# Beep + Mort

EARLY EDUCATION GUIDE

Background

Beep and Mort is a puppet-based television series for preschoolers. Episodes follow two best friends from different worlds - Beep, a robot from the stars and Mort, a forest creature from planet Mollyvale. Together, they learn to solve problems through invention, play and action-packed adventure. Set in a country town and filled with quirky characters, Beep and Mort explores and celebrates a collision of both the natural and technological worlds. Children will delight in this wondrous world full of friendship and fun!
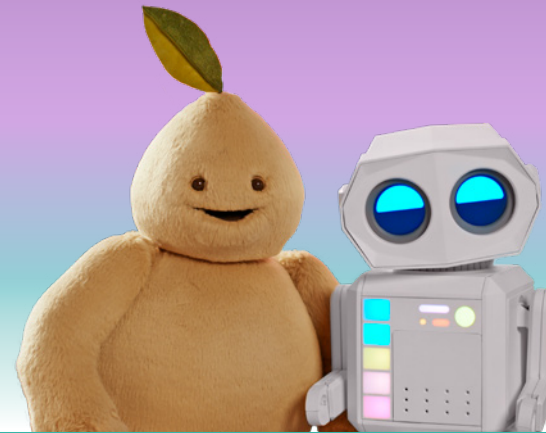
Early Learning with Beep and Mort

With its fantastical setting and playful puppet characters, Beep and Mort explores a wide range of concepts aligned with priorities in early years pedagogy including -the creative arts, digital technologies, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), self-identity, prosocial skills and the natural environment.

Integrating this series into children's multimodal play can provide opportunities to sustain, extend and deepen their knowledge and understandings about the world. This guide is a useful toolkit for educators to plan play-based learning experiences across the curriculum, helping children further investigate key ideas from the show.

Preschoolers investigate autumn leaves through multimodal play after viewing Beep and Mort episode Goodbye Leafy. Image: ABC Kids Early Education.

Characters

Pop

Mort's younger sister. She's cheeky and bright, with limitless energy.

Uncle Joe

Uncle Joe is a master of fantastic creations from the kitchen to the stories he tells.

BEEP

Beep is a robot from outer space. She is curious to learn about her new home, planet Mollyvale. Her spaceship contains all sorts of gadgets to help solve problems in the village.

MORT

Mort lives in a cosy treehouse. He is an inventor, a problem solver and above all, a good friend. Mort loves making creations inspired by natural elements like wood and stone.

Mae

Mae is the other parental figure of Mort and Pop, and she's Uncle Joe's soulmate.

Raf

Raf is an oversized, lovable family dog. A loyal companion enthusiastic about life, food, fuzzles and naps.

Story settings

Treehouse

The treehouse is home to almost everyone in the village including Mort, Pop, Raf, Mae and Uncle Joe.

Beep's Spaceship

Beep's home includes a high-tech laboratory filled with gadgets, blinking lights and computer systems.
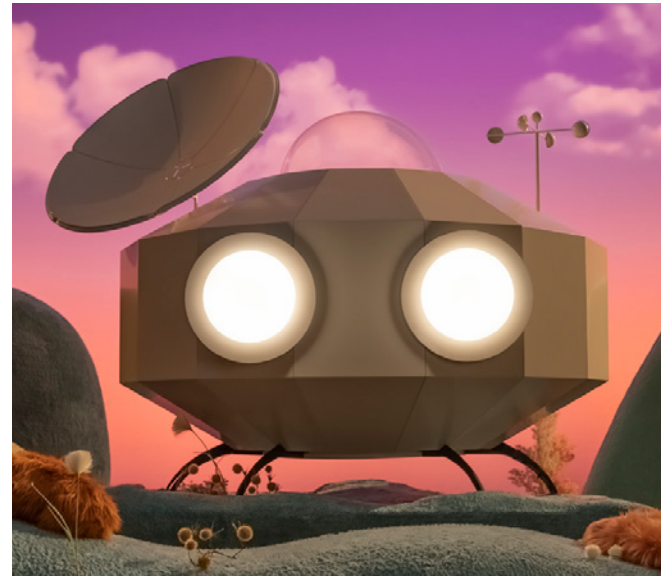
Mort's Workshop

This is where Mort creates his signature inventions. It's filled with old style hand tools, sawdust, and hand-drawn designs on the wall.

Landscapes in Mollyvale

The hills, forest and billabong are all places where Mort, Beep and their friends like to spend time playing and exploring.

Themes & Concepts Explored

Beep and Mort promotes curiosity and wonder about feelings and emotions, friendship, nature, STEM concepts, storytelling, and drama. It also provides a springboard for educators to help children develop divergent thinking skills and processes modelled by characters in the show such as, problem solving, inquiry and investigation.

Emotional literacy

Many episodes, including Mort Gets the Grumps and Birthday Surprise, reveal how Beep is curious to learn about different feelings, emotions, mindfulness and relationships with her friends. Viewing the show together with children can help build emotional awareness by discussing prosocial behaviours such as empathy, kindness, fairness, turn-taking and respect.

The natural world and sustainability

Fun facts about the natural environment are cleverly woven into episode storylines including outer space, seasons, flora, fauna, landscapes, growing food and sustainability concepts. Episodes The Beauty of Nature and Goodbye Leafy explore winter, autumn, and different types of weather. Friends also notice and appreciate the natural world in Nothing To Do Day.

Problem-solving and teamwork

Each episode presents a problem for the characters to solve, often by working together to apply their own unique gifts and points of view. Friends and family help each other and model cooperation and teamwork, by sharing ideas about new challenges and discoveries in episodes such as My Pet Fuzzle, The Dream and Birdsong.

