Susie shows you how to make these great fish puppets!

All photos Dropped Pencil

Fish stick Puppets!

Here's a project that will let you make your own fish puppets like the ones we used in *Things With Teeth.* As an example, I'm going to make a blue and yellow fish, but you can make any color fish you would like. Once you've made one or two fish using the pattern, use your imagination and make new fish shapes!

Supplies. For this project, we'll need two different colored sheets of craft foam, glue dots, foam glue, cartoon eyes, craft paint and shish kabob/bamboo skewers. You'll also need to print the pattern from this PDF. The other items we'll need you may have around the house, including a pencil, a black marker, a paintbrush, masking tape, and a pair of scissors. And, since we'll be using some glue and some paint, you'll want to keep your workspace clean by covering the table with newspaper before you begin your project.

Materials list
- Sheets of craft foam in at least two different colors
- Glue dots
- Foam glue (white glue will also work)
- Plastic eyes with self-adhesive backing
- Bamboo Skewers
- Black water-based acrylic craft paint
- The paper template on this PDF

A note to grownups
- Approximate cost: $12 provides materials for 6 or more fish
- Average project time: 1 to 2 hours
- Supervision: This project requires scissors, so assistance with cutting is recommended for younger children. We use both glue dots and foam glue for the project to speed things up. You can make the fish using just glue, if you wish. It will add drying time between the steps.

Hold the stick by the pointed end to paint it.

We'll start our project by painting a few of the bamboo sticks black. These will be the control rods for the puppets, and you need two sticks for each fish you build. Paint the sticks first, so they will be dry when you need them later. Hold the stick by the pointed end (top), and paint it all the way to the bottom with black paint. You won't need to paint the top inch or two because that will be glued inside the fish. Set the sticks aside to dry. (Placing them in a clean, empty plastic container is a great way to keep the wet paint from sticking to anything.)
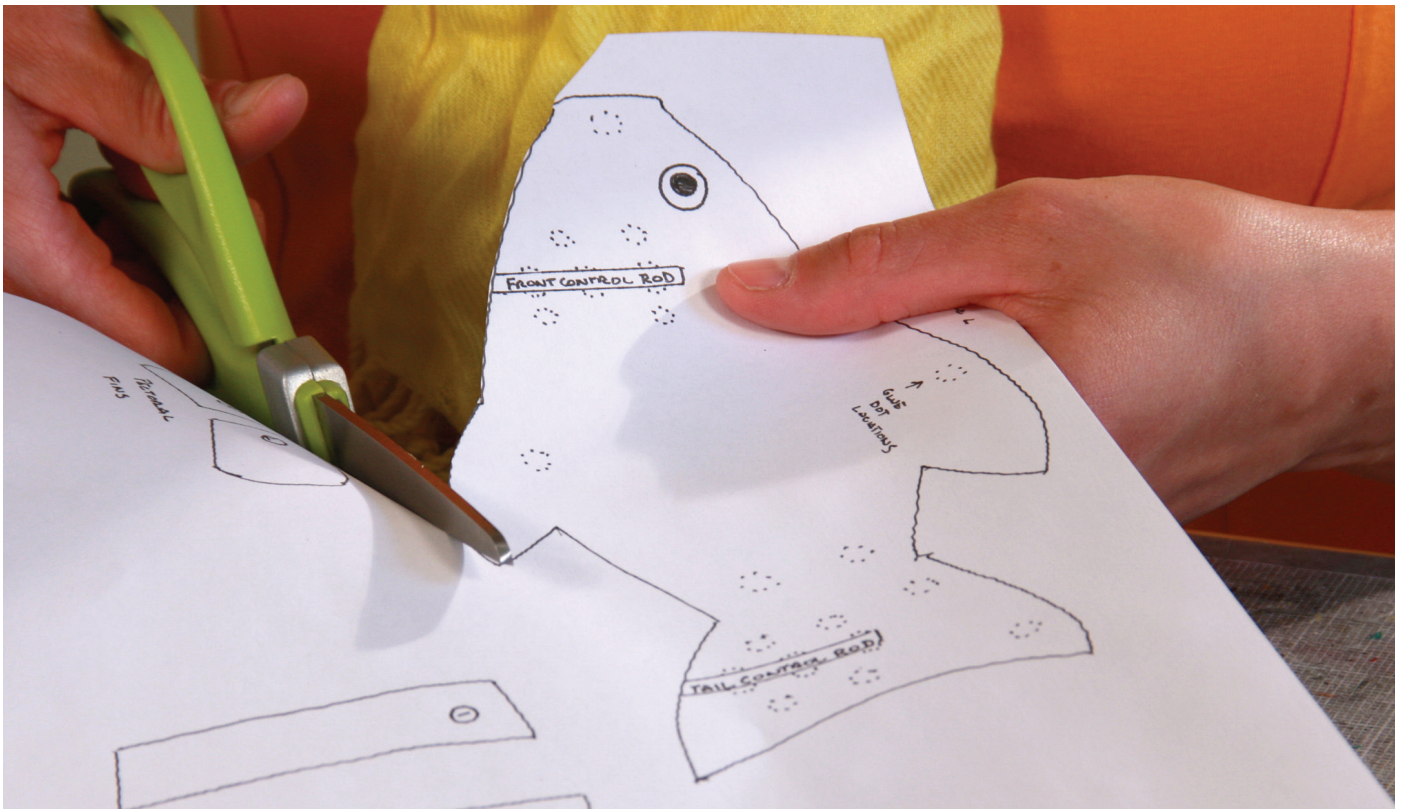
Step 2: Body foam

