6 play-based activities to increase literacy skills

- Sammy the horse and Gabby the bunny are the main characters in “Sammy Shares.” While at the barn, they come across a problem. Pretend you’re each of the characters and act out the problem they are facing.

- Look at the front cover of “Sammy Shares.” What is happening in the picture? What emotions do the friends show? With your child, take turns making different emotions with your face. Assign words to the other emotions. Have your child guess what emotion you are feeling based on your facial expressions. Switch places with your child and have him/her act out different emotions, and this time you guess the correct emotion.

- After reading “Sammy Shares,” discuss the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Next, grab some paper and crayons. With your child, rewrite the story using short, basic sentences. Include drawings to match your retelling. Allow your child to write and draw some parts too.

- Sammy and Gabby are lovable characters that learn how to respect each other through clear communication. Reenact the story twice. Once where your child gets to be Sammy, and a second time, where your child is Gabby. Ask which character they liked to play the most and why.

- In “Sammy Shares,” Sammy learns the value of sharing, and Gabby learns how to ask for what she wants in a respectful way. During your next mealtime, emphasize the distribution and sharing of the food. Refer back to Gabby and Sammy and model how your family is sharing and communicating nicely, just like the characters in the story.

- With your child, draw and color the main characters from our story, Sammy and Gabby. Cut out your drawings and use them to retell the story. Be sure to use your best horse and bunny voices!