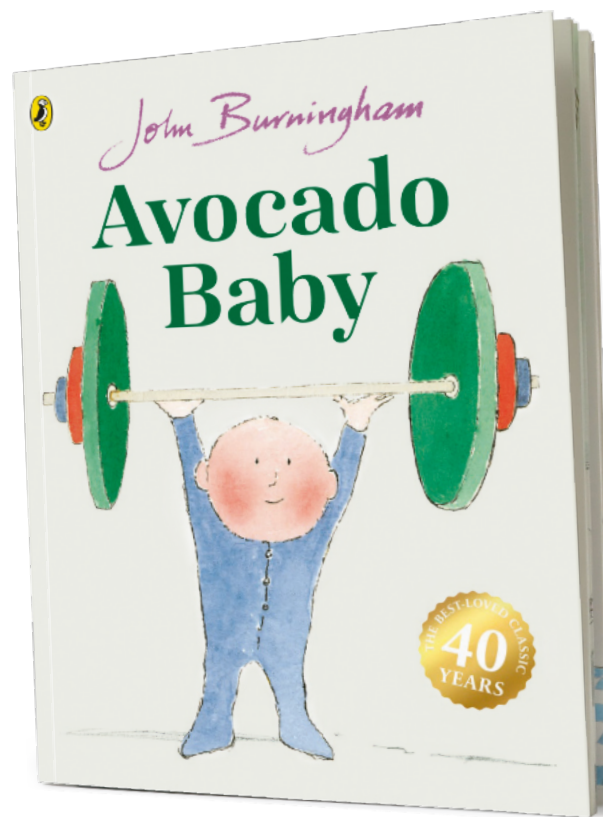


Teaching Ideas and Resources



Teaching Notes for 'Avocado Baby' by John Burningham

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Avocado Baby is a fantastic story that all the children I have ever shared it with, love. They particularly enjoy that (like many of John's books) that the baby or child is the hero of the story which makes this an excellent story for a child to innovate and rewrite making themselves the hero. It is also great for predicting events and children love anticipating the parts where the baby uses it's strength when they hear it again and again.

Early Years Foundation Stage Activities

A wide variety of activities for the three prime areas of the EYFS Framework (Communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development) can be created and differentiated to include both Year 1 and 2 using the story as a hook into learning. The best activities are inspired and led by the children themselves, their interests, imaginations and experiences. However here are some starting points many of which can take place indoors or outdoors.

Role play activities ...

Photocopy illustrations of the family and baby in the home and place them around the home corner role play area, along with a copy or two of the book for the children to see.

Literacy and phonics – Place letter cards in the role play area matching initial sounds of objects, cvc words, captions and sentences (steadily add and change focus to suit which ever phase of phonics your children are learning). Leave paper, notepads, clipboards, pens and masking tape and encourage them to write and label objects in the home scene.

Have a large selection of John Burningham's other books available for the children to read and enjoy. Also have a selection of non-fiction how to care for a baby books (check they are suitable for children to read) and recipe books for baby and toddlers available.

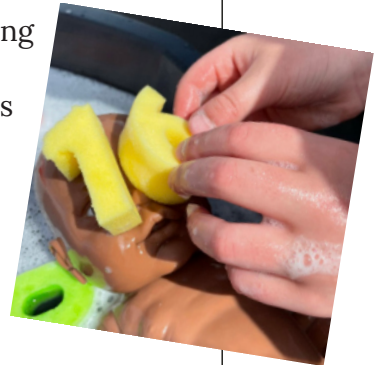
Communication and language – Play with the children and model how to reenact the story adding and changing it as they wish. Add small microphones and dolls to be the characters (as an alternative to different children taking roles of characters) encourage the children to tell their own story about the Hargraves family whilst another child films and records it on an iPad. Show the film to the rest of the class.

Learn and sing nursery rhymes that the children may be familiar with as well as introducing them to new ones. Then using the illustration of the children being pulled uphill in the cart act the scene out and suggest the children sing rhymes as they travel. The singing helps the baby pull! Organise the children into groups, each to learn a different nursery rhyme. Once they are confident let them perform in their group to the rest of the class.



Physical development -Develop fine motor skills by adding clothes for the dolls that have buttons, poppers and zips for them to close and open. Put a selection of baby and toddler toys designed for improving fine motor control (balls, shape posting toy etc) in the role play area for them to play with.

