KIDS LEARN HOME

Little Moments, Big Learning

A Practical Parent's Guide to Playful Learning at Home



48 illustrated activities • Ages 3–8

KidsLearnHome.com

About this edition

A Kids Learn Home companion

Revised visual edition • October 2026. Created for parents and caregivers of children roughly ages 3–8. The age ranges are invitations, not developmental deadlines. Choose the entry point that fits the child in front of you.

What this book contains

48 original activity guides in six subject areas. Each has a practical explanation, a visual example, adaptation guidance, and a reusable practice or planning page. The complete PDF has 160 pages, including its cover, front matter, activity pages, planning tools, and references.

Editorial approach

Parent discussions informed the design priorities: modest preparation, realistic materials, flexible participation, and help when an activity does not go as expected. Educational and safety resources provide context. The activities and drawings are newly created examples, not copied Reddit posts or reproductions of another publisher’s worksheets.

Using and adapting the book

You may print the practice pages for use within your own household. Kids Learn Home may adapt this commissioned manuscript for its site and books. Third-party resources remain the work of their respective authors; links do not imply their endorsement.

A transparent starting point

This is an AI-assisted original manuscript and illustrated first edition. It has received digital layout and consistency checks, not classroom trials or an independent specialist review. General learning activities do not replace a child’s own teaching plan, accessibility support, or professional advice.

Artwork and sources

The cover and the 48 activity photographs are AI-generated illustrative scenes, not records of real families completing tested lessons. Interior diagrams were designed for this book. Photos show an attainable setup; diagrams explain the target idea precisely. No child is expected to reproduce a photographed result. Related reading appears on pages 159–160; access date: 15 October 2026.

A note to the parent

Start with the day you have

You do not need a perfect shelf, a special room, or a child who enjoys worksheets. A few blocks on a placemat can be enough for a real conversation about counting. A familiar story read again can be enough for a meaningful reading moment. The purpose of this book is to make those moments easier to begin and easier to adjust.

Your attention is a useful material

You can model one action, wait, and notice what your child does next. You do not have to narrate every second or ask a question after every move. Some children explain by talking; others show an idea by pointing, arranging, repeating, or quietly observing. Leave room for those different responses.

An invitation can be declined

Offer a small choice and accept information about tiredness, discomfort, or disinterest. If the materials become part of a different safe game, you can follow that idea. If an activity stops being useful, stopping is a reasonable decision. It is not a lost learning opportunity that must be recovered by finishing a page.

Repeat before buying more

A second encounter often lets a child notice something new because the setup is already familiar. Change one feature if there is a good reason. There is no need to replace every successful game with a fresh purchase or a more elaborate craft.

Keep one observation

At the end, jot down something concrete: touched each block once; asked why the towel became wet; chose to dictate a label. These details are more useful for choosing the next activity than a general judgment such as clever, behind, or not trying. You are learning what helps this particular child participate.

How to use an activity

Page one: read and begin

Start with the purpose, materials, and four practical steps. A realistic illustrative photo shows an attainable setup; the adjacent materials panel helps you prepare. It is not a standard your child must reproduce. Preparation and session times are estimates; drying, growing, and revisiting are identified separately.

Page two: make it fit

Use the clean visual model, easier version, optional stretch, access option, and troubleshooting notes. These are alternative routes through the same idea, not a ladder every child has to climb. A child may use the easier route in one subject and an extended version in another.

Page three: use or skip the paper

Practice pages provide frames, mats, records, and communication tools. An adult may write dictated words. Draw or recreate a mat on scrap paper if printing is inconvenient. Activities can also be completed without a saved product.

Understand the labels

Dry/low means little material cleanup; it does not promise zero effort. Wet/tray needs a stable tray and active adult water supervision. Paint/protected needs suitable washable supplies and a protected surface. The parent remains available; none of the activities is a promise of unattended child care.

A simple learning cycle

Invite → try → notice → adjust. Offer a manageable start. Model if useful. Notice one detail. Then choose to repeat, simplify, extend, or stop. You do not need to complete an entire section in order.

Printing

The page size is US Letter, 8.5 × 11 inches. Interior practice pages use mostly line art and generous margins. Print the selected practice page at actual size when possible. On A4, choose fit to printable area and check that the shapes remain large enough. The cover is a digital front cover, not a print-shop wrap with spine and bleed.

Choose what fits today

Only five minutes

Try Count a small collection (13), Play with rhyming words (40), Tap the parts of a word (43), Feel a gentle vibration (79), or Mirror a partner (118). Use the oral version and leave the recording sheet for another day.

No printer or craft supplies

Read a familiar book (37), name a beginning sound (46), compare two towels (25), match socks (145), or plan one small learning moment (154). A conversation or arrangement can do the job of a worksheet.

Your child wants movement

Choose Move like an animal (109), Follow a floor path (112), Play a gentle stop game (115), or Aim at a soft target (121). All have a seated, toy-based, or adult-directed route.

You want a calm table activity

Try Build a five-frame (16), Take a picture-book walk (37), Write a useful label (58), or Fold and change a sheet (100). Calm describes the offered setup, not a promised behavior.

You have time to revisit

Watch water travel (61), Compare two melting places (73), or Keep a seed journal (76). Record a starting point and return later instead of expecting continuous attention.

Two children need different versions

Choose a shared material with separate jobs: one matches a single plate while another plans all place settings (142); one counts three blocks while another tells an addition story (28). Agree which materials belong to each person.

You are both frustrated

Put the task away. Offer connection or a preferred familiar routine. Later, reduce the number of choices, the quantity, or the length of the next attempt. The low-energy plan on page 10 is designed for this kind of day.

Before you begin

Match the material to the child

Check product age labels, allergies, and how the child actually uses objects. Keep small parts, loose scraps, seeds, and choking hazards away from children who mouth items and from younger siblings. A stated age range does not make a material safe for every child. [C1, C2]

Keep adult jobs with adults

Adults handle cutting tools, hot or breakable items, dyes, uncertain plant identification, and disposal of mold. This book does not require balloons, button batteries, magnets, open flames, or chemical mixtures. Use large blocks and ordinary safe materials instead.

Water needs direct attention

Use a shallow amount on a stable surface with an adult within arm’s reach. Empty containers immediately after the activity, even if the amount seems small. Keep liquids away from electrical equipment and dry slips promptly.

Choose child-intended art supplies

Read labels and follow intended use. Use child-labeled washable materials and small portions. Non-toxic does not mean edible. Keep food separate from art, avoid dusty powders and solvent-based products, and wash hands after use. [C1]

Make a safe movement space

Remove trip hazards; use a non-slip surface; keep routes away from stairs, doors, and furniture edges. No activity requires climbing on furniture. Offer seated or toy-based versions whenever useful.

Consent and comfort matter

Ask before touch or display of a child’s work. Do not require tasting, smelling, eye contact, noisy cues, or a sensory texture. Keep an easy way to pause. If an activity causes pain, fear, or distress, stop and choose appropriate support.

Use the book within its purpose

These are general learning invitations, not tests, therapy, or evidence that a child has reached or missed a milestone. Bring ongoing learning or access concerns to a qualified professional who knows the child.

Build a small reusable kit

Start with what you own

Choose a tray or placemat, five to ten large blocks, plain paper, a thick crayon, a washable cloth, and a few unbreakable containers. Add one familiar picture book. Keep the kit small enough that putting it away is realistic.

Optional art additions

A glue stick labeled for children, washable child-intended paint, a broad brush, and low-tack tape cover several projects. Use scrap paper for tests before offering a large sheet. Buy supplies only for an activity the family actually wants to repeat.

Optional science additions

Clear plastic cups, paper towels, and a small amount of food coloring support the water activity. These stay in adult-controlled storage. A short board, large toy car, and books support ramp testing without specialized laboratory equipment.

Keep two storage zones

Child-accessible: safe materials the child can use as intended with the agreed adult availability. Adult-controlled: dyes, scissors, seeds, unsuitable small parts, and anything with special handling. Adjust zones for younger siblings and individual use.

Choose by cleanup capacity

Dry day: blocks, books, labels. Tray day: water or a damp journal setup. Protected art day: paint. No-material day: rhymes, gestures, a familiar story, or a conversation. Low cost is useful only when setup and cleanup also fit.

A replacement rule

If a supply is missing, first ask what function it serves. A tray marks the work area; a placemat can do that for dry materials. A five-frame can be drawn. Do not substitute hazardous objects just because they fit the shape of an example.

Adapt without a deadline

Ages are orientation, not a checklist

The 3–8 range spans major differences in language, reading, movement, and experience. Use the skill description and the child’s response to choose a starting point. An older child can benefit from a small concrete example; a younger child may enjoy a sophisticated conversation.

Reduce one demand at a time

Keep the central idea and change the access route. For counting, use fewer objects. For a story, use two pictures instead of three. For a motor task, let an adult move materials on the child’s signal. Avoid simplifying every dimension at once unless the child needs that.

Separate knowing from showing

Difficulty holding a pencil does not tell you whether the child understands quantity. Difficulty saying a word does not by itself tell you whether the child recognizes it. Accept dictation, pointing, looking, arranging, signs, or an established communication system.

Keep language familiar

Explain and discuss in a language the child understands well. English rhyming and sound examples in this book need changing when the spoken language changes. Translated words do not necessarily keep the same rhyme, syllable count, or sound pattern. [E2]

For siblings

Offer related roles rather than competition: observer and pourer with adult support; builder and designer; storyteller and picture chooser. Small-part materials for an older child must stay away from younger siblings. Parallel play in separate spaces is an acceptable plan.

Coordinate with existing support

If a school, therapist, or specialist has a learning or communication approach in place, use that guidance. The optional stretches are not replacements for systematic reading teaching or individualized access support.

A gentle four-week menu

How to use this menu

Choose about three short invitations per week, with familiar repeats between them if wanted. This is a sample menu, not a complete curriculum or daily obligation. Each title below links to its numbered activity in the contents.

Week one: connect and notice

Try 01 Count a small collection; 09 Take a picture-book walk; 41 Explore feelings with a puppet. Parent focus: wait for a response and record one concrete detail. Optional repeat: use the same counting group with different objects.

Week two: compare and explain

Try 03 Sort it two ways; 17 Watch water travel; 26 Reveal a leaf texture. Parent focus: describe what changed without rushing to an answer. Swap leaf texture for paper folding if safe leaves are unavailable.

Week three: make and revise

Try 06 Tell an addition story; 24 Engineer a paper bridge; 40 Build one shared structure. Parent focus: name a revision and check whether it helped. Use the easier route if building feels frustrating.

Week four: use learning in life

Try 16 Write a useful label; 44 Set a place for everyone; 48 Plan one family learning moment. Parent focus: let the child’s contribution serve a real purpose. Revisit one earlier favorite.

Review without a score

Ask: Which setup was easy to begin? Which material created unnecessary work? Which invitation did the child return to? Keep useful answers and drop the rest. The reusable weekly page on 158 can hold a much smaller plan.

The low-energy version

One minute to choose

Offer two familiar options: look at a book or count these three blocks. If choosing is too much, put one option nearby without requiring a response. Check whether rest, food, comfort, or another immediate need should come first.

One clear start

Use a single action: touch one object, notice one picture, make one fold, or name one choice. Demonstrate once if helpful. A child does not need the full activity explanation before beginning a small familiar version.

Two minutes together

Sit nearby and follow one interest. You might say, you lined the blocks up, or that character looks surprised to me. Wait. There is no need to convert every comment into a question.

A small ending

Give a predictable finish: one more page or these blocks go back in the basket. Offer help rather than making cleanup the price of participation. A child who contributed briefly still participated.

What to leave out

Skip printing, photos, elaborate displays, and written records. Skip a new supply order. Skip a comparison with yesterday or another child. Keep direct adult attention where safety requires it.

If nothing fits

You can close the book. Everyday conversation, familiar care routines, and a break from structured activities are part of family life. Return when there is a useful opening. The book is a resource for you, not a schedule you owe it.

Find your next little moment

Each activity uses three pages: begin together • make it fit • reusable practice page.

MATH & COUNTING

01 Count a small collection **13**

02 Build a five-frame **16**

03 Sort it two ways **19**

04 Make a repeating pattern **22**

05 Measure without a ruler **25**

06 Tell an addition story **28**

07 Go on a shape hunt **31**

08 Open a pretend shop **34**

STORIES, SOUNDS & WRITING

09 Take a picture-book walk **37**

10 Play with rhyming words **40**

11 Tap the parts of a word **43**

12 Find a beginning sound **46**

13 Move a block for each sound **49**

14 Connect a letter and a sound **52**

15 Retell with three pictures **55**

16 Write a useful label **58**

SCIENCE & DISCOVERY

17 Watch water travel **61**

18 Predict: sink or float? **64**

19 Change one ramp feature **67**

20 Make a shadow change **70**

21 Compare two melting places **73**

22 Keep a seed journal **76**

23 Feel a gentle vibration **79**

24 Engineer a paper bridge **82**

Find your next little moment

Each activity uses three pages: begin together • make it fit • reusable practice page.

ART & MAKING

25 Paint a tape-resist picture **85**

26 Reveal a leaf texture **88**

27 Tell a torn-paper story **91**

28 Mix a new paint color **94**

29 Print with a sponge **97**

30 Fold and change a sheet **100**

31 Build a dough creature **103**

32 Curate a family art gallery **106**

MOVEMENT & SHARED PLAY

33 Move like an animal **109**

34 Follow a floor path **112**

35 Play a gentle stop game **115**

36 Mirror a partner **118**

37 Aim at a soft target **121**

38 Remember a small collection **124**

39 Give a toy directions **127**

40 Build one shared structure **130**

EVERYDAY LIFE & CONNECTION

41 Explore feelings with a puppet **133**

42 Make a comfort-choice plan **136**

43 Practice a turn-taking script **139**

44 Set a place for everyone **142**

45 Find the laundry partners **145**

46 Design a flexible routine strip **148**

47 Repair a small play problem **151**

48 Plan one family learning moment **154**

ACTIVITY 01 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Count a small collection

One-to-one counting

Ages 3–6 • 5–10 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Five large blocks; a tray or placemat; paper and a thick marker.

THE LEARNING IDEA

One-to-one counting

WHY TRY IT

Reciting a number sequence and counting objects are different jobs. This game makes the connection visible: one touch, one object, one number word. Keep the collection small enough that your child can check it without feeling rushed. The final number describes the whole group, even when the blocks move.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place three blocks in a line. Model touching each once as you say one number word.

02 Move each counted block to the other side of the tray. Invite your child to lead the next count.

03 Ask how many there are altogether. Wait; recount together if your child wants to check.

04 Add one block, then another. Rearrange the same collection and find out whether its size changed.

Try saying: “You moved this one after counting it. How could we remember which blocks we have already counted?”

ACTIVITY 01 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Count a small collection



One touch • one object • one number word

An easier entry

Use two large objects and move them into separate spaces. You can count while your child points, or switch roles.

An optional stretch

Hide one of five blocks under a cloth. Ask what might be missing, then reveal and count to check. Avoid turning this into a timed quiz.

Another way to participate

A child can indicate each object by looking, pointing, or asking you to move it. Use high-contrast blocks on a plain mat.

Close and reset

Count blocks into their storage box. This makes the finish part of the activity rather than a separate demand.

What to notice

Look for coordinated touching and speaking rather than speed. A child may say the sequence correctly while skipping an object. Record the collection size that felt comfortable today.

If it does not go as planned

Double-counting: slide each object into a finished area. Losing interest: count something that belongs in the current game, such as garage spaces for toy cars.

Use the idea in daily life

At snack time, count one napkin for each person. Use a number that matches the actual family group.

A useful question: Does spreading the objects out change how many there are?

Parent note: No. With no objects added or removed, the quantity stays the same.

Related reading: E1; E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 01 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Count a small collection

Place or draw one object in each space. Touch each once. Tell someone how many you have.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Use the spaces as a mat. Place one large object in each.

How many altogether? Draw or dictate.

