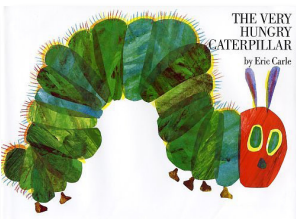


# Bonding with books

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Choose a children's picture book that you and your child will both enjoy.
- ❖ Before you open the book, talk about what is on the cover and what you think the book will be about.
- ❖ Look at the pictures together before you read the story, and talk about what you see. Point out some interesting details, e.g. "Look at all these bright colours. It makes the page look happy."
- ❖ As you read the story, move your finger along the print from left to right. If your child is interested, point out some familiar letters or words.
- ❖ Encourage your child to ask questions or make comments throughout the reading. Add your own questions and comments, and enjoy the conversation together.

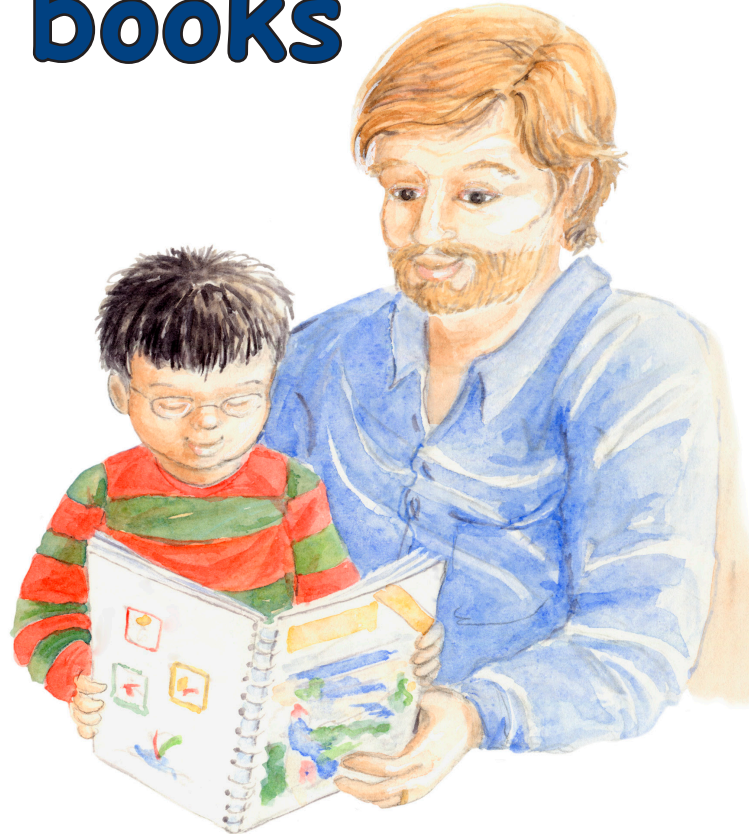
## A good read-together book



**The Very Hungry Caterpillar** by Eric Carle

You will need some children's picture books with attractive pictures and interesting stories that you and your child will both enjoy.

This activity connects children with books through positive social interactions and conversation. "Reading to children—and talking with them about what's been read—is the single most valuable thing we can do to contribute to their literacy learning." (Early Childhood Knowledge Centre, 2006)



## Hints for success

- ❖ Sit side by side in a comfortable place. Cuddle your child as you look at books together.
- ❖ Read slowly and use an expressive voice.
- ❖ If the book has a repeated pattern or rhyming words, invite your child to chime in and chant the words together.

I liked the way the animals helped each other. Which part did you like the best?

Can you say the next part with me?

## Ways to say it



# More ideas for Bonding with books

## Try this way

- ❖ Look for board books that are made especially for young children to handle. Cuddle your infant or toddler in your lap as you look at a book together. Show how to hold the book right side up, and let your baby put his or her hands on the pages as you talk about them together.
- ❖ Encourage your toddler to help you turn the pages. Say "turn the page" when it is time.
- ❖ Invite your pre-schooler to choose which books you will read aloud together. Don't be concerned if your child requests the same book many times, as this is a good sign of enjoyment and early literacy learning.

## Language development

Encourage your child to re-tell familiar stories, either with or without the book in hand. Listen and take an interest in the child's version of the story without expecting it to be perfect. Each re-telling helps to develop your child's memory and verbal fluency.

## Creativity and imagination

Encourage your child to dramatize parts of a book by putting out props that go with the story or offering to play the part of one of the characters as you act out the story together.



## Book links

**Peekaboo Morning** by Rachel Isadora

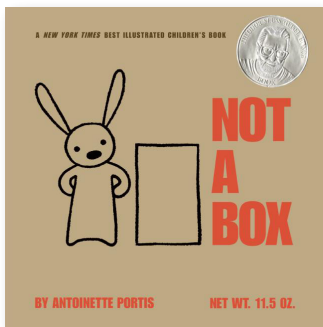
**Peekaboo Bedtime** by Rachel Isadora

# Box town

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Start collecting empty boxes of different sizes and kinds. The sizes will depend on how much space you have for building a village, town or city. Talk with your child about different kinds of buildings you have seen in a city, town or village. Name some different kinds of buildings, e.g. house, condominium, school, hotel, store, skyscraper, garage, fire station, community hall, etc.
- ❖ Imagine the boxes are buildings. Think about what kind of buildings they could be. Talk about their shapes and sizes.
- ❖ Use the boxes to build an imaginary city, town or village. As you are building, talk about what the people might be doing there.

## A good read-together book



**Not A Box** by Antoinette Portis

You will need some light, empty boxes of different shapes and sizes, as well as scissors, tape or glue, and crayons or paint.

This activity will help your child use imagination and creativity, and learn new words for shapes, sizes and structures.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Build on a flat surface so the boxes stand upright.
- ❖ Add toy cars, animals, people figures, trees made of twigs, etc. Invite your child to find other objects which could be added.

Where do you think we should put the store?

Which box could we use for the school?

## Ways to say it





# More ideas for Box town

## Try this way

- ❖ If you have a large outdoor play space, use big cardboard boxes so children can climb inside. Decorate the boxes to look like different kinds of buildings. Put signs on them and encourage children to use them for imaginary play.
- ❖ Encourage your child to make the boxes look like different buildings. Use paints, crayons, coloured paper, and tape or glue to decorate each building. Use blunt scissors to cut out windows and doors.



## Physical activity

Take a walk around your neighbourhood and look at the different kinds of buildings you see. Talk about their shapes and sizes.

As you pass each building, give it a name and add some descriptive words (e.g. squat, colourful, dark and spooky, etc.).

## Early literacy

Make some signs to add to your buildings, e.g. doctor's office, hospital, school, etc.

Make some traffic signs like the ones you would see in your city, town or village. Draw and cut out the shapes, glue them to small sticks, and stand them up in lumps of playdough near the box buildings.

## Go In and Out the Window

Go round and round the village,  
Go round and round the village,  
Go round and round the village,  
As we have done before.

Go in and out the window,  
Go in and out the window,  
Go in and out the window,  
As we have done before.

Now stand and face your partner,  
Now stand and face your partner,  
Now stand and face your partner,  
As we have done before.

Now shake his hand and leave him.  
Now shake her hand and leave her,  
Now shake his hand and leave him,  
As we have done before.

Traditional

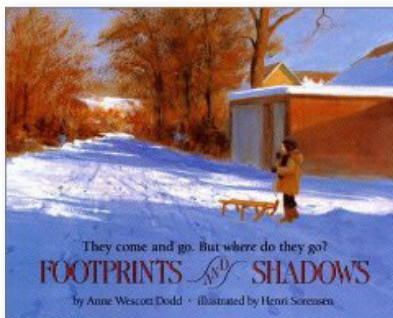


# Chasing shadows

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Go on a shadow hunt together. Look for shadows with interesting or odd shapes.
- ❖ Talk about what is making the shadows.
- ❖ Make shadows with your own bodies.
- ❖ Talk about the shapes of the shadows and how they move.

## A good read-together book



**Footprints and Shadows** by Anne Wescott Dodd



## Hints for success

- ❖ Talk about how and why the shadows change, e.g. how they blend and when they disappear.
- ❖ Pretend to be different creatures making shadows, e.g. "I'm a hungry eagle looking for a meal...I'm swooping down on my shadow lunch! Run, run, here I come!"

Can we make our shadows go around the corner?

Let's try!

Let's make a zig-zag shadow!

## Ways to say it

You will need a sunny day or a bright light.

This activity is good for pretending, thinking out loud and matching actions to words.

# More ideas for Chasing shadows

## Try this way

- ❖ Make a game of finding different kinds of shadows: solid ones, l-o-n-g ones, flowery ones, scary ones, etc.
- ❖ Look for shadows that are very dark, and others that are lighter. Try to figure out what is making them different.



## Art

Help your children draw pictures of themselves with a shadow.

## Physical activity

Play "Shadow Stomp." Take turns running and trying to stomp on one another's shadows.

## Book link

**Shadows and Reflections** by Tana Hoban

## My Shadow

I have a little shadow  
that goes in and out with me  
And what can be the use of him  
is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me  
from the heels up to the head,  
And I see him jump before me,  
when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him  
is the way he likes to grow--  
Not at all like proper children,  
which is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller  
like an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes goes so little  
that there's none of him at all.

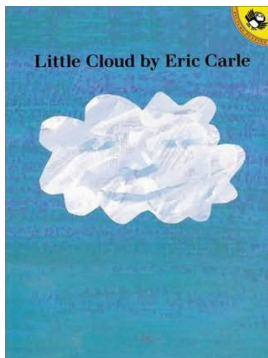
Robert Louis Stevenson

# Cloud play

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Go outside together and look up at the clouds in the sky.
- ❖ Talk about the shapes you see in the clouds, e.g. a fluffy sheep, a clown face, a mushroom. Talk about what you see. Use lots of descriptive words.
- ❖ Invite your child to describe something in the clouds. Create a story together about what is happening in the sky.