Bath the baby - In a tuff tray place dolls in soapy water for the children to give the babies a bath. Mild baby shampoo works well as its kind to children's skin but be mindful of children with allergies and eczema. Provide sponges for squeezing and jugs etc for pouring. Create **phonics** and **maths** learning by putting alphabet or number shaped sponges in to use. Water play gives lots of opportunities for maths learning - developing understanding, reasoning and problem solving and using vocabulary are possible eg measuring, capacity, counting, doubles, halves, more than, less than and subitising.



Give the children access to a variety of equipment (tyres, logs, wooden bricks, etc) and encourage them to construct a **baby gym** for Avocado Baby to exercise their muscles! Give the gym a name and encourage them to write invites and membership cards for others in the school to become members and join the gym! Let the children decide opening times, rules for the gym etc.



Put some of the dolls' clothes in the water and have the children wash them and then peg them onto a washing line to dry. Using the pegs strengthens fingers.

Key Stage One Activities

ENGLISH

If possible invite a parent with a new baby into school for a visit to talk about how to care for a baby. Prior to the visit ask the parents to share photos of their child as a baby to them and tell them about what they were like as babies and the things they did (link to history activities below). After the visit ask the children to **recount** the visit or a time when they have had a new baby born in their family or when they have visited a new baby. Recount events in chronological order, write in the past tense, write in first person – informal, include a mixture of facts and opinions and ask rhetorical questions.

Write a variety of lists – in the home corner, shopping lists, lists of food the baby might want to try, lists of jobs that need to be done to care for the baby, lists of things you need to pack when taking your baby on an outing linking to the children's own experiences, etc.

Write 'congratulations on your new baby', **cards, postcards or social media post** announcing the birth, write birthday cards and invitations to a first birthday party for the baby imagining it has its first birthday. Note the telegram on the bed in the illustration showing the family in the hospital when the baby was born. What is a telegram? Do we still use them? How have our methods of communication changed over time?

Write in role as the baby, write a diary entry recounting the event when he challenges the bullies linking this to the PSHE activities (below).



"The bullies started being very nasty to the children. The baby did not like that and jumped out of its push-chair."





Write a list of **instructions** telling someone “How To Help A Baby Grow Strong.” Or “How To Care For A Baby”. Remember to use imperative verbs and give commands keeping your instructions short and to the point. Write sequenced, chronological steps in the present tense. Include diagrams or illustrations if you wish.

Create a comic strip scene to tell part of the story using the six illustrations showing the baby refusing the food in the book as a hook. Or to tell part of their new story that they create (ideas below).

Describe the main character, the baby, ask the children to draw the different characters in the family, talk about, hot seat, role play them then write a description of one or more of them.

Describe a setting in the story, let the children choose a setting they like to draw and then describe. Model how to by choosing the family’s kitchen as a setting, draw it and label the features inside with their help, add things the children would like to be in there then describe.

Innovate the story and pick out points that could inspire short writing opportunities such as ...

Choose a different fruit, what super powers would it give you? What would you do you’re your powers? Discuss, draw then write about what happens.

Change some of the main characters in the story, does one of them start to create recipes for meals that give babies extra special powers? Could they become famous chefs?

Cross Curricular Activities

HISTORY

Use the story to look at their own history and develop an understanding personal chronology. Talk about the past and present events in their own lives and the lives of their family members. Compare things from the past to now. Start with children using **timelines** to order three or four photos of themselves showing them as a baby, toddler, pre-schooler and now.

Take a **memory box** of your own to show the children. A great hook to a lesson is to place a photo of yourself and your teaching assistant, if you have one, on a chair for them to find. Have fun as they try to guess who it is. Then as you share three key memories from your childhood (favourite toy, place you visited, a birthday) and challenge the children to remember three key memories from their past. Compare similarities and differences. Ask why are memories special.

Investigate what life was like for children in the past further by asking a grandparent to come into school and share some memories of their childhood with the children, bringing some of their old toys and photographs to share and talk about. Compare childhood in the past to childhood now.