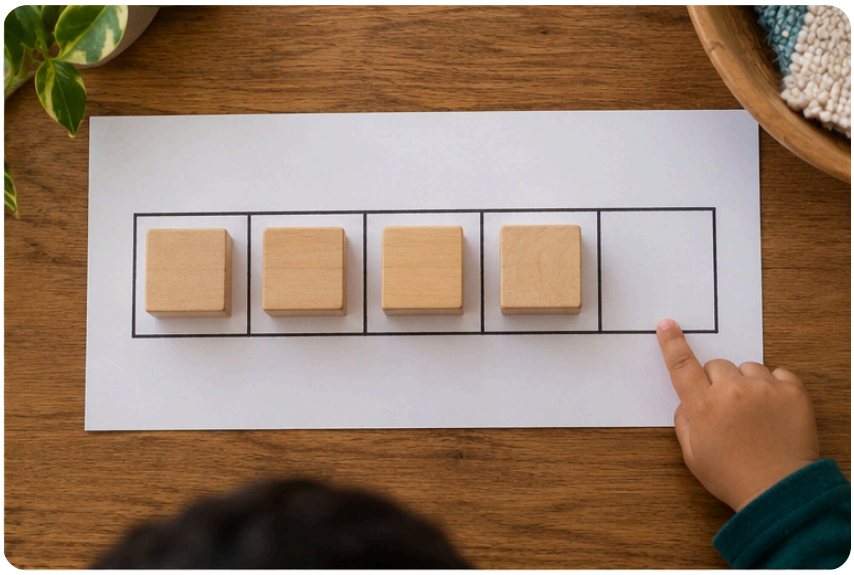
Rearrange the same group. What changed? What stayed?

ACTIVITY 02 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Build a five-frame

Seeing quantities

Ages 4–7 • 5–12 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

The practice mat; five large blocks or folded paper squares; a pencil.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Seeing quantities

WHY TRY IT

A frame gives a small collection a predictable home. Empty spaces matter as much as filled ones: four objects can be seen as four occupied spaces and one empty space. Let children count whenever they need to. Quick recognition grows through familiar arrangements, not pressure to respond instantly.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Show the five spaces on the mat and put one block in each of the first three.

02 Ask what your child notices about the filled spaces and the empty spaces.

03 Remove the blocks. Invite your child to build a group of two, then a group of four.

04 Choose one arrangement to draw. Ask how many more spaces would need filling to make five.

Try saying: “I see some spaces with blocks and some without. What do you see?”

ACTIVITY 02 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Build a five-frame



4 occupied spaces + 1 empty space = 5 places

An easier entry

Cover two spaces so that only three remain. Explore one, two, and three before returning to the full mat.

An optional stretch

Use two five-frames to explore numbers up to ten. Explain that the two rows together have ten places.

Another way to participate

Use large drawn spaces and one high-contrast object type. Accept placing, drawing, or verbal directions to an adult.

Close and reset

Stack the five objects in their container and keep the mat with them for another day.

What to notice

Notice whether your child uses the structure or counts from one every time. Both are useful starting points. Watch for placing two objects in one space.

If it does not go as planned

Crowded spaces: use smaller drawings or a larger hand-drawn mat. Guessing: ask your child to show how they checked instead of demanding another answer.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice the empty places in an egg carton, but do not assume every carton has ten spaces. Count the actual spaces together.

A useful question: If four spaces are full, how many are empty?

Parent note: One space is empty in a five-frame.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 02 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Build a five-frame

Build a number in the frame. Draw what you built. Write or dictate the number of full and empty spaces.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Use the spaces as a mat. Place one large object in each.

Full: _____ Empty: _____ Total places: 5

Full: _____ Empty: _____ Total places: 5

Full: _____ Empty: _____ Total places: 5

ACTIVITY 03 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Sort it two ways

Classifying and explaining

Ages 3–8 • 8–15 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Six to ten large blocks or safe household objects with different colors and shapes; two trays.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Classifying and explaining

WHY TRY IT

Sorting is about a rule, not about a single correct arrangement. A child who groups objects by what they are used for is reasoning just as genuinely as a child who groups them by color. Changing the rule helps children see that one object can belong to different categories at different times.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Choose objects with two obvious features. Keep the collection small and uncluttered.

02 Invite your child to make groups that belong together. Ask them to show or tell the rule.

03 Choose one object and ask where it belongs under that rule. Accept a reasoned explanation.

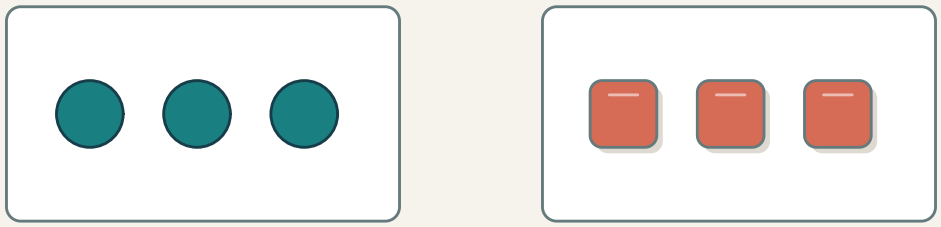
04 Mix the objects again. Offer a different rule and compare what changed.

Try saying: “You put these together. What is the same about them?”

ACTIVITY 03 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Sort it two ways



One rule: shape

An easier entry

Offer four objects with a strong difference, such as two washcloths and two wooden spoons. Model one placement.

An optional stretch

Make a group that follows two rules at once, such as objects that are both blue and round. Find something that follows only one rule.

Another way to participate

Choose features your child can perceive: texture, use, or size can replace color. Describe features aloud if needed.

Close and reset

Use the final sorting rule to return objects to their actual storage places.

What to notice

Notice the rule your child chooses and whether they keep using it. A changed rule is an opportunity to talk, not evidence of failure.

If it does not go as planned

Everything in one group: ask whether any object could have a different home. Disagreement: sort by each person’s rule in turn and explain both.

Use the idea in daily life

Sort clean laundry by owner, then by where it belongs. Let your child explain an ambiguous item.

A useful question: Can the same object move groups when the rule changes?

Parent note: Yes. Group membership depends on the chosen rule.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 03 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Sort it two ways

Draw or place objects in the two sorting spaces. Tell your rule. Try a new rule on the second round.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Round 1 • Our rule: _____

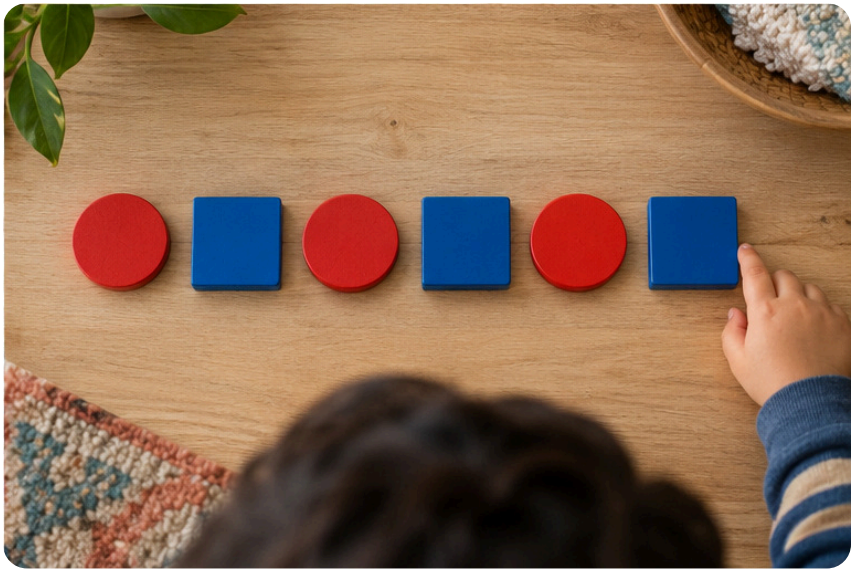
Round 2 • Our rule: _____

ACTIVITY 04 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Make a repeating pattern

Identifying the repeat unit

Ages 4–8 • 8–12 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Large blocks in two colors; space for a row; the pattern strip.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Identifying the repeat unit

WHY TRY IT

The useful part of a repeating pattern is the little unit that repeats. Children can sometimes guess the next item without noticing that structure. Building, reading, and deliberately breaking a pattern gives them a chance to explain the rule. Movement patterns can provide the same learning with no objects at all.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Build red, blue, red, blue. Read the row aloud while touching each block.

02 Place a loose pair beside the row and show how the same pair keeps coming back.

03 Invite your child to continue the pattern with two more blocks.

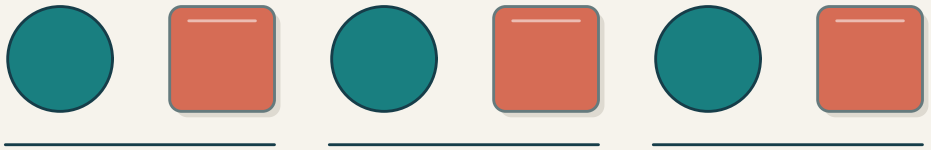
04 Swap one block. Ask whether the row still follows the rule and how someone could repair it.

Try saying: “Which little part keeps happening again?”

ACTIVITY 04 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Make a repeating pattern



The repeating unit is circle–square.

An easier entry

Make an action pattern together: clap, tap, clap, tap. Keep the movements comfortable and optional.

An optional stretch

Try AAB: red, red, blue. Ask your child to transfer that same structure to sounds or drawings.

Another way to participate

Use shapes or textures as well as colors. A seated movement or spoken-word pattern works without grasping blocks.

Close and reset

Take the row apart one repeating unit at a time, then store the materials.

What to notice

Listen for a description of the unit: red-blue or clap-tap. Simply naming colors is a starting point; matching the repeated group is the next idea.

If it does not go as planned

A colorful but nonrepeating row: describe it as a design, then offer a separate repeating example. Too many choices: put away extra colors.

Use the idea in daily life

Find repeating structures in a song refrain or clothing print. Check the actual repeat instead of assuming every decoration is a pattern.

A useful question: What comes next in circle, square, circle, square?

Parent note: Circle, if the repeating rule is circle-square.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

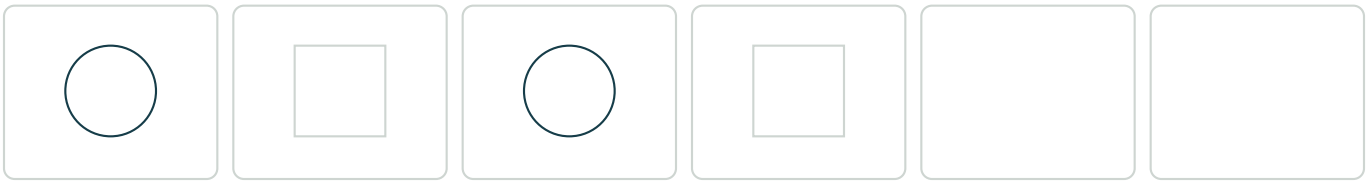
ACTIVITY 04 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Make a repeating pattern

Continue each row. Circle the smallest group that repeats. Create a pattern with your own rule.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Continue circle–square.



Continue circle–circle–square.



Make your own repeating rule.

Circle the smallest repeating unit in each completed row.

ACTIVITY 05 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Measure without a ruler

Comparing and measuring length

Ages 4–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Two books; identical large blocks or identical paper strips; a clear table.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Comparing and measuring length

WHY TRY IT

Measuring is more than naming a number. The units need to be the same size, touch end to end, and begin at a shared starting point. Exploring mistakes makes these requirements meaningful. A rough result can be described honestly as about five blocks rather than pretending it is exact.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Line up the bottom edges of two books and compare which reaches farther.

02 Lay identical units alongside one book with no gaps or overlaps.

03 Count the units and describe any partly used final space.

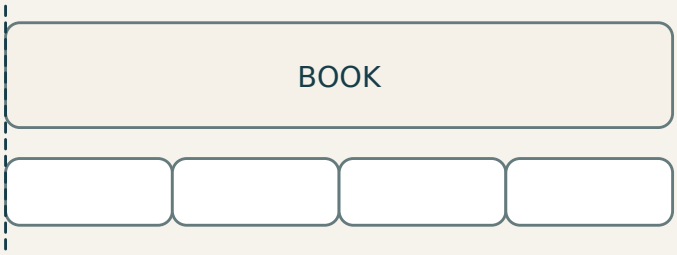
04 Measure the second book using the same units and compare the results.

Try saying: “Where should our first unit start? What happens if we leave a gap?”

ACTIVITY 05 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Measure without a ruler



Same-size units; no gaps or overlaps.

An easier entry

Compare two objects directly without units. Use visibly different lengths and line up one end.

An optional stretch

Measure the same book with two unit sizes. Discuss why smaller units usually produce a larger count for the same length.

Another way to participate

Use broad paper units that are easy to position. Your child can direct an adult to move them while checking the alignment.

Close and reset

Build a neat unit stack and return books to their shelf together.

What to notice

Watch the starting edge and the spaces between units. Notice whether your child compares the counts only after checking that the units match.

If it does not go as planned

Different counts on repeat: inspect gaps and starting points. Mixed block sizes: choose one size and start again rather than averaging the result.

Use the idea in daily life

Compare the lengths of two towels when folding laundry. Describe the shared starting edge.

A useful question: Why might a book measure four big units but eight small ones?

Parent note: The unit changed; the book did not. Smaller units cover less length each.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 05 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Measure without a ruler

Draw your object and unit. Record an estimate, a measurement, and something you checked.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Object / unit	Estimate	Measurement
Object 1		
Object 2		
Same object; new unit		

A drawing of our setup

Why might a book measure four big units but eight small ones?

ACTIVITY 06 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Tell an addition story

Joining small groups

Ages 4–8 • 8–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Five large blocks; a sheet split into two small spaces and one combined space.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Joining small groups

WHY TRY IT

An addition story connects an action to a mathematical idea. Two blocks can be passengers and one more can arrive at the stop. Begin with objects before expecting written equations. The child’s explanation of what joined is often more informative than a quickly spoken total.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place two blocks in one space and one block in another. Give them a simple story.

02 Ask what happens if the two groups come together. Move them into the large space.

03 Count the joined group. Retell what each starting group represented.

04 Draw the story. If useful, add 2 + 1 = 3 beside the drawing and read it aloud.

Try saying: “There were two passengers, and one more arrived. Show me what happened.”

ACTIVITY 06 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Tell an addition story



Two join one. Three altogether.

An easier entry

Start with one object and one more. An adult can narrate while the child moves the objects.

An optional stretch

Tell a missing-part story: three altogether, two visible, how many hidden? Let your child check with objects.

Another way to participate

Use familiar characters and short sentences. Drawing, pointing, or arranging objects can replace spoken explanations.

Close and reset

Retell a final story about blocks going home to their box.

What to notice

Look for the connection between the story and the movement. A child might count accurately yet lose track of what the objects stand for.

If it does not go as planned

Answer changes after rearranging: recount the joined group. Plus and equals confused: return to the joining action and postpone the symbols.

Use the idea in daily life

Count plates already on the table and plates still needed. Act out the joining rather than only asking for a sum.

A useful question: Two objects join one object. How many altogether?

Parent note: Three objects. The written equation is 2 + 1 = 3.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 06 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Tell an addition story

Draw the first group, the arriving group, and the whole group. Tell your own joining story.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

First group

Group that joins

The whole group

Our joining story • Adult may write dictated words.

ACTIVITY 07 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Go on a shape hunt

Describing shape properties

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Paper; a crayon; safe objects already in the room.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Describing shape properties

WHY TRY IT

A shape hunt works best when children explain what they notice. A door is a three-dimensional object whose front face may look rectangular. That distinction can be introduced gently without turning the walk into a terminology test. Rotating a drawing also shows that a shape does not change just because its position does.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Draw a circle, triangle, and rectangle. Talk about curved edges, straight sides, and corners.

02 Search one room for surfaces that resemble the drawings. Point without climbing or pulling objects down.

03 Sketch one example and count its sides or corners together.

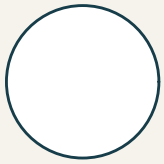
04 Turn your drawing around. Ask whether it still has the same properties.

