

Make a Bird Puppet

Using clay, cardboard, paint, and craft feathers, you can create a whimsical bird puppet that's primed for imaginative play. Kids will love sculpting their very own bird puppets based on real birds, and all that rolling, molding, and shaping will help strengthen their hand muscles for writing.

What You Need:

- Picture books or encyclopedias that contain photos or illustrations of birds
- Cardboard cone (such as an empty yarn holder)
- Modeling clay
- Glue
- Scissors
- Fabric scraps or felt
- Tempera paint
- Paint brushes
- Craft feathers (these can be purchased at most art or craft supply stores)
- Thin wooden dowel or stick



What to Do:

1. Help your child choose a bird to create. Thumb through the animal picture books or encyclopedias to find photos and illustrations of different kinds of birds. If you have time, go on a bird watching safari in your backyard. What birds did she see?
2. Now start the puppet. To make the bird's head, roll a handful of modeling clay into a ball. Place a small amount of glue on the narrow end of the cardboard cone and firmly press the clay ball into the it. If the clay becomes misshapen during this step, simply re-mold it once it's firmly attached.
3. Cut scraps of fabric long enough to fit around the cone and help her glue them onto it.
4. Now create the bird's face. Use the remaining modeling clay to form a beak, eyes, and other bird features.
5. Once the shape of the bird is complete, invite her to add color to the bird with the tempera paint. Encourage her to paint the bird as realistically as possible.
6. Use the craft feathers to make the bird's wings. Apply thin lines of glue to the bird's body where its wings would go, then firmly press the tips of the feathers into the glue.
7. Place a small dab of glue on the tip of the dowel or stick. Feed the stick through the cone until it reaches the clay head. Push the dowel gently into the clay ball to secure it.
8. Set aside to dry.

Watch as your child enjoys hours of imaginative bird fun.

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