Now let's make the body for our fish. First, choose a sheet of foam. I used blue for my fish, but you can use any color you'd like. Fold the sheet of foam in half, and cut it along the fold line.

Next, place a small piece of masking tape on each end to hold the foam halves together so you can cut out both sides of the fish body at the same time.

Place one piece of tape at each end of the foam to keep it together.

Carefully cut out the fish pattern.

For your first fish, use the "basic fish" pattern we've supplied at the end of these printed instructions. After printing the pattern on a sheet of paper, carefully cut it out of with a pair of scissors.

Next, lay the pattern on top of the foam (you can keep it in place with a little piece of tape or hold it steady with one finger) and trace it with a pencil. Make sure you work all the way around the pattern and don't forget any lines. Press down a little harder with the pencil so your lines show up on the foam.
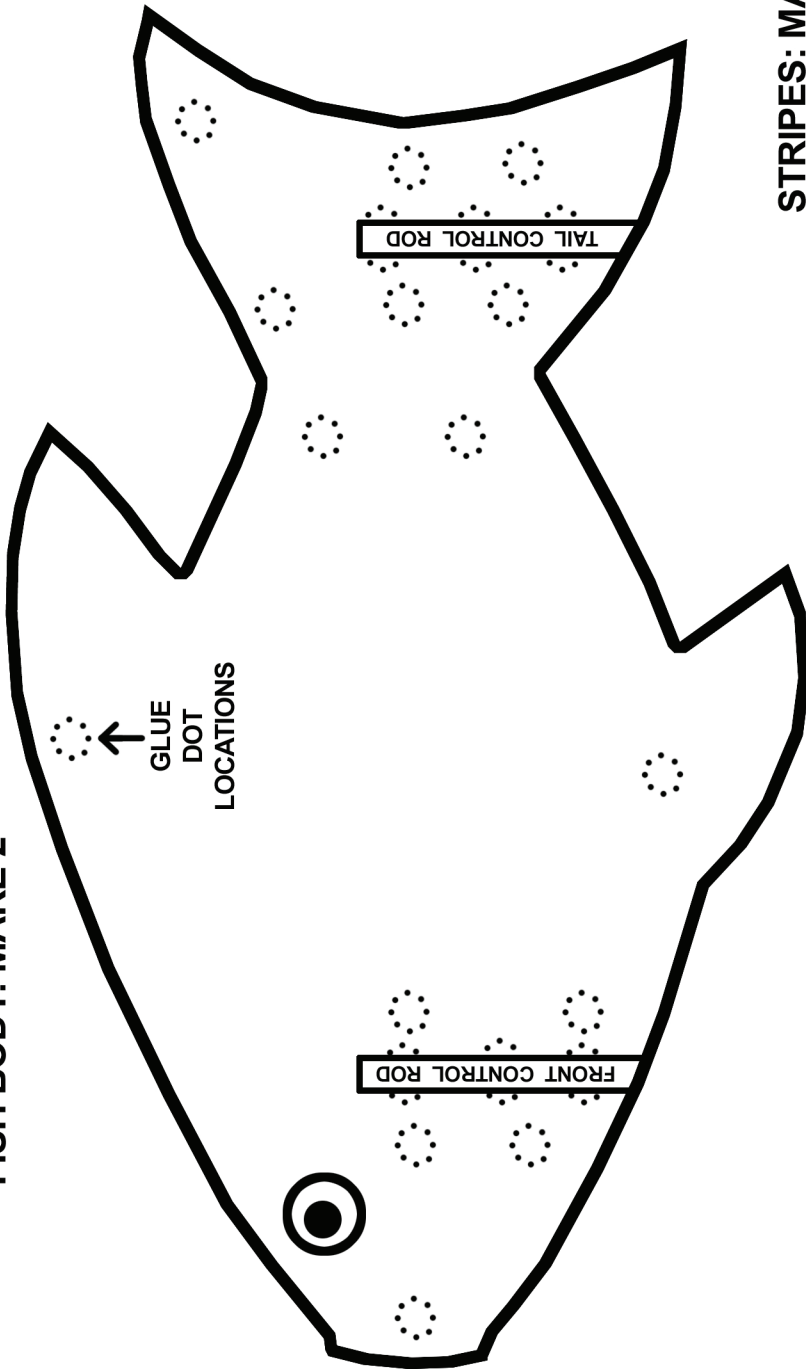