Try saying: “What makes you think this face looks like a rectangle?”

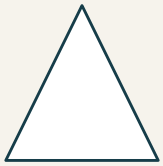
ACTIVITY 07 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Go on a shape hunt



curved edge



3 sides



4 corners

An easier entry

Hunt for one shape only. Offer two visible examples at your child’s eye level.

An optional stretch

Compare a square and a longer rectangle. Both have four right angles; a square also has all sides equal.

Another way to participate

Use large high-contrast outlines or trace safe edges together with permission. A photo hunt can replace walking.

Close and reset

Keep the drawing as a map; return any handled objects to their places.

What to notice

Notice descriptions such as round, pointy, or four sides. Expand the language while respecting the observation behind it.

If it does not go as planned

Naming every four-sided object a square: compare side lengths. Calling a ball a circle: acknowledge its roundness and compare a flat circle with the ball.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice shapes on packaging at the table. Ask whether you are describing the whole object or one face.

A useful question: Does a triangle stop being a triangle when it points down?

Parent note: No. It still has three straight sides and three corners.

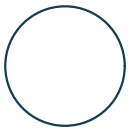
Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 07 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Go on a shape hunt

Match the outlines, then draw something in your room with a similar face. Turn the page and check the shape again.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____



curved edge



3 sides



4 corners

A surface that resembles a circle

A surface with three straight sides

A surface with four corners

ACTIVITY 08 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Open a pretend shop

Counting with a purpose

Ages 4–8 • 15–20 min • Prep 5 min • Dry / moderate



YOU WILL NEED

Three safe toy items; large paper price labels; large paper tokens; a basket.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Counting with a purpose

WHY TRY IT

Pretend shopping gives counting a reason. Begin with prices of one, two, or three tokens so the child can match one token to one unit of price. These tokens are not a lesson in real currency yet. The useful ideas are choosing, counting a payment, and checking whether the amount matches the label.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Set out three items with simple token prices and agree who will be the shopper.

02 Read one price together and count the required tokens onto a mat.

03 Let the shopkeeper check the payment by matching and counting.

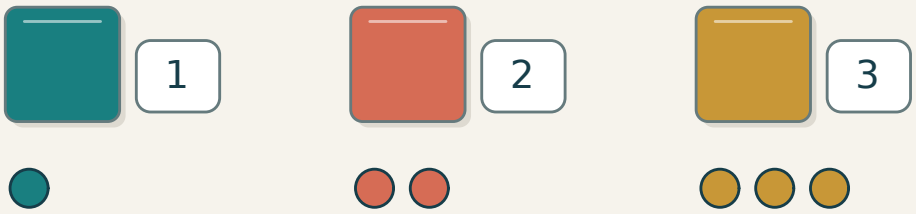
04 Swap roles. Change just one price or introduce a second purchase when the first round feels easy.

Try saying: “This costs three tokens. How could we show the shopkeeper that we have enough?”

ACTIVITY 08 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Open a pretend shop



Game-token prices: 1, 2, and 3

An easier entry

Make every item cost one token. Match one token to one item without reading numerals.

An optional stretch

Give a budget of five tokens and plan two purchases. Record what was spent and what is left using drawings.

Another way to participate

Use picture labels and large tokens. A child may choose by pointing, and an adult can count aloud on request.

Close and reset

The shop closes with a shared stock count. Put price labels and tokens in one envelope.

What to notice

Look for matching a written numeral to an amount. Also notice the social work of asking, waiting, and changing roles.

If it does not go as planned

Buying everything at once: limit the basket to one purchase per turn. Confusing token value with real money: say clearly that these are game tokens.

Use the idea in daily life

At a real shop, talk about a planned choice without asking the child to manage real payment or family finances.

A useful question: An item costs two tokens. Is one token enough?

Parent note: No. One more token is needed for a payment of two.

Related reading: E1; E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 08 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Open a pretend shop

Design three price labels. Draw one purchase and the number of tokens needed. Write a simple receipt.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our items and token prices

One purchase and the tokens needed

Receipt: what we bought / what we paid

ACTIVITY 09 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Take a picture-book walk

Conversation and comprehension

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 1 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

One familiar picture book; a comfortable place to sit.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Conversation and comprehension

WHY TRY IT

Sharing a book is a conversation, not an examination. Looking at pictures before reading can help children notice characters and possibilities. Predictions do not need to be correct. After reading, compare the prediction with what the author actually wrote rather than teaching children to guess printed words from pictures.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Let your child choose a book. Notice the cover and name the author and illustrator.

02 Look at one opening picture. Share something you notice, then invite a comment.

03 Read the words aloud. Pause where your child shows interest rather than at every sentence.

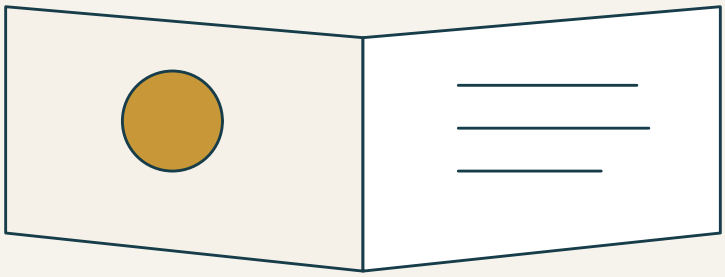
04 Return to one earlier prediction. Ask what the story helped you discover.

Try saying: “I noticed the tiny door. What caught your eye?”

ACTIVITY 09 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Take a picture-book walk



Notice a picture. Read the words. Talk together.

An easier entry

Read a few favorite pages and stop. A full book is not a requirement.

An optional stretch

Compare two characters' choices and point to a story detail supporting an idea.

Another way to participate

Offer a large-print or accessible book, audio alongside print, or discussion in the family's strongest language.

Close and reset

Put the book in a reachable basket and mark a page your child wants again.

What to notice

A point, gesture, question, or connection to family life is participation. Quiet listening also counts; do not require constant answers.

If it does not go as planned

Interruptions: follow an important comment, then return to the page. Restlessness: offer a standing or lying-down listening position.

Use the idea in daily life

Talk about an illustration during a library visit without making every book a lesson.

A useful question: Must a prediction match the ending?

Parent note: No. Use it to discuss how new information changes an idea.

Related reading: E1; E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 09 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Take a picture-book walk

Draw a noticed detail, a prediction, and something you discovered after reading.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

A picture detail I noticed

A prediction before reading

Something I discovered after reading

ACTIVITY 10 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Play with rhyming words

Hearing ending sounds

Ages 3–7 • 5–8 min • Prep 1 min • None



YOU WILL NEED

Your voices; optional drawings of cat, hat, sun, and run.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Hearing ending sounds

WHY TRY IT

Rhyme is a listening game about word endings. You do not need print, and a nonsense word can be a useful experiment with sound. Model an obvious pair before asking children to produce their own. Rhyming ability alone does not measure reading readiness.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Say cat and hat slowly in a playful sentence. Notice their matching endings.

02 Offer cat, hat, sun. Ask which two sound alike at the end.

03 Invite another ending match; accept a made-up word and name it as pretend.

04 Swap roles so your child can offer you a pair to judge.

Try saying: “Cat, hat: I hear the same ending. Does sun have that ending too?”

ACTIVITY 10 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Play with rhyming words

cat hat sun

cat / hat: matching endings; sun: different

An easier entry

Choose between one rhyming pair and one clearly different pair.

An optional stretch

Make a short spoken rhyme using a chosen pair without needing to write it.

Another way to participate

Use familiar words in a language your child knows well. Accent can change which pairs rhyme.

Close and reset

No materials need saving; stop while the game still feels playful.

What to notice

Listen for sound matching rather than word meaning. Cat and kitten are related but do not rhyme.

If it does not go as planned

Confusing meaning and sound: repeat the pair while emphasizing the ending gently. Frustration: sing a familiar rhyme together instead.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice a rhyming pair in a song and enjoy it without quizzing.

A useful question: Do cat and kitten rhyme?

Parent note: No. They are related in meaning; cat and hat rhyme in common English pronunciations.

Related reading: E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 10 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Play with rhyming words

An adult reads the word pairs. Circle a matching ending pair and invent another orally.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Adult reads aloud	Matching endings?
cat / hat	
sun / run	
cat / sun	
Our pair:	

Make a silly spoken sentence using a matching pair.

ACTIVITY 11 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Tap the parts of a word

Hearing syllables

Ages 4–7 • 5–10 min • Prep 1 min • None



YOU WILL NEED

Voices; hands or a tabletop; familiar names.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Hearing syllables

WHY TRY IT

Syllables are the spoken beats within a word. This is different from counting letters or individual speech sounds. Begin with familiar names and say them naturally. Some words vary by dialect, so choose clear examples rather than arguing about an accent.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Say tiger naturally, then model two taps: ti-ger.

02 Try banana with three taps and cat with one.

03 Invite your child to choose a familiar name and tap its spoken parts.

04 Sort spoken examples into one-, two-, and three-beat groups.

Try saying: “Listen to the whole word first. Now let’s tap its beats together.”

ACTIVITY 11 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Tap the parts of a word



banana: three spoken beats

An easier entry

Tap together using two familiar words. Watch your child’s comfortable pace.

An optional stretch

Compare two long-looking printed words only after tapping how they sound. Explain that letters and syllables are different.

Another way to participate

Use quiet finger taps or large arm movements. A child can indicate a count without speaking.

Close and reset

Choose one final name as a goodbye rhythm.

What to notice

Notice whether the taps follow the spoken parts rather than each written letter.

If it does not go as planned

Tapping too fast: model the word again, then pause. Disagreement about a name: use the family’s own pronunciation.

Use the idea in daily life

Tap a character’s name during a story if your child enjoys the interruption.

A useful question: How many syllables are in banana in a common English pronunciation?

Parent note: Three: ba-na-na. This is not a count of its six letters.

Related reading: E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 11 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Tap the parts of a word

Draw one dot for each spoken beat in cat, tiger, and banana. Add a name from home.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Say the word	Draw one dot per spoken beat
cat	
tiger	
banana	
A name from home:	

A word we would like to try next

ACTIVITY 12 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Find a beginning sound

Hearing initial phonemes

Ages 4–7 • 5–10 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Pictures or large safe objects representing sun, sock, moon, and cup.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Hearing initial phonemes

WHY TRY IT

Beginning-sound play is about the first sound you hear, not the name of a letter. Stretch a continuous sound such as /s/ without adding uh. Keep pictures easy to name so a vocabulary puzzle does not hide the listening task.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Name each picture together, agreeing on the word you will use.

02 Say sun and sock. Gently stretch their shared /s/ sound.

03 Offer moon as a contrast and find the pair with a matching start.

04 Let your child choose another object and help you hear its beginning.

Try saying: “Sssun and sssock start with the same sound. Can you hear it?”

ACTIVITY 12 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Find a beginning sound

/s/

sun | sock | moon

Match the beginning you hear.

An easier entry

Use only two matching objects and say the words together.

An optional stretch

Sort several familiar words into two beginning-sound groups. Add print only if the sound game is comfortable.

Another way to participate

Use words your child can hear and name accessibly. Do not judge speech production from this game.

Close and reset

Place the pictures in a reusable sound-game envelope.

What to notice

A correct sound match matters more than naming a printed letter at this stage.

If it does not go as planned

Naming shoe instead of sock changes the task: agree on labels first. Letter-name answers: acknowledge the letter, then model the sound.

Use the idea in daily life

Play a short sound search with familiar items in a room.

A useful question: Do sun and sock begin with the same speech sound?

Parent note: Yes, /s/. Their vowel sounds are different.

Related reading: E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 12 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Find a beginning sound

An adult names each pictured or drawn item. Draw two things beginning with the same sound.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Two things that begin with /s/

One thing with a different beginning

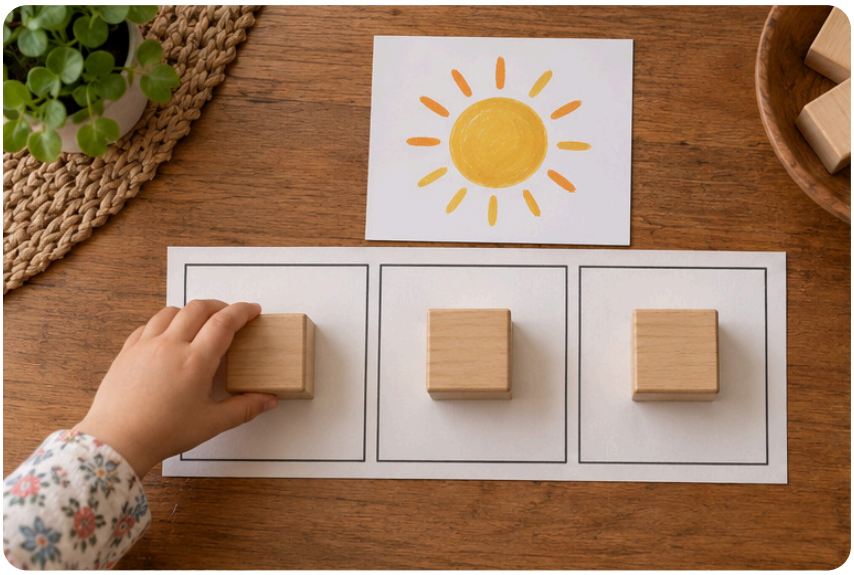
A beginning sound we want to try next

ACTIVITY 13 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Move a block for each sound

Segmenting spoken words

Ages 5–8 • 5–10 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Three large blocks; the three-box mat; familiar spoken words.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Segmenting spoken words

WHY TRY IT

A sound box represents a speech sound, not necessarily a letter. Start with simple three-sound words such as sun, map, and fish. Fish has four letters but three phonemes: /f/ /i/ /sh/. This distinction prevents a common mistake when sound work later connects with spelling.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Say sun once. Stretch it gently without changing the word.

02 Move one block for /s/, one for /u/, and one for /n/.

03 Slide a finger beneath the row and blend the sounds back into the word.

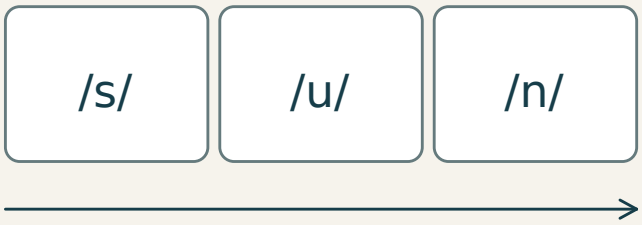
04 Invite your child to try map, then repeat a familiar example before stopping.

Try saying: “One block for each sound we hear. Then we will put the word back together.”

ACTIVITY 13 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Move a block for each sound



Blend the sounds back into sun.

An easier entry

An adult segments while the child moves the blocks. Return to syllable play if the task feels unclear.

An optional stretch

Use fish and explain why sh uses two letters to represent one sound in this word.

Another way to participate

Offer tapping, eye-pointing, or adult-directed movement. Use the child's familiar pronunciation.

Close and reset

Keep three blocks beside the sound mat, away from younger siblings.

What to notice

Watch for adding an extra uh sound after consonants or counting letters instead of spoken sounds.

If it does not go as planned

Too difficult: blend an adult model instead of asking for segmentation. Letter counting: put written words away temporarily.

Use the idea in daily life

Briefly stretch a familiar three-sound word while writing a real note together.

A useful question: How many speech sounds are in fish in common English pronunciation?

Parent note: Three: /f/ /i/ /sh/. Four letters represent those three sounds.

Related reading: E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 13 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Move a block for each sound

Move a block into each box for sun, map, and fish. Blend each row back into a whole word.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Say sun. Move one block for each speech sound.

Say map. Move one block for each speech sound.

Say fish. Move one block for each speech sound.

