

Play  
School

# Story Time

## PlayWorld

### Ideas for parents and carers

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Waleed Aly shares 'How to Catch a Star' by Oliver Jeffers.

Thea and her mum Alice who zoom through space to meet Alpha Centuri's brightest star and help them solve a big problem.



**STEM learning**  
Space and distance

**This PlayWorld supports:**  
Connection to the natural world and a curiosity about science. It also fosters empathy and working together as a team.



### STEP 1:

#### View/read and reflect

The boy in this story tries different ways to catch his star. As you read, explore why his ideas may not have worked. You can also talk about the different ways we can feel when we persist with a task.

### STEP 2:

#### Plan your play

Prepare these items:

- Print pictures of our galaxy (sun, planets, moon, comets), the Milky Way and the star system Alpha Centauri to display around the house.
- Make a pretend rocket ship using a cardboard box.
- A walkie talkie to use as your 'space radio'.
- Record 2 'crackly' voice messages on a phone -



### STEP 3:

#### Go on your adventure

- Jump into your rocket ship and set off. You are now in your PlayWorld on an adventure to the star system Alpha Centuri.

- Zoom around your house, noticing all the planets, their different colours and sizes and their order from the sun.
- Dodge some comets! Then look at the Milky Way galaxy and zoom faster, around and around in a spiral!

1. Hello! I am the brightest star in the Alpha Centauri system, which is the closest system to your earth. There are two other stars in our system, and we all need your help to find better names. The astronomers on earth just call us "A" "B" and "C". We think this is TERRIBLE! Could you come to visit and think of some new names?
2. Silly us! We forgot to tell you. We are very far away but still in the Milky Way. Play this special code (beep bop boop) into your space computer for our space address, then use your space zoomer so it doesn't take 75,000 years to get here!



### STEP 4:

#### Encounter a problem

The adult notices a message is coming in over the space-radio from Alpha Centauri!

What will you do? Let's go help! But how will you get there? Where is Alpha Centauri? Send

a message on your space radio and ask.

While you are 'waiting' for an answer, wonder which star it might be. Notice how many stars there are. Can you see earth?

Soon, you hear a crackle and the new message arrives. Wow! It must be a long way away if it would take 75,000 years to get there. Repeat your space code and hit your imaginary space zoomer to go visit Alpha Centauri.

### STEP 5: Learn through play

When you get there you will see three stars. Which one is the brightest? Decide what the new names will be. Should Alpha Centauri A start with an A sound?

Now, how will you let the astronomers on earth know?

Fly back to earth, then get out of your rocket ship and leave the PlayWorld.

It's time to let the astronomers know the new names of the 3 stars. Where do astronomers work? Write/draw a letter or send a video via email to tell the astronomers the news!



### Why this learning matters

In this PlayWorld you're activating your child's learning about space and our place in the solar system.

You expand their literacy skills by receiving and sending messages, and by using scientific vocabulary like planets, solar system, galaxies and astronomers.

A partnership between

