



PLAYFUL LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

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Hello everyone and welcome to our presentation on Playful Learning at the University of Waterloo. My name is Ruhi and my team members are Abby, Marina, and Trinity. Today we will be presenting some ideas for fun and educational activities that children and their caregivers can do on the university campus.



OVERVIEW



1. WHAT IS PLAYFUL LEARNING?

A brief overview of the main goals of this project.

2. TODDLERS

Activities aimed toward toddlers and their caregivers.

3. PRESCHOOLERS

Activities aimed toward preschoolers and their caregivers.



4. ELEMENTARY-AGED

Activities aimed toward elementary-aged children and their caregivers.

5. Q&A

An opportunity to ask questions will be given at the end.



We will begin with a brief overview of what playful learning is, followed by activity ideas aimed toward three age groups; toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary-aged children. At the end we will give you an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have for us.

WHAT IS PLAYFUL LEARNING?

- Encourages learning through children's play.
- Through fun activities, we attempt to promote:
 - Language use and development.
 - Socio-cognitive development.
 - Improved academic achievement.



A playful approach to learning attempts to harness the power of imagination and inspire active engagement with children's learning as they become familiar with novel subjects. We introduce several activities which will allow children to do what they do best (play and have fun), while also learning. Our activities are supported by a wide breadth of research literature which suggests that they will be successful in expanding children's language skills and socio-cognitive development, which in turn will promote academic achievement across the lifespan.



To begin, we have activities for toddlers between 12 months and 3 years old. In these activities, we wanted to provide children an opportunity to interact with their environment, using their five senses to get to know their surroundings. These activities encourage rich conversations between children and caregivers, and are, generally, just a fun way to develop their language skills!



These activities will take place in the university colleges on campus. Namely, the St. Jeromes courtyard, the Renison garden space, and the open green space beside Conrad Grebel. Among these areas, there is tons of green space, a diverse collection of plant and animal life, as well as unique buildings and plenty of areas to run around and play!

ACTIVITY 1: EXPLORATION SCAVENGER HUNT

Put on your explorer's hat and
get ready to discover the
university colleges! Can you
find everything on the list?

can you find...



a blue shed

find me at Conrad Grebell!

an apple

find me at Renison!



a snail

find me at Renison!

a pinecone

find me at St. Jerome's



can you find...

a pine tree

find me at Conrad Grebell!



an arch

find me at Renison!



a bridge

find me at Renison!



a goose

find me at St. Jerome's!



So, our first activity is an exploration scavenger hunt ! In this activity, as children and their caregivers are moving from one college to the next, they are encouraged to look around their surroundings for these specific items. Some of the items—like the bridges, the arch, or blue shed—act as landmarks in a specific area and can be spotted year round. The other items are a little bit more ambiguous. They can be found anywhere along the path or within the spaces, and will sometimes be visible, but sometimes won't be, so it's a fun activity that you can repeat more than once, if you weren't able to find all of the objects the first time around.

can you find something...

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| spiky | noisy | rough |
|  |  |  |
| smooth | heavy | soft |
|  |  |  |
| bumpy | bright | small |

ACTIVITY 2: SENSORY SCAVENGER HUNT

Try to find as many items that fit the sensory categories given on the list as you can!

With that same idea in mind, our second activity is a sensory scavenger hunt. This is a little bit different, as rather than only looking specific objects in your surroundings, children are encouraged to use their five senses to listen, or feel, or smell certain things. For example, they would have to listen to their surroundings and find something loud—like a goose honking—smell the flowers, feel different rocks or tree bark to find something rough or smooth, etc.. So this is just a fun twist on your traditional scavenger hunt that is a little bit more interactive.

**ACTIVITY 3:
COLOURING SHEETS**

Find a picnic table and take some time to colour! Once you're done, go on the hunt for snails and squirrels. How many can you find? What other animals do you see?

this is a snail!

how many snails can you find?

The final activity is some simple colouring sheets. We wanted to provide this as an option if the weather doesn't permit a child to spend much time outside, or as a follow up activity for when a child and caregiver have spent the day on campus, and perhaps completed the scavenger hunts. They're able to colour in a squirrel or a snail which they may have spotted on campus earlier that day. It's just a good conversation starter for caregivers and children, and a simple activity if they can't spend much time outside.

And that completes our activities for toddlers!



While considering what activities to offer for children aged 3-5 years, we wanted to combine elements of story-telling with pretend play, as these components have been shown through a number of studies to be important for language and other skill development at this age. Therefore, we came up with the concept of Super Goose.