## A good read-together book



Little Cloud by Eric Carle

This activity helps children observe carefully, use their imaginations, and learn new descriptive words.

This is an outdoor activity for a day when the sky is filled with puffy clouds.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Help your child find some interesting shapes by pointing out the things you see. Show your child how to be imaginative.
- ❖ Try to see what your child sees. There are no wrong answers in this game.

I can see a dog over there. It's big and fluffy. Can you see its long tail?

Sometimes I think those aren't really clouds. Do you think they could be something else instead?

## Ways to say it





# More ideas for Cloud play

## Try this way

- ❖ Make up a silly story about something in the sky.
- ❖ Play this game in the woods, when you are looking at tree trunks and stumps. Use your imagination to find faces or figures in the bark.
- ❖ Look for interesting or mysterious objects in the environment. Encourage children to create stories about them with you.



## Art

Put a blob of white paint in the middle of a piece of blue paper. Fold the paper flat, then open it again. Talk with your child about the cloud shape you see on the paper when you open it. Then let your child make a cloud shape the same way.

Glue cotton balls onto blue paper to make cloud shapes.

## Book links

**It Looked Like Spilt Milk** by Charles G. Shaw

**Cloud Dance** by Thomas Locker

**Once Upon a Cloud** by Rob D. Walker

## Floating Clouds

(Sing to the tune of  
**Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star**)

Floating clouds up in the sky,  
Changing shapes as you pass by.  
Floating by without a sound.  
Won't you come and touch the ground?  
Floating clouds up in the sky,  
Changing shapes as you pass by.

Anonymous

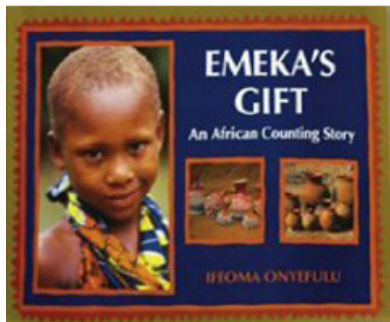
# Counting walks

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Invite your child to take a counting walk. Talk about some things you could count as you walk.
- ❖ Choose one thing to look for, and keep track as you walk along. Count out loud together.
- ❖ Once your child knows the game, let him or her choose what you will count next.



## A good read-together book



**Emeka's Gift, An African Counting Story**  
by Ifeoma Onyefulu

This activity will help your child practice counting, learn words for different amounts, and understand the meaning of "more than."

## Hints for success

- ❖ Help your child point to each object as you count out loud together.
- ❖ At first, use fingers to keep count.

Let's count how many people have umbrellas!

I think we'll see more than 2 buses before we get home. Can you help me count?

## Ways to say it



# More ideas for Counting walks

## Try this way

- ❖ For younger children (ages 1-2), count groups of things when you see them together, e.g. 3 red cars, 5 children, 2 dogs. Point to each one as you count.
- ❖ For older children (ages 3-5), decide on a target you want to reach, e.g. 4 dogs, 3 joggers, 7 silver cars, 5 cyclists, etc. Celebrate when you reach your target, then set a different one.
- ❖ With older children (ages 3-5), make predictions using "more than." For example, say "I think I'll see more than 4 people wearing boots," or "Do you think we'll see more than 5 dogs with long tails today?"
- ❖ Take a pencil and small notebook on your walk. Show your child how to use tally marks to keep track of your counting. Make a tally mark each time you see what you are looking for.



## 100 Stars

I saw 100 stars last night  
Shining in the sky.  
I wondered as I watched them,  
How did they get so high?

Anonymous

## Healthy eating

Stop for a healthy snack along the way. Count how many bites it takes to eat your snack.

## Physical activity

Guess how many steps it will take to reach a point on your walk, e.g., "How many steps will it take to get to the next corner?" Count out loud as you take each step, and see how close you came to your prediction.

## Book link

**My Little Counting Book** by Roger Priddy



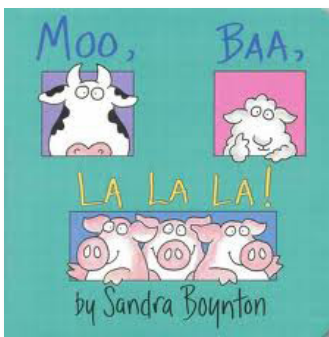
# Does it rhyme?

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Pick out a favourite nursery rhyme or a book of children's rhymes.
- ❖ After reading or saying the rhymes several times correctly, change part of the rhyme to something that doesn't make sense, e.g. "Eeeny, meeny, miney, moe, catch a monkey by his belly button."
- ❖ If your child catches the "error," ask him or her to tell you how it should really sound. If your child does not catch the error, say, "That doesn't sound right! What do you think it should say?"
- ❖ Have fun saying rhymes to one another and changing the words.



## A good read-together book



**Moo, Baa, La, La, La** by Sandra Boynton

You will need some favourite nursery rhymes or other familiar verses.

This activity is good for listening carefully, learning about rhyming patterns and paying attention to word endings.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Make this a playful activity—the sillier the better!
- ❖ Start with rhymes that are familiar so it is easy for your child to catch the error.



**Ways to say it**

# More ideas for Does it rhyme?

## Try this way

- ❖ Make up some rhyming verses with your child by changing the words of a familiar rhyme or song.
- ❖ Encourage your child to fill in the rhymes as you read children's story books that rhyme, e.g. books by Dr. Seuss.

## Language development

Play the following game to help your child learn to hear rhymes and sound patterns. Start with one word, e.g., goat, and take turns thinking of as many words as you can that rhyme, e.g., float, tote, boat, coat. Then make up some nonsense poetry using your rhyming words. Have fun playing with rhymes.

## Physical activity

Teach your child some action rhymes like "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear." Say the rhymes as you do the actions. Look in the book **My First Action Rhymes** for more ideas.

## Book links

**A Child's Treasury of Nursery Rhymes**  
by Kady MacDonald Denton

**My First Action Rhymes** by Lynne Cravath

**Hop on Pop** by Dr. Seuss

**Fox in Socks** by Dr. Seuss



## Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.  
(turn around)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.  
(bend and touch ground)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, jump on the floor.  
(jump up and down)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, sing once more!  
(clap hands 3 times)

Traditional

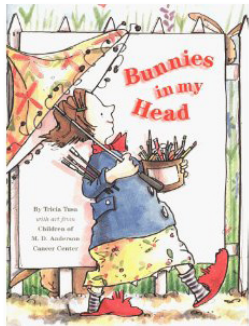
# Draw and talk

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Give your child some drawing materials and time to draw freely.
- ❖ Invite your child to talk about the picture when he or she is ready. Listen to the story or explanation, and discuss some of the details.
- ❖ Ask if your child would like to add a few words or a sentence to go with the picture.
- ❖ If your child is interested, write the words next to the picture or on a separate piece of lined paper.
- ❖ Read the words together.
- ❖ Put your child's picture story on display where he or she can see it and share it with others.



## A good read-together book



**Bunnies in my Head** by Tricia Tusa

You will need some blank paper, drawing materials, lined paper, and a pencil or marker.

This activity is good for learning how to express ideas with words, recording words in print and making labels.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Wait patiently until your child seems interested in talking about the picture.
- ❖ Check with your child to make sure you understand what he or she wants to say.

What words would you like me to write for this picture?

Where do you think we should put the writing?

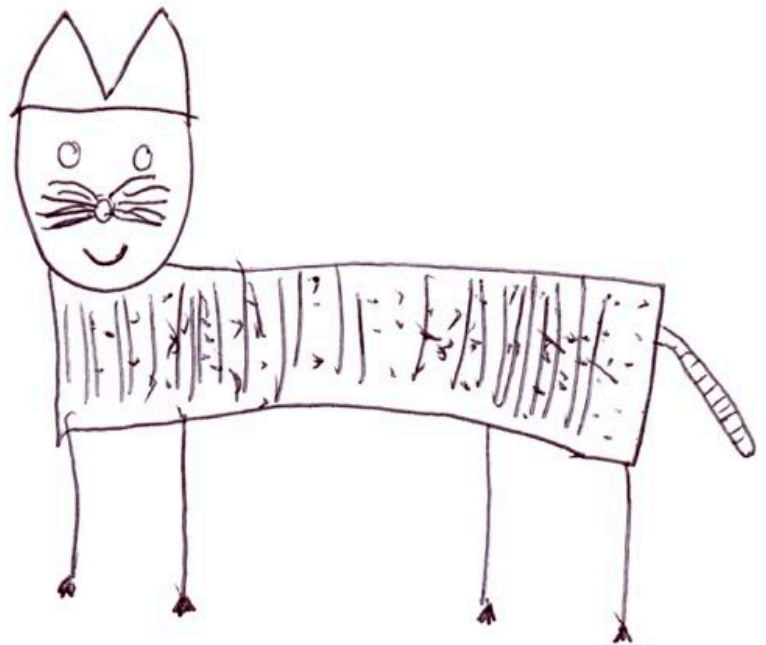
**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Draw and talk

## Try this way

- ❖ Play a game with your child in which you share a piece of drawing paper and take turns making parts of a picture together. Talk about what you are doing as you draw, and add to one another's ideas. When you are finished, decide on some words to go with your drawing and write them down.
- ❖ Use sticky notes to help your child label different parts of a picture. Ask your child to suggest the labels, write each one on a separate sticky note, and invite your child to put them where they match the drawing.



