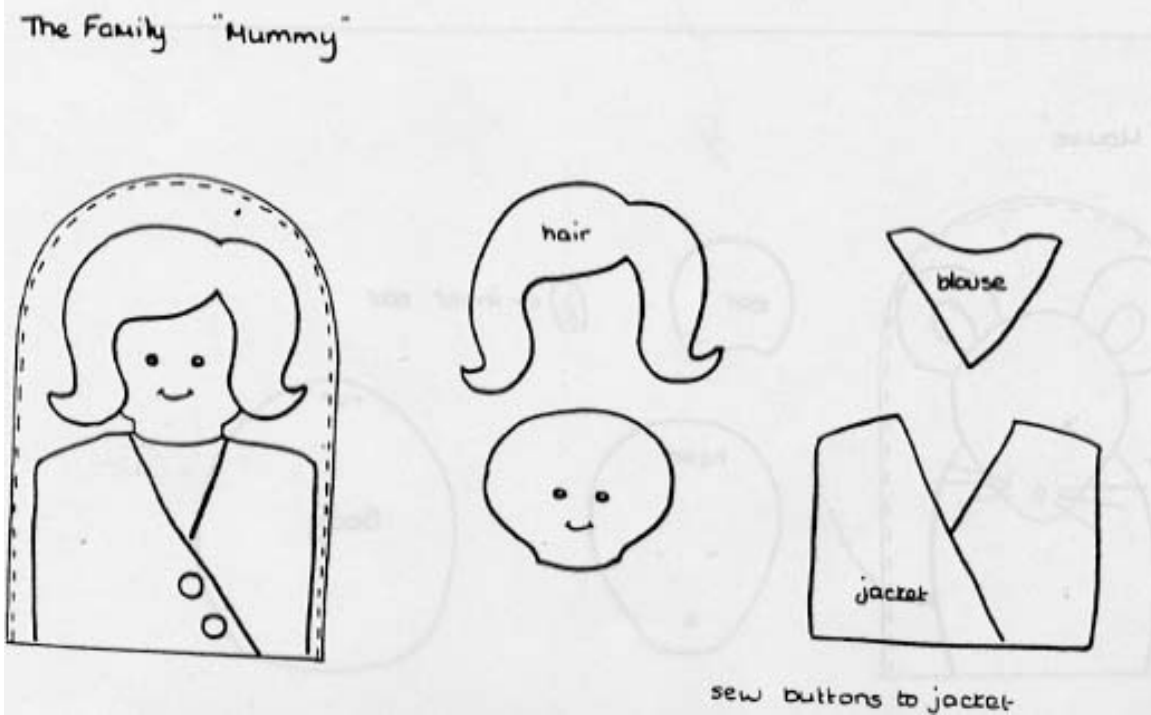
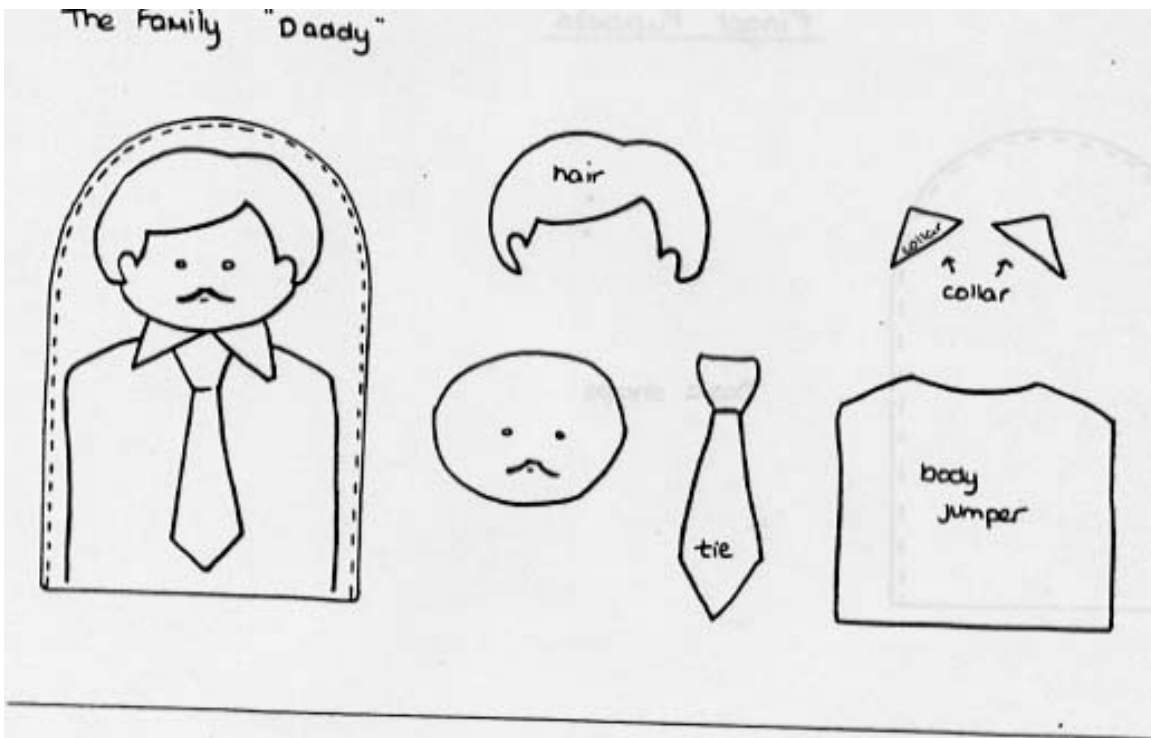


