



Name of Activity: “How to Make Popcorn” Parachute Activity

Book Used: *The Popcorn Dragon* by Jane Thayer

Music Used for the Activity: “How to Make Popcorn” from the CD “Catpaws” by Cat Paws in Motion. The CD and instructional book is available on-line from www.mycatpaws.com.

Purpose of the activity:

1. To associate a book with a rhythmic activity associated with popping popcorn.
2. To build upper body strength and rhythmic skills in a fun and unique way.

Benefits of the Activity:

1. Children tend to remember both the book and the activity better because physical activity is associated with a story, thus reaching more of the multiple intelligences.
2. A story often adds meaning and purpose to the activity. This helps children remember both the book and the activity better.
3. Children more readily share information with parents and family members if they have more ways in which to remember the information. This is good public relations for the physical education department.
4. Since the parachute is a cooperative activity, children work together to make the popcorn (yarn balls) move in the way they are supposed to.

Suggested Grade Level: Pre-K-2

Materials Needed:

1. Yarnballs to be used as popcorn – one for each student, if possible
2. Parachute large enough for all students to fit around

Organization of students:

1. Students take a position around the parachute, holding the parachute with one hand and a yarn ball in the other. The hand position will later change from one hand to two.

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Description of the Activity:

Students stand around the parachute. The beginning of this song has an “echo” segment so students have an opportunity to hear the lyrics and repeat them aloud. Try the following actions on the introduction:

PART A

Wait 8 fast counts (**Note – It is fun for children to repeat the echo portion in the first part of this song.*)

How to make popcorn - (add echo) - side step to the right 4x with the parachute (8 cts)

First you take the popcorn and you throw it in the pot - side step to the left 4x with the parachute (8 cts)

(Echo) - **First you take the popcorn and you throw it in the pot** – lift yarn ball up above head (4 cts) and throw yarn ball on to parachute (4 cts)

You shake it, you shake it, you shake it up a lot – (add echo) shake parachute gently (16 cts)

When you hear it start to rumble from the bottom to the top – (add echo) hold parachute and twist down to the ground (16 cts)

Then you know the oil is burning and you know the corn will pop – stay down and shake the parachute on the ground (do not raise the parachute up on this “pop” unless you discover that your students need more time to retrieve balls later after they are popped off the parachute.

(Echo) - **Then you know the oil is burning and you know the corn will pop** – continue to shake the parachute very gently on the ground until the “pop,” then raise the parachute up fast and pop the popcorn off the parachute by continuously shaking it.

Instrumental – When all the yarn balls are off the parachute, students lay the parachute down, retrieve any one ball off the floor, and return to the parachute to repeat the actions. (32 cts)

PART B

IMPORTANT – *The 2nd and 3rd time the actions are done, there are no echos so some actions change slightly*

How to make popcorn – Wait in place (4 cts)

You throw it in the pot – throw yarn ball on parachute (4 cts)

You shake it, you shake it, you shake it up a lot – shake parachute gently (8 cts)

When you hear it start to rumble from the bottom to the top – Twist down to ground with parachute (8 cts)

Then you know the oil is burning and you know the corn will “POP” – shake the parachute very gently on the ground until the “pop” (6 cts waiting, lift on count 7)

Instrumental – each person retrieves a yarn ball and returns to the parachute (32 cts)

Repeat PART B (to the end of song)

Suggestions:

1. Stress that the ball picked up off the floor does not necessarily have to be the one that the person popped off. This will save time and arguments in case yarn balls are the same color.
2. Remind students of safety when moving away from the parachute to get a ball. Watch out for others.
3. Teach students the overhand grip for the parachute. It will help them hold on to the chute as it is shaken.

Adaptations:

1. Try different kinds of balls on the parachute to see how they respond to the shaking and popping. This can lead to a discussion about weight and how it affects speed.
2. If there is not enough room around the parachute for everyone, keep some people on the outside of the parachute. Have them do the actions just like everyone else but let them retrieve the balls and bring them back to the people at the parachute. The person can either give the ball back and the routine starts again, or the person who retrieves the ball takes the place of someone who just had a turn at the parachute. This is a good lesson in sharing and cooperation.