SUPER GOOSE



**PORCIE THE BOAR IS IN TROUBLE! CAN YOU
HELP SUPER GOOSE SAVE THE DAY?**

Super Goose is a short comic-book story that is centered around Super Goose's attempts to make it across the Art Quad to get to Porcie (aka Porcellino), who is calling out for help. Along the way Super Goose encounters a number of obstacles, which he must overcome. The idea is that caregivers will be able to pull the comic book up on their phone or other device while in the Arts Quad with their child, and they will be able to explore the space while reading through the story.

THE CITY OF UWATERLOO-VILLE...



The story begins with an overview of the Arts Quad, which will help children and their caregivers orient themselves within the space while reading through the story. You can also see a cartoon boar at the bottom right of the panel, who says "welcome to campus!". This cartoon boar will be seen throughout the story asking questions and prompting conversation between caregivers and children.



Here, Super Goose is sleeping on top of Tatum Centre when suddenly Porcie calls out for help. This awakens Super Goose, who is seen in panel three as being alert. The cartoon boar says "Porcie the boar needs help! What could be the problem?"



Super Goose flies down from Tatum Centre and lands on the ground, where he encounters his first obstacle. Panel two shows what the space actually looks like, whereas panel three shows what Super Goose is imagining it as. In this case, Super Goose sees a chasm with a tightrope stretching across it. The cartoon boar says "Oh no! How will Super Goose get across the chasm?".

**BALANCE CAREFULLY TO MAKE IT
ACROSS THE DANGEROUS CHASM!**



Super Goose ends up balancing on the tightrope to make it across, and children are encouraged by the cartoon boar to balance with him, thus inviting them to join the story themselves.



Super Goose celebrates, having made it across the chasm, however he is quickly met by another obstacle. Here, Super Goose sees a pit of lava in the green space, with the yellow circles representing rocks. The cartoon boar says "That lava looks hot! How will Super Goose make it across?".

**JUMP FROM ROCK TO ROCK TO
AVOID THE BOILING LAVA!**



Super Goose jumps from rock to rock to make it across, and the cartoon boar again encourages children to jump with him.



Super Goose celebrates again, before facing his next obstacles. He sees the lines in front of Dana Porter as being lasers. The cartoon boar says "Oh no, lasers! How will Super Goose make it to the other side?"

HOP OVER THE LASERS TO MAKE IT TO THE RAMP!



Super Goose hops over the lasers, and the cartoon boar encourages children to do the same.



Super Goose makes it across the lasers and celebrates, before finding another obstacle. This time he sees a runway on the ramp. The cartoon boar says "A runway! What will Super Goose do?"

**RUN DOWN THE RAMP AT TURBO
SPEED!**



Super Goose runs down the ramp at "turbo speed", and the cartoon boar encourages children to do the same.



Super Goose celebrates at the bottom of the ramp before encountering another obstacle. Here, in the open space he sees shark-infested water. The cartoon boar says "Those sharks look hungry! How will Super Goose make it across?"

**FLAP YOUR WINGS TO FLY OVER
THE SHARK-INFESTED WATER!**



Super Goose flies across the shark-infested water to get to Porcie, and the cartoon boar encourages children to join him.



Having finally made it to Porcie, Super Goose asks him what's wrong, to which Porcie says "my nose is itchy!". Super Goose throws his wings up in the air angrily at this. The cartoon boar says "Super Goose looks annoyed! Why is he annoyed?"

RUB PORCIE'S NOSE TO RELIEVE HIS ITCH!



Super Goose itches Porcie's nose for him, and children are also encouraged to rub his nose. The cartoon boar says "Fun fact: Campus legend says rubbing Porcie's nose during exam season brings good luck to students!"



On this slide, children can celebrate completing the mission. The frog and crab at Porcie's feet say "Thanks Super Goose!" and "You're awesome!", and the cartoon boar says "Check out these critters at Porcie's feet! How many can you find?". Thus, children are encouraged to take a closer look at the Porcellino statue after reading the comic book.

**SUPER GOOSE WAS
CREATED WITH LOVE BY:**

**ABBY EDINGTON
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**THANK YOU FOR READING! WE HOPE TO
SEE YOU ON CAMPUS AGAIN SOON.**



Overall, Super Goose is a fun comic-book adventure for children which will allow them to explore the Arts Quad, while also engaging in the important educational acts of reading and story-building.



Now, on to the activities aimed towards elementary-aged children, or about 6-10 years.

Compete with Warrior Goose in...

THE UWATERLOO OLYMPICS

Head on over to the open field across from
the Student Life Centre near Village 1!



For this age group, we wanted kids to compete with warrior goose in the UWaterloo Olympics!

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO COMPETE?

