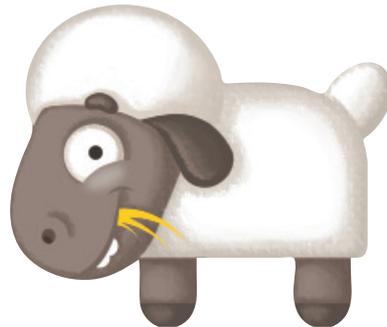


HEADU

Montessori

MY FIRST PUZZLE THE FARM

This very first puzzle, inspired by the method of the famous educator Maria Montessori, enables younger children to become acquainted with a happy farm, thus stimulating gesture, touch, the perception of shapes, and the sense of space. This multi-sensory approach favours a more in-depth learning, a factor that is very important for cognitive development in children of pre-school age. In fact, they can re-assemble a large stall on the farm that is populated by 5 delightful wooden shaped animals, which need to be inserted in the corresponding forms..



THE PUZZLE AND THE WOODEN ELEMENTS

First of all, we let the children assemble the puzzle. We let them play completely independently, thanks to the self-correcting inserts. Help, if necessary, must be limited to several simple suggestions, without our replacing the children in the single actions. For example, we let them put in place all the paper tokens and the wooden elements on the playing level, with the designated painted side facing upwards. Then, we encourage them to compare the designs of the tokens with the picture shown on the back of the box, thus attracting from the very beginning their attention to the details of the stall from the very beginning: the roof, the stairs, the window. We must always remember to name the elements, to point them out with a finger, and to motivate them to learn with stimulating questions: "This is the roof, these are the stairs, these are the stairs to the hen house, this is the dog..." "Where is the horse? This is the sheep: how is its coat made?" Once the puzzle has been assembled – or even during the game – we encourage the children to carefully observe the wooden elements, making them analyse their shape and inviting them to look in the picture for the corresponding shape. If we notice that the children are having difficulties, we should help them simply by handing them the correct token.



DISCOVERING THE FARM

We can now play with the children by asking them to recognise the animals of the farm by means of the following questions: "Where is the horse? And where is the hen? And the sheep?" In a second moment, we can ask them to recall the names of the animals: for example, we can ask them "What is the name of this [particular] animal?" Or else, by pointing at the cow, "What is the name of this animal?" We should always remember to point at the object of our question. We can make the experience more profitable by adding information on the farm. For example, we can explain that, on the farm, each animal has its own precise task, and they produce many things: eggs, milk, corn, wool...



THE WATCH DOG AND THE FARM'S THREE RULES

Lastly, we can have fun by inventing brief stories using the wooden elements supplied. For example, we can reproduce - together with the children - the story of the dog, who is the most faithful animal on the farm: he stays awake both day and night in order to keep watch. All the other animals go to the dog in order to learn the good rules of life on the farm.

RULE NUMBER 1: The dog has the task of watching over all the animals. He is the one who helps the farm, to make sure that each one is in its proper place in the evening before going to sleep.

RULE NUMBER 2: Sheep must be sheared every time that their coats become overly thick. We can thus realise lots of warm covers for the winter.

RULE NUMBER 3: The horse must be able to rest in peace in its stall, with lots of good hay to eat. But when it wants to go for a good gallop...it is necessary to put a saddle and bridle on it and ride it very fast while keeping a tight grip on the reins! That way, it will be truly happy.