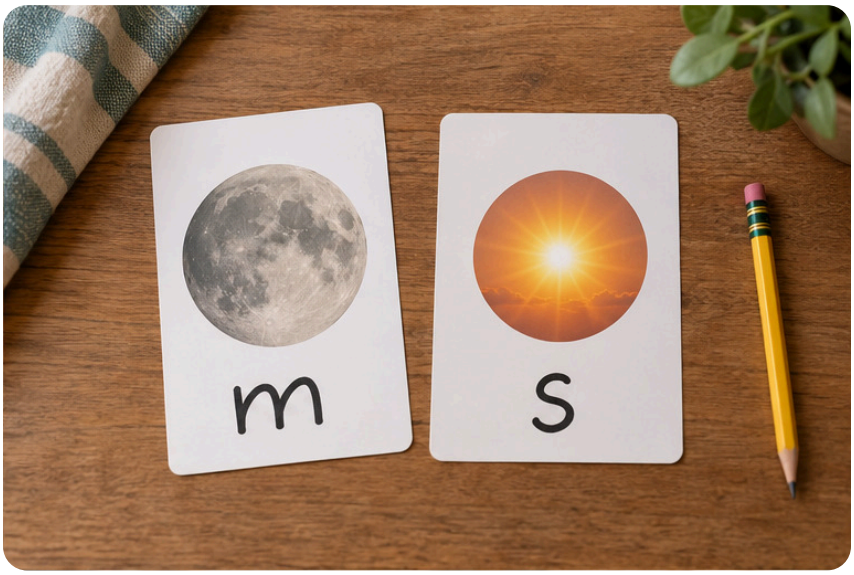
Adult reminder: fish has three sounds, /f/ /i/ /sh/. The number of sounds is not always the number of letters.

ACTIVITY 14 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Connect a letter and a sound

Early phonics

Ages 4–8 • 5–10 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Large lowercase m and s cards; familiar pictures of moon, map, sun, and sock.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Early phonics

WHY TRY IT

Phonics connects written letters with speech sounds. Use a small set that fits what your child is learning at school, rather than introducing many letters at once. Letter names remain useful, but the task here is to connect the printed form with a common sound it represents.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Show m and model its common /m/ sound while naming moon.

02 Trace the letter in the air and say the sound once.

03 Introduce s with sun, then match the four pictures to their beginning letters.

04 End by finding one of these letters in a familiar book without guessing an unfamiliar word.

Try saying: “This is m. In moon, it represents /m/. Let’s find another word that starts that way.”

ACTIVITY 14 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Connect a letter and a sound



A printed letter connects with a speech sound.

An easier entry

Use one letter and two clearly named matching pictures.

An optional stretch

Blend a word made only from sound-letter correspondences your child already knows; do not ask for untaught patterns.

Another way to participate

Use large high-contrast print and a smooth tactile letter if helpful. Coordinate with the child’s teaching approach.

Close and reset

Store cards by the letters actually practiced, not the whole alphabet.

What to notice

Notice whether the child recognizes the letter in a different size or font, not just on one card.

If it does not go as planned

Confusing similar forms: separate their introduction. Saying muh: model a clean /m/ without a trailing vowel.

Use the idea in daily life

Write an initial on a real message and connect its shape, name, and sound.

A useful question: Is knowing a letter name the same as knowing its sound?

Parent note: No. The name and the sound connection are related but different knowledge.

Related reading: E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 14 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Connect a letter and a sound

Trace m and s with a finger. Draw or name a matching beginning-sound example for each.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Say the letter’s sound. Add a matching drawing or word.

m

Say the letter’s sound. Add a matching drawing or word.

s

Use known examples: m as in moon; s as in sun. Adult writing or dictation is welcome.

ACTIVITY 15 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Retell with three pictures

Sequencing and meaning

Ages 4–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

A familiar story; three paper rectangles; crayons.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Sequencing and meaning

WHY TRY IT

Retelling asks children to choose important events and connect them. Three pictures provide a manageable structure without requiring a polished written summary. There may be more than one sensible selection of events. Ask whether the retelling preserves the story’s meaning rather than demanding your exact wording.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Read or revisit a familiar short story together.

02 Choose an event from near the beginning and sketch a simple reminder.

03 Add an event from the middle and one from the end.

04 Use the three pictures to tell the story to a toy or another person.

Try saying: “What happened that made the next part possible?”

ACTIVITY 15 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Retell with three pictures



Choose important moments; connect the story.

An easier entry

Provide two adult-drawn pictures and let the child put them in order.

An optional stretch

Explain what a character wanted and whether that changed by the ending.

Another way to participate

Use photographs of a familiar routine, objects, or adult-scribed captions instead of drawings.

Close and reset

Keep the three cards together with a paper band or in an envelope.

What to notice

Notice connections such as because, then, or so. Drawing skill is not being assessed.

If it does not go as planned

Retelling every detail: invite one important moment per space. Different order: return to the book and check together.

Use the idea in daily life

Retell a real outing using first, next, and finally.

A useful question: Must two readers choose exactly the same three moments?

Parent note: No, but each retelling should make sense and fit what happened in the story.

Related reading: E1; E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 15 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Retell with three pictures

Draw three important moments and tell the story using your pictures. An adult may add dictated words.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

An important beginning moment

An important middle moment

An important ending moment

ACTIVITY 16 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Write a useful label

Writing for a real reader

Ages 3–8 • 8–12 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Large paper labels; a crayon; removable tape; one toy basket.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Writing for a real reader

WHY TRY IT

A label gives marks a purpose: helping another person know what belongs somewhere. Early writing may include drawing, letter-like shapes, invented spelling, or conventional words. Offer an accurate adult model without taking over the child’s contribution. A useful message is a better goal than a perfect-looking page.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Choose a basket whose contents need a label and name the intended reader.

02 Invite a drawing or writing that communicates what belongs there.

03 Ask the child to read the label to you. Add an adult-written word if requested.

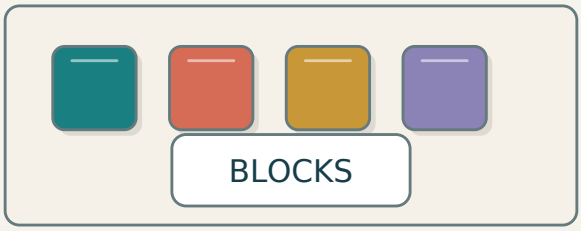
04 Attach it and ask another person to use it during cleanup.

Try saying: “What could you put on this label so someone else knows what goes here?”

ACTIVITY 16 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Write a useful label



A message that helps a real reader.

An easier entry

Choose between two picture labels and help attach the chosen one.

An optional stretch

Create a short instruction such as return blocks here, then test whether someone can follow it.

Another way to participate

Dictation, stamps, a keyboard, or choosing a picture can all create a meaningful message.

Close and reset

Use the new label to put the basket away.

What to notice

Notice how the child explains their marks and adapts them for a reader.

If it does not go as planned

Fear of spelling mistakes: offer to write a separate model. Label misunderstood: revise it with the reader rather than blaming the writer.

Use the idea in daily life

Make a real greeting, shopping reminder, or name card for a family purpose.

A useful question: Does a young child’s useful label need perfect spelling?

Parent note: No. Support the meaning, offer a correct model, and allow the child to contribute at their level.

Related reading: E1; E2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 16 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Write a useful label

Design two labels. Show one to a reader, ask what it means, and revise if needed.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

A label for a real reader

What the reader thought it meant

Our revised label or next message

ACTIVITY 17 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Watch water travel

Observing capillary action

Ages 4–8 • 15 min + revisits • Prep 5 min • Wet / tray



YOU WILL NEED

Three clear plastic cups; two paper-towel strips; water; blue and yellow food coloring; a tray.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Observing capillary action

WHY TRY IT

A paper towel can draw water through tiny spaces between its fibers. This capillary movement lets colored water travel from a filled cup toward another cup. Mixing blue and yellow in the middle may make green. The change can be slow, which gives children a reason to return and compare observations.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 On a tray, half-fill the outer cups. An adult adds a little blue to one and yellow to the other. Leave the middle empty.

02 Fold two narrow towel strips. Put one between the left and middle cups, the other between middle and right. Ends must reach the cup bottoms.

03 Draw the starting setup. Look for a wet front moving up each strip.

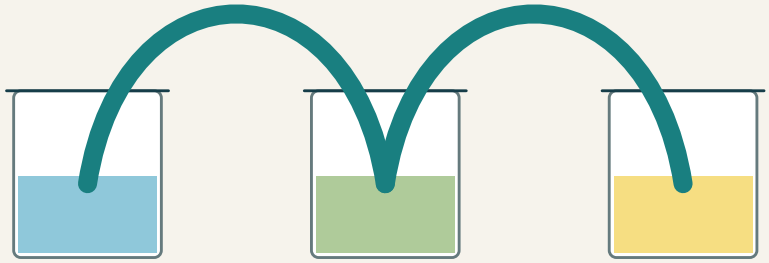
04 Revisit after 10 and 30 minutes, then later if needed. Record what actually changed.

Try saying: “Where is the wet part now? What could we compare when we come back?”

ACTIVITY 17 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Watch water travel



Later: water may collect and mix in the middle.

An easier entry

Use two cups, one strip, and one color. Observe the wet strip without requiring color mixing.

An optional stretch

Compare two towel brands in separate otherwise matching setups. Repeat before drawing a firm conclusion.

Another way to participate

Use strong color contrast, large cups, and spoken descriptions. An adult handles dyes and all pouring if needed.

Close and reset

Adult empties cups, wipes the tray, and keeps dyes out of reach. Do not drink experiment water.

What to notice

Record the direction of wetting and any water collected in the middle. Do not promise a fixed completion time.

If it does not go as planned

No movement: check absorbent paper and contact with the water. Very pale middle: use a clearer dye solution, not extra cups.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice how a cloth absorbs a small clean-water spill.

A useful question: Does water jump through the air between cups?

Parent note: No. It moves through the towel’s connected porous structure.

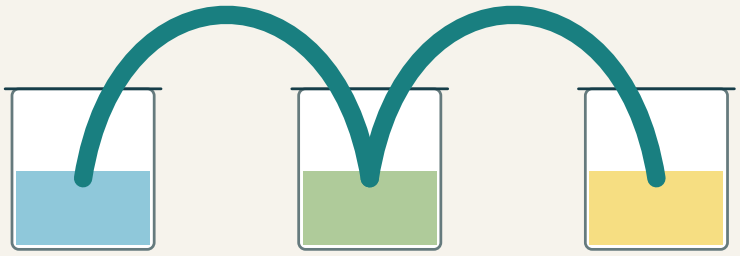
Related reading: S1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 17 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Watch water travel

Draw the cups at the start and later. Record times and the route the water took.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____



Later: water may collect and mix in the middle.

START • Time: _____ What can we see?

LATER • Time: _____ What changed?

OUR QUESTION • What would we like to test next?

ACTIVITY 18 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Predict: sink or float?

Testing a prediction

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 4 min • Wet / tray



YOU WILL NEED

A shallow bowl of water; towel; four large waterproof safe objects, such as a wood block, plastic lid, metal spoon, and bath toy.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Testing a prediction

WHY TRY IT

A prediction is an idea to test, not an answer to defend. A floating result depends on the object as a whole, including its material and shape. Avoid the simple rule that heavy always sinks: a large ship can float while a much smaller metal object sinks.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place the shallow bowl on a towel. Stay within arm’s reach during all water play.

02 Choose one object and predict whether it will float or sink.

03 Lower it gently, let go, and observe without pushing it underwater.

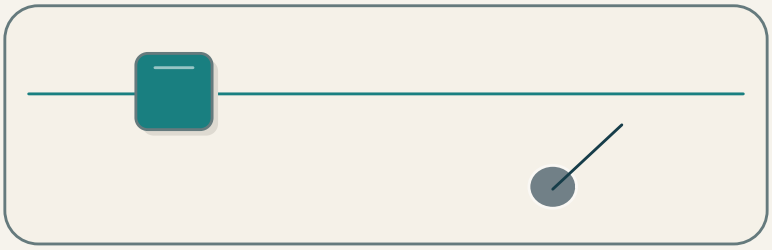
04 Test the other objects. Sort by observed result, then retest one surprising example.

Try saying: “What do you predict? We can change our idea after we see what happens.”

ACTIVITY 18 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Predict: sink or float?



Release gently. Observe instead of pushing.

An easier entry

Test two clearly different objects and describe what you see together.

An optional stretch

Compare two shapes made from the same piece of modeling material, with adult support and a washable surface.

Another way to participate

Let the child choose objects while an adult handles them. A dry demonstration video can replace water if needed.

Close and reset

Empty the water immediately and dry the floor; never leave the bowl available unattended.

What to notice

Distinguish a prediction from an observation. Notice whether trapped air or pushing changes the result.

If it does not go as planned

Splashing hides the result: use one object at a time. A floating item gets pushed down: release it and observe again.

Use the idea in daily life

Discuss why a bath toy can float without treating all materials as identical.

A useful question: Does every heavy object sink?

Parent note: No. The object’s overall density and shape matter; heaviness alone is not a reliable rule.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 18 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Predict: sink or float?

Record each object, your prediction, and its observed result. Draw one surprise.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Object	Prediction	What happened
Object 1		
Object 2		
Object 3		
Object 4		

A drawing of our setup

Does every heavy object sink?

ACTIVITY 19 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Change one ramp feature

A fair comparison

Ages 4–8 • 12–20 min • Prep 5 min • Dry / floor



YOU WILL NEED

A sturdy short board or stiff cardboard; two books; one large toy car; tape marks on a non-slip floor.

THE LEARNING IDEA

A fair comparison

WHY TRY IT

A useful comparison changes one chosen feature while keeping other important features alike. Here, change ramp height but use the same car, track, starting position, and release method. More than one attempt helps reveal normal variation. Results belong to this setup rather than proving a rule about every ramp.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Build a low stable ramp away from walking routes. Release the car without a push.

02 Mark where it stops and repeat three times.

03 Add one book to raise the ramp modestly. Check that it is stable.

04 Repeat three releases from the same starting point. Compare the stopping positions.

Try saying: “What did we change? What are we keeping the same?”

ACTIVITY 19 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Change one ramp feature



Same car and release; compare two heights.

An easier entry

Watch two releases from one low ramp and practice letting go without pushing.

An optional stretch

Keep the height fixed and compare surface coverings instead. Measure distances in the same units.

Another way to participate

Use a tabletop demonstration with a catch tray if floor access is difficult. An adult can release on the child’s signal.

Close and reset

Remove the ramp and tape immediately so the route is clear.

What to notice

Watch for accidental pushes, a shifted ramp, or a change from tile to carpet.

If it does not go as planned

Car veers: straighten the track. Results vary widely: check the release before deciding which height sends it farther.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice ramps in public places without rolling objects on them or blocking access.

A useful question: Should we change the car and the height together?

Parent note: Not for this comparison: it would be unclear which change contributed to the result.

Related reading: S2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 19 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Change one ramp feature

Record three trials at each height. Draw the setup and circle the feature you changed.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Trial	Lower ramp	Higher ramp
1		
2		
3		

A drawing of our setup

Should we change the car and the height together?

ACTIVITY 20 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Make a shadow change

Light and observation

Ages 4–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

An adult-held flashlight; large opaque toy; blank wall or paper; a dim but safe room.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Light and observation

WHY TRY IT

A shadow forms where an object blocks light. Changing the object’s position between a light and a surface changes the shadow you see. Use the same torch and screen while moving the object. Do not claim that all shadows behave identically in sunlight and with a nearby flashlight.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Shine the flashlight toward a plain wall, never into eyes. Place the toy between light and wall.

02 Keep the light still and move the toy closer to it. Observe the shadow.

03 Move the toy toward the wall and compare again.

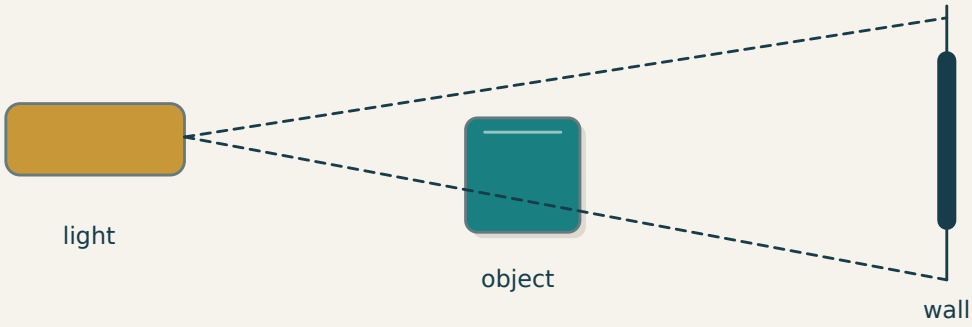
04 Draw two setups with the same light and wall positions.

