

Montessori

MY FIRST PUZZLE - THE JUNGLE



This multicoloured puzzle, inspired by the Maria Montessori method, introduces children to a jungle scene, stimulating gesture, touch, shape perception and spatial awareness. A multisensory approach like this facilitates deeper learning which is crucial to pre-school cognitive development. The children build the six-piece puzzle featuring lots of characters and five cute wooden animals which have to be slotted into the matching spaces on the completed puzzle.

Puzzle and wooden figures

Begin by letting the children assemble the puzzle. Let them do it themselves, as they will be guided by the self-correcting matches. For example, have the children lay out all the cut-outs and wooden figures on the playing surface. Then ask them to compare the drawings on the tiles with the pictures on the back of the box, drawing their attention to the details right away. If you see the children are finding it difficult, show them how to do it, joining two tiles, for example, then asking them to do the same.

While playing the game, don't forget to say the names of each thing out loud, pointing to them and encouraging the children with prompts: "This is a tree trunk, this is a snake, this is a chimpanzee, where does the boy live?".

When they have assembled the puzzle - or even while they are doing it - draw their attention to the wooden animals, asking them to observe the shapes and then slot them into the matching holes on the puzzle.



Wooden animals

You can continue the game, now, by introducing the names of the five wooden animals, pointing to them: "Look at the toucan!", "That's a panther!", "This is an elephant!", "Ooh, a tiger!", "This is an orangutan.". Have the children repeat the names you've just introduced, asking them to say them out loud while pointing to the relative figure. Follow this by asking the children to recognize the animals: "Where's the elephant? Can you give him to me?", "Where's the tiger? Can you give him to me?". And so on.

Finally, help them to remember the names of the animals with the following questions: "What is this animal called?" pointing to the elephant; or, pointing to the tiger, "What animal is this?". If the children were engaged during the previous steps of the game, they'll find it easy to remember the names of the animals and say them out loud. Enrich the experience by adding information about the jungle and other details depicted in the puzzle. Explain, for example, that other birds like parrots live in the jungle, and wild animals like leopards.



Jungle stories

If the children enjoyed the previous steps, you can continue the game by making up stories using the wooden shapes provided. For example, make up a story together about the elephant, the biggest animal in the jungle, saying it has decided to go and visit its friends (the toucan, the tiger, the orangutan and the panther) to organise a big party for all the other animals.

