



CM18



DANDELIONS, BUTTERFLIES AND CHICKENS



15-20 minutes



- To develop curiosity and creativity
- To recognise seasonal changes (spring)
- To use a given procedure to add additional features
- To work cooperatively



FROM YOUR FELT PACK

- ❖ 'The Meadow in Spring' set up beforehand: A blue or green felt background, white clouds, orange sun, green grass and a couple of yellow circles on green stalks to be the dandelions



- ❖ The rest of the pieces in your felt set to hand, for easy selection of the range of colours, shapes and sizes that you will need for each step of this session, plus your spare sheets of felt in case you need to cut any particular pieces out



- ❖ A video showing dandelions and another showing chickens (optional)



Dandelions:

Before this session, if it is the right time of year and they exist where you live, look for yellow dandelions and dandelions with white fluffy seed heads when you are out and about. If not, use a video of them. Show and explain to your child that the 'petals' of the yellow flowers stay still when you blow on them, but that the fluffy seed heads blow away.

Look at 'The Meadow in Spring' and talk about it. Ask your child to find the flower (i.e. a yellow circle) in the meadow. When they have spotted it, ask if they know what it is and agree that it is a dandelion.

Ask them for their ideas about how to show the whole meadow full of yellow dandelions (add more yellow circles). Ask them to help you fill the meadow with dandelion flowers.

Now replace some of the dandelion flowers with dandelion seed heads (replace some yellow circles with white ones). Tell your child that you have given the dandelions 'white hats' instead of their yellow ones.

Ask your child if they know why the dandelions put on 'white hats'. Explain that in the warm sunshine, the yellow dandelions make dandelion seeds. The seeds have fluffy white 'parachutes' to carry them away when the wind blows. Where the seeds land, new dandelions will grow. Ask your child to help you give all the dandelions their white hats (i.e. replace the yellow circles with white ones).

Butterflies:

Now talk about butterflies in spring, and discuss what your child already knows about them. While you are talking, take some short, thin, orange rectangles and light and dark, small, purple circles, and start to add them to the picture of the meadow, like this:

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- Your child can distinguish between triangles, circles and semi-circles, and big and little circles.
- Your child can work independently to transform the scene.
- Your child uses a given procedure to add specific body parts to the butterflies and chickens.
- Your child takes part in the discussion.



KEY TO LEARNING
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Show your child a complete butterfly that you have added and talk about the structure – it has a body, the orange rectangle, and wings, a pair of purple or lilac circles, one on each side of the rectangle. Explain that many butterflies have arrived in the meadow, but some of them are missing their wings. Point to an incomplete butterfly (with one wing). Tell your child that this butterfly needs to find its wing. Choose a circle of the wrong colour first, and hold it next to the butterfly saying: *I'm just going to check if I have found the butterfly's wing.* Reject this circle and say: *No, this is the wrong wing; it isn't the right colour.* Finally place a matching circle against the butterfly's body, saying: *Ah, now here's the butterfly's wing. Look, the colour matches. Now the butterfly is happy again!*

Ask your child to help all the butterflies have two matching wings, making sure that the right shade of purple is used for each butterfly, so they can all be happy again.

Chickens:

Talk to your child about chickens, and show them a video if you can't see any in real life. Discuss their body parts and movements, and act out their movements together.

Then show your child how they can create an image of a chicken. As you do it, say something like: *I'm going to put a chicken in the meadow just here. First I have to make a body for the chicken. What do you think I could use for the body? Yes, I'm going to use a big yellow circle, and next I need the head, so I need a little yellow circle. I have to put the head and the body together, so I'm going to join the head and the body just like this. Now I'm going to make the chicken's legs. I put one red triangle here, and another red triangle there. What's next? Oh yes, the tail. I'm going to use a red triangle for the tail; I have to put it over here. Now the body is finished, so I have to finish the head. What does the chicken's head need? It needs eyes so that it can look for food, and it needs a beak for eating the food. Here are two white circles and two tiny black circles for the eyes; I have to put them on the head like this, and now a triangle for the beak. What have I forgotten? Oh yes, wings. Here are two orange semi-circles for the wings.*

Put out a couple more large yellow circles with a few random body parts, leaving many parts off them. Point out to your child that these other chickens are missing parts of their bodies. Ask them what is missing and if they can help to make this chicken happy again. Prompt them to discover which feature is missing by asking questions like: *How can this chicken see his mummy? How can this chicken run to find her mummy? How will the chicken peck seeds for breakfast?*

When the missing features have been identified, help your child choose the correct substitutes to 'make the chickens happy again'. Your final meadow picture will look something like the image top right on the first page.

End by encouraging your child to admire their *dandelion-filled meadow with its happy and beautiful chickens and butterflies.*