Try saying: “Which part of the setup moved? How did the shadow change?”

ACTIVITY 20 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Make a shadow change



An easier entry

Find the shadow of a hand and move it slowly.

An optional stretch

Compare an opaque object with a translucent plastic object using the same positions.

Another way to participate

Keep enough room light for safe movement. Describe the edges aloud or use large high-contrast shadows.

Close and reset

Turn off and store the flashlight with its battery compartment secured.

What to notice

Look for a connected explanation involving light, object, and screen rather than just a bigger drawing.

If it does not go as planned

No clear shadow: reduce competing light, not visibility of walking routes. Blurry edges: try adjusting the distances.

Use the idea in daily life

Look at outdoor shadows without looking at the sun or leaving safe paths.

A useful question: What must be between the light and the screen to make this shadow?

Parent note: An object that blocks enough of the light.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 20 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Make a shadow change

Draw light, object, and wall in two positions. Add the shadow you observed.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Setup 1: light / object / screen

Setup 2: move only the object

What changed in the shadow?

ACTIVITY 21 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Compare two melting places

Change over time

Ages 4–8 • 10 min + revisits • Prep 5 min • Wet / tray



YOU WILL NEED

Two similarly sized ice cubes; matching shallow dishes; a towel; clock.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Change over time

WHY TRY IT

Melting changes solid ice into liquid water. Compare two safe locations rather than adding hot water or salt, which introduces extra factors. Use cubes made in the same tray and start them together. This small home comparison suggests what happened here; it is not a precise measurement of temperature.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Put one cube in each matching dish at the same time.

02 Choose a warmer indoor location and a cooler one, away from electronics and child-accessible hazards.

03 Draw both cubes at the start and revisit every few minutes.

04 Compare the last solid ice and the water left in each dish.

Try saying: “What counts as melted? Let’s agree what we are looking for.”

ACTIVITY 21 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Compare two melting places



Matching starting cubes; record actual times.

An easier entry

Watch one cube change in one dish and describe the wet edge.

An optional stretch

Repeat on another day and compare whether the pattern is similar. Use matching starting cubes each time.

Another way to participate

Use large visual outlines or an adult’s description; touching cold ice is optional.

Close and reset

Pour away meltwater and dry all surfaces. Ice is for this experiment, not for eating.

What to notice

Record both position and time. A smaller starting cube can melt sooner even without a warmer location.

If it does not go as planned

One cube already partly melted: restart together. Changing locations mid-test: record the change rather than hiding it.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice ice in a drink changing shape while avoiding choking hazards.

A useful question: Did the ice disappear into nothing?

Parent note: No. The melted ice became liquid water.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 21 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Compare two melting places

Sketch both dishes at the start, middle, and end. Write the observation times.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Time	Place A	Place B
Start		
Revisit 1		
Revisit 2		
End		

A drawing of our setup

Did the ice disappear into nothing?

ACTIVITY 22 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Keep a seed journal

Patient biological observation

Ages 4–8 • 10 min + daily look • Prep 5 min • Damp / tray



YOU WILL NEED

Large untreated bean seeds; a clear plastic container; damp paper towel; date labels; adult handling.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Patient biological observation

WHY TRY IT

A seed journal makes gradual change visible. Different seeds may sprout at different times or not sprout at all. For many common bean seeds, water, air, and a suitable temperature support germination; later green growth needs adequate light. Observation should describe the actual seed rather than copy an ideal growth sequence.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Adult checks seed instructions and places a bean beside a damp, not flooded, towel in a ventilated container.

02 Mark the start date and keep the container out of reach of children who mouth objects.

03 Observe daily without tasting seeds or handling mold. Draw what is visible.

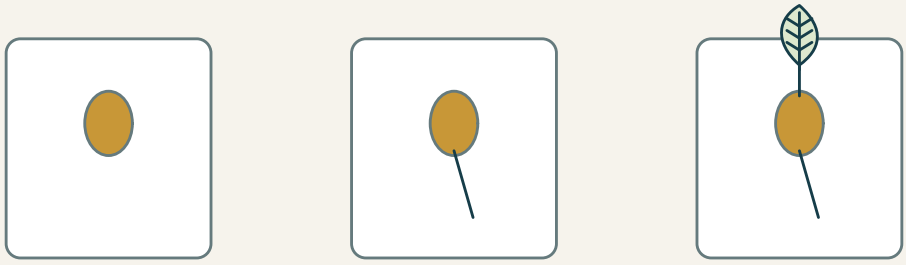
04 If it sprouts, identify the root and later shoot. Move to appropriate growing conditions following packet guidance.

Try saying: “What is different since yesterday? What stayed the same?”

ACTIVITY 22 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Keep a seed journal



Possible stages; timing varies. Draw what you see.

An easier entry

Observe a young purchased plant while an adult manages seeds.

An optional stretch

Compare several seeds under the same conditions and record how many sprout.

Another way to participate

Use enlarged photos or a magnifier with adult support. Dictate observations rather than writing them.

Close and reset

Wash hands after adult handling. Never eat seeds or sprouts from the experiment.

What to notice

Look for seed-coat changes, a root, and later a shoot. A drawing of no visible change is valid data.

If it does not go as planned

No sprout: check seed viability, moisture, and temperature. Mold: adult discards the entire setup without opening it near the child.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice a plant’s new leaf over a week instead of expecting daily dramatic changes.

A useful question: Must every seed sprout on the same day?

Parent note: No. Timing varies, and some seeds may not germinate.

Related reading: S3; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 22 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Keep a seed journal

Record dates and draw three observations. Label root or shoot only when you can actually see them.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Date	Drawing / visible change	Next question
Look 1		
Look 2		
Look 3		

A drawing of our setup

Must every seed sprout on the same day?

ACTIVITY 23 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Feel a gentle vibration

Sound and vibration

Ages 3–8 • 5–10 min • Prep 1 min • None



YOU WILL NEED

Your voice; a table; optional drum or empty plastic container.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Sound and vibration

WHY TRY IT

A gentle hum offers a simple link between a sound and a vibration a child may feel in their own body. Keep the activity quiet and optional. Feeling the vibration is an observation, not a test of hearing or speech. Different ways to notice sound should remain available.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place your own fingers lightly on the front of your own neck and hum gently.

02 Invite your child to try on their own body if comfortable. Do not press on anyone’s throat.

03 Stop humming and compare what the fingers feel.

04 Tap a container gently and notice its sound, then stop it with a resting hand.

Try saying: “I feel a little buzz when I hum. What do you notice in your own way?”

ACTIVITY 23 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Feel a gentle vibration



gentle sound

a vibration to notice

An easier entry

Listen to two quiet taps and indicate when they stop.

An optional stretch

Compare two containers with the same gentle tapping method; describe rather than rank the sounds.

Another way to participate

Offer visual hand signals for sound and silence, a tactile surface, or participation by watching. Do not force sound exposure.

Close and reset

Return containers and finish with a quiet pause.

What to notice

Notice descriptions such as buzzing, moving, or quiet. Accept not wanting to touch or hum.

If it does not go as planned

Too loud: reduce force or switch to silent visual patterns. No felt buzz: try another comfortable sound or simply listen.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice a washing machine’s vibration from a safe distance without touching moving parts.

A useful question: Should we press hard on the neck to feel more?

Parent note: No. Use only light self-touch if comfortable, or choose a different way to observe.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 23 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Feel a gentle vibration

Draw one sound maker. Mark when it is making sound and when it is still.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our sound maker

What we notice when it makes sound

What we notice when it stops

ACTIVITY 24 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Engineer a paper bridge

Design, test, and improve

Ages 5–8 • 15–25 min • Prep 5 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Two equal-height books; two identical sheets of paper; several identical large blocks; clear table.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Design, test, and improve

WHY TRY IT

Changing a paper’s shape can change how it carries a load. Comparing a flat sheet with a folded sheet makes that idea visible. Keep the span and test loads alike. A collapsed bridge gives information about the design; it is not a failed child.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place two books a short fixed distance apart. Lay one flat paper across the gap.

02 Add one large block at the center, then another if it stays up. Stop when the paper bends to the table.

03 Fold the second sheet into an accordion and bridge the same gap.

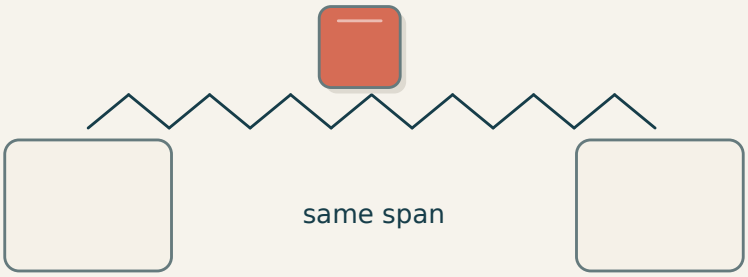
04 Repeat the same loading method and compare. Sketch a revision you would like to test.

Try saying: “What did the bridge show us? Which one change should we try next?”

ACTIVITY 24 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Engineer a paper bridge



Change the paper shape, then test.

An easier entry

Let the child choose a fold while an adult builds and loads the bridge.

An optional stretch

Repeat both designs with a slightly wider span while keeping the paper and blocks unchanged.

Another way to participate

Use pre-folded paper, a stable table, and adult loading on the child’s signal.

Close and reset

Remove books from the table edge and reuse paper for drawing.

What to notice

Notice the fold shape, support spacing, and where each block was placed.

If it does not go as planned

Both collapse immediately: shorten the gap or use a lighter test block. Unequal tests: reset the span and loading position.

Use the idea in daily life

Look at corrugated cardboard and notice that shape is part of its structure.

A useful question: Did folding add more paper?

Parent note: No. It changed the shape and the way the paper supported the load.

Related reading: S2. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 24 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Engineer a paper bridge

Draw flat and folded designs. Record blocks held before collapse and plan one improvement.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Design	Blocks held	What changed?
Flat paper		
Folded paper		
Our revision		

A drawing of our setup

Did folding add more paper?

ACTIVITY 25 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Paint a tape-resist picture

Creative choices and sequence

Ages 3–8 • 15–25 min + drying • Prep 5 min • Paint / protected



YOU WILL NEED

Thick paper; low-tack painter’s tape; washable child-labeled paint; brush; table cover.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Creative choices and sequence

WHY TRY IT

Tape covers areas that paint cannot reach. Removing it reveals the unpainted paper beneath. The picture belongs to the child: there is no model they must copy. Explaining the cover-paint-dry-peel sequence gives the project a clear structure without deciding the final design.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Test tape on a scrap of the same paper. An adult tears several manageable strips.

02 Invite your child to place strips, pressing their edges gently.

03 Brush thin layers of washable paint across the paper. Leave it flat to dry fully.

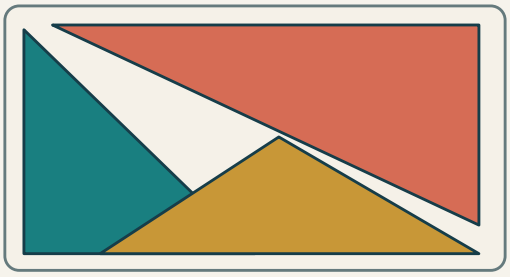
04 Peel slowly with adult support. Notice the covered areas and choose a title.

Try saying: “Which areas were protected? What would you like to try in another picture?”

ACTIVITY 25 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Paint a tape-resist picture



Cover → paint → dry → peel

An easier entry

Offer two tape strips and one paint color on a smaller sheet.

An optional stretch

Predict which spaces will stay white and compare after peeling.

Another way to participate

Pre-attach tape tabs for grasping. Offer a broad brush or let the child direct an adult’s brush.

Close and reset

Wash tools before paint dries and remove tape scraps from younger children’s reach.

What to notice

Look for choices and experiments, not a tidy result. Uneven edges are information about paper, tape, and paint.

If it does not go as planned

Paper tears: try lower-tack tape and sturdier paper next time. Paint bleeds: press edges and use thinner paint layers.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice how a cover protects a table from paint, just as tape protected the paper.

A useful question: Why do some parts stay unpainted?

Parent note: The tape covered those areas while paint was applied.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 25 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Paint a tape-resist picture

Plan a few tape lines, draw the revealed shapes, and dictate a title. Your result need not match the example.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Tape lines we might try

Our revealed shapes or a rubbing of the result

A title and one thing we noticed

ACTIVITY 26 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Reveal a leaf texture

Close observation and mark-making

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 4 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

A large clean fallen leaf from a known safe plant; thin paper; chunky crayon.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Close observation and mark-making

WHY TRY IT

A rubbing translates a raised surface into a visible pattern. It is a useful reason to look slowly at a leaf rather than simply collect it. Choose familiar safe plants and avoid berries, irritating sap, or unknown leaves. The rubbing is an observation tool, not a requirement to identify a species.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 An adult selects and checks a clean leaf. Place its raised-vein side upward.

02 Lay paper over it and hold the paper still.

03 Rub the side of a crayon lightly across the paper until the pattern appears.

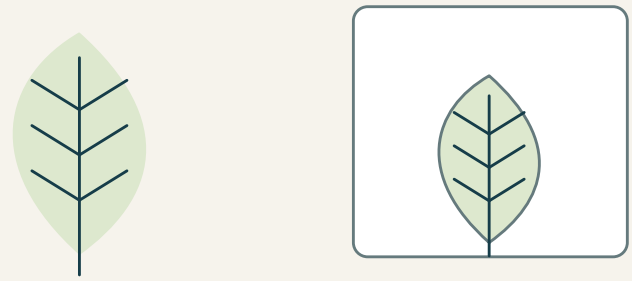
04 Compare the rubbing with the leaf and point out a matching detail.

Try saying: “What marks appeared that we could not see through the plain paper?”

ACTIVITY 26 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Reveal a leaf texture



Leaf beneath paper → a rubbing above it

An easier entry

Tape the paper in place and let the child watch while an adult reveals the first patch.

An optional stretch

Compare two safe leaves and describe similarities without assuming they are the same kind.

Another way to participate

Use a broad peeled crayon and a non-slip mat. Offer a safe textured board if leaves are unsuitable.

Close and reset

Adult returns or disposes of the leaf and everyone washes hands.

What to notice

Notice pressure, direction, and specific features such as a branching vein.

If it does not go as planned

Only solid color: reduce pressure and use the crayon’s side. Leaf shifts: secure paper edges without hiding the leaf.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice safe textures in woven cloth and compare a cloth rubbing on another day.

A useful question: Where did the pattern come from?

Parent note: Raised parts beneath the paper picked up more of the rubbing pressure.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 26 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Reveal a leaf texture

Make a rubbing in the large space. Circle a vein and draw one detail larger.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Make a leaf rubbing here

Draw one small detail larger

A texture word or dictated observation

ACTIVITY 27 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Tell a torn-paper story

Composition and storytelling

Ages 3–8 • 15–20 min • Prep 4 min • Paper / tray



YOU WILL NEED

Scrap paper in a few colors; backing sheet; child-labeled glue stick; tray.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Composition and storytelling

WHY TRY IT

A torn-paper collage lets shape and meaning develop together. A blue piece may become a river or a character’s coat. Tearing is an alternative to scissors, but the point is creative choice rather than a fine-motor test. Invite a story after the child has had time to explore.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Offer paper pieces large enough to hold comfortably. Model one tear.

02 Arrange pieces on the backing before introducing glue.

03 Attach the chosen pieces using small amounts of glue.

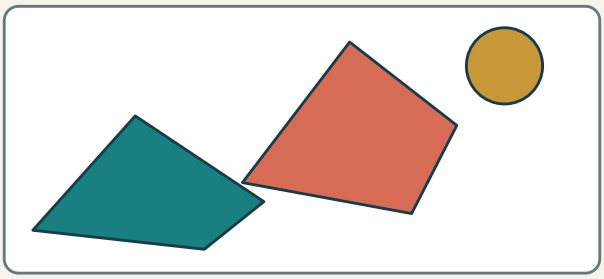
04 Ask whether the picture has a story or title; accept a nonrepresentational design.