The new baby was born and the family were very pleased



SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY

Show the children an avocado, what do they know about them? Have they ever tasted one? Where do they grow? How do they grow? Use a hook to learn about plants as part of a science unit. Carry out an investigation and plant an avocado seed (they take six weeks to germinate so do this early in the year!) see how to grow here [Gardeners World - How to grow avocado](#)



Where in the world do avocados come from? Use photos or show the children the stickers/labels on avocados showing the country of origin. As an activity ask parents and children to notice and collect labels from packaging on food they buy showing the country of origin. Bring the labels into school and make a display on a large map to create opportunities for learning about different countries and climates around the world.

Locate on a map the countries that they have been grown and then ask how did they get to this country?

Sustainability - discuss how ethical it is to eat food that has used so many resources to reach us, investigate and discuss how it is important to support local farmers and businesses by buying and eating food that is grown and produced local to their homes.

Science – use the story as a hook to investigate the topic ‘healthy humans’ learning what humans need in order to survive and grow (link to DT activities).



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design, create and make a healthy meal for a baby with the title 'A Meal To Make Your Baby Strong'.

Learn about food groups and a balanced diet, practise food preparation skills, taste and evaluate foods and design and make a meal based on a criteria.

PSHE

Look at the part of the story where the baby challenges the bullies. Explore different activities to address bullying and friendship. How do we treat bullies?

Link to activities for anti-bullying week which is held every year in November [Anti Bullying Alliance](#)



ART

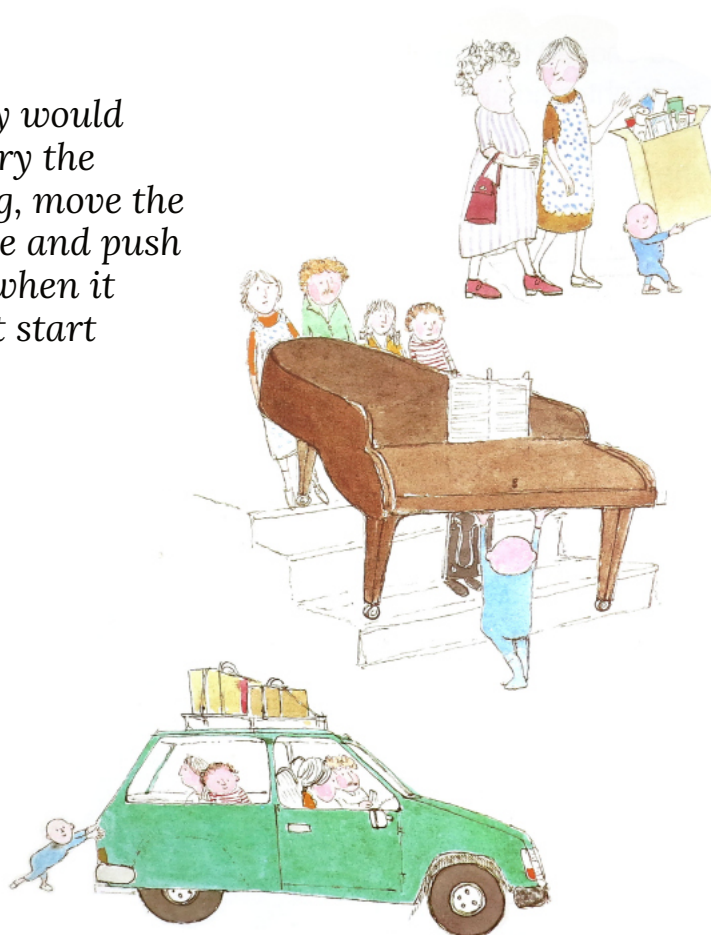
Look closely at John Burningham's illustrations. Look at his use of colour, how did he create his pictures? Explore.

Draw or paint pictures of themselves as babies, or with their families, create a family portrait and have a class gallery.



Avocado Baby picked up the bullies and ...

*The baby would
help carry the
shopping, move the
furniture and push
the car when it
wouldn't start*



Draw imaginary scenes for the book, think of new strong acts the baby could do, what would they like to do if they were the baby? Create new pages for the story. Alternatively create a sequel to the story where the baby has grown into a child, what new things could the child do if they were still a lot stronger than their peers? Have fun creating silly scenarios eg the child went to the zoo and carried ten elephants back to their enclosure after they had escaped.

MUSIC

Compose a song creating lyrics based on the story or parts of the story. Use a variety of musical instruments to soundtrack the different emotions and events that happen throughout the story.