## Art

Take your child to a gallery or art show, or look at art in magazines or library books. Point out how artists often give titles to their work. Talk about how the artists might have chosen titles for their pictures. Help your child think of titles for his or her drawings or paintings. Make labels for them and create a home art gallery.

## Book link

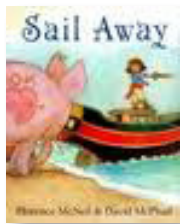
**The Dot** by Peter H. Reynolds

# Floating boats

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Look for different kinds of boats in books or magazines, or when you are near a river, lake or ocean with your child.
- ❖ Talk about different types of boats, e.g. ferries, tugs, fire boats, cruise ships, kayaks. Point out different ways that boats are used.
- ❖ Make some simple boats with your child. Use materials that float, such as small pieces of wood, styrofoam, paper plates or cardboard boxes. Add details with straws, string and paper.
- ❖ Decorate your boats with flags and stickers, and give them names.
- ❖ Find a safe place to put the boats in water, e.g. in the bathtub or a plastic wading pool.
- ❖ Pretend you are going somewhere on your boats. Talk about where you are going and what kind of adventures you have along the way.

## A good read-together book



**Sail Away** by Florence McNeil & David McPhail

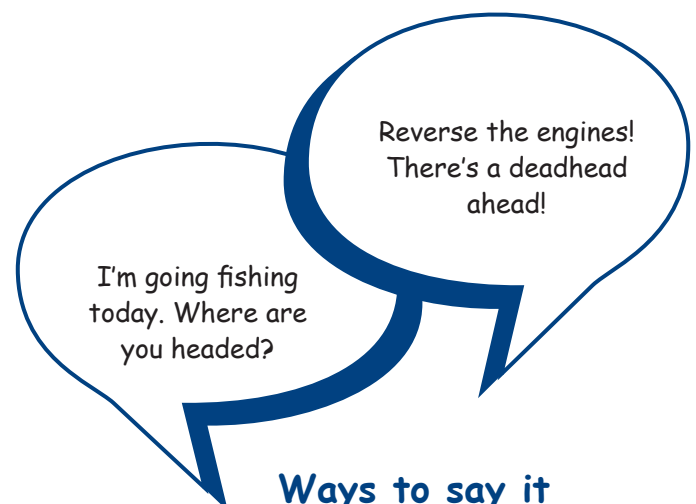
You will need scraps of material that float, some paper, string, straws, stickers or other decorations, and a bathtub or wading pool.

This activity is good for talking about how to make things, learning new words about boating, and using imagination and creativity.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Encourage your child to use his or her own ideas when making and sailing boats. Show your child how to use imagination by making a boat yourself and talking about it.
- ❖ Attach a piece of yarn or string to the front of each boat so you can guide it through the water.
- ❖ Make several boats so your child does not get discouraged if one boat sinks or falls apart.



**Ways to say it**

# More ideas for Floating boats

## Try this way

- ❖ Set up some simple experiments with your boats and talk about what happens, e.g. "Do you think this boat will sink if we put 2 pennies on board?"
- ❖ Take a walk around a harbour or marina to look at the names on different kinds of boats. Read the names together and talk about how people might choose names for their boats. Encourage your child to name his or her homemade boats and add the names to the boats.



## Language development

Read the book **Sail Away** together and learn some of the special "sailor talk," e.g. "trim the sheets," "bail the bilge" and "weigh the anchor." Invite your child to figure out the meaning of each term by studying the picture.

## Creativity and imagination

Read the book **Nicole's Boat** together. At bedtime, imagine you are going to take a trip down a river to the sea on your own boats. Make up stories about your adventures.

## Art

Talk with your child about the pictures in **Nicole's Boat**. Notice how the artist painted scenes from the story. Invite your child to paint pictures about imaginary adventures on a boat.

## Book links

**Nicole's Boat** by Allen Morgan & Jirina Marton

**The Little Boat** by Kathy Henderson

**The Ferryboat Ride** by Robert Perry

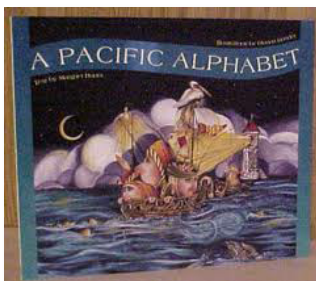


# Fun with letters

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Set up the computer so that you can type BIG capital letters (size 48 font or larger) on a blank word processing page.
- ❖ Show your child how the letters appear on the screen as you press the keys.
- ❖ Encourage your child to experiment with the keyboard to see what different letters, numbers and other symbols appear on the screen.
- ❖ After a while, help your child find letters by name. Talk about the letters with your child. Notice their shapes and point out how some letters look almost the same.
- ❖ Make familiar words such as names of friends or family members. If your child seems ready, you may also write a sentence or a longer message together.
- ❖ Print the page if you can so your child can see how a computer is used to create print on paper.

## A good read-together book



**A Pacific Alphabet** by Margriet Ruurs

You will need access to a computer, a printer and some blank paper.

This activity is good for learning to recognize and name letters and for showing how a computer can be used to make print.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Use fonts such as Futura, Chalkboard or Monaco that are similar to printing by hand.
- ❖ Provide plenty of time for your child to experiment before you point out specific letters or words.
- ❖ Begin with capital letters because they are easier for young children to remember. Add lower case letters once your child is familiar with the capital letters.

Look what happens when we change the font. Do you want to try it?

Can you find a "K" for the beginning of your name?

## Ways to say it



# More ideas for Fun with letters

## Try this way

- ❖ Show your child how to use the "Fonts" menu and other features of the word processing program. For example, you might change letter sizes, styles or colours, or make the text look different with outlining or highlighting.
- ❖ Encourage your child to suggest a message to type on the computer. Print the words on a piece of paper, and show your child how to type the message by finding the same letters on the keyboard. For this activity, you will need to explain how to make spaces between words using the space bar.



## Computer literacy

Show your child how to send messages to family members in other places. Write a message together and send it using email. When you get a reply, read it together and write a response to send.

## Book link

**The Alphabet Tree** by Leo Lionni

# Let's make a list!

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Invite your child to help you plan an activity that you can do together, e.g. going to the market, getting ready for a birthday party or cleaning the house before a special event.
- ❖ Ask your child to help you think of all the things you will need to remember. As you think of each idea, make a list using just a few words for each item. Encourage your child to suggest words that will remind you of each item.
- ❖ Show your child how you write each item on its own line. If your child is ready, encourage him or her to guess what letter to use at the beginning of each word.
- ❖ When you have finished your list, read it aloud together. Help your child follow along by pointing to each item as you say it.
- ❖ Encourage your child to help you with the activities you have listed. Show your child how to mark off each item when it is completed.

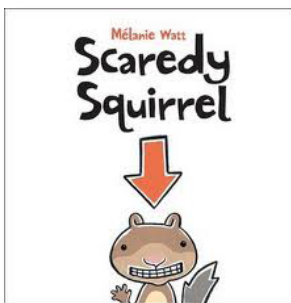


## Hints for success

Sit side by side as you make the list so your child can see how you shape the letters and words.

Print with capital letters because they are easier for young children to recognize.

## A good read-together book



**Scaredy Squirrel** by Melanie Watt

You will need a pencil and a scrap of paper.

This activity shows children how their thoughts and ideas can be written down, and how writing can be useful in everyday activities.

What words should we write to help us remember the birthday candles?

Can you find the word "Milk" and mark it off?

**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Let's make a list!

## Try this way

- ❖ Invite your child to draw pictures for each item on a list instead of writing words.
- ❖ At bedtime, help your child make a list of his or her activities for the next day.
- ❖ Make lists just for fun, e.g. a list of your favourite foods or a list of good friends.

## Early reading and writing

Keep a list of familiar words that your child can recognize, e.g. MOM, DAD, STOP, etc. Post it where your child can see it and read what it says. As your child learns to recognize more words, add them to the list. Provide pencil and paper if your child seems interested in copying the list or making his or her own.

## Book link

**Wallace's Lists** by Barbara Bottner and  
Gerald Kruglik



# Let's pretend

## Let's play and talk together

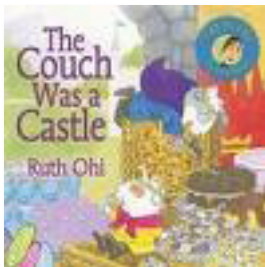
- ❖ Put some old clothes, hats, shoes, stuffed animals and other props into a box or basket.
- ❖ Start playing "let's pretend" by choosing a prop and talking about what you are going to pretend.
- ❖ Invite your child to join in the pretend game. Make up a story together.
- ❖ Encourage your child to tell you what is happening as you act out the story.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Have conversations in which you pretend to be different characters.
- ❖ Include parts in the story for dolls, stuffed animals or puppets.
- ❖ Change your voice for different parts.

## A good read-together book



**The Couch Was A Castle** by Ruth Ohi

You will need a collection of old clothes, hats, shoes, bags, sunglasses and other items for dressing up.

This activity will help your child use imagination and creativity, think out loud and describe actions with words.

What are you going to wear?

Let's pretend we're having a party, and all the animals are going to come.

**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Let's pretend

## Try this way

- ❖ Use empty cardboard boxes and blankets to build a "let's pretend" play space. Talk about what kind of space you are building and who will be there.
- ❖ Put a few chairs in a row to make a train, a bus or a subway car. Go on an imaginary trip.
- ❖ Act out a story you have read together in a book. Take turns telling parts of the story as you act it out.



## Writing

Make signs for your imaginary play space.