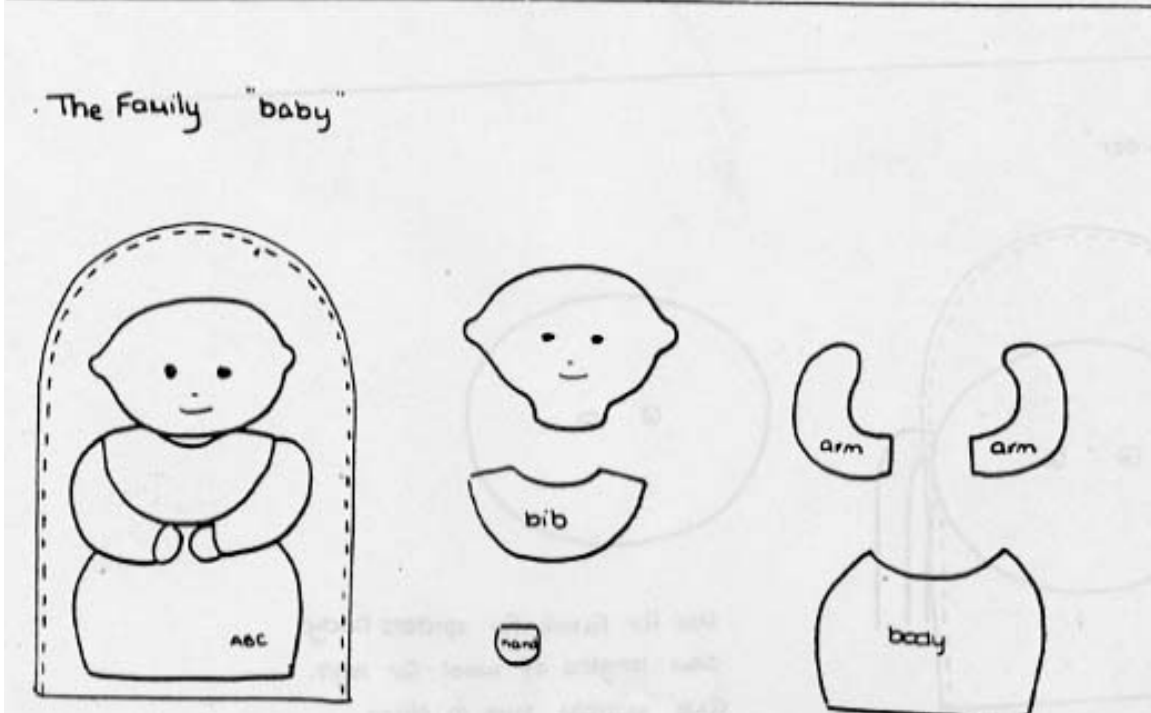
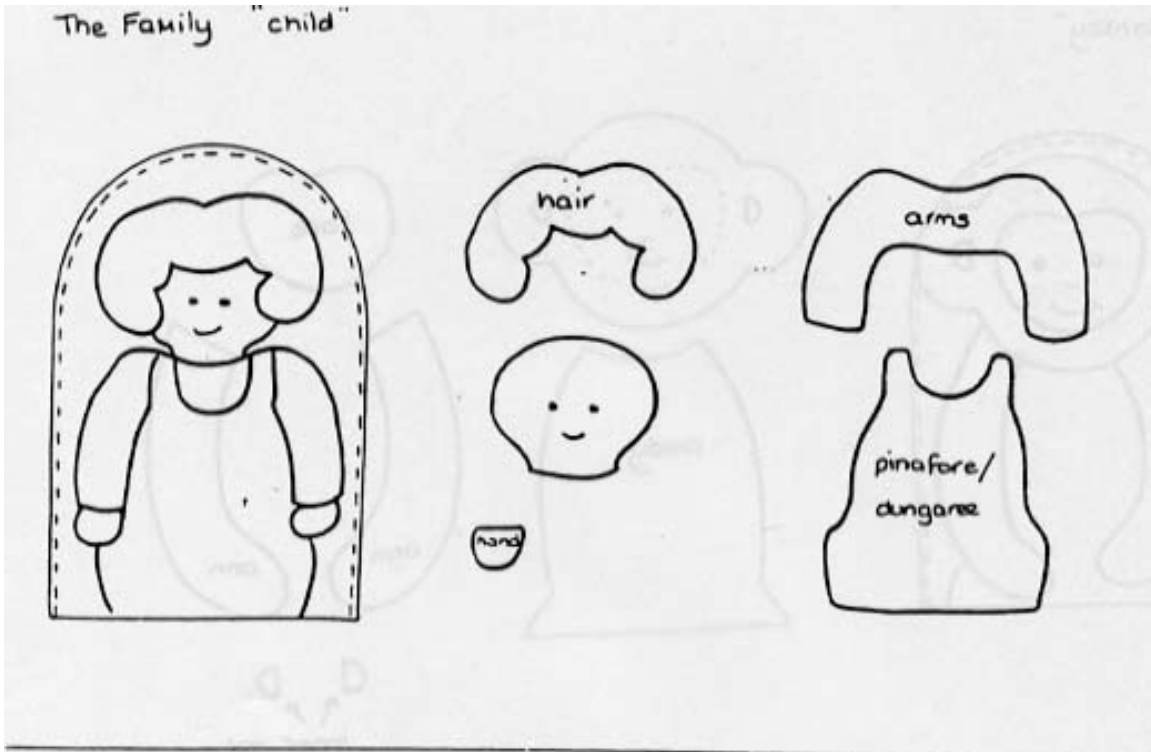