Try saying: “Tell me about the part you want me to notice.”

ACTIVITY 27 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Tell a torn-paper story



Arrange first. Glue only when ready.

An easier entry

Use pre-torn pieces and skip gluing: arrange, photograph if desired, and reuse.

An optional stretch

Create two scenes with one element appearing in both. Tell what changed.

Another way to participate

Offer paper with a starter tear or fabric pieces that are easier to grasp. An adult can apply glue on request.

Close and reset

Sort reusable scraps into one envelope and discard tiny pieces.

What to notice

Look for intentional placement, revision, and descriptions. Do not guess what the picture is supposed to be.

If it does not go as planned

Glue becomes the activity: offer a glue-free round first. Torn shape disappoints: show how it might become a different feature.

Use the idea in daily life

Arrange safe packaging shapes into a design before recycling them.

A useful question: Does the picture have to look like an adult example?

Parent note: No. The child’s choices and explanation guide the work.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 27 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Tell a torn-paper story

Plan a scene in the large frame. Add a dictated title and choose one detail to explain.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Plan or make a torn-paper scene

A title or story for the scene

One choice the maker wants to explain

ACTIVITY 28 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Mix a new paint color

Prediction and visual comparison

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 5 min • Paint / tray



YOU WILL NEED

Washable child-labeled blue and yellow paint; white palette; brush; paper; water cup under adult control.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Prediction and visual comparison

WHY TRY IT

Mixing paint invites a prediction followed by a visible test. Many common blue and yellow paints mix toward green, but the exact result depends on the pigments and proportions. Let children name what they actually see. Mixing paint is not the same process as mixing colored light.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place a small dab of each color separately on a palette.

02 Predict what a small mixture might look like.

03 Mix similar small amounts and paint a sample on paper.

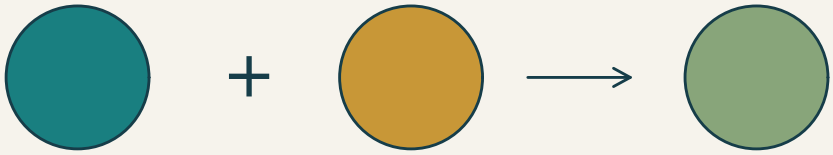
04 Add a little more of one color. Compare and label both samples through dictation or writing.

Try saying: “What changed when we added more yellow? How could we describe the difference?”

ACTIVITY 28 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Mix a new paint color



Compare the actual starting colors and mixture.

An easier entry

Use one mixture and allow an adult to manage quantities.

An optional stretch

Make a three-sample series with increasing yellow, keeping a visible record.

Another way to participate

Describe the process and use texture or amount comparisons if color perception differs. There is no required color-name answer.

Close and reset

Wash the brush and hands. Keep paint and painting water separate from food and drink.

What to notice

Notice whether your child compares two actual samples rather than trying to produce a prescribed perfect green.

If it does not go as planned

Muddy result: clean the brush and start a fresh small mixture. Too much paint: offer smaller portions on a tray.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice variations in green clothing or leaves without assuming all greens share a recipe.

A useful question: Will every blue-and-yellow paint mixture look exactly the same?

Parent note: No. Pigments, proportions, and the surface affect the result.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 28 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Mix a new paint color

Paint or draw the starting colors and two mixtures. Describe what changed.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Starting colors: add two small samples

Mixture 1 and mixture 2: label amounts if useful

What changed when we added more of one color?

ACTIVITY 29 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Print with a sponge

Repeating a chosen mark

Ages 3–8 • 12–20 min • Prep 5 min • Paint / protected



YOU WILL NEED

Large clean sponge pieces, adult-prepared; washable paint in a shallow dish; paper.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Repeating a chosen mark

WHY TRY IT

Printing repeats a shape using a tool. The amount of paint, the pressure, and the surface affect the mark. These variables make an imperfect print worth examining. A child can make a repeating pattern, a picture, or an experimental page without needing to produce all three.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Adult prepares large sponge pieces without loose fragments. Show one light dip in paint.

02 Press and lift vertically to make a mark. Compare it with a sliding mark.

03 Try a lighter amount of paint and another press.

04 Choose a favorite way to print and build a page around it.

Try saying: “What happened when you pressed and lifted instead of sliding?”

ACTIVITY 29 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Print with a sponge



Press, lift, and compare marks.

An easier entry

Use one large sponge shape and one paint color.

An optional stretch

Create an AB or AAB print pattern and explain its repeating unit.

Another way to participate

Attach a broad handle only if securely adult-made, or offer an easy-grip child printing tool.

Close and reset

Adult washes sponge and checks it before storage. Remove all scraps from younger siblings.

What to notice

Notice purposeful changes in pressure or paint amount rather than the number of finished pictures.

If it does not go as planned

Puddles instead of shapes: reduce paint. Sponge crumbles: discard it and choose a sturdier tool.

Use the idea in daily life

Find a repeated printed motif on fabric and compare its marks.

A useful question: Must every print be identical?

Parent note: No. Pressure and paint amount naturally produce variation.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 29 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Print with a sponge

Print in the large frame. Circle one clear print and one experiment; explain how you made each.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Press and lift: make test prints

Try a different pressure or paint amount

One print I want to explain

ACTIVITY 30 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Fold and change a sheet

Spatial reasoning through paper

Ages 4–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Several sheets of paper; crayons; a clear tabletop.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Spatial reasoning through paper

WHY TRY IT

A simple fold changes the visible shape and reveals a line when opened. Folding allows children to explore alignment, halves, and reflected placement without needing a complicated origami model. A fold need not be perfect to be useful, and paper shapes can be turned or reopened to check an idea.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Explore one sheet flat. Predict what will happen when two opposite edges meet.

02 Bring the edges together and press a crease with a finger.

03 Open the paper and trace the crease. Compare the two regions.

04 Draw a mark on one side and fold again to investigate its position.

Try saying: “Which edges did you bring together? What can the crease help us see?”

ACTIVITY 30 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Fold and change a sheet



A crease changes a sheet without cutting it.

An easier entry

Start the fold and let the child press the crease. Use a large sheet.

An optional stretch

Compare a half fold with an accordion fold. Explore whether the folded paper can stand.

Another way to participate

Use lightweight paper and a broad flat hand or smooth tool to press. An adult can hold the edges.

Close and reset

Save folded sheets for labels, drawing, or the bridge activity.

What to notice

Notice alignment and the child’s explanation. A rough fold is not a test of readiness.

If it does not go as planned

Edges drift: use fewer steps and hold one corner together. Frustration with precision: make a playful fold sculpture instead.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice folds while folding a towel; compare the material with paper.

A useful question: Did folding cut the sheet into separate pieces?

Parent note: No. It changed its position and shape while keeping the sheet joined.

Related reading: E1; E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 30 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Fold and change a sheet

Draw the flat sheet, the folded shape, and the opened crease. Add your own folding idea.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

The flat sheet and my fold plan

The folded shape and opened crease

A new fold I would like to try

ACTIVITY 31 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Build a dough creature

Sculpture and descriptive language

Ages 3–8 • 15–20 min • Prep 3 min • Dough / mat



YOU WILL NEED

Commercial child-labeled modeling dough; mat; chunky roller; no beads, toothpicks, or small decorations.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Sculpture and descriptive language

WHY TRY IT

Sculpture allows children to change a form repeatedly. Rolling, flattening, and joining are choices, not a recipe for one correct animal. Choose a product appropriate to the child, checking allergens and labels. Non-toxic does not mean edible; keep dough away from children who try to eat it.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Check the label and prepare a small portion on a washable mat.

02 Model rolling a ball, making a thick rope, and flattening a shape.

03 Invite a creature or an abstract sculpture using large joined pieces.

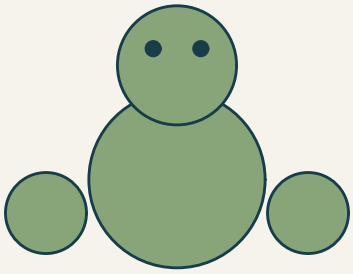
04 Ask what one feature does and how your child could change it.

Try saying: “This part is long and this part is flat. What would you like your creature to do?”

ACTIVITY 31 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Build a dough creature



Roll • flatten • join • revise

An easier entry

Explore one action, such as flattening with a palm, without making a named object.

An optional stretch

Design a wide base so the sculpture can stand. Explain which revision helped.

Another way to participate

Offer soft suitable dough, adult-assisted rolling, or paper sculpture if touch or allergens make dough unsuitable.

Close and reset

Store dough as labeled, clear all pieces, and wash hands. Do not mix dough with snack food.

What to notice

Notice revisions and descriptions. A creature can change identity during the play.

If it does not go as planned

Pieces fall off: press a broader joining area. Texture disliked: offer a tool or change the material.

Use the idea in daily life

Notice that an object’s base helps it stand, from a sculpture to a cup.

A useful question: Must a creature look realistic?

Parent note: No. Imagination, material exploration, and explanation are the focus.

Related reading: E1; C1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 31 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Build a dough creature

Draw a front view and a side view of your sculpture. Name one change you made.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

My sculpture from the front

My sculpture from the side

One change I made and what it did

ACTIVITY 32 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Curate a family art gallery

Reflection and sharing choices

Ages 3–8 • 15–20 min • Prep 4 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Two or three child-chosen artworks; removable tape; large paper caption cards.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Reflection and sharing choices

WHY TRY IT

A gallery gives children a voice in what is kept and shared. Asking permission before displaying an artwork respects that it belongs to its maker. Reflection can focus on a choice or a problem solved rather than calling everything beautiful. A small rotating display also reduces the pressure to save every sheet.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Ask your child which work, if any, they want to display.

02 Choose an accessible display spot that does not damage walls or block routes.

03 Make a title card and a short dictated or written note about the process.

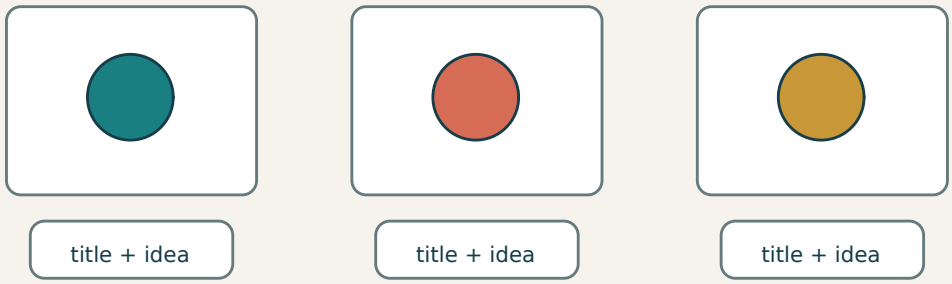
04 Invite a viewer to notice and ask a genuine question. Plan when to rotate the display.

Try saying: “What would you like a visitor to know about how you made this?”

ACTIVITY 32 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Curate a family art gallery



An easier entry

Display one piece on a table and let the child point to a favorite part.

An optional stretch

Arrange three works around a theme and explain the curatorial choice.

Another way to participate

Include a sculpture, audio description, or photograph with permission. A gallery need not depend on written captions.

Close and reset

Return undisplayed work to a labeled folder with the child’s help.

What to notice

Notice ownership and the child’s own meaning. They may prefer not to share a work yet.

If it does not go as planned

Too much to keep: agree on a rotating number and photograph selected work privately. Comparison between siblings: describe each process separately.

Use the idea in daily life

Practice noticing details during a museum or library display visit.

A useful question: Who should help decide whether the child’s work is displayed?

Parent note: The child, with adult support for practical choices.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 32 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Curate a family art gallery

Make a title card, an artist’s comment, and a visitor question. Plan the next rotation.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Artist’s title card

Artist’s comment: how I made it

A visitor’s question / next rotation date

ACTIVITY 33 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Move like an animal

Body awareness and language

Ages 3–8 • 5–10 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / clear space



YOU WILL NEED

Clear non-slip floor space; optional animal pictures; adult nearby.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Body awareness and language

WHY TRY IT

Pretending offers an invitation to move without competing. Children can choose movements that suit their bodies, including seated gestures or imagined actions. The goal is exploring words and comfortable motion, not copying an animal perfectly or exhausting a child.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Check a small clear space and agree on a stop signal.

02 Model a slow bear-like walk or a seated bird-wing movement.

03 Let the child choose an animal and a comfortable way to represent it.

04 Compare two actions, then finish with a gentle still pose.

Try saying: “How could you show a bird using the movement that feels comfortable for you?”

ACTIVITY 33 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Move like an animal



Choose your own comfortable movement.

An easier entry

Stay seated and choose between two arm or hand actions.

An optional stretch

Sequence three chosen animals and ask a partner to remember the order.

Another way to participate

Use gaze, sound, hands, or a toy moved by an adult. No jumping, crawling, or standing is required.

Close and reset

Return pictures and clear the floor before the next routine.

What to notice

Notice a chosen movement, descriptive word, or adjustment to space. Do not use balance or stamina as a developmental score.

If it does not go as planned

Speed gets unsafe: reduce the space and model slow motion. Child declines: invite them to direct a toy instead.

Use the idea in daily life

Use a gentle chosen animal gesture during a short waiting period.

A useful question: Is there one correct way to represent an animal?

Parent note: No. Choose a safe, comfortable movement and explain the idea.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 33 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Move like an animal

Draw three animal ideas and choose a comfortable movement for each. Add a stop signal.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Animal idea 1 and a comfortable action

Animal idea 2 and a comfortable action

Our stop signal and final gentle pose

ACTIVITY 34 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Follow a floor path

Planning a route

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 5 min • Dry / floor



YOU WILL NEED

Low-tack tape tested on the floor; open non-slip space; a toy for an alternative route.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Planning a route

WHY TRY IT

A path turns direction words into visible choices. Keep it on the floor rather than building an obstacle course on furniture. Children can walk beside the line, follow it with a toy, or direct another person. Success means navigating the chosen route, not balancing on a narrow line.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Adult makes a short tape path away from doorways and tests that tape lies flat.

02 Name the start, a turn, and the finish. Walk beside it together.

03 Invite the child to lead at a comfortable pace, stopping at an agreed marker.

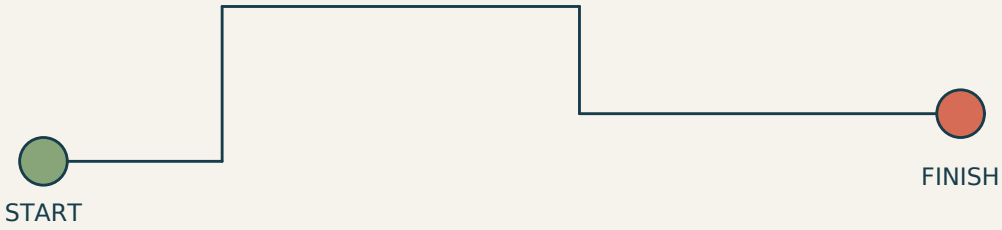
04 Change one turn or draw a second route and compare.

Try saying: “Where will you turn? Show me the route before you begin.”

ACTIVITY 34 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Follow a floor path



Walk beside the line or move a toy.

An easier entry

Use a straight route and move a toy along it.

An optional stretch

Draw a simple map of the route, then ask a partner to follow the map.

Another way to participate

Use a table path for hands, a large accessible floor route, or verbal directions for an adult.

Close and reset

Adult removes tape and checks the floor for residue or loose pieces.

What to notice

Notice planning, stopping, and the use of position words. Falling or wobbling is not a task requirement.

If it does not go as planned

Tape peels: stop and remove it. Too many turns: shorten the path instead of repeatedly correcting the child.

Use the idea in daily life

Talk about a safe familiar route from bedroom to kitchen.

A useful question: Must the child balance directly on the tape?

