

The Things I Can Do

The 2014 CLEL Bell Award Book for WRITE

by Jeff Mack

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Hand-written text and exuberant collages illustrate this story of a boy who takes great pride in his accomplishments. Reading skills and writing skills develop together, and the format of *The Things I Can Do* invites children to see themselves as authors as well as readers.

Activity Ideas for *The Things I Can Do*:

- Have the children draw a picture of something they can do that they are proud of. (With younger children, you might take a photo of them doing something instead.) Ask the children to say what they are doing in their pictures, then write down what they said. Read what you wrote down out loud, pointing to each word as you say it. This will help children make the connection between the words we say and the words on the page.
- Look at the pictures in the book together, and talk about all the different objects Jeff Mack used to make the illustrations, like Lego blocks, popsicle sticks, torn paper, and string. Set out paper for the children to tear into small pieces, and other small objects such as old jigsaw pieces, pasta, or foam shapes. Let the children glue the torn paper and objects to construction paper or cardboard to make their own collages. Tearing paper and holding and moving small objects builds finger strength and hand-eye coordination, which in turn will help children when they scribble, draw, and write.
- Sing about what the children can do to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." Invite them to act out the words they are singing! Children learn through all their senses, so hearing words in songs and acting them out can help them reinforce vocabulary words.
*Micah dances, so can you, Micah dances, so can you,
Micah dances, so can you, skip to my lou my darling.*
To keep having fun with words, you can make up rhymes for the chorus, either real words or nonsense syllables:
*Dance, pants, skip to my lou, Dance, ants, skip to my lou,
Dance, zance, skip to my lou, skip to my lou my darling.*

The CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards are given to books that provide excellent support of early literacy development in young children. For more information and for other activity sheets, visit <http://www.clel.org/content/bell-awards>



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