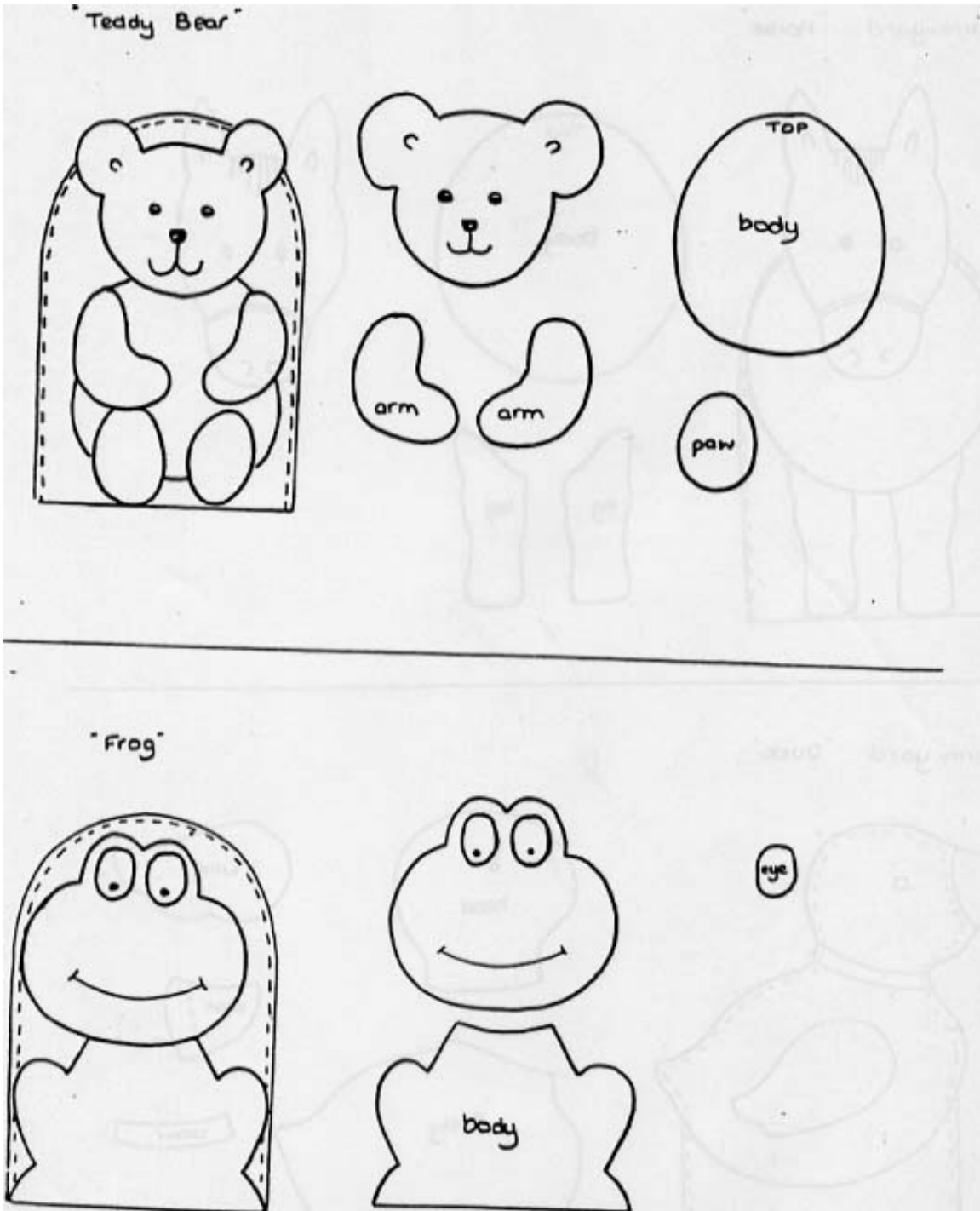




Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT

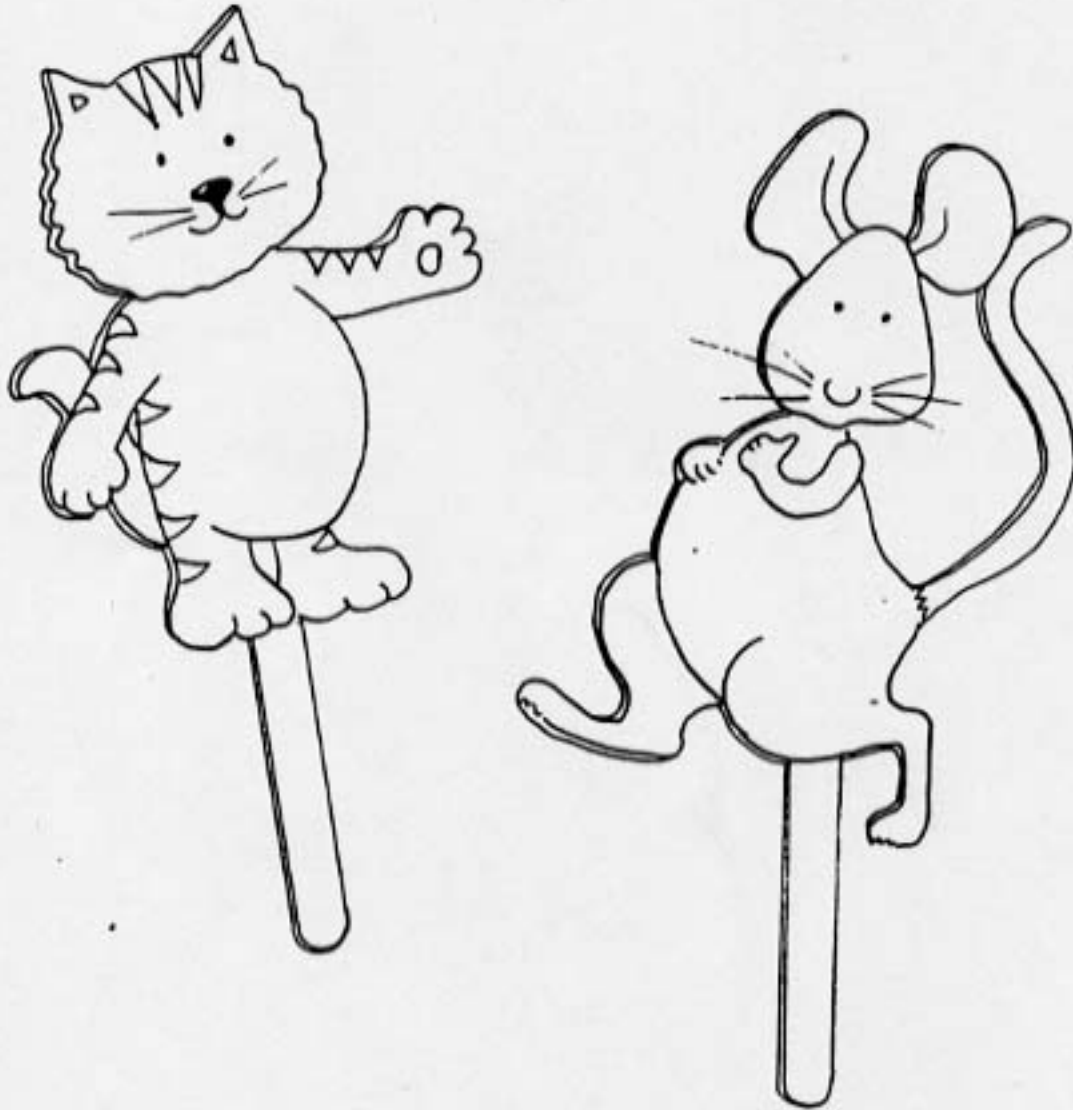








STICK PUPPETS

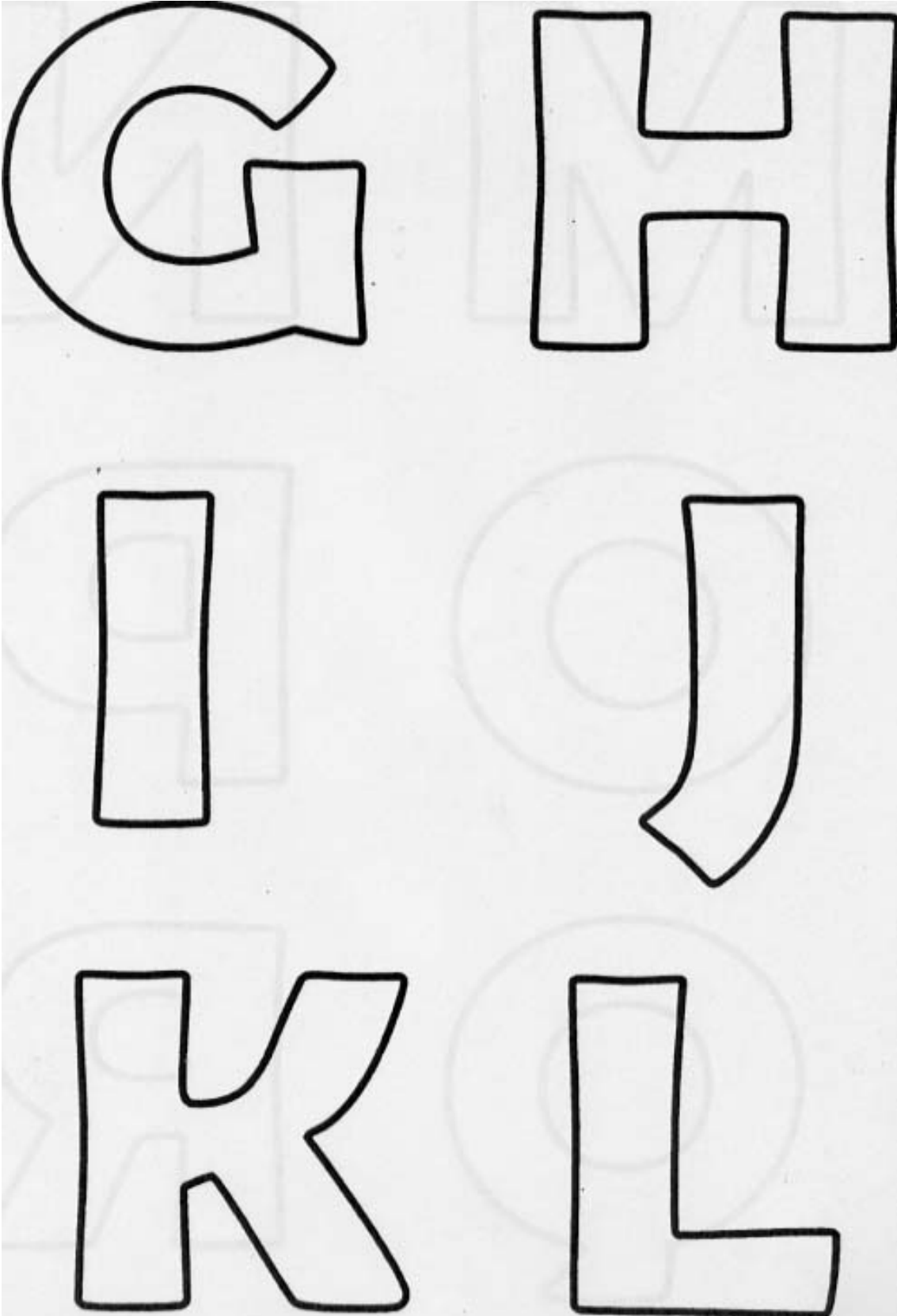


Story character stick puppets.
These can be made by adults or the children themselves from card, fabric
or 'junk' material.