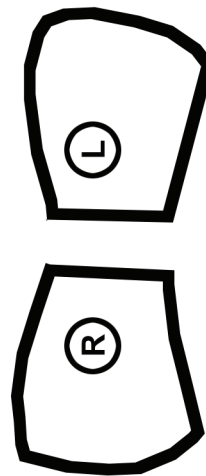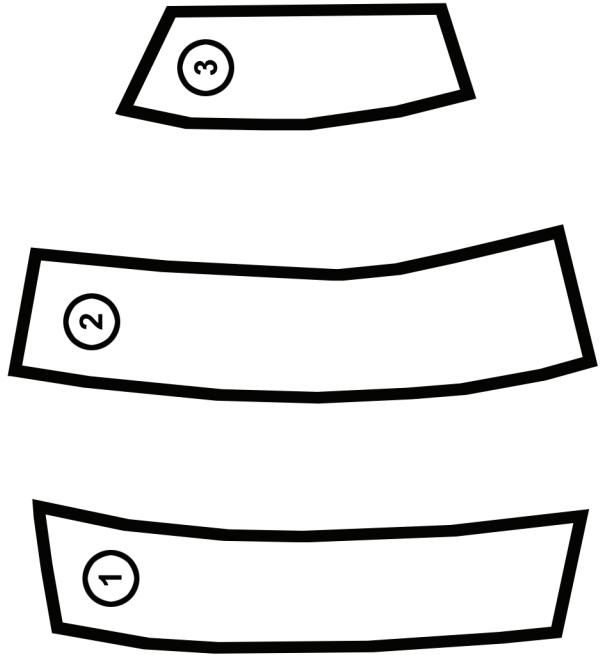**Trace the pattern on one side of the foam using a pencil.**

FUN TIP:
If you want a sturdy pattern that is easier to trace, glue the paper pattern on a piece of cardboard or cardstock, such as an empty cereal box, before you cut it out. This will make your pattern more durable, which is especially helpful if you plan to make a lot of fish!