The first Winter Olympic Games took place on January 25, 1924 in Chamonix, France, 28 years after the first modern Olympic Games!

Hey kids! Are you ready to compete for olympic gold? Start stretching and warming up now. I won't be going easy on you. Let the UWaterloo Olympic games commence!



Here we have warrior goose saying "hey kids! Are you ready to compete for Olympic gold? Start stretching and warming up now. I won't be going easy on you. Let the UWaterloo Olympic games commence!"

We also have our friendly little yeti telling the kids a fun fact about the first winter Olympic games.

SPORT #1: THE LUGE



Luge is the French word for "sledge"!



Oh the luge! This one isn't for the faint of heart. Hop in a toboggan and go flying down the hill. Experiment with different techniques to try to get as far as you can:

- Get a running start.
- Go down on your bum.
- Go down on your stomach.
- Go down with someone else.

On to sport number one: the luge

Fun fact, luge is the French word for sled, which our friendly yeti is telling us.

Kids are encouraged to grab their toboggans and slide down a hill with warrior goose.

They can also experiment with different techniques, such as getting a running start, and see how it affects the distance they slide and their sliding speed.

SPORT #2: SNOWMAN MAKING

Ok, this isn't an official Olympic sport, but it exists in the UWaterloo Olympics! Try to construct the tallest snowman you can. Can you make it as tall as you are? What can you use for eyes and a nose?

The biggest snowman ever built was 37.21 m tall. That's approximately 6 times taller than the average 2-story house!



Although it isn't an official Olympic sport, sport number two in the UWaterloo Olympics is snowman making

For this event, kids can try to build the tallest snowman they can, and maybe it will be taller than them! Perhaps it will even be taller than the record holder for biggest snowman ever built. They can also experiment with a variety of materials for the eyes and nose, giving their snowman different facial expressions.

SPORT #3: SNOW-PUT

This is a spin on the classic summer Olympic sport: shot-put!
Make a ball of snow then try to throw it as far as you can.
Experiment with different techniques to see how far it can go:

In the traditional version of shot-put, athletes put (not throw) a metal ball. This means that they push the ball using one hand which is balanced close to their neck, above their shoulder!

Overhanded throw.
Underhanded throw.
"Shot-put" throw (i.e., push)
Other?



Sport number three is a spin-off on the classic summer Olympic sport, shot-put. Instead of using a traditional shot-put ball, kids can make a snowball and try to throw it as far as possible.

Warrior goose is also encouraging them to try out some different techniques, including underhand and overhand throws, as well as a traditional shot-put throw, as explained by our friendly yeti.

SPORT #4: LONG JUMP

In the Olympics, long jump athletes commit a foul when they step beyond their jumping point, which is a wooden take-off board.

This is another traditionally summer Olympic sport, but we're going to do it in the snow! Draw a line in the snow as your "jump point," then take a running start and jump once you get to the line. Once you land, measure in feet how far you got by walking back to the line and counting your steps. How far can you jump?

Sport number four is long jump, and while it is traditionally a summer Olympic sport, jumping in the snow is always a thrill for kids.

Warrior goose tells the kids to draw a line in the snow to act as their "jump point", then take a running start and jump once they get to the line. Once they land, they can walk back to their jump point and measure how far away they landed by counting their steps.

Our friendly yeti also explains what a foul looks like in long jump, so kids can make sure they're playing fair and following the rules.

SPORT #5: SKATING



It's our final sport, so let's end with a bang! Head on over to the United College outdoor skating rink (or if you're up for the trek, Columbia Ice-Field's indoor skating rink) and strap on those skates! Experiment with different skating techniques:

Speed skating.

Backwards skating.

Spinning/twirling.

There are 3 events in the winter Olympics which involve ice skates: figure skating, speed skating, and hockey.



Our final sport is skating, arguably the most well-known and well-loved winter Olympic sport.

There are two skating rinks on campus, located outside United College and inside Columbia ice field.

Here, warrior goose encourages kids to strap on their skates and test their skills!

As our friendly yeti tells us, there are three events in the winter Olympics that involve ice skate: figure skating, speed skating, and hockey. Kids can try out figure skating and speed skating on their own, and maybe play a game of hockey or two if they have some friends with them.



Congratulations! You have completed the UWaterloo Olympics! Now kids can design and colour their own Olympic medals while resting after an extraordinarily busy day.



Do you have any questions?

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Now we would like to open the floor to any questions, concerns or feedback that you have to offer. Our references are listed on the next slide and we have also attached our emails in case you would like to discuss anything further.

We appreciate everyone taking time out of their busy schedule to come out and listen to our presentation. We hope we offered more insight on this topic and opened some space for more discussion. Thank you everyone.

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