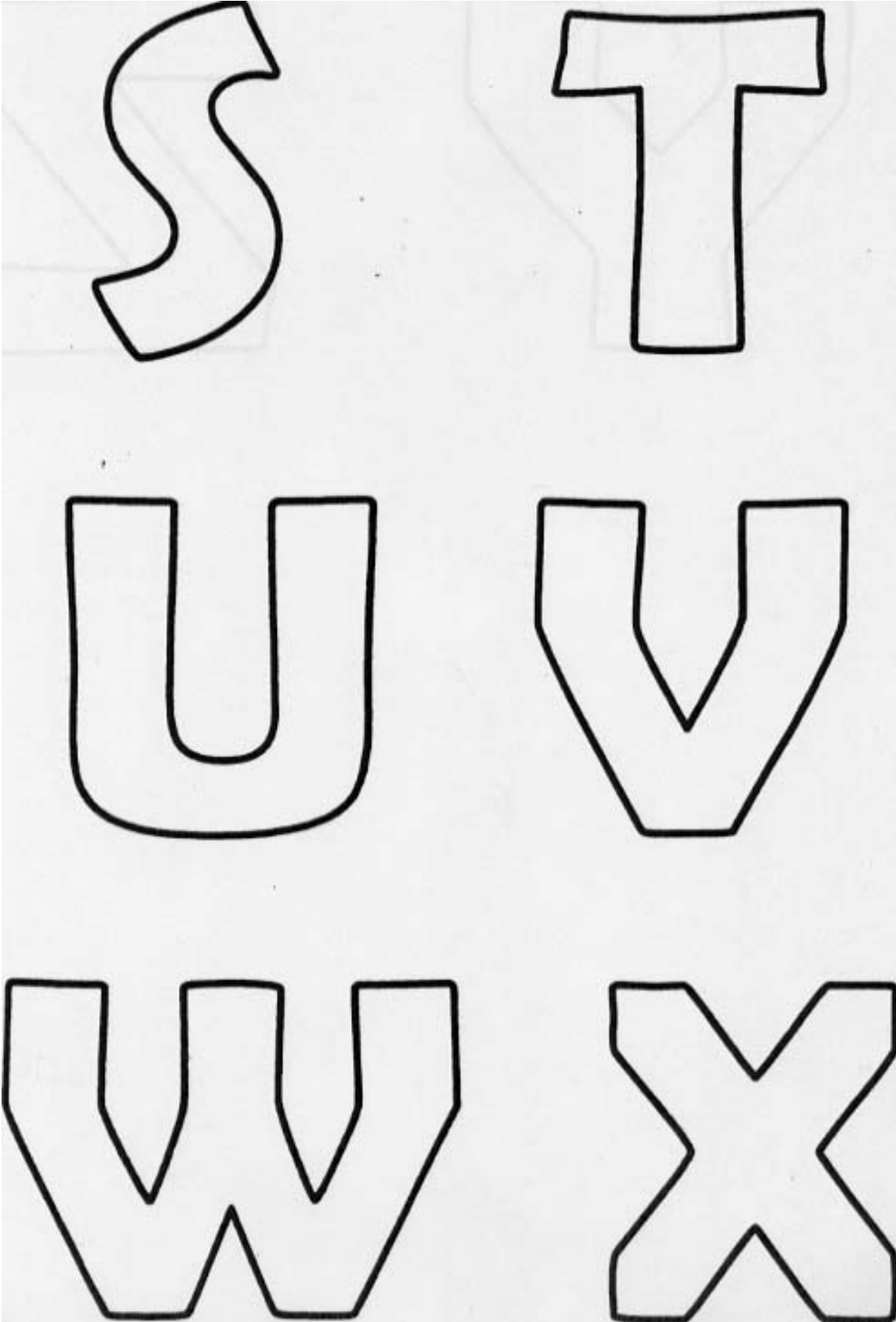


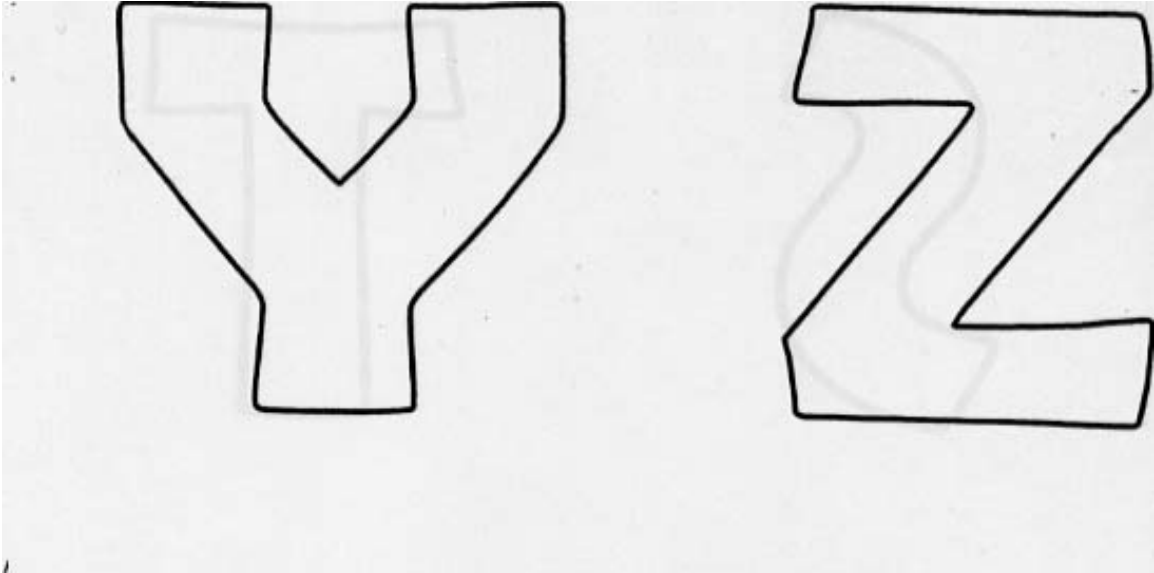
Stencils



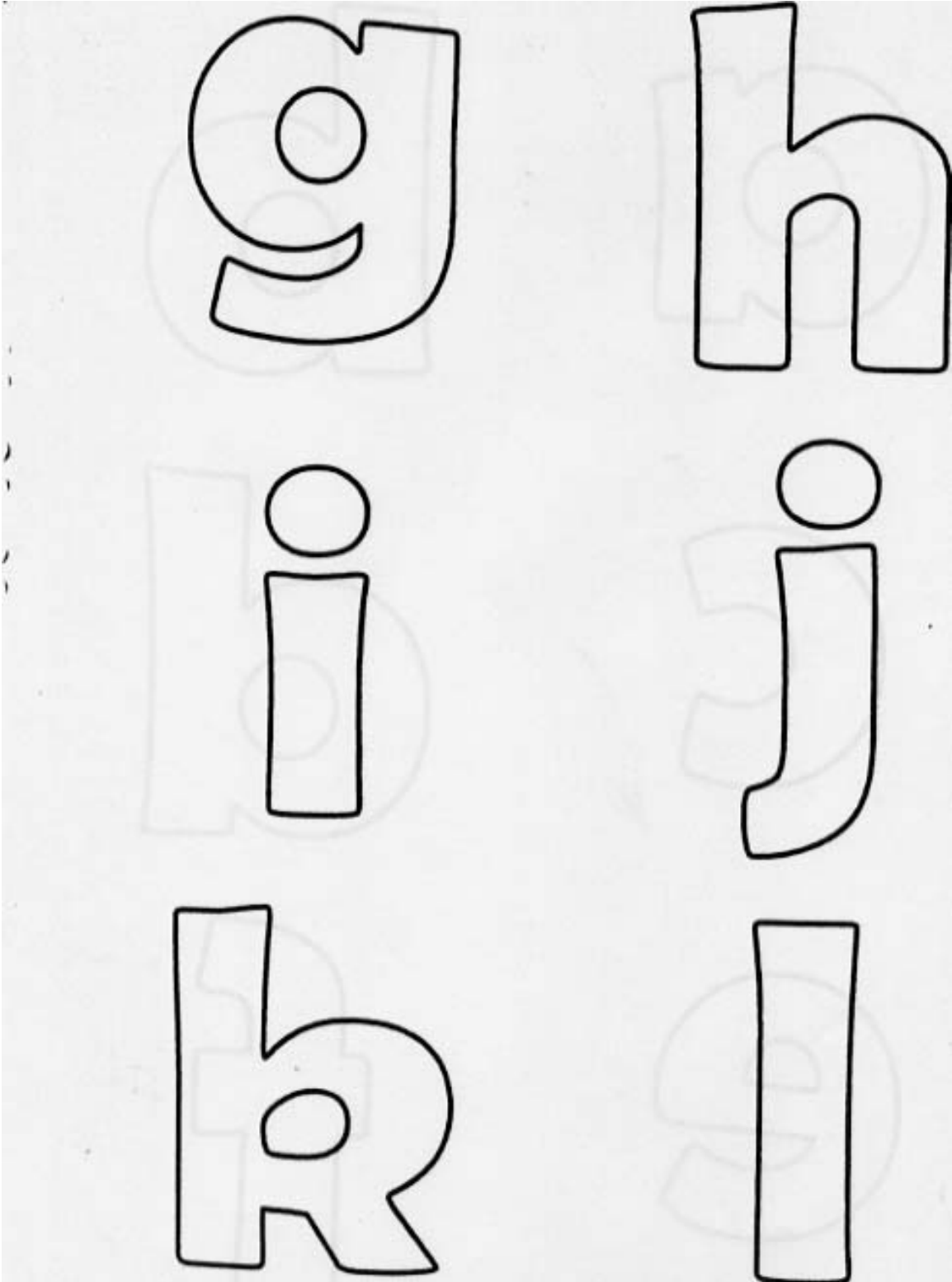


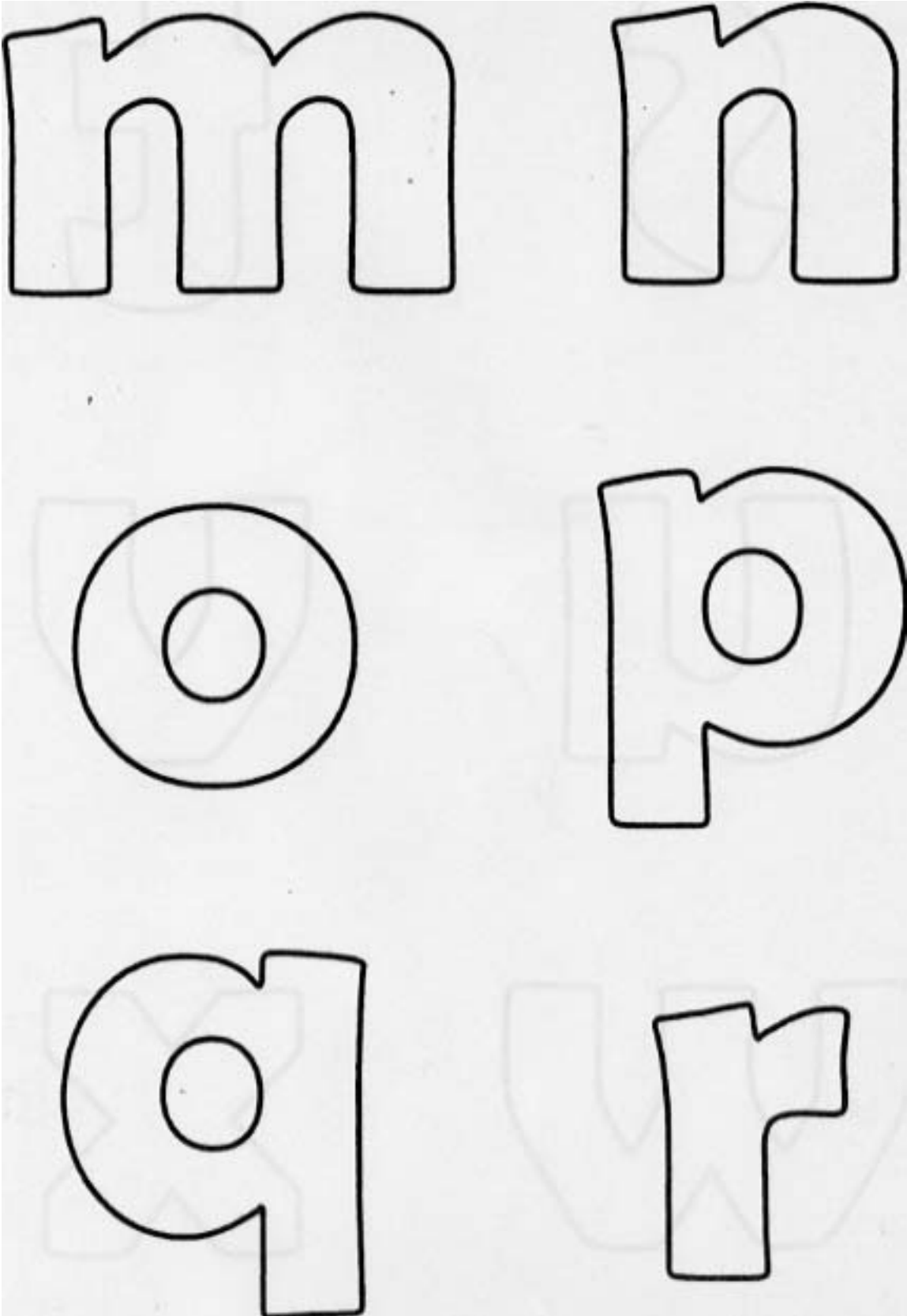


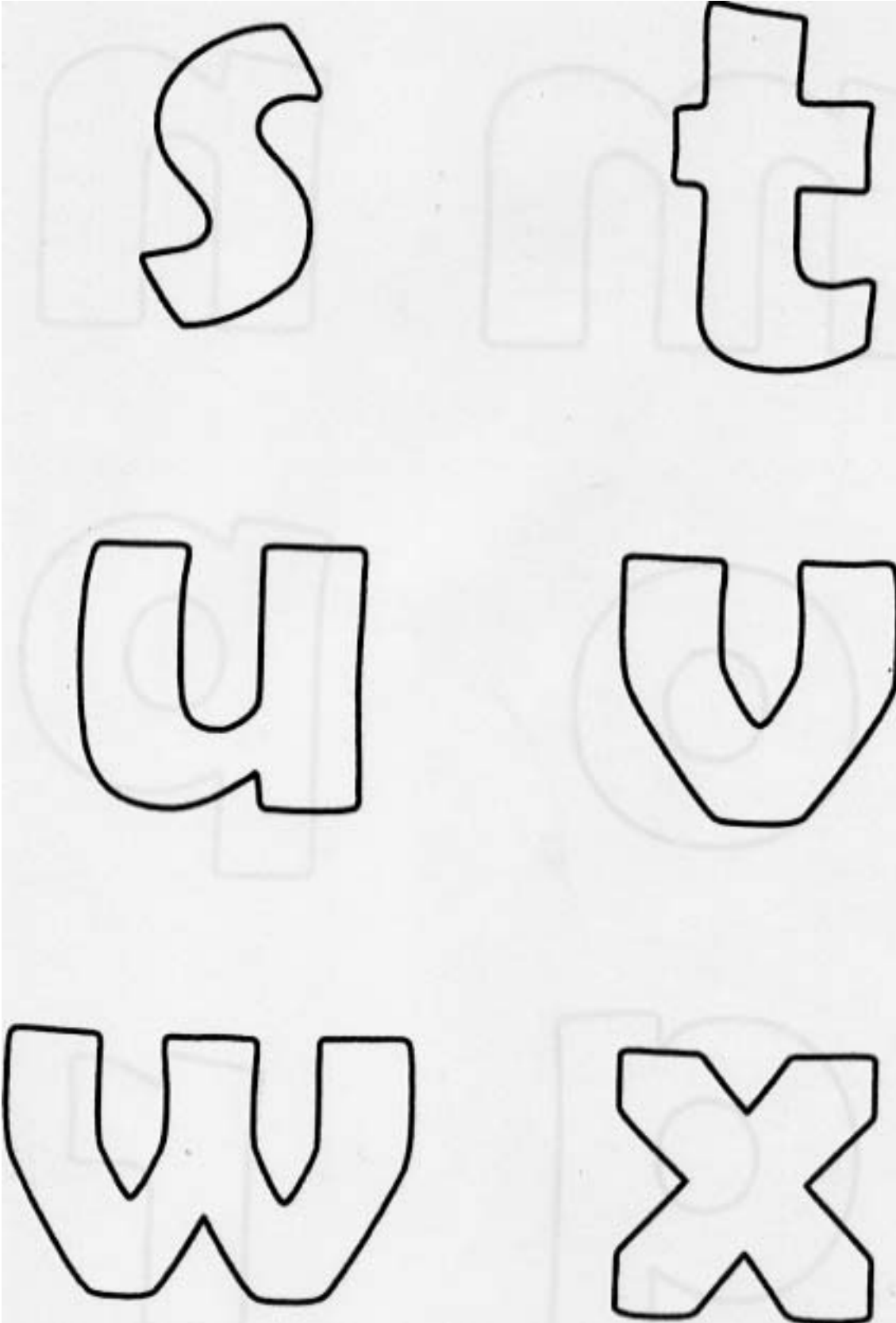


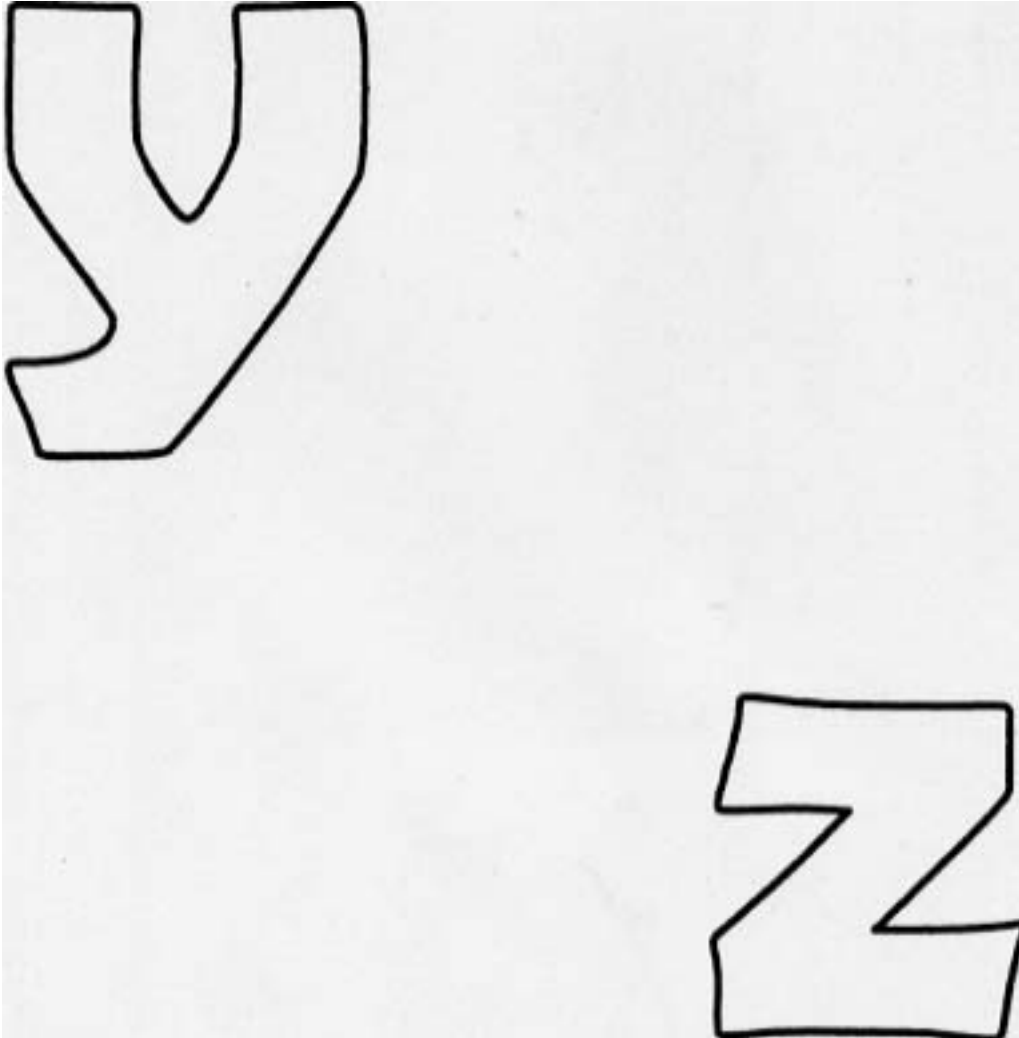














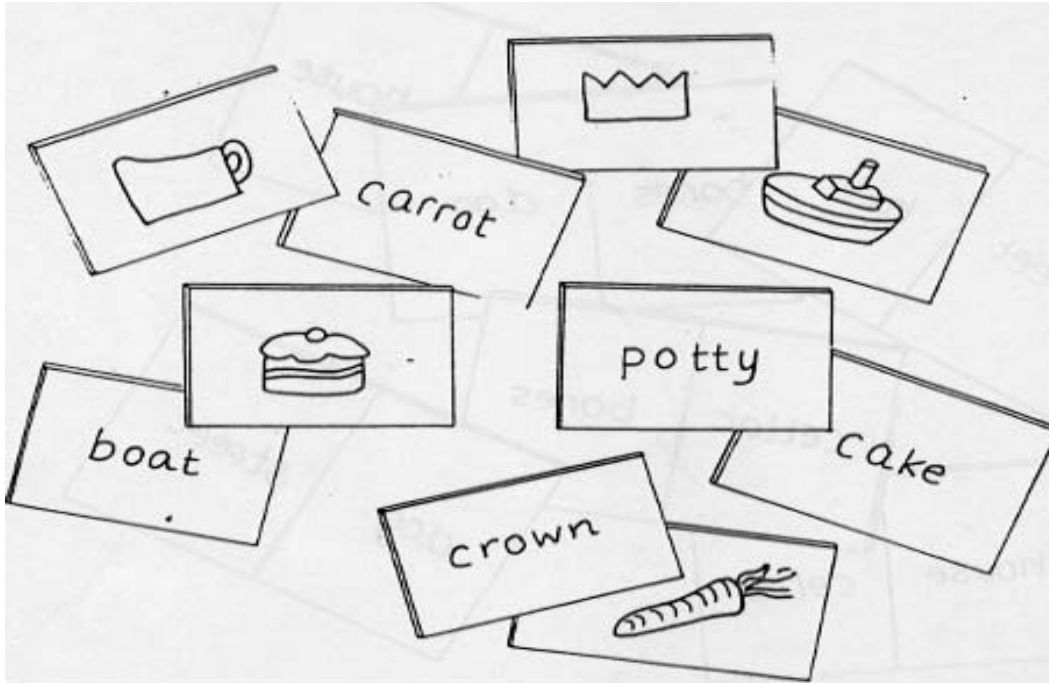
Games

1. Word recognition
2. Visual discrimination
3. Sequencing