Digital technologies

Mort is in awe of Beep's technological gizmos like her rocket blasters, shrinking rays and sonar dish. Beep's computer database prompts adventures to find answers to fascinating questions in Mollymelon Mayhem and Beep's Home. The series demonstrates ways children can use digital technologies to access information to help make sense of the world.

STEM

Characters in the show often wonder and ask questions about the world; and investigate STEM concepts through play. In The Big Wind and The Magic Button, friends explore scientific concepts about wind energy and metamorphosis. Mort also designs and engineers different inventions including kites, swings, boats, a home for a bird, and a Mollymelonade stand.

Drama and storytelling

Episode stories are character-driven, using hand-crafted puppets, sets and costumes. They provide a perfect opportunity for educators to explore key components of story structure with preschoolers, such as characters and setting. Talent Show and Beep and Mort Make a Movie demonstrate ways children can engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas.

Early Education Curriculum Links

Teaching and learning emerging from *Beep and Mort* can link to:

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0

- **Practice 3**

  Educators act with intentionality in play-based learning by facilitating the integration of popular culture, media and digital technologies in children's multimodal play.

- **Learning Outcome 1.4**

  Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

- **Learning Outcome 2.4**

  Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

- **Learning Outcome 3.1**

  Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing.

- **Learning Outcome 4**

  Children are confident and involved learners.

- **Learning Outcome 5.3**

  Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.

- **Learning Outcome 5.5**

  Children use digital technologies and media to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

Beep and Mort episode Talent Show ignites children's creativity by expressing their ideas through drama and digital technology. Image: ABC Kids Early Education

The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Statement on young children and digital technologies

- Young children have opportunities for play and pedagogy in digital contexts.

- Play and pedagogy involves children using a range of digital devices for exploration, meaning-making, collaboration and problem-solving.

After viewing *Beep and Mort,* here are some ways to extend children's learning through play-based experiences:

Build a robot or spaceship

Promote children's creativity and engineering skills by using a range of open-ended materials to design and build a 3D robot or spaceship, inspired by Beep and her high-tech home. Provide cardboard boxes of different shapes and sizes, bamboo cups, paper towel rolls, foil plates, duct tape, nuts & bolts, loose parts (e.g. old CD's & computer keys, buttons, milk bottle lids, corks), and other recycled materials. Add some small, coloured LED ball lamps for children to decorate their 3D creations with flashing lights!

Make puppets and put on a show

Use the *Beep and Mort: Puppet Pals* templates to make finger puppets for a show! Encourage children to take inspiration from the beautifully hand-crafted puppets in *Beep and Mort,* by using a range of media to express their ideas through the creative arts incuding – felt, ribbon, goggly eyes, material scraps and coloured pom poms. Guide preschoolers to make-up a story or re-tell a favourite *Beep and Mort* episode to enhance language and literacy learning. Ask open-ended questions to scaffold deeper thinking - *Who are the characters in your puppet show? What other props will we need?*

Design and fly a kite

Be an inventor like Mort! Explore the different kite design sketches drawn by characters in The Big Wind episode. Use these to spark discussions about ways to make kites using art & craft materials (e.g. paper straws, tissue paper, string, ribbon and glue). Engage children in STEM conversations and investigate ideas using digital technology – *What materials are suitable for the kite sails and tail? What material will make a kite fly high in the sky? How does the shape of the kite affect how it flies?*

Construct a Mollyvale small-world

Explore the different story settings in *Beep and Mort* including the treehouse, forest, hills and billabong. Then provide a variety of natural and processed materials (e.g. wooden blocks, branch cuts, felt trees, people figurines, ladders, doll house furniture) for children to build a Mollyvale small-world playscape. Promote the development of children's divergent thinking skills by supporting creativity, problem-solving and exploration as they build a fantasy world for imaginative play. Make Mort's favourite Mollymelon trees, by gluing small orange pom

Conduct a science experiment

Beep runs out of battery in Mollymelon Mayhem and Mort makes a "wind power hat" to create energy and charge her batteries. After viewing the episode, conduct a simple science experiment to investigate how wind can make power; and extend children's understandings about this type of clean energy. Construct a small windmill using coloured paper, a pencil and push pin. First, try to make the windmill blades move by blowing with your breath. Next, use a hand fan to blow more air onto the windmill and watch it spin faster! Develop children's science process skills by encouraging them to observe, compare and predict throughout the experiment.

Create a mini-movie

Use the Beep and Mort Make a Movie episode as a provocation for children to make their own mini-movie. Guide children to imagine and create a short/simple script together including characters, plot ideas, setting and costumes. Set up a space like Mort's workshop, where children can make a backdrop set for their movie using a large sheet and coloured paints. Help children choose costumes for the different characters and then rehearse the script through this educator guided drama. Integrate digital technology into the multimodal play experience by asking children to film their performance using a smartphone or camcorder. Share the children's learning by inviting families to a movie night at your early learning setting.

More ABC resources for planning and practice

- Mindfulness Builds Emotional Literacy: Reflective journal article
- Growing Ecological Identities: Reflective journal article
- Early Learning Little Talks: Tinkering with unplugged technology
- Wonder Cards
- Noisy by Nature: Early Education Resources
- Play School Story Time: Conceptual PlayWorld Ideas for Educators and Families
- Media and Digital Technologies in Early Education webinar
- Play School: Lights, Camera, Action Educator Notes
- Play School Science Time: Early Education Resources

Beep and Mort Puppet Pals

Glue or Tape

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Glue or Tape

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Instructions

Cut out along dotted line with scissors and glue or tape tab to wrap around finger.