## Healthy eating

Include healthy foods as you play "let's pretend." Serve real food and have a meal together in your play space.

## Book links

**Little Fox Goes to the End of the World**

by Ann Tompert

**Rainy Day Play: Explore, Create, Discover, Pretend** by Nancy F. Castaldo

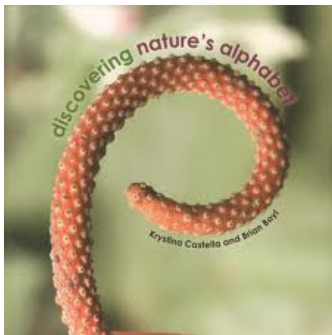


# Looking for letters

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Play a game with your child in which you look for letter shapes in your surroundings, either indoors or outside.
- ❖ Start with a simple shape such as the letter "O." Draw the shape on a piece of paper, talk about it, and take the paper with you as you look for the letter shape around the house or in your neighbourhood.
- ❖ Once your child understands the game, take turns pointing out other letter shapes as you find them. When you find a letter, point it out and say its name. If you can, trace the letter shape on the object with your fingers.

## A good read-together book



**Discovering Nature's Alphabet** by Krystina Castella and Brian Boyl

You will need a pencil and paper to start the game.

This activity develops awareness of shapes and letter recognition, and encourages children to look at details in their surroundings.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Begin with capital letters, which are easier for young children to learn and recognize.
- ❖ At first, play the game with one letter at a time. Later your child will be able to look for any letters that are familiar.

Those tree branches make lots of "V" shapes. Can you trace a "V" with your fingers?

Look! That swing in the playground has a "U" shape!

**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Looking for letters

## Try this way

- ❖ Go on a letter hunt together around your neighbourhood. Encourage your child to find letter shapes in printed words on signs or posters and in the shapes of natural and man-made objects.
- ❖ Take an alphabet walk to see if you can find all the letters of the alphabet. Write all the letters of the alphabet on a piece of paper, and take it with you as you look for letter shapes. As you find each letter shape, mark it off with a pencil.

## Early literacy

Take photos of the letter shapes that you find, print the pictures on plain paper and make an alphabet book or a book about just one letter. Help your child mark the letter shapes on the photos using a highlighter pen.

## Physical activity

Invite your child to make letter shapes with different body parts, e.g. finger and thumb to make an "O" or arms outstretched to create a "T." Discover how many different letters can be made with the human body.

## Book links

**The Butterfly Alphabet: Photographs**

by Kjell Block Sandved

**Alphabet City** by Stephen T. Johnson

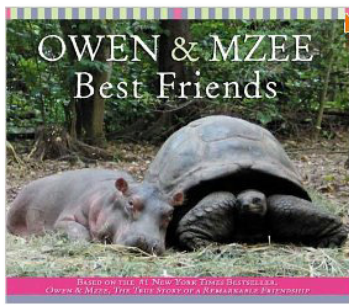


# Making photo stories

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Take some photos of your child during a favourite activity.
- ❖ Print the pictures and look at them together. Talk about what is happening in each picture.
- ❖ Help your child choose a favourite picture for a photo story.
- ❖ Glue the picture onto a sheet of blank paper. Invite your child to suggest a short story to go with the picture.
- ❖ Print your child's story next to the picture. Then read it together.
- ❖ Display the photo story where your child can re-tell it often and share it with family and friends.

## A good read-together book



**Owen and Mzee: Best Friends** by Craig Hatkoff, Isabella Hatkoff and Dr. Paula Kahumbu

You will need a camera, a printer, blank paper, glue, and a crayon or marker.

This activity will help your child remember and re-tell stories and learn how to save memories in pictures and writing.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Start with just a few pictures to make it easier for your child to choose a favourite.
- ❖ Follow your child's lead and print your child's own words to go with the picture.

Which picture is your favourite?

What words could we write to go with this picture?

**Ways to say it**





# More ideas for Making photo stories

## Try this way

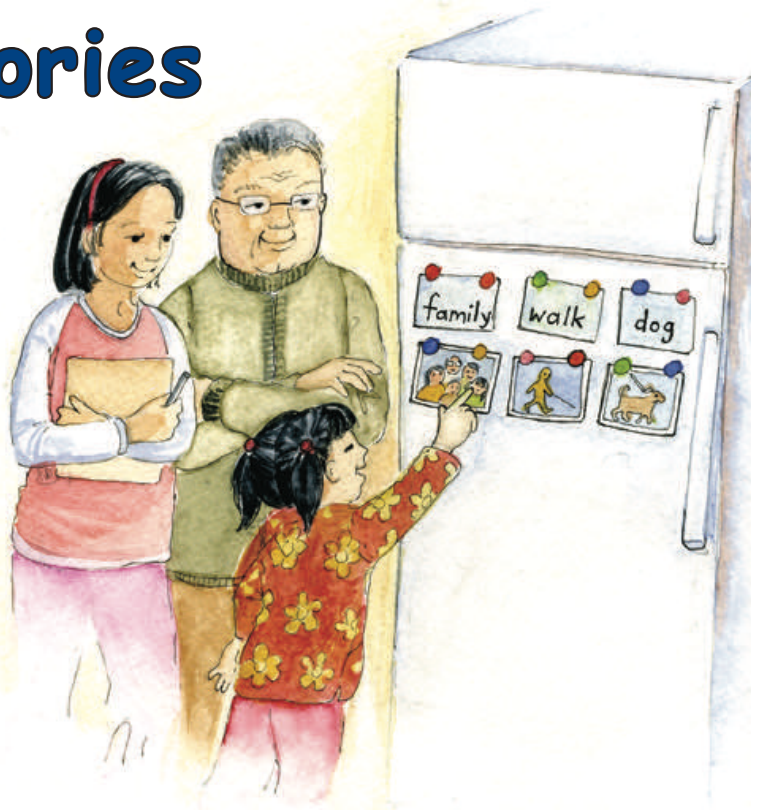
- ❖ Keep a camera on hand so your child can ask you to take photos of events to remember.
- ❖ Help your child collect photos of important events in your child's experience. Make a "Memory Book" in a photo album or scrapbook. Look at the photos and talk about them often to help your child learn to remember and re-tell stories.

## Social development

Take photos of your child with friends, caregivers or other family members. Look at the photos together and talk about people that are important to your child. Help your child make a "Friendship Book" with pictures and words on each page.

## Early numeracy

Take photos over time during an activity or event. Print the photos and invite your child to help you put them in sequence, e.g. "What happened first?" "What happened next?" Put each photo on a page to make a book that tells the story of the event. Number the pages in order before adding words.



## Early literacy

Look for books in the library that are illustrated with photographs. Talk about the photographs before reading the text on each page. Help your child learn to read pictures by looking carefully to predict what the text will be about.

## Book links

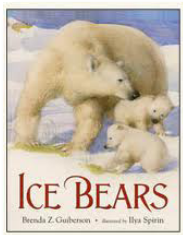
**Owen & Mzee: A Day Together** by Craig Hatkoff, Isabella Hatkoff, Dr. Paula Kahumbu  
**If You Find A Rock** by Peggy Christian

# Melting ice floes

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Explain to your child that you are going to make some ice together and then see what happens when you put it in water.
- ❖ Make some ice together using ice cube trays and small containers of different sizes and shapes. Talk about how much water to put in each container to make ice blocks of different sizes.
- ❖ Help your child carefully place the containers in the freezer. Predict which containers will freeze first and last. Check the containers from time to time until all are frozen.
- ❖ When all the containers are frozen, take out the ice and float the pieces in water in a dishpan or sink. Compare what happens with the different shapes and sizes.
- ❖ Talk about changes you see as the ice melts. Predict which ice floe will melt first and which will last the longest. Encourage your child to guess why this happens.

## A good read-together book



**Ice Bears** by Brenda Z. Guiberson

You will need containers of different shapes and sizes that you can put in the freezer, and a sink or plastic tub for floating the ice blocks.

This activity helps children learn to observe, predict and compare, and to think like scientists about how and why changes happen.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Let your child help you choose the containers. Talk about their shapes.
- ❖ Make sure each container is as wide at the top as it is at the bottom so the ice can be removed easily.

Oh look! The smallest one has almost disappeared!

Which ice floe do you think will last the longest?

**Ways to say it**

# More ideas for Melting ice floes

## Try this way

- ❖ Add small boats to the water and put plastic animals and people on the ice floes. Encourage pretend play about their adventures.
- ❖ Experiment with melting ice floes in cold and warm water. Compare how quickly the ice melts.

## Early literacy

Look for **Fox on the Ice** and other picture books about life in the north that you could read with your child. Talk about what it would be like to live in a very cold climate.

## Book links

**A Symphony of Whales** by Steve Schuch

**Fox on the Ice** by Tomson Highway



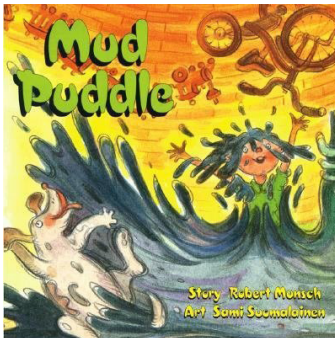


# Mud pie muck about

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Find a sand pile, park, garden corner or beach where your child can play in the mud. Bring along some water in a bucket or a plastic bottle.
- ❖ Add some plastic containers, scoops, spoons, cookie cutters and strainers.
- ❖ Mix water with the dirt and see what happens. Talk about the way the mud looks and feels.
- ❖ Make some cakes, pies and other pretend foods together. Talk about foods and cooking as you play.