THE FRED AND SUSIE SHOW

STRIPES: MAKE 2 SETS

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FISH BODY: MAKE 2

GLUE DOT LOCATIONS

TAIL CONTROL ROD

FRONT CONTROL ROD

PECTORAL FINS

L

R

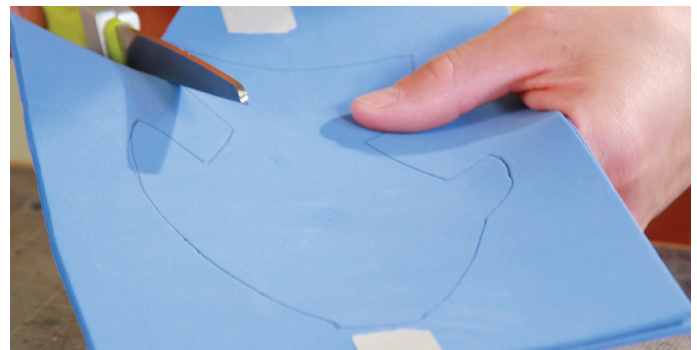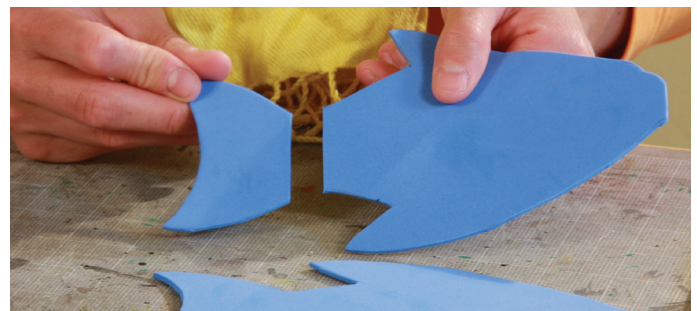**When you're finished cutting, you'll have two fish bodies.**

Now, carefully cut both pieces of foam at the same time. Once you've finished, you'll have both halves of your fish body.

Before moving on to the next step, cut the fish tail off of one of the halves. (Not both!) Line up your scissors straight across the narrowest part of the tail and make a cut. By cutting the tail from one half of the fish body, this will allow the remaining tail to be flexible, so it can swish back and forth when we make the fish puppet swim.

Carefully cut out the fish's body from the foam.

Before moving to the next step, carefully cut off 1 fish tail. Don't do both!

The next step is to glue the body together. For this step use both craft foam glue (or white glue) and glue dots. Glue dots are a sticky adhesive that come on a roll. Since they stick right away, there's no waiting for glue to dry!

Start by laying the complete fish half, the one with the tail, on your work surface. As shown on the pattern, one control stick will go in the middle of the tail, and the other will go in the body, just behind the fins. Following the pattern, place three glue dots under each of the locations where the control sticks go, next, press the pointed ends of the sticks into the dots to secure them. Then, place two glue dots on either side of the sticks, and two more dots on top of the sticks.

Next, apply a bead of foam glue all the way around the fish. Also, run a bead of glue along either side of the joint where the tail will bend. Be careful to NOT glue the Pelvic fins (the ones on the bottom of the fish) together.
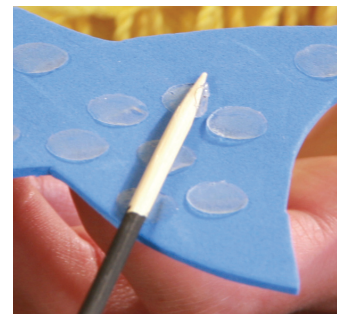
Now, carefully line up the other side of the fish and press it onto the glue dots and then into the glue. Do the same thing with the second half of the tail. Then, pick up the fish and look for places where the glue may have oozed out of the sides. Wipe the excess glue off with a paper towel. Wait for it to dry before continuing work on the body.

Use the pattern to mark the control stick locations.

Place three glue dots under each stick.

Press the stick into the dots.

Don't glue the pelvic fins

Apply the foam glue (or white glue) around the edges.

Wait an hour for the glue to dry.

Press the two halves of the fish together. Don't forget the clipped tail!

