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Dan, the Taxi Man

By Eric Ode, illustrated by Kent Culotta

Many of these activities are for children in a preschool setting with learning centers, but they can easily be used at home as well.

Read to the Rhythm

This book is written with rhythm, so it should be read with rhythm! If there is another adult with you, she or he can hold the book and turn the pages while you snap your fingers, clap your hands, or pat your knees. If you're the only adult, you can read each page in time to the beat without snapping, clapping, or patting. When the letters get bigger at the end of the story, your voice can crescendo as well.

Little Beep Beeps

As the children become more familiar with the book, have them say the line "Beep! Beep!" each time it occurs in the story.

Variation: Let the children also do the sounds of the different instruments in the book after you've read it a few times. Have them read the words like "Whee, wazzle, wah!" or "Squeeba-dee-dee, squeeba-dee-doo!" or they can imitate the musical sounds as best they can.

T-A-X-I, the Song

Sing this song to the tune of B-I-N-G-O.

There was a man, his name was Dan, and Dan, he drove a taxi.

T-A-X-I, T-A-X-I, T-A-X-I, and Dan, he drove a taxi.

2nd verse, clap once instead of singing the letter T.

There was a man, his name was Dan, and Dan, he drove a taxi.

(Clap) A-X-I, (Clap) A-X-I, (Clap) A-X-I, and Dan, he drove a taxi.

Continue until there are no letters, only claps.

To use while singing, make one of the following:

- Cut 2-inch square letters (T, A, X, I) out of sturdy paper and tape each to the top of a pencil. Hold each one up during its part of the song.
- Attach a letter to each of the 4 fingers of a glove and move your fingers during the song.
- Make a mini-poster with the word TAXI written clearly. Point to the letters during the song.
- Write each letter on a 9x12 piece of construction paper and give one to each of 4 children. When you come to their letter in the song, they hold it up for everyone to see. Or you can make enough of these for each child for maximum participation.

Act It Out

After repeated readings, let the children act out the story as you read, where one child plays each part: Dan, the dog, Maureen, Tyrone, Star, Clair, and Ace.



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Name That Dog

The adorable dog in the book has a definite personality but no name!

- Use an Experience Chart to write down what each child wants to name the dog. (This can be done during free choice play; it doesn't have to be a large group activity.) Then as a group, see if the children can agree on a name.

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Dog's Name</u>
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Aiden	Moustache
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Julia	Fig Newton
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- Read the book aloud again, but this time focus on the dog's point of view, and what he or she might be thinking. Encourage the children to add their ideas.

Rhymes & Rhythm

Encourage phonemic awareness by teaching the children these 5 lines, then saying them together with a steady rhythm:

Maureen (clap-clap) – Tambourine (clap-clap)

Tyrone (clap-clap) – Saxophone (clap-clap)

Star (clap-clap) – Guitar (clap-clap)

Clair (clap-clap) – Snare (clap-clap)

Ace (clap-clap) – Bass (clap-clap)

Once they have learned this, implement them during your routines:

- As a marching or follow-the-leader activity (indoors or outdoors)
- As a call to let the children know it's time to gather for group or circle time
- As you travel from place to place in your preschool, such as down the hall to another room or to go outdoors
- During any time when there is waiting, such as when the children are getting their coats on, and some are ready while others are not – a simple rhyming & clapping activity like this, besides being fun, can prevent many behavior problems.

The Real Band

Add real musical instruments to the children's experiences.

- Tambourine
- Saxophone
- Electric guitar
- Snare drum
- Upright bass

Use what you have on hand, rhythm instruments, toy instruments, whatever. But if possible, find a way for the children to see and hear the real thing in person, either in your classroom or during a field trip. (Try your neighborhood high school's music department.) Include photos and/or audio recordings of instruments playing on the Internet or a CD to add to the experience. The more senses that are involved, the higher the level of learning.