## A good read-together book



**Mud Puddle** by Robert Munsch

This activity is good for learning words that go with foods and cooking. It also develops creativity and imagination and the sense of touch.

You will need a collection of plastic containers, old kitchen tools, old cooking pans or foil plates, some sand and water, and a bucket or dishpan for mixing.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Dress for fun in the mud.
- ❖ Encourage imagination. Show your child how to pretend you are making and eating food.
- ❖ Invite your child to make a whole variety of dishes, e.g. spaghetti, sky-high sandwiches, soups, birthday cakes, etc.

I wonder if it needs more spices? Did you add cinnamon?

Oh, it smells delicious! May I have some more?

## Ways to say it

# More ideas for Mud pie muck about

## Try this way

- ❖ Use flowers, twigs, shells, leaves or pebbles to decorate your foods.
- ❖ Pretend to be a customer in a restaurant. Ask your child about the ingredients and how the foods were made.
- ❖ Mix up special recipes for family members, stuffed toys or story characters. Talk about what each one would like and why.

## Book link

**Mud** by Mary Lyn Ray



## I Love To Play

(sung to the tune of  
**My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean**)

I love to play in the sand box.  
I love to play in the dirt.  
I love to play in the wet mud.  
I squish it and watch it squirt.

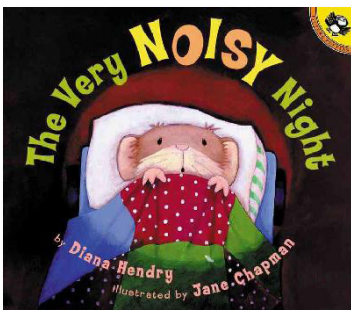
Author unknown

# Name that sound

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Draw your child's attention to the many noises around your home, both indoors and outdoors.
- ❖ Take a walk around your home together and listen to the different sounds in each room. Describe the sounds with words and see how many you can name.
- ❖ Talk about different sounds you hear outdoors, and try to guess what is making them.
- ❖ Imitate some of the sounds you hear, e.g. a dog barking, a truck engine roaring, a crow cawing.
- ❖ Think of some words to describe different sounds, e.g. loud, soft, high, low, harsh, tinkling, crashing, tinny, swishing, scratchy, etc.
- ❖ Use household objects to make sounds that have different qualities, e.g., ring, tap, scratch, thud, hiss, etc.

## A good read-together book



**The Very Noisy Night** by Diana Hendry

You will need a variety of everyday objects that make different sounds.

This activity is good for listening carefully, recognizing different sounds, naming and describing sounds with words and creating sounds with everyday objects.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Start by listening for familiar household sounds, e.g. water running from a tap, a person coming up or down stairs, a pet noise, etc.
- ❖ Encourage your child to describe everyday sounds with words, e.g. "My drum goes boom, boom" or "My new shoes make a squeaking sound".

I can hear a soft scratching sound.  
What do you think it is?

What kinds of noises can you make with a spoon?

## Ways to say it



# More ideas for Name that sound

## Try this way

- ❖ Play a "Guess this sound" game with your child in which one person listens with eyes closed while the other makes a sound using something nearby. The listener tries to guess how the sound is being made by saying, "I hear a \_\_\_\_\_ sound and I think it is \_\_\_\_\_."
- ❖ Talk with your child about how different sounds make you feel. Name some sounds you like to hear and some you do not like to hear.
- ❖ If your child is fearful of noises at night, read **The Very Noisy Night** or **Elliott's Noisy Night** together.

## Vocabulary development

Invite your child to help you think of words that sound just like their meaning, e.g. ping, bonk, creak, honk, clack, growl, etc. Try saying the words as if they were making the sound they describe.

## Book links

**Elliott's Noisy Night** by Andrea Beck

**What's That Noise?** by Michele LeMieux



# Never NOT EVER!

## Let's play and talk together

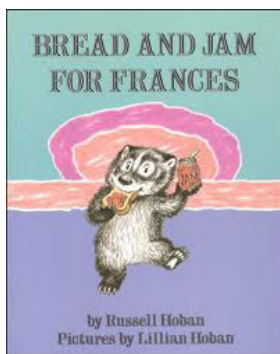
- Explain to your child that you are going to play a game in which you use your imagination to think of activities that you would never want to do.
- Introduce the phrase "Never NOT EVER." Ask your child to think of something that he or she would never NOT EVER do. Take turns thinking of different possibilities, and talk about why you would not want to do these things.
- Have fun playing with your ideas, e.g. "I will never NOT EVER swim in a pool with an alligator!" Encourage your child to imagine what might happen if you did.
- Mix some serious ideas with silly ones, e.g. "I will never NOT EVER be a litter-bug." Help your child understand the difference between realistic and imaginative possibilities.



## Hints for success

- Take the first turn to show your child how the game works.
- Encourage your child to have fun with imagination.

## A good read-together book



**Bread and Jam for Frances**  
by Russell Hoban

This activity is good for imagining, learning to play with ideas and sorting ideas into categories.



## Ways to say it

# More ideas for Never NOT EVER!

## Try this way

- Change the game to talk about things you will do "always and forever," e.g. "I will always and forever love reading books with you" or "I will always and forever hate the feel of wet socks on my feet."
- Read the book **Bread and Jam for Frances**. Talk about how people sometimes change their minds and do things they said they would never do. Use yourself as an example.

## Language development

Introduce new words to talk about your imaginary ideas, e.g. "preposterous," "ridiculous," "outrageous," "unbelievable" or "disgusting." Have fun playing with big words, e.g. "I think it would be disgusting to eat worms on toast!"

## Creativity and imagination

Read the book **I Will Never NOT EVER Eat a Tomato** together. Enjoy the imaginative ways that food is described to make it more attractive. Then try the same approach with your own "never NOT EVER" ideas.



## Book link

**I Will Never NOT EVER Eat a Tomato**  
by Lauren Child



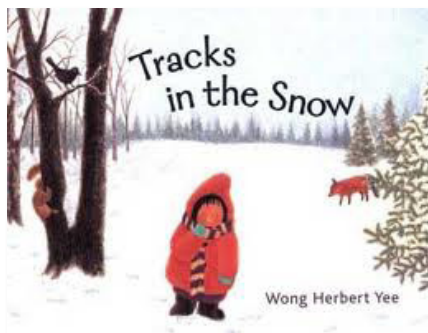
# Outdoor detectives

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Go on an outdoor walk with your child. Look around for signs of living things, e.g. tracks on the ground, feathers, cocoons, nests.
- ❖ When you find something interesting, look around for signs of life nearby.
- ❖ Talk about what you find. Try to guess who or what has been there. Wonder out loud with your child.



## A good read-together book



**Tracks in the Snow** by Wong Herbert Yee

This activity is good for helping children learn to look and listen carefully and to ask questions about what is around them. It develops curiosity and thinking out loud.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Choose a place to walk where you will find signs of other living things, e.g. in a park, at a beach, in the woods or by a stream.
- ❖ Be a model of curiosity for your child. Show how to be a detective by looking for things yourself and asking questions about what you find.

Let's look for signs of life along this path.

I wonder what happened here? What do you think?

**Ways to say it**

# More ideas for Outdoor detectives

## Try this way

- ❖ Choose a small patch of grass or soil to study with your child. Look closely at the ground for signs of insect life and other living creatures. Use a magnifying glass if you have one.
- ❖ Sit quietly with your child in an outdoor spot away from city noises. Listen for signs of life such as rustling leaves, scratching, bird calls or other animal sounds. Try to guess what kind of creature is making each of the noises that you hear.



## Early literacy

Look for the book **Animal Tracks and Signs** in your local library. Talk with your child about how all animals leave clues such as footprints and other signs that can tell you about them. Enjoy the pictures together.

## Book links

**Animal Tracks and Signs** by Jinny Johnson

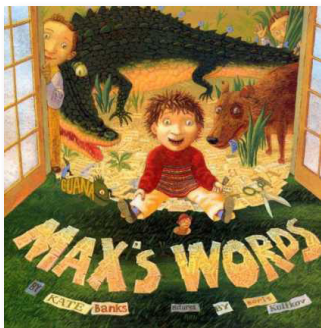
**I Love Dirt! 52 Activities to Help You and Your Kids Discover The Wonders of Nature**  
by Jennifer Ward

# Pick a letter, find a word

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Put some plastic, wooden or hand-written alphabet letters into a paper bag.
- ❖ Shake up the bag and invite your child to reach in and pick a letter.
- ❖ Look at the shape of the letter together and say its name. Talk about how the letter makes a sound at the beginning of a word, e.g. "B" makes a "buh" sound.
- ❖ Look around the house to find objects that start with the letter sound. Try to find five things whose names start with that sound.

## A good read-together book



Max's Words by Kate Banks

You will need a bag, some plastic, wooden or hand-written letters, and a paper and pencil to make labels.

This activity is good for matching letters and sounds, and listening for the sound a letter makes at the beginning of a word.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Start with letter sounds that are easy to hear, e.g. B, D, H, L, M, N, R and T.
- ❖ Explain that some letters make similar sounds, e.g. C and S, K and G, F and W.
- ❖ Add Q, V, Z and X only when your child can play the game with confidence.

Let's look for things that start with "R." It makes a "rrrr" sound.

That's a "B." It makes a "buh" sound.

**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Pick a letter, find a word

## Try this way

- ❖ Write on labels the names of objects found around the house, and then put the labels on the objects. Help your child look for labels containing words that start with the letter he or she has picked from the bag.
- ❖ Make a collection of objects that start with the same letter. Put out a box or basket with a letter on it, and invite your child to find things to go into the collection.