Parent note: No. Walking beside it or moving a toy follows the same route idea.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 34 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Follow a floor path

Draw start, turn, and finish. Plan one route and describe it to a partner.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our route: start / turn / finish

Directions for a partner

One change that would make it easier to use

ACTIVITY 35 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Play a gentle stop game

Noticing and responding to cues

Ages 3–8 • 5–8 min • Prep 1 min • None



YOU WILL NEED

A clear safe space; a visual stop card or quiet clap cue.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Noticing and responding to cues

WHY TRY IT

A stop game makes a changing rule visible and playful. The adult's job is to provide predictable practice, not to catch a child out. Missed signals can mean the cue was unclear, the movement was absorbing, or the task needs simplifying. They are not evidence of poor self-control.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Agree on move and stop cues and show them before playing.

02 Choose a comfortable slow action, such as waving or marching in place.

03 Alternate several seconds of moving with a visible stop cue.

04 Swap leaders and let the child signal when the adult moves or stops.

Try saying: "That cue was quick. Let's try it slowly so we can both notice."

ACTIVITY 35 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Play a gentle stop game



Agree on clear, comfortable cues.

An easier entry

Use one simple hand movement and longer intervals.

An optional stretch

Add a third cue for slow movement after the first two feel familiar.

Another way to participate

Use visual, spoken, or tactile cues by agreement. Allow seated movement and avoid startling sounds.

Close and reset

Finish with an agreed final stop and put the cue card away.

What to notice

Notice whether the child understands the cue and has time to respond. Celebrate noticing, including a late stop.

If it does not go as planned

Frustration after a missed cue: remove elimination and restart together. Sound sensitivity: use a card instead of music.

Use the idea in daily life

Practice a clear pause signal before crossing a safe doorway with adult guidance.

A useful question: Should a missed stop eliminate a player?

Parent note: Not in this game. Adjust the cue and keep participation welcoming.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 35 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Play a gentle stop game

Design move and stop symbols. Draw an action that works in your available space.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our MOVE cue

Our STOP cue

A movement that fits our space

ACTIVITY 36 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Mirror a partner

Attention and taking turns

Ages 3–8 • 5–10 min • Prep 1 min • None



YOU WILL NEED

A partner; comfortable sitting or standing space.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Attention and taking turns

WHY TRY IT

Mirroring asks one person to notice another person’s movement and respond. Slow actions make that exchange manageable. Matching need not be exact, and direct eye contact is not required. The leader should choose actions both partners can perform comfortably.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Sit or stand facing in a way both partners find comfortable.

02 Adult slowly raises one hand and invites a matching movement.

03 Try two or three gentle actions with pauses between them.

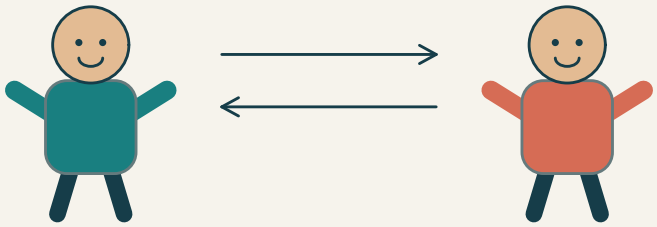
04 Swap leaders. Describe one detail you noticed while following.

Try saying: “I will move slowly enough for you to choose how to follow.”

ACTIVITY 36 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Mirror a partner



Lead slowly. Swap roles.

An easier entry

Match one hand opening and closing with a generous pause.

An optional stretch

Create a three-action sequence and repeat it with roles reversed.

Another way to participate

Use hands, facial expressions, a toy, or sound patterns. Agree on a version that does not require uncomfortable motion.

Close and reset

Finish with matching waves or another mutually chosen ending.

What to notice

Notice shared pacing and turn changes. Looking at hands instead of faces is a valid strategy.

If it does not go as planned

Moves too fast: add a slow-motion rule. Partner does not want copying: use two toys as the performers.

Use the idea in daily life

Use a shared slow gesture to reconnect before starting a routine.

A useful question: Must partners make direct eye contact?

Parent note: No. They can attend to hands, a toy, or another agreed cue.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 36 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Mirror a partner

Draw three movements your partners can both use. Mark who leads first and second.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Movement 1 that suits both partners

Movement 2 that suits both partners

Who leads first? How will we swap?

ACTIVITY 37 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Aim at a soft target

Adjusting a movement

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / clear space



YOU WILL NEED

Rolled clean socks; a laundry basket on the floor; a starting marker.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Adjusting a movement

WHY TRY IT

Aiming is a chance to notice what a movement does and adjust it. Keep the target soft and low, the distance short, and other people out of the throwing route. A closer marker is a useful adaptation, not cheating. Avoid scoring a child against a sibling.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place the basket in a clear area and agree to throw only toward it.

02 Model a gentle underarm toss from a short distance.

03 Invite a few attempts and ask what your child wants to change.

04 Move the marker closer or farther by agreement and try again.

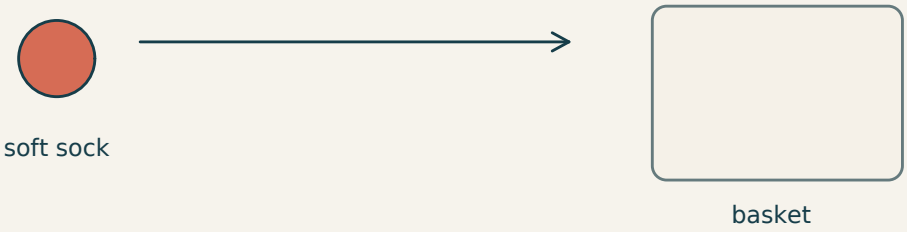
Try saying: “Where did the sock land? What would you like to change on the next try?”

ACTIVITY 37 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Aim at a soft target

Choose a comfortable distance.



An easier entry

Drop or place socks into a basket from a comfortable position.

An optional stretch

Predict a good starting distance, test it, and record several attempts without ranking people.

Another way to participate

Use a nearer wide target, roll rather than toss, or let the child direct an adult.

Close and reset

Count all socks back into the laundry basket and clear the marker.

What to notice

Notice an intentional change in force, distance, or direction rather than only counting baskets.

If it does not go as planned

Throwing toward people: stop and reset the safety rule. Repeated misses upset the child: enlarge or move the target closer.

Use the idea in daily life

Place laundry into its basket using a movement appropriate to the setting.

A useful question: Is moving the basket closer allowed?

Parent note: Yes. Adjusting the task makes practice useful and comfortable.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 37 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Aim at a soft target

Draw your setup, mark the distance in a chosen unit, and record a change you tried.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our starting point and target

A change we tried

What the change helped us notice

ACTIVITY 38 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Remember a small collection

Choosing a memory strategy

Ages 4–8 • 8–12 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Three large familiar objects; tray; cloth; pencil and paper if wanted.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Choosing a memory strategy

WHY TRY IT

Memory games are more useful when children can discover a strategy than when they are judged for a score. Naming, arranging, drawing, or making a little story can all help. The collection should remain small enough that a child can enjoy checking it.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Show three objects and name them together.

02 Invite a strategy for remembering, such as a spoken story linking the objects.

03 Cover them briefly and ask what your child remembers in any form.

04 Uncover, check, and discuss which strategy helped. Let the child test the adult next.

Try saying: “Would naming them, drawing them, or telling a story help you remember?”

ACTIVITY 38 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Remember a small collection



Name them • arrange them • tell a story

An easier entry

Use two objects and uncover after a short pause.

An optional stretch

Add one object only if the first round is comfortable. Compare strategies, not people.

Another way to participate

Use tactile exploration of safe objects, spoken names, or a child-made picture rather than relying only on sight.

Close and reset

Return each object to its own place and recall where it belongs.

What to notice

Notice the selected strategy and willingness to check. This is not a memory assessment.

If it does not go as planned

Stress about forgetting: leave a picture clue visible. Guessing rapidly: reveal the tray and practice a strategy together.

Use the idea in daily life

Choose one strategy for remembering a two-item task during a routine.

A useful question: Is forgetting an object a failure?

Parent note: No. It helps identify whether to reduce the collection or try another strategy.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 38 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Remember a small collection

Draw your collection and a memory clue. Record what strategy you want to try next.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

The objects we chose

A memory clue: name / picture / story

A strategy to try on another day

ACTIVITY 39 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Give a toy directions

Position words and communication

Ages 3–8 • 8–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

One large toy; a box; a book; a clear surface.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Position words and communication

WHY TRY IT

Directions let children connect words with positions. Start with one instruction, such as put the bear beside the box, and check shared understanding. More steps are not automatically better. Switching roles reveals whether a message was clear to its listener.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Place the box, book, and toy where the child can see or explore them.

02 Model one direction using in, on, under, or beside.

03 Invite the child to position the toy or direct you.

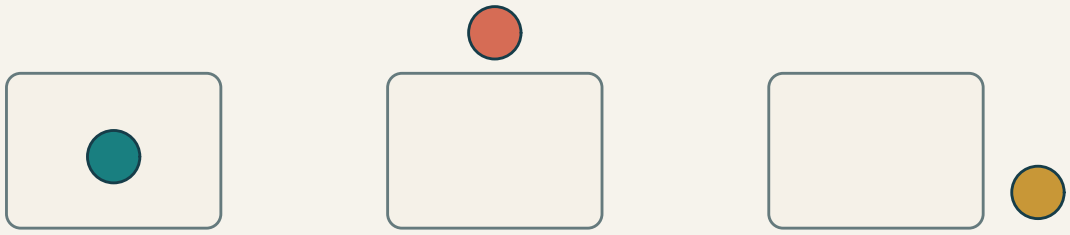
04 Swap roles and ask for clarification when a direction could mean more than one thing.

Try saying: “Do you mean beside the box or inside it? Can you show me?”

ACTIVITY 39 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Give a toy directions



An easier entry

Offer a choice between two shown positions and say the words together.

An optional stretch

Use two connected directions only after one-step instructions feel easy.

Another way to participate

Offer pictures, pointing, signs, or adult movement of the toy. Keep objects within accessible reach.

Close and reset

Use one real direction to return the toy to its box.

What to notice

Notice understanding of a chosen word and attempts to repair an unclear message.

If it does not go as planned

Left and right confuse the task: use in, on, and beside first. Child follows a different interpretation: ask about the message rather than blaming listening.

Use the idea in daily life

Describe where a needed item is during daily life using a clear reference object.

A useful question: What helps when a direction is unclear?

Parent note: Ask for clarification or demonstrate the intended position.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 39 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Give a toy directions

Draw the toy in, on, under, and beside a box. Make a direction for a partner.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Draw the toy IN and ON a box

Draw the toy UNDER and BESIDE a box

A direction for a partner to try

ACTIVITY 40 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Build one shared structure

Cooperation and revising a plan

Ages 4–8 • 15–20 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / floor



YOU WILL NEED

Large blocks; a clear floor mat; two willing builders.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Cooperation and revising a plan

WHY TRY IT

A shared construction gives cooperation a concrete purpose. Begin with a goal both people accept, such as a home for a toy, rather than demanding a tallest tower. Agreements about adding and changing pieces protect each builder’s contribution. A child can work in parallel if shared construction is not welcome today.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Choose a small shared goal and sketch or describe it.

02 Agree how to ask before moving another person’s piece.

03 Build in short turns or give each person a chosen role.

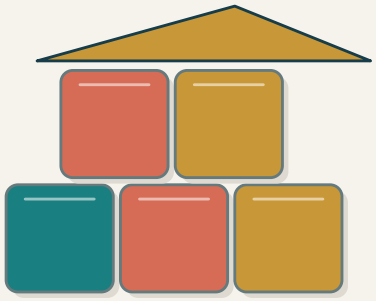
04 Test whether the structure serves its purpose. Revise one feature together.

Try saying: “You both have an idea. How could we try one, then make room to test the other?”

ACTIVITY 40 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Build one shared structure



Agree • build • test • revise

An easier entry

Build two nearby structures and share one connecting piece only if both agree.

An optional stretch

Add a constraint, such as a doorway wide enough for the toy, and measure it together.

Another way to participate

Offer a design role, a stable tabletop, large pieces, or an adult who places blocks on request.

Close and reset

Photograph only with permission, then dismantle together or agree on a safe temporary display.

What to notice

Notice asking, explaining, waiting, and revising. Height alone tells little about the cooperation.

If it does not go as planned

One builder takes over: agree separate roles or spaces. Collapse causes distress: acknowledge it and ask whether to rebuild or stop.

Use the idea in daily life

Use ask-before-changing when sharing a family project.

A useful question: Does cooperation require identical ideas?

Parent note: No. It requires a workable agreement about how to try and discuss different ideas.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 40 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Build one shared structure

Draw the shared goal, each person’s role, and one revision that helped.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our shared goal and building plan

Each builder’s agreed role

A revision we tried and what it changed

ACTIVITY 41 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Explore feelings with a puppet

Emotion vocabulary and curiosity

Ages 3–8 • 8–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

A large stuffed toy or hand puppet; paper; crayons.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Emotion vocabulary and curiosity

WHY TRY IT

A toy provides a little distance for talking about feelings. A face can suggest an emotion, but it cannot prove what someone feels. Offer possibilities and ask the person when possible. This activity practices vocabulary and listening; it does not diagnose a child or require sharing private experiences.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Invent a short everyday situation for the toy, such as a game ending.

02 Suggest two possible feelings and invite another idea.

03 Ask what the toy might want someone to understand.

04 Draw a feeling or dictate a sentence the toy could use to ask for support.

Try saying: “The toy might feel disappointed or tired. We would need to ask to know more.”

ACTIVITY 41 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Explore feelings with a puppet



maybe excited



maybe tired



ask to learn

An easier entry

Choose between two named possibilities and let the child point.

An optional stretch

Explore how two characters can feel differently about the same event.

Another way to participate

Use symbols, a communication board, gestures, or the family's home language. Personal disclosure is optional.

Close and reset

Let the child decide whether the feeling drawing is kept private.

What to notice

Notice expanding language and multiple possible interpretations rather than matching one correct face.

If it does not go as planned

Child does not want to discuss feelings: keep the story about the toy. A label feels wrong: accept the correction and ask what word fits better.

Use the idea in daily life

Ask how someone feels instead of declaring what their face must mean.

A useful question: Can we know a feeling for certain by looking at a face?

Parent note: No. Expression and context offer clues; the person's own communication matters.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 41 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Explore feelings with a puppet

Draw a toy’s situation, two possible feelings, and one helpful question.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

The toy’s situation

Two possible feelings: we would ask to know

A question or support the toy might welcome

ACTIVITY 42 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Make a comfort-choice plan

Communicating a support preference

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 3 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Paper; crayons; two familiar comfortable options such as quiet company or a book.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Communicating a support preference

WHY TRY IT

A comfort plan is best made during a calm moment, not imposed when someone is upset. Different children want different forms of support, and a choice can change. The plan offers ways to communicate a need; it is not a promise to stop tears or a substitute for adult connection.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Ask what helps your child feel comfortable during an ordinary rest time.

02 Draw two or three accepted options with the child.

03 Practice asking for one option while everyone is settled.

04 Choose where to keep the plan and agree that an adult will help when it is needed.

Try saying: “Would you like company, more space with me nearby, or a different kind of help?”

ACTIVITY 42 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Make a comfort-choice plan

company | quiet space | a book

Offer choices; accept a different need.

An easier entry

Offer two familiar options using real objects rather than pictures.

An optional stretch

Add a way to say this is not helping and choose another support.

Another way to participate

Use an established communication system or a large pointing card. Never require touch, eye contact, or breathing exercises.

Close and reset

Store the plan accessibly. Keep the comfort space voluntary and never locked or used as punishment.

What to notice

Notice whether the choice is genuinely welcome. Silence or refusal is information, not disobedience.

If it does not go as planned

Plan rejected when upset: prioritize connection and reduce demands. Too many choices: return to two known options.

Use the idea in daily life

Adults can model saying what support they need during a manageable frustration.

A useful question: Should a comfort choice be forced?

