



Rescue the Animals from the Shark

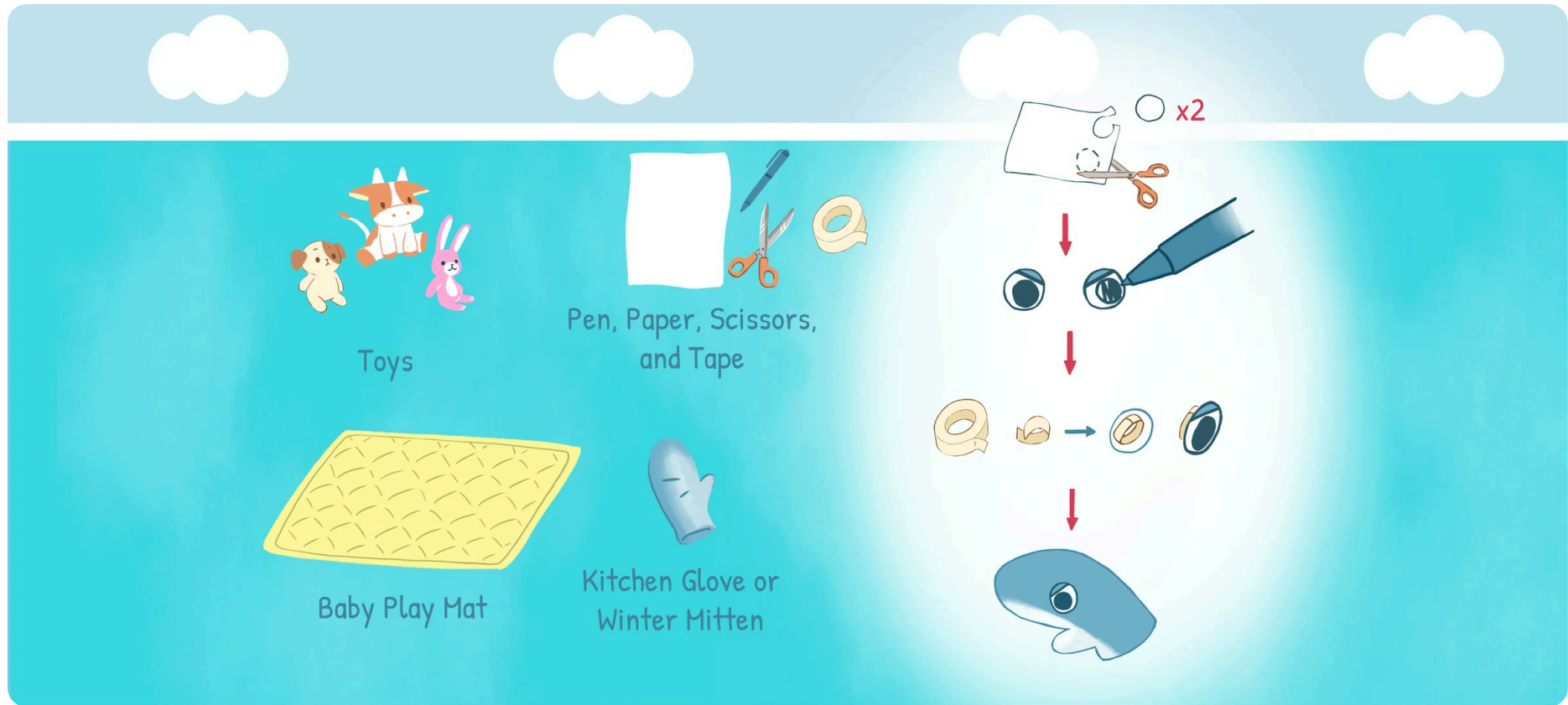
Invite your baby to rescue animal friends from a pretend shark. Reaching for animals at different heights and carrying them to the boat turns repeated squats, stands, and steps into a dramatic mission.

Helps Your Child Grow



Gross Motor

Reaching animals in different positions gives your baby repeated practice squatting, standing, stepping, and balancing while working toward a playful goal.



What You'll Need

1. Animal figures
2. a play mat
3. paper, markers, scissors, and tape
4. an oven mitt or ski glove
5. draw paper shark eyes and tape them to the glove



Rescue the Nearest Animal

Pretend the floor is the ocean and the play mat is a rescue boat. The animal friends are in the water and the shark is approaching. Invite your baby to squat at the edge of the boat, pick up a nearby animal, stand, walk to the middle, and squat to set it down gently.

Observations

- Squats to pick up an animal figure
- Smiles or shows excitement when the pretend shark approaches

Tips

- A second caregiver can demonstrate one rescue while your baby watches, then invite them to join.
- An adult playing the shark adds a clear, exciting reason to squat, stand, and move.
- A 12-month-old may not follow the full rescue story. The shark's approach and retreat can still make the movement playful.
- Say that the rescued animal needs to rest gently in the center of the boat. The story gives purpose to carrying and setting it down.



Reach High for the Next Rescue

Make the shark's chase more dramatic. Hold the animals at different heights and directions while the shark leaps from the water. Your baby may reach overhead or rise slightly onto their toes before squatting to return each animal to the boat.

Observations

- Stands and squats to rescue animals from different positions
- Reaches eagerly for different animals near the shark

Tips

- Change the animal's position and height so each rescue uses a slightly different reach and squat.
- Repeated squatting and standing gives your baby practice using leg strength and stabilizing their body.



Everyone Is Safe

Leave one last animal in the ocean and keep the shark circling nearby. When your baby rescues every animal and places them on the boat, let the defeated shark swim away.

Observations

- Continues until every animal has been moved to the boat
- Hugs the rescued animals and shows pride or happiness

Tips

- Play the shark's defeat with an exaggerated sigh or pout so your baby can feel the rescue succeeded.
- A successful, enjoyable rescue can motivate your baby to repeat the physical actions in later play.
- If attention shifts, point out the last animal: "Look - one friend is still in the water. The shark is coming!"