4. Story setting
5. Character study
6. Story comprehension
7. Retelling a story



1. Word Recognition

Example

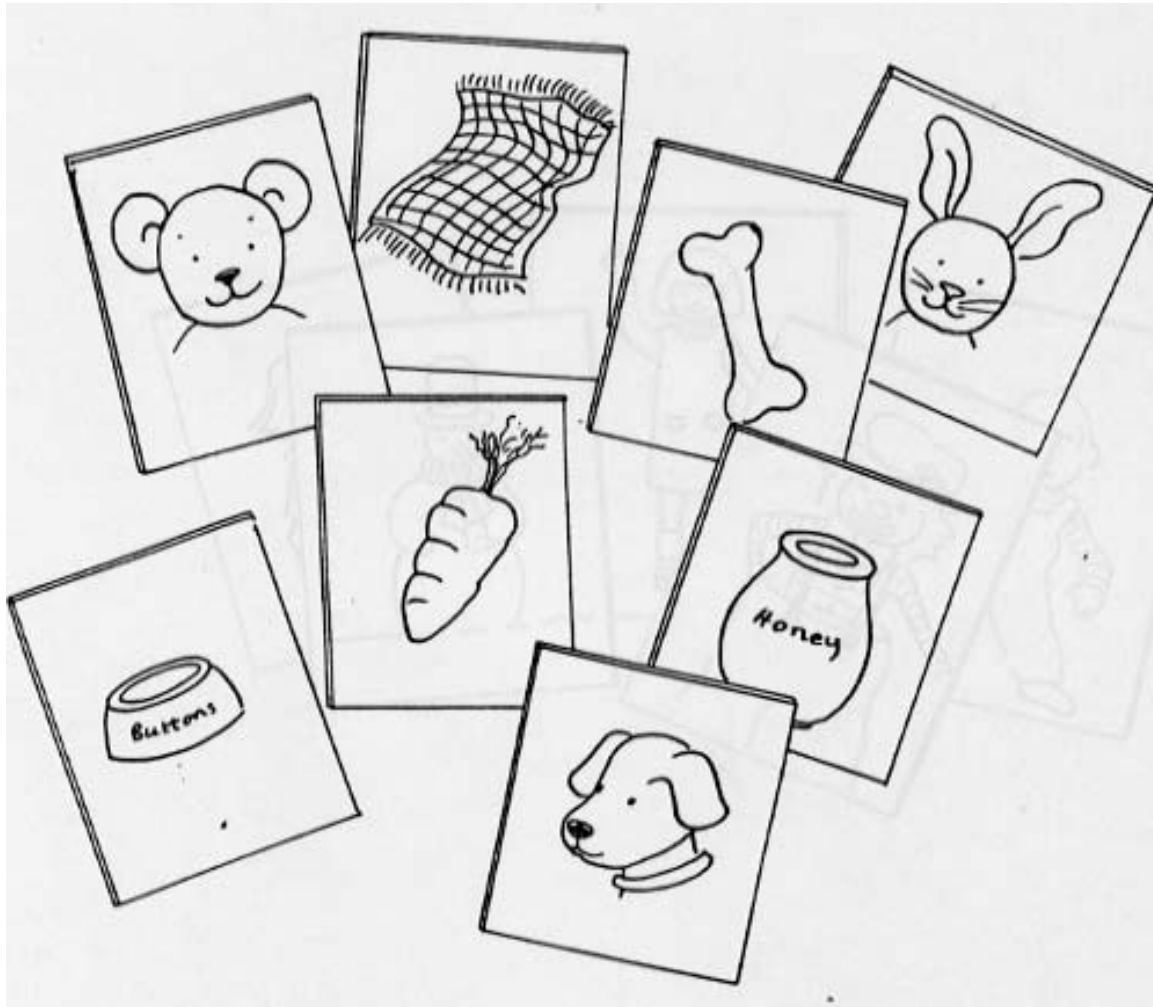


1. Play picture 'snap' based on the objects from the storybook.
Make cards with pictures and cards with words. Deal an equal amount to each person. Lay the cards down one at a time. When there is a match the first person to say snap wins the pile.
2. Play memory with pictures and words from the storybook.
Make cards with pictures and cards with words. Place cards the face down on the table. The first player picks up two cards and says what they are. If they match she can go again. If they do not match they turn them over and the next person goes.
(Example above)
3. Use picture cards and words cards as flash cards.