## Crafts

Make alphabet letters with playdough or clay. Bake them in the oven and then paint them. Use them to make words.

## Early reading

Look through old magazines with your child to find things that start with a letter you have picked. Help your child cut out some of the pictures that match the beginning letter. Make a book by pasting each picture on a separate sheet of paper and putting the pages together. Write the words for the objects on each page. Put a title on the book, and then read it together.

## Book link

**Max's First Word** by Rosemary Wells

## I Use My Brain

I use my brain to think, think, think.  
I use my nose to smell.  
I use my eyes to blink, blink, blink.  
I use my throat to yell.  
I use my mouth to giggle, giggle, giggle.  
I use my hips to bump.  
I use my toes to wiggle, wiggle, wiggle,  
And I use my legs to jump.

Author unknown

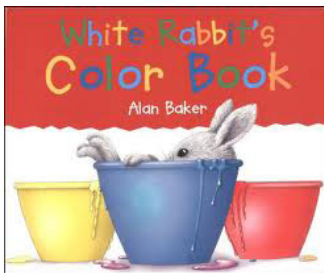


# Rainbow ice

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Put out several clear jars of water and some food colouring.
- ❖ Invite your child to put a few drops of food colouring into each jar of water. Use one colour for each jar.
- ❖ Talk about what you see happening as the food colouring mixes with the water.
- ❖ Help your child pour each jar of coloured water into a different ice cube tray. Put the trays into the freezer for several hours.
- ❖ When the cubes are frozen, put some fresh warm water into the clear jars. Then add different coloured ice cubes into the jars. Talk about how the colours change as they mix.
- ❖ Encourage your child to try mixing different coloured ice cubes into the same jar to see what happens.

## A good read-together book



**White Rabbit's Color Book** by Alan Baker

This activity is good for learning colour words, watching carefully and talking about how colours change.

You will need food colouring in different colours, several clear jars or glasses and one ice cube tray for each colour.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Show your child how to stir the food colouring gently into the water, then let your child take a turn.
- ❖ Get the ice cubes ready in the evening so they can freeze overnight.

Look! The dark blue drops make the water turn pale blue. I wonder what happened?

What do you think will happen if we add yellow and blue cubes to this glass?

## Ways to say it

# More ideas for Rainbow ice

## Try this way

- ❖ Help your child make ice cubes of different colours to add to drinking water on a hot day.
- ❖ Collect scraps of different coloured cellophane paper. Show your child how to make new colours by putting two scraps of different coloured cellophane together and holding them to the light.
- ❖ Read the book **Mouse Paint** together. Talk about how the mice made different colours with paint. Make some finger paint and experiment with colours.

## Book link

**Mouse Paint** by Ellen Stoll Walsh



## Art

Help your child cut out scraps of different coloured cellophane wrapping paper and glue them onto a piece of clear plastic packaging. Experiment with putting scraps together to make different colours.



# Remember when...?

## Let's play and talk together

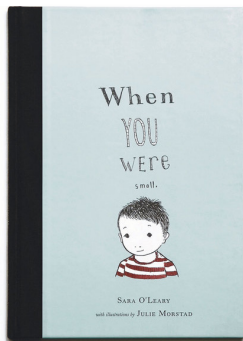
- ❖ Think of a good memory to talk about with your children.
- ❖ Start your story with, "Do you remember when...?" For example, "Do you remember when we went to Grandma's birthday party? I remember how you played tag with your cousins."
- ❖ Invite each child to add a memory, e.g. "What do you remember about Grandma's party?"
- ❖ Keep on taking turns. Let the memories grow.



## Hints for success

- ❖ This activity works well during mealtimes.
- ❖ Ask simple questions that help each child remember some details.
- ❖ Invite other people to add their memories.
- ❖ If a child wants to talk about a different memory, follow along.

## A good read-together book



**When You Were Small** by Sara O'Leary

This activity helps children remember and re-tell stories and take part in conversations.



## Ways to say it

# More ideas for Remember when...?

## Try this way

- ❖ With younger children (ages 1-2), use familiar words to help your child remember something specific about an event, e.g. "Auntie has a cat. Do you remember Auntie's cat?"
- ❖ With older children (ages 3 and up), invite a child to choose a favourite memory to start the game.
- ❖ Take photos of important events that your child may want to remember later. Start a scrapbook with your child that you can add to in the future.



## Drawing and writing

Make a Memory Book with your children. Use photos or simple drawings to tell the story. Invite the children to help you add words to the pictures. Read your memory book together often.

## Physical activity

Talk about milestone events when your child learned to do something new, e.g. jump, climb the jungle gym, ride a tricycle.

## Book links

**Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day** by Judith Viorst  
**Zoe and the Fawn** by Catherine Jameson  
**Listen, Said the Donkey** by Jean Little

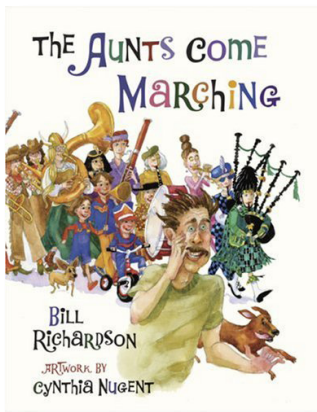
# Rhythm ruckus

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Gather some objects that make different noises, e.g. plastic containers, sticks, pot lids, noise-making toys, containers with blocks or small toys inside.
- ❖ Try making lots of different sounds. Think of words that go with each sound, e.g. bing, bang, ping, pop, crash, etc.
- ❖ Have fun making a rhythm with sounds and words, e.g. "Bing, bang, rattle, bing, bang, rattle...."



## A good read-together book



**The Aunts Come Marching** by Bill Richardson

## Hints for success

- ❖ Let the child experiment with different sounds before adding words.
- ❖ Use objects that make both hard and soft sounds, e.g. bang, swish, ping.

You will need household objects for making different sounds.

This activity helps children learn to listen carefully, notice differences in sounds and find words to describe the sounds.

What sounds  
can we make  
with this?

Listen!  
I can make it go  
kum-cha, kum-cha!



# More ideas for Rhythm ruckus

## Try this way

- ❖ Clap a rhythm, and then invite your child to clap it with you. Describe the rhythm, e.g. fast, slow, bouncy, light.
- ❖ See how many sounds you can make using your bodies.
- ❖ Clap a rhythm on your body. Say the names of the body parts as you clap them, e.g. "Hands, knees, hands, knees...."

## Music

Look for **The Aunts Come Marching** picture book in your library. Sing the song together.

Play music with a strong rhythm. Use objects to keep time with the music.

## Physical activity

Make a rhythm using your bodies, e.g. clap, stamp, stamp, clap, stamp, stamp. Say the sounds as you move your bodies with the beat.

## Book links

**Too Much Noise** by Ann McGovern  
**What's That Noise?** by Michele Lemieux



## The Aunts Come Marching

The aunts come marching one by one,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 The aunts come marching one by one,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 The aunts come marching one by one,  
 It's dainty Dot with her big bass drum.  
 "To the guest room, please," says Pop.  
 Up she hops  
 With a Thump  
 And a Whump  
 Bump, Bump, Flump.

The aunts come marching two by two,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 The aunts come marching two by two,  
 Hurrah! Hurrah!  
 The aunts come marching two by two,  
 It's piccolo Pat with sousaphone Sue,  
 "To the guest room, please," says Pop.  
 Up they hop  
 With a Hoot  
 And a Bloat  
 Tweet, Tweet, Toot.

Bill Richardson

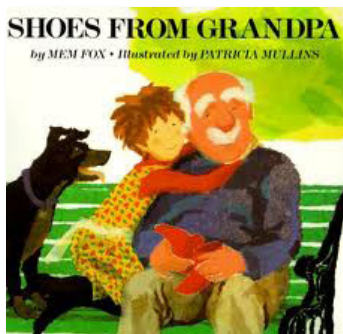
# Shoe shenanigans

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Help your child to gather up all the footwear that can be found around the house, e.g. shoes, boots, slippers, sandals, etc.
- ❖ Begin by sorting the footwear into two groups, e.g. "shoes with laces" and "shoes without laces."
- ❖ As you sort the footwear, talk about each item. Ask your child to help you decide where each one belongs, and place it with others in the same group.
- ❖ Change the groups and sort again, e.g. "children's shoes" and "adult shoes" or "inside shoes" and "outside shoes."



## A good read-together book



Shoes from Grandpa by Mem Fox

You will need a collection of footwear such as shoes, boots and slippers.

This activity is good for learning descriptive words, talking about how things are the same or different and sorting into categories.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Encourage your child to think of different ways to make groups.
- ❖ Make a label for each group. Invite your child to draw a picture for each label, and add the words as well.

What shall we do with these shoes? You wear them inside AND outside!

These are shoes for jogging, so I'm going to put them in the "sports shoes" pile.

## Ways to say it

# More ideas for Shoe shenanigans

## Try this way

- ❖ Play a game with younger children in which you pile several pairs of shoes together. Choose one shoe and then help your child look through the pile to find its match.
- ❖ With older children, try sorting footwear into more than two groups at a time, e.g. by patterns on the soles, by style, by their uses, etc. Help your child to think of interesting categories for sorting and labeling.

## Language development

Read the book **A Flock of Shoes** together. Talk about some of the adventures that your shoes have had. Take turns telling true or imaginary stories about where your own footwear might have traveled.

## Early literacy

Find pictures of footwear in old catalogues, magazines or flyers. Give your child some blunt scissors to cut out pictures of footwear, and make groups by gluing the pictures on paper. Help your child make labels for each of the groups.