Parent note: No. Offer support, respect sensory preferences, and help choose another option.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 42 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Make a comfort-choice plan

Draw three support choices and a way to ask for something different. Review choices together later.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Comfort choice 1

Comfort choice 2

How I can ask for something different

ACTIVITY 43 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Practice a turn-taking script

Negotiating shared play

Ages 3–8 • 8–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

One appealing large toy; another acceptable activity; a willing adult partner.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Negotiating shared play

WHY TRY IT

Turn-taking works better when children have language and a predictable agreement. It does not mean a child must surrender an important object instantly. Use a shared practice toy and agree what marks the end of a turn. Waiting is easier when another meaningful option is available.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Choose a toy both people agree to share for this game.

02 Model a request: may I have a turn when you finish this round?

03 Agree on a visible end, such as one trip along a toy road.

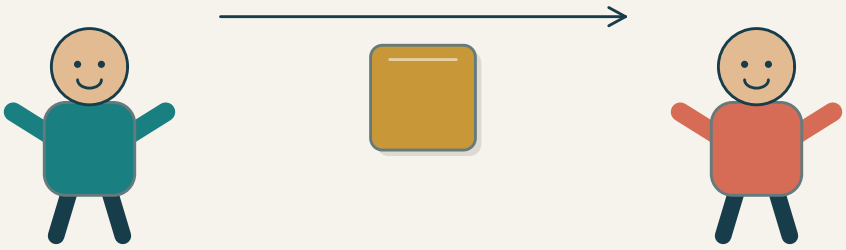
04 Swap roles and practice accepting wait, asking for help, or choosing something else.

Try saying: “You can ask for a turn. We can also agree when this turn is finished.”

ACTIVITY 43 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Practice a turn-taking script



Ask • agree • take turns

An easier entry

Use two similar toys and practice giving and receiving only when both agree.

An optional stretch

Let children suggest a fair turn boundary and revise it if it does not work.

Another way to participate

Use picture requests, gestures, or an adult who speaks the agreed message. Avoid relying only on a timer sound.

Close and reset

Close with an agreed final turn and put the shared toy away together.

What to notice

Notice requests and agreements rather than demanding a cheerful response every time.

If it does not go as planned

Toy too emotionally important: choose a neutral shared object. Waiting escalates: support the waiting child and shorten future practice.

Use the idea in daily life

Use the script for a genuinely shared household resource with adult support.

A useful question: Must every personal toy be shared for this exercise?

Parent note: No. Choose a mutually agreed shared practice item.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 43 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Practice a turn-taking script

Create a request card, a turn-ending agreement, and an alternative while waiting.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our request: may I have a turn when…?

The agreed end of one turn

Another option while waiting

ACTIVITY 44 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Set a place for everyone

One-to-one matching and contribution

Ages 3–8 • 8–12 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Unbreakable plates; napkins; safe utensils; a clear table with adult support.

THE LEARNING IDEA

One-to-one matching and contribution

WHY TRY IT

A real household task can give counting a clear purpose. Each person needs a place setting, and the arrangement can be checked by matching rather than reciting numbers. Keep the task small and achievable. Contribution matters more than adult standards of table presentation.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Name who will be at the meal and choose a safe item for the child to place.

02 Match one plate to each seat. Count only if useful.

03 Add one napkin per plate, checking for gaps or doubles.

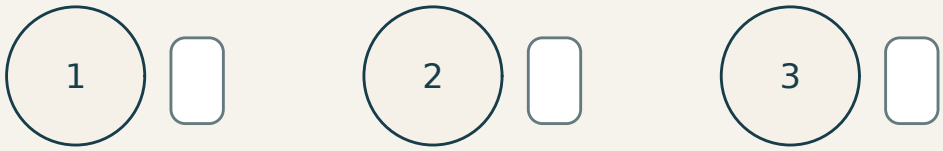
04 Ask how the setup would change if one extra person joined.

Try saying: “Is there one place for every person? How can we check?”

ACTIVITY 44 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Set a place for everyone



One place for each person.

An easier entry

Prepare two place settings together, with the adult moving heavier items.

An optional stretch

Plan for an extra guest or create a picture checklist for several safe items.

Another way to participate

Offer a seated sorting role, an adult delivery partner, or a visual checklist at eye level.

Close and reset

After the meal, children return safe items while adults handle sharp, hot, or breakable objects.

What to notice

Look for matching people to places and noticing an extra or missing item.

If it does not go as planned

Doubles at one seat: pair each item with a plate. Task overwhelms: give just napkins rather than the whole setting.

Use the idea in daily life

Match one towel per person before a family outing.

A useful question: If one guest joins, what needs to change?

Parent note: Add one complete appropriate place setting; the exact items depend on the meal.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 44 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Set a place for everyone

Draw the people or write their names. Add one place setting for each and check your plan.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Who will be at the meal?

One place setting for each person

What changes if one more person joins?

ACTIVITY 45 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Find the laundry partners

Comparing features and organizing

Ages 3–8 • 8–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

A small basket of clean socks or washcloths; clear floor or table.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Comparing features and organizing

WHY TRY IT

Laundry matching invites careful comparison of size, shape, pattern, and owner. Similar does not always mean identical, and a missing partner is a real possibility. Treat the task as shared household work rather than a worksheet made from clothing. Finish with a manageable contribution.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Select four to six clean items, keeping the remaining laundry out of view.

02 Choose one sock and describe features that might help find its partner.

03 Compare candidates and make pairs. Set any unpaired item aside.

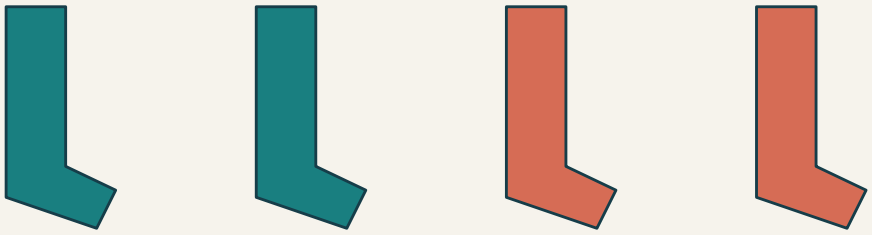
04 Fold or place pairs into the correct storage area together.

Try saying: “These are both blue. What else could we compare before deciding they are partners?”

ACTIVITY 45 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Find the laundry partners



Check size, shape, and pattern.

An easier entry

Use two visibly different pairs or pair identical washcloths.

An optional stretch

Group pairs by owner or size after matching and explain the new rule.

Another way to participate

Use texture and size as well as visual patterns. Offer a stable tabletop or an adult folding partner.

Close and reset

Put matched items away and leave one clearly labeled unmatched basket.

What to notice

Notice attention to more than one feature and the willingness to revise a match.

If it does not go as planned

Everything looks similar: reduce the collection. Missing sock causes worry: make a waiting place for unmatched items.

Use the idea in daily life

Compare mittens or shoes by size, shape, and owner.

A useful question: Do two blue socks always make a correct pair?

Parent note: No. Check size, shape, pattern, and other useful features.

Related reading: E3. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 45 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Find the laundry partners

Draw matching features for two pairs. Design a place for an unmatched item.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Pair 1: matching features

Pair 2: matching features

Where an unmatched item can wait

ACTIVITY 46 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Design a flexible routine strip

Anticipating what comes next

Ages 3–8 • 12–20 min • Prep 4 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Three large paper boxes; crayons or familiar photos; removable tape.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Anticipating what comes next

WHY TRY IT

A short routine strip makes a few upcoming steps visible. It should support understanding rather than become a rigid rule that ignores changing needs. Choose one small routine, such as preparing to go outside, and agree how to show a change. Completion speed is not the goal.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Choose a routine and name three actual steps in a workable order.

02 Draw a simple picture for each, with the child helping choose meaningful symbols.

03 Practice using the strip once while an adult provides support.

04 Add a change symbol and explain how to update the plan when something is different.

Try saying: “Here is our plan. If something changes, we can show the new plan together.”

ACTIVITY 46 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Design a flexible routine strip



Show a change when the plan changes.

An easier entry

Show only now and next with two real objects or pictures.

An optional stretch

Let the child suggest an order, then test whether it works practically.

Another way to participate

Use photos, objects, large print, spoken reminders, or an established communication method.

Close and reset

Keep the strip near the routine location without blocking access or attaching unsafe loose pieces.

What to notice

Notice whether the pictures communicate the steps and whether the child uses them voluntarily.

If it does not go as planned

Too many steps: reduce to two. Unexpected change causes distress: acknowledge it and show one clear next step with adult help.

Use the idea in daily life

Make a temporary two-step plan for an unfamiliar outing.

A useful question: Does a routine strip mean the plan can never change?

Parent note: No. It should include an understandable way to communicate changes.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 46 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Design a flexible routine strip

Draw now, next, and after. Add a symbol that means our plan has changed.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

NOW

NEXT

AFTER • How will we show a change?

ACTIVITY 47 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Repair a small play problem

Listening and problem-solving

Ages 4–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

Two toys; a simple pretend disagreement; paper for possible solutions.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Listening and problem-solving

WHY TRY IT

Practicing with toys allows children to explore repair without reliving a real conflict under pressure. Repair is more than reciting sorry: it may include listening, restoring an item, changing an action, or giving space. Adults remain responsible for stopping harm and supporting both children.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Invent a small problem, such as a toy knocking down another toy’s building.

02 Name the observable event without assigning motives.

03 Invite each toy to communicate what happened and what it needs.

04 Choose a practical repair, try it, and ask whether more help is needed.

Try saying: “The blocks fell when the toy bumped them. What could help now?”

ACTIVITY 47 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Repair a small play problem



Name the event. Ask what would help.

An easier entry

Offer two possible repairs and let the child select one for the toy.

An optional stretch

Compare two workable solutions and explain how each supports the people involved.

Another way to participate

Use pictures, gestures, a communication system, or an adult narrator. The child may observe without performing.

Close and reset

Restore the toy setup together or agree that it is finished.

What to notice

Notice a solution connected to the actual problem, not just a memorized polite phrase.

If it does not go as planned

Real conflict is still intense: stop the rehearsal and offer support. Forced apology becomes the focus: return to the concrete repair.

Use the idea in daily life

Adults can model repairing an everyday mistake without expecting immediate forgiveness.

A useful question: Is saying sorry always a complete repair?

Parent note: No. A useful repair responds to the situation and the affected person’s needs.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 47 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Repair a small play problem

Draw what happened, what someone needs, and one repair to try. Add a check-in question.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

What happened? Describe the event.

What might someone need? Ask rather than assume.

One practical repair and a check-in question

ACTIVITY 48 / BEGIN TOGETHER

Plan one family learning moment

Choice, reflection, and follow-through

Ages 3–8 • 10–15 min • Prep 2 min • Dry / low



YOU WILL NEED

This book; paper; pencil; a realistic space in the family day.

THE LEARNING IDEA

Choice, reflection, and follow-through

WHY TRY IT

A family plan should fit the day that exists. One short repeat of a familiar activity can be more usable than an ambitious list. Involving children in a small choice creates ownership, while the adult checks safety, time, and available energy. A skipped plan can be revised without becoming a failure.

TRY IT TOGETHER

01 Offer two activities that fit the materials and adult availability today.

02 Let the child choose one and identify what needs preparing.

03 Agree on a flexible time or routine anchor, such as after snack.

04 Afterward, record one useful observation and decide whether to repeat, adapt, or leave it.

Try saying: “Which of these fits today? What would make it easier to begin?”

ACTIVITY 48 / MAKE IT FIT

Notice, adjust, and connect

Plan one family learning moment



Repeat, adapt, or stop.

An easier entry

Repeat one familiar five-minute activity without adding a worksheet.

An optional stretch

Let an older child help gather supplies and propose a variation for next time.

Another way to participate

Offer a choice through objects, pictures, gestures, or conversation. Build in the child’s preferred pace.

Close and reset

Store the chosen activity’s supplies together if you intend to repeat it.

What to notice

Notice whether the chosen plan actually fits the family, not whether every box gets filled.

If it does not go as planned

No energy left: choose shared reading or a tiny familiar game. Plan repeatedly skipped: change the routine anchor or reduce the setup.

Use the idea in daily life

Use the same plan-try-notice cycle for an ordinary family task.

A useful question: Does a skipped activity mean the week failed?

Parent note: No. Revise the plan to match the family’s actual needs and capacity.

Related reading: E1. See pages 159–160. These original examples are not diagnostic assessments.

ACTIVITY 48 / TRY, DRAW, OR DICTATE

Plan one family learning moment

Choose one activity, note the supplies, and record one observation plus a repeat/adapt decision.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

Our choice and why it fits today

Materials / adult help / a flexible time

What we noticed: repeat, adapt, or stop?

Keep one useful observation

Use a brief factual note, not a score. Repeat this page whenever you want a record. You can also keep the same information in a notebook.

Activity / date / entry version

What my child did, said, pointed to, or chose

What helped participation? What got in the way?

One change to try next time

Plan a week that fits

Choose a small number of invitations. Repeats count. Leave space for a change of plan. This is a family planning tool, not a completion target.

Day / routine anchor	One invitation or repeat	What needs preparing?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Weekend		

One thing to keep next week / one thing to simplify

Educational and safety context

Source codes identify related background reading. They do not mean a publisher tested or endorsed this book. Activities, sample scripts, diagrams, and adaptations were newly written for this edition.

E1 NAEYC • Play and learning

Context for adult participation, curiosity, and play. The book's activities are original examples, not a reproduction of this article.

www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/support-learning-with-play

E2 Reading Rockets • Sound awareness

Further reading on spoken sounds and the distinction between phonological awareness and print-based phonics. The book uses original listening games and simple English examples.

www.readingrockets.org/reading-101/reading-and-writing-basics/phonological-...

E3 NAEYC • Meaningful early math

Background reading on math in everyday play; not a validation study of these particular activities.

www.naeyc.org/node/2439

C1 CPSC • Art and Craft Safety Guide

Guidance for selecting and using children's art materials. Activity-specific notes are concise reminders, not the full safety guide.

www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/5015.pdf

C2 CPSC • Small parts guidance

Background on choking hazards and age-related product labeling. Individual mouthing behavior and younger siblings also matter.

www.cpsc.gov/FAQ/Small-Parts-and-Choking-Hazard-Labeling-FAQs

S1 BBC Children in Need • Walking water

A related published demonstration. This edition uses plastic cups, an observation record, and adult-managed dye.

www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/changing-lives/pudsey-crafts/walking-water-expe...

S2 Science Buddies • Paper bridge

Related engineering activity and the role of changing paper shape. Ramp comparisons in this book use the same general change-one-feature approach.

www.sciencebuddies.org/stem-activities/build-best-bridge

S3 Science Buddies • Root growth

Related seed and root observation context. Follow the seed packet and adapt the setup to the child.

www.sciencebuddies.org/teacher-resources/lesson-plans/root-growth-gravity

Listening to real family needs

Reddit informed practical design choices, not educational or medical claims. The threads represent individual experiences, not a survey or a community consensus. No usernames, quotations, or family photographs are reproduced.

R1 What are some low effort activities that keep your pre-schooler busy?

Design response: short setup estimates, modest materials, and cleanup notes. March 2026 discussion; experiences are anecdotal.

Open the discussion →

R2 Easy/low prep indoor activities for preschoolers?

Design response: alternatives for mixed-age homes and children who mouth objects. January 2023 discussion; unsafe suggestions were not adopted.

Open the discussion →

R3 Preschool Homeschool

Design response: hands-on play before optional paper records. April 2024 discussion; no claim of a community consensus.

Open the discussion →

R4 Which low-prep art activity keeps your kids the most engaged?

Design response: attainable art processes and simple tape play. August 2026 discussion; comments do not establish effectiveness.

Open the discussion →

Continue with Kids Learn Home

Companion themes: mathematics, literacy, science, art, purposeful play, and everyday skills. The website provides related articles; this book is a newly structured parent resource rather than a copy of those pages.

Home and subject categories →

Math resources for families →

Art projects at home →

Science ideas at home →

Links were checked or located on 15 October 2026 and can change. This edition makes no claim of Reddit approval, guaranteed learning gains, or professional endorsement.