2. Visual Discrimination

Example

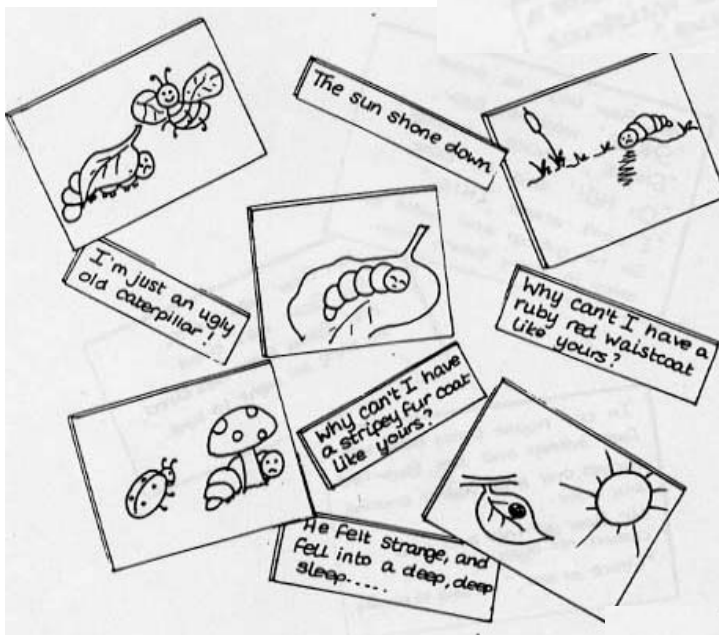
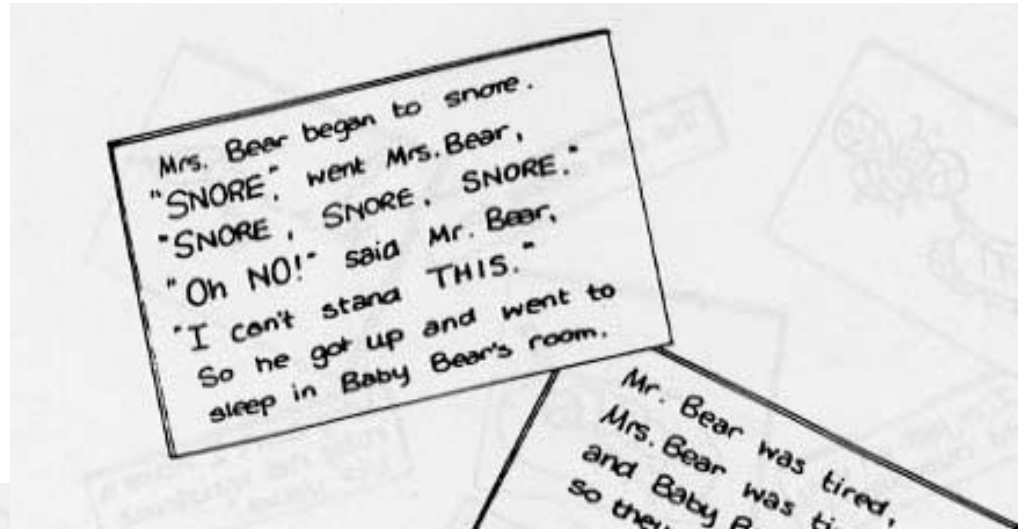


1. Play a matching game where children match the objects that belong to each character. (Example above)
2. Ask your child to pick out the picture that does not belong or to spot the mistake.

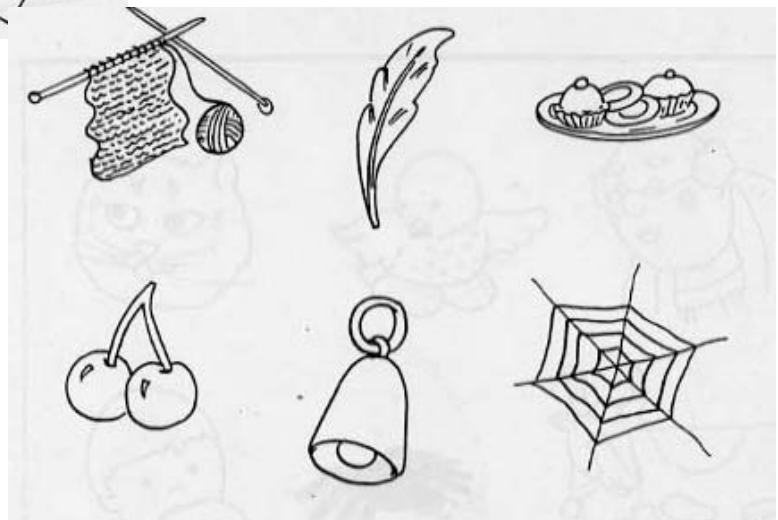


3. Sequencing

Example A



Example B



Example C

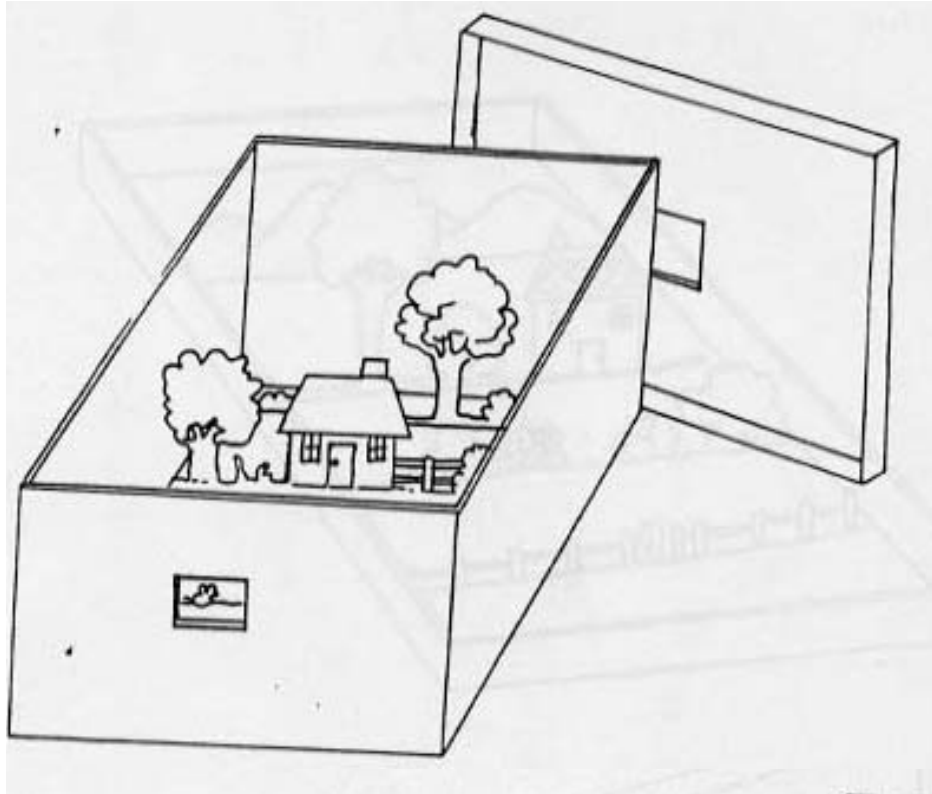


Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT

1. Ask your child to match the text to the picture and then put the story in the correct order. (Example B)
2. Write the story on separate cue cards. Ask your child to reorganize the cards in the right order. (Example A)
3. Make up pictures of each character. Ask your child to put the characters in the order they appear in the story.
4. Make up pictures of objects from the story. Ask your child to put the objects in the order they appear in the story. (Example C)