## Early numeracy

After you make groups of different kinds of footwear, count the number of items in each group. Talk about which group has the most and which has the least. Make a graph together by tallying the number of shoes in each group.

## Book link

**A Flock of Shoes** by Sarah Tsiang



# Show me a face

## Let's play and talk together

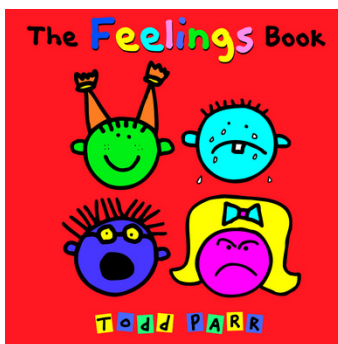
- ❖ Sit or stand in front of a mirror with your child.
- ❖ Look at your faces in the mirror. Talk about what you see. Point to different parts of your own face and then point to the child's face.
- ❖ Show one another your smiles. Talk about things that make you feel like smiling.
- ❖ Show some other expressions, e.g. a frown, a scared face, an angry face, a wondering face. Talk about things that make you have those feelings.
- ❖ Ask your child to show you some faces, e.g. "Show me how you feel when..."



## Hints for success

- ❖ Talk about what faces do to show the feelings, e.g. "When you are surprised, your eyebrows go up!"
- ❖ Feel the changes in your faces with your fingers.
- ❖ Have fun with silly faces as well as serious ones.
- ❖ Look straight at one another as well as in the mirror.

## A good read-together book



The Feelings Book by Todd Parr

You will need a large mirror.

This activity helps children understand other people's expressions, show their own feelings and use words to talk about feelings.

Can you show me a surprised face?

What is my face saying now?

Look what your mouth does when you smile!

## Ways to say it



# More ideas for Show me a face

## Try this way

- ❖ With younger children (ages 1-2), catch their emotions as they happen. Look in the mirror when the feelings are real.
- ❖ With older children (ages 3 and up), play "Guess how I'm feeling." Each person takes a turn to make a face, and the others guess what their face is saying.



## Drawing and writing

Make a "Faces Show Feelings" book using paper and crayons or markers. Use one page for each feeling. Draw simple faces with different expressions. Write some words to go with each picture.

## Healthy eating

Read **How Are You Peeling? Foods with Moods** together, and talk about the feelings in each picture. Learn the names of all the fruits and vegetables in the book.

## Book links

**Feelings to Share Board Book**  
by Todd and Peggy Snow

**How Are You Peeling? Foods with Moods**  
by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers

**Walter Was Worried** by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

## Here Are My Ears

Here are my ears.  
Here is my nose.  
Here are my fingers.  
Here are my toes.  
Here are my eyes,  
Both open wide.  
Here is my mouth  
With white teeth inside.  
Here is my tongue  
That helps me speak.  
Here is my chin,  
And here are my cheeks.  
Here are my hands  
That help me play.  
Here are my feet  
For walking today.

Author unknown

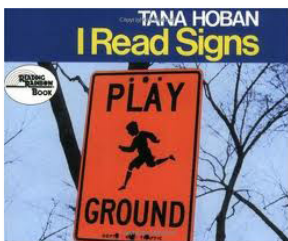
(Make actions to go with the words.)

# Sign smarts

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Draw your child's attention to the different kinds of traffic signs in your surroundings, e.g. stop signs, crosswalk signs, railroad signs, highway entrance signs, arrows, etc.
- ❖ Talk with your child about the meaning of each sign and how people use signs to help them travel safely and find their way.
- ❖ Notice how some signs have shapes and symbols and some signs have letters on them. Point out how the shapes and symbols on some traffic signs give us messages without using words.
- ❖ When you are driving together, encourage your child to help you travel safely by pointing out the signs.
- ❖ Look for signs with symbols that you may not have seen before, e.g. for a divided highway, a curve, an animal crossing, trucks entering, etc.
- ❖ Point out electronic traffic signals, e.g. green, yellow and red traffic lights, flashing caution lights, push-button crosswalk signals, etc. Help your child learn the meanings for each colour and symbol, and use the signs to practice traffic safety when crossing the street.

## A good read-together book



**I Read Signs** by Tana Hoban

This activity helps children learn that shapes, symbols and print have meaning, and encourages them to use signs to help them travel safely.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Encourage your child to look for familiar signs when you go to new places.
- ❖ Let your child take the lead in trying to guess the meaning of unfamiliar signs and symbols.

Here's a sign with an animal on it. What do you think it means?

Let's count how many stop signs there are between here and the library.

**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Sign smarts

## Try this way

- ❖ Look for signs that help people find their way in the city and in the country. If you live in the city, take a neighbourhood walk and point out the names of streets near your home. If you live in the country, help your child learn the road numbers or other points to remember.
- ❖ Help your child look for signs that identify public buildings, e.g., the library, the hospital, the police station, etc.
- ❖ Help your child learn the name of your road or street and memorize your home address. Talk about how numbers are used to help people find houses, apartments or businesses.

## Imagination and symbolic play

Help your child make some traffic signs to use when playing with cars, trucks or other small toys. Make the shapes of traffic signs on cardboard, colour them with crayons or markers, cut them out and glue them to sticks. Put the stick in a piece of playdough or modeling clay to make the sign stand up.

## Book link

**City Signs** by Zoran Milich



## Safety tip

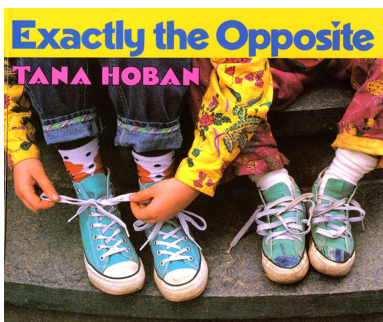
Children love to push buttons on crosswalk traffic signals. Teach your child to look both ways before crossing, even after the signal says you can walk.

# Simon and Sarah

## Let's play and talk together

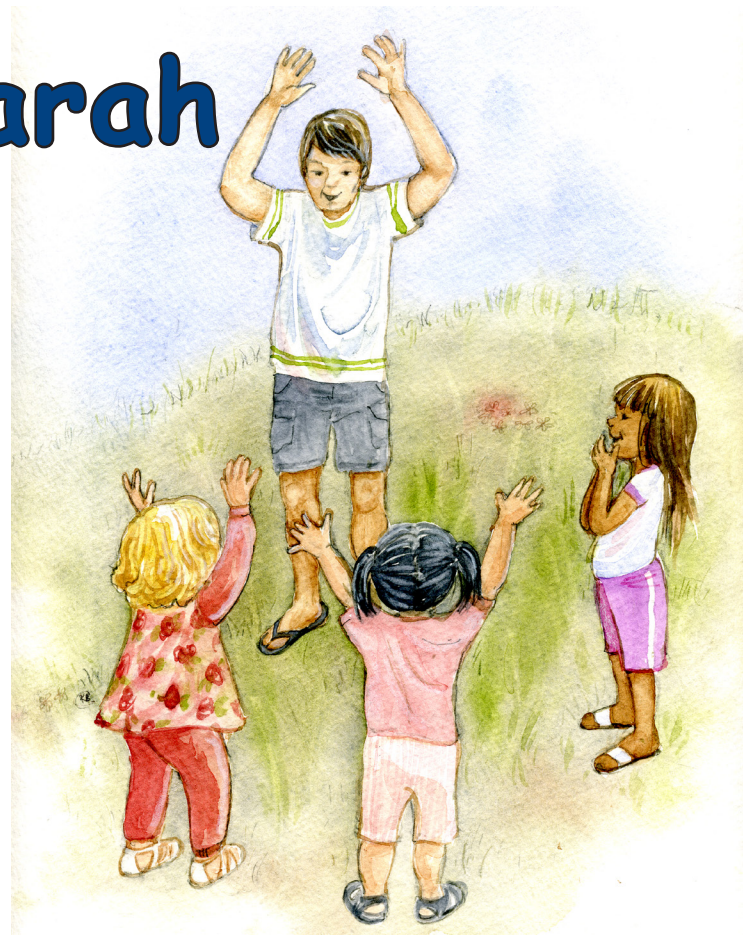
- ❖ First, teach your children to play "Simon Says." Give the children an instruction to follow, starting with the words "Simon Says..." e.g. "Simon says sit down." The children should follow Simon's instructions. If you do not say "Simon says..." before giving the instruction, the children should not do as you say. The point of this game is to catch a child doing something that Simon has not said they should do. When this happens, the child takes a turn to give the instructions.
- ❖ Next, teach the children to play "Sarah Says." This game is almost the same, but Sarah always means the opposite of what she says. If you say "Sarah says sit down," you really mean "Sarah says stand up." The children try to do the opposite of what Sarah says. The point of this game is to catch a child doing what Sarah says, instead of the opposite. When this happens, the child takes a turn to give the instructions.

## A good read-together book



**Exactly the Opposite** by Tana Hoban

This activity helps children listen to and follow instructions, learn the concept of opposites and play with language.



## Hints for success

- ❖ These games are more fun when there are several children playing.
- ❖ If a child doesn't understand an opposite, explain it and show an example.
- ❖ Switch places if your child starts to lose interest.

What does the opposite of shouting sound like?

When Sarah says "up" she really means "down."

