

Furry Friends Product Guide

by Sue Wilkinson, OTR/L



Introduction

Our Furry Friends facilitate incredible progress and FUN! What child doesn't enjoy these engaging roles as an adorable furry animal?! Want to see progress...fast? Then, try Furry Friends, for a total therapeutic work-out.

This game is easy to adapt to various age levels and interests and is wonderful for children at the developmental stage of imaginary play. Usually the adult is the Pet Owner and the child becomes the hungry Furry Friend. There are only winners in this game and the length of time is determined by the child's endurance and persistence in the activity.

Note the amount of time the child engages in the activity on the first day. As time and strength improve, the child will engage in longer and longer versions of this play activity.

Activities

Components

- 2 Furry Friends tails and ears: Dog and Bunny or Cat and Mouse.
- 2 sets of 4 pieces of Pet Food. Bones and Carrot or Fish Bones and Cheese. Chew toys contain latex yet no PVC.
- Activity Guide

Goals

All of the Furry Friends assist in:

- Strengthening back, neck and abdominal muscles
- Improving shoulder and wrist stability
- Strengthening respiration muscles
- Improving articulation particularly of the sounds for k, g, f, v, s, and z
- Improving following auditory instructions
- Primitive reflex integration such as the ATNR and STNR
- Strengthening ocular tracking

- Improved vestibular functioning
- Bilateral integration
- Improved praxis and coordination
- Oral muscular strengthening of the muscles of the TMJ

Activity Set Up

Ask the child which of the Furry Friends they would like to be.

The child can tuck the tail of the Furry Friend in the elastic on their pants to add a tail, and place the animal ears on top of the head.

If a child is sensitive to the feel of the clothing, no costume is required, since everyone has good imaginations!

Working on a comfortable surface, such as mats or carpet, paper plates can be put out at various locations with the chewy toys on them.

The kids love to make animal sounds as the Pet Owner showers their pet with love and affection while stroking them as they are on all fours.

Activity Ideas

After giving your Pet profound love and attention, encourage them to make their sounds. Some animals can practice wiggling the nose. The Dog sounds strengthen diaphragmatic respiration and will improve articulation of the k and g sounds. The high squeaky tight Cat and Mouse noises, improve the s and z sounds by improving graded respiration. What is the longest meeeeeeeow? What is the longest squeeeeeeeek?! Count to yourself the number of seconds these sounds are made. With repeated play with Furry Friends you will see the sounds lengthen and articulation improve.

Ask if your Pet has been good today. Ask if they are hungry.

Tell them to find the treat that you left for them and bring it to you. You may direct the Pet to improve the ability to follow auditory directions eg: left/right, near/far, one step/two step commands and prepositions.

Tell the Furry Animal to hold tight to their food. You are going to pull their food and see if they can keep it! Use a steady tug as the child works the muscles of the TMJ. Stop pulling and say, Oh My! I must try that again. Keep giving steady tugs to the child's tolerance.

Children love to be Furry Friends! And want to play again and again and again! You will too, especially as you see the gains in respiration, postural control, reflex integration, and oral facial strengthening.

Those that have enjoyed this product have also used:

(Available in the Abilitations Catalog)

- Fun Facial Games
- Breath Buddy™
- Blowfish, Blow!™
- BlowGames™
- MegaTunnel™
- Fish Tunnel™

Resources

- Oetter P, Richter, E.W., & Frick, S. M. (1995) M.O.R.E. Integrating the Mouth With Sensory and Postural Functions. Hugo, MN: PDP Press, Inc.
- Orr, C. (1998) Mouth Madness. San Antonio TX: Therapy Skillbuilders a division of The Psychological Corporation



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