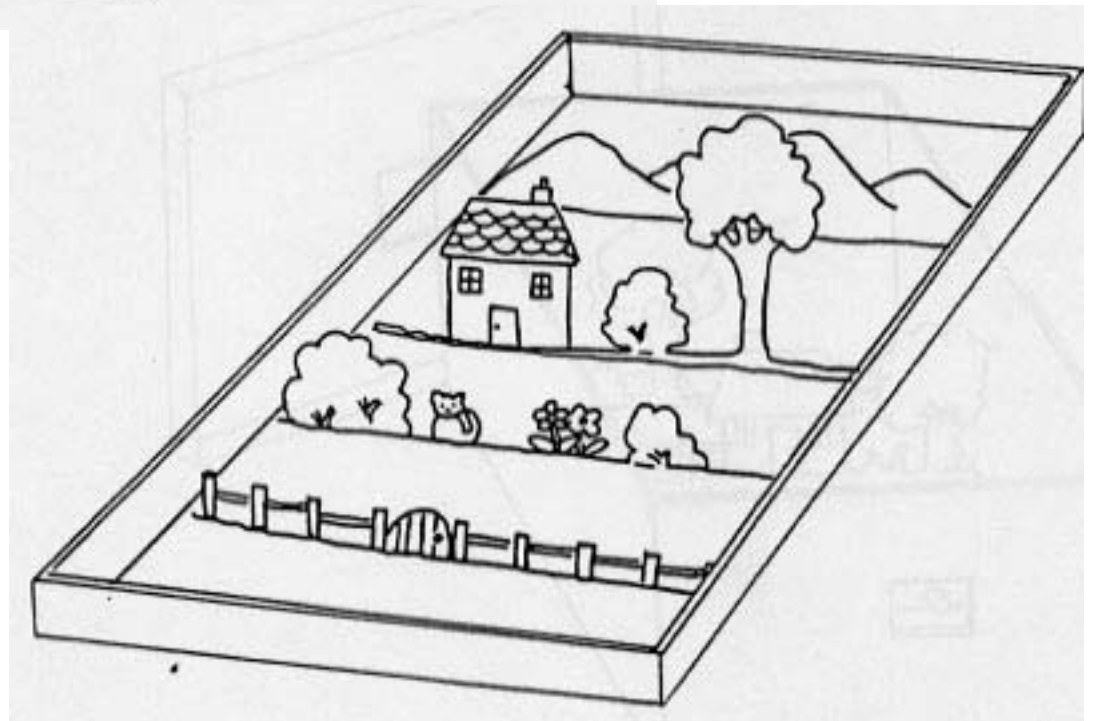


4. Story Setting



Example A

Example B





Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT

1. Ask your child to make a scene or setting from a story in a shoe box. Position objects and scenery in rows to make a 3D effect. Cut a hole in the lid of the box to light the scene. (Example A)
2. Make a scene or setting on a shoe box lid. Position objects and scenery in rows to make a 3D effect. (Example B)



5. Character Study

Example A

Who am I?

Where do I live?

What do I wear?



What do I own?

What am I like?

What do I like doing?

Who are my friends or family?

What happens to me in my story?

	Aa	Bb	Cc
Da	Ee	Ff	Gg
Hh	Ii	Jj	Kk
Ll	Mm	Nn	Oo
Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss
Tt	Uu	Vv	Ww
Xx	Yy	Zz	

happy calm selfish busy grumpy

Example B



Celebrate Family Literacy in the NWT

1. Create a background to stimulate discussion about a character. Your child can complete the board independently or you can work with them to write down the answers. (Example A)
2. Ask your child to describe the characters in the story. Ask them to use descriptive words like 'happy', 'busy' or 'funny.' Make up a base board with all the letters of the alphabet. Ask your child to place the word in the correct place. (Example B)
3. Use the words that you come up with to play a matching game. Write out words cards with the names of characters and words cards that describe them.



6. Story Comprehension

How?

Why?

When?

Who?

What ?

Tell me how t he st ory went ?

How could t he st ory have ended dif f erent ly?

Make up a new ending t o t he st ory?

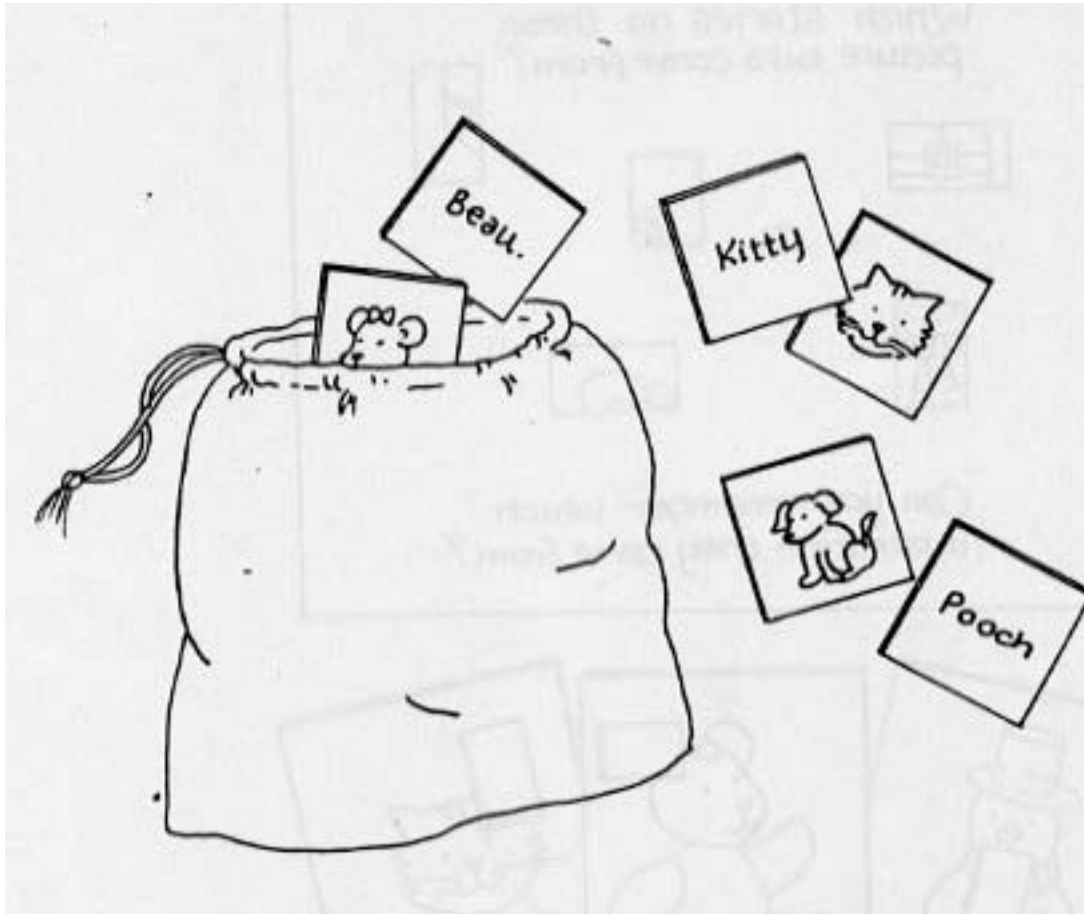
Did you like t he st ory? Why or Why not ?

1. Make up comprehension cards to go with the book. The cards can have questions about the story. Include fact, why and imagine questions. You can also include different activities to do like:
 - Writing a new ending to the story
 - Writing a sequel to the book
 - Researching information about the theme
 - Writing their own story
 - Interviewing Elders about the old days
2. Make up cue cards of different words in the story. Ask your child what they think the definition of the word is. Look it up in a dictionary together and write it down on the card.



7. Retelling a Story

Example



1. Put pictures, word cards, props and dolls in a bag. Ask your child to pull out an object from the bag and tell you about it and how it related to the story. (Example above)
2. Ask your child to tell you the story in their own words.