While we wait for the glue on the fish body to dry (about an hour), we can cut out the stripes and pectoral fins for your fish. Using your pattern again, trace the pectoral fins on a piece of foam that is the same color as the fish body, and then cut them out. You'll need two fins, one for each side.
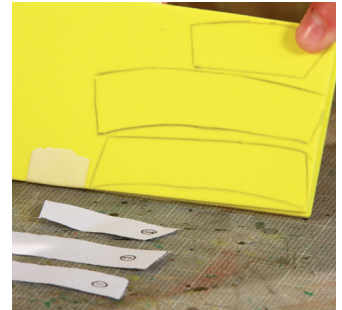
Next, cut the stripes for your fish. Use a different color from the body of the fish. For my example, I'm using yellow. Make the stripes using the pattern, and remember that you'll need a set of stripes for each side. You can make them more quickly by taping two pieces together again, like we did for the body. This way you can cut both sets of stripes at the same time.

Attach the stripes first using glue dots. Place a dot at the top and bottom of each stripe, then apply the stripes to the fish, following the photos. Complete one side first, then the other.

With the stripes in place, we'll add the pectoral fins. These go just in front of the first stripe and about a third of the way up from the bottom of the fish. One glue dot is all you'll need for the fins. You want them to stick out a bit like a real fish, so attach them to the body, but let the the front stripe push them up.

Make the fins from blue foam.

Trace the stripes on the yellow foam.

Big stripes get three glue dots.

Don't glue a stripe over the tail joint.

Add the fins with more glue dots.

Our fish is almost done! The last step is to add the eyes to our fish. Plastic cartoon eyes work the best, but you can paint the eyes instead, or you can make them out of more craft foam. The easiest cartoon eyes to use are the ones that have a self-adhesive backing. (If you use plastic eyes that aren't self-adhesive, you can stick them in place with more glue dots.)
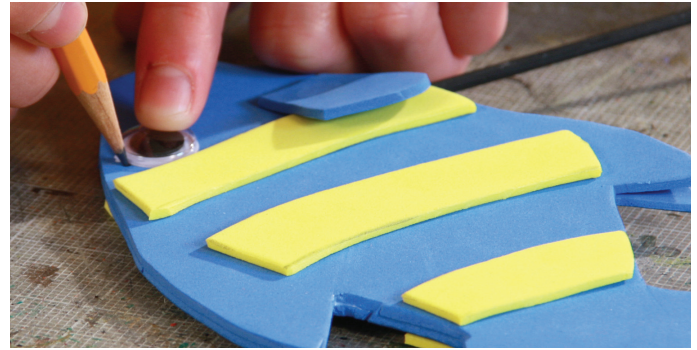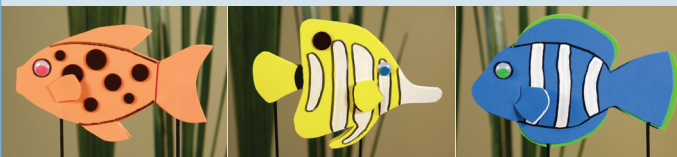
First, we want to make the dark outline that will go around the plastic eye, making it stand out. Start by taking one plastic eye (don't stick it in place yet) and set it on the fish in the proper location. Use your pattern again as a guide for the best eye placement. Then, take a pencil and mark the outline of the plastic eye on the fish's body. Next, take the eye off and trace your pencil circle carefully with a black marker. Do the same for the other side of the fish. Now you can remove the paper backing on the plastic eyes and stick them in place.

Your fish is complete! You can make it appear to swim by rolling the tail rod back and forth between your thumb and finger. Now that you know how to make one, try making them in other colors. Or, draw your own patterns to create different kinds of fish. Also, look in the bonus section on the DVD for how to make your own fish movies. Enjoy your fish stick puppets!

Susie

FUN TIP:
Instead of stripes for your next fish, try polka dots! Or try painting different color markings on your fish using craft paints, or if you'd like to keep it simple, you can leave your fish one solid color.

Trace the eye with a pencil.

Darken the pencil line with a marker.

Stick the eye in the center of the circle.

Susie talking to her new fish friend.