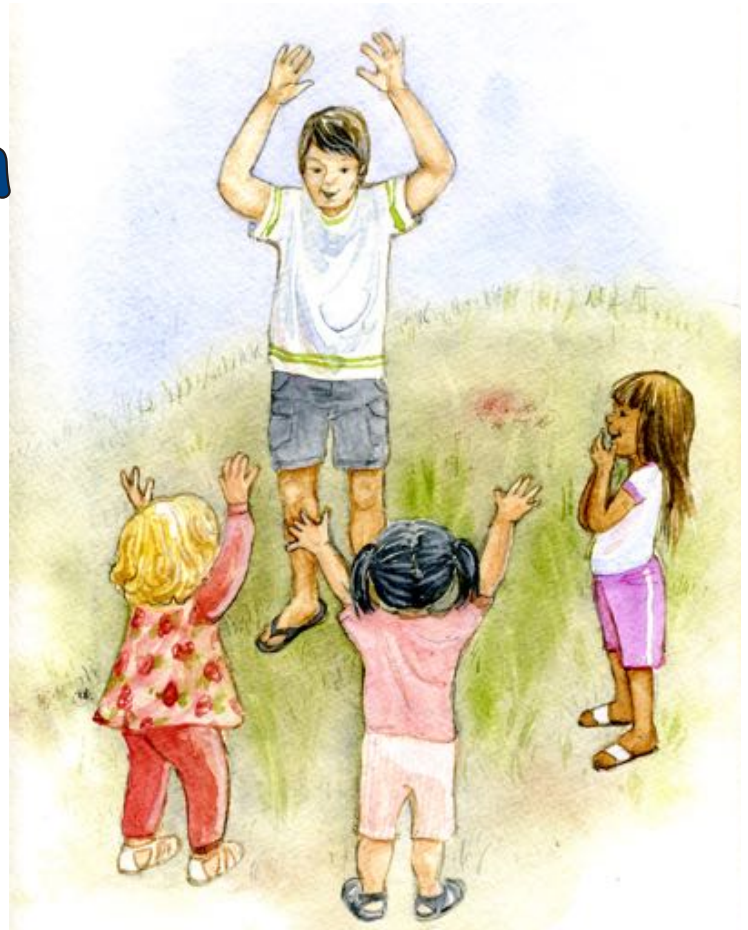
**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Simon and Sarah

## Try this way

- ❖ For younger children (ages 3-4), use simple pairs of opposites, e.g. up/down, over/under, off/on, fast/slow.
- ❖ With older children (ages 5 and up), use more complicated pairs of opposites, e.g. right/left, near/far.
- ❖ Once children are very familiar with the two games, mix "Simon says..." and "Sarah says..." in the same game. The children must think of three different possibilities: do what Simon says, do the opposite of what Sarah says, or do nothing if Simon's or Sarah's name is not used.



## Craft activity

Help your child make an "opposites" picture by putting stickers on a piece of paper in different positions, e.g. at the TOP and at the BOTTOM, on the FRONT and on the BACK, etc.

## Physical activity

During the game, have Simon or Sarah instruct children to do a healthy physical activity, e.g. "Simon says run around the telephone pole three times."

## Book links

*Hot, Cold, Shy, Bold* by Pamela Harris  
*My First Canadian Opposites: A My World*  
 Board Book by Chez Picthall

## Ten Little Fingers

I have ten little fingers,  
 And they all belong to me.  
 I can make them do things,  
 Would you like to see?

I can shut them up tight,  
 Or open them wide.  
 I can put them together,  
 Or make them all hide.

I can make them jump high,  
 I can make them jump low.  
 I can fold them up quietly,  
 And hold them just so.

Author unknown



# Snap! card sharks

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ First, make some playing cards with your child. You will need two copies of the same magazine or catalogue to make pairs of cards which are the same. To make the cards, get some blank recipe cards or cut out cardboard rectangles from cereal boxes, and glue one picture on each card. You will need about 15 pairs of playing cards.
- ❖ Now you can play "Snap!" together. Shuffle the cards and deal an equal number to each player. Take turns placing a card face up between you. When two cards with the same picture come up one after the other, the person who says "Snap!" first takes all the cards in the pile. Keep putting down cards until someone has no more cards to play.



## A good read-together book



**The Book of Card Games for Little Kids** by Gail MacColl

You will need scissors, cardboard or recipe cards, a glue stick, and two magazines or catalogues with the same pictures in them.

This activity helps children learn to observe, look for similarities, and think quickly.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Choose magazines or catalogues with interesting pictures for your child, such as toys, tools or hardware.
- ❖ As you make the cards, talk about the pictures. Help your child notice the shapes and details in each picture.
- ❖ Before you start, play a simple matching game where you mix up the cards and then put the pairs together.
- ❖ Show your child how the game works before you play.

How many cards did you get for that Snap?

You're right - it's a Snap! You got two fire trucks!

**Ways to say it**



# More ideas for Snap! card sharks

## Try this way

- ❖ The person who says "Snap!" first makes up a short story or a sentence about the object on the winning Snap card before taking the pile of cards.
- ❖ Make playing cards with large numbers on them. Use only the numerals from 0 to 9, and make at least two pairs of each numeral. Play snap with the numeral cards, and say the name of the numeral when you get a Snap!
- ❖ Make playing cards with simple shapes (e.g. pairs of circles, squares, triangles, rectangles) in different colours (e.g. red, yellow, blue, green). Help your child learn the names of the shapes and colours as you play "Snap!" with the cards.



## Book link

**The Book of Cards for Kids**  
by Gail MacColl

## The More We Get Together

The more we get together,  
Together, together.  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.

For your friends are my friends,  
And my friends are your friends.  
The more we get together,  
The happier we'll be.

Traditional

# Snappy rhymes

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Start this game by saying or singing the poem Willoughby, Wallaby Woo together. This verse was adapted from the Raffi song based on a poem by Dennis Lee.

Willoughby Wallaby Woo  
An elephant sat on you;  
Willoughby Wallaby Wee  
An elephant sat on me!

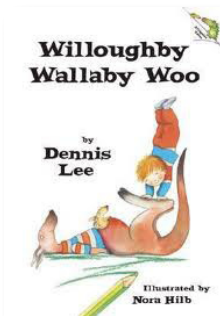
- ❖ Pick the name of someone in your family or a close friend that the elephant is going to sit on, e.g. daddy, a brother or sister, auntie, etc. Make a new rhyme by changing the last word in the first line to rhyme with the name of the person the elephant is going to sit on.

Willoughby Wallaby Waddy  
The elephant sat on Daddy!

- ❖ Invite your child to make up a rhyme about the elephant sitting on someone else you know.

Willoughby Wallaby Washa  
The elephant sat on Sacha!

## A good read-together book



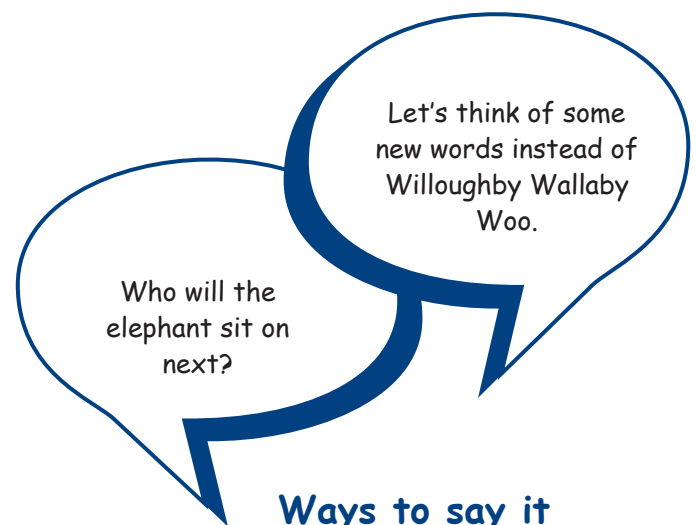
Willoughby Wallaby Woo by Dennis Lee

This activity helps children learn to hear the small parts of words and make up rhymes, and encourages them to play with language.



## Hints for success

- ❖ This game encourages children to play with language. Show your child that it is fun to make up silly verses.
- ❖ Talk about all the different people you know that the elephant could sit on.





# More ideas for Snappy rhymes

## Try this way

- ❖ Have the elephant sit on household objects, e.g. a chair, the table, the sofa.
- ❖ Change the beginning letters or the animals, e.g.  
Billabee Ballabee Boo  
A big bear sat on you!  
or  
Sillabee Sallabee See  
A dinosaur sat on me!
- ❖ Invite older preschoolers to choose the letter sound to start the first line and name the letter that makes the sound, e.g., Billabee starts with the letter "B."



## Physical activity

Dance or bounce around to the rhythm of the words, and sit down suddenly on the word "sat."

## Healthy eating

Sing the rhyming song about the foods your child is eating and put your child's name into the song.

Willoughby Wallaby Woop  
\_\_\_\_\_ is eating her soup!  
or

Willoughby Wallaby Wilk  
\_\_\_\_\_ is drinking his milk!

## Book link

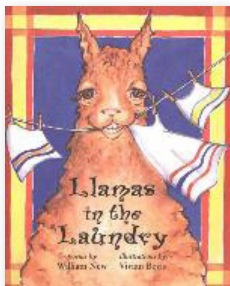
Down by the Bay by Raffi

# Sort and separate

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Start with a big pile of laundry, along with some baskets or a space on the floor for sorting.
- ❖ Explain that you are going to play a sorting game together.
- ❖ Help your child or children sort the laundry into piles based on colours.
- ❖ Talk about what you are thinking as you decide where each piece of laundry should go.
- ❖ Talk about the different materials and how they look and feel.

## A good read-together book



**Llamas in the Laundry** by William New

You will need a big pile of laundry.

This activity will help your child learn words for colours, patterns and textures, and how to sort things into groups.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Start with solid colours first. Name the colours as you sort.
- ❖ Remember that getting the laundry done is only one of your goals. You are also helping your child learn about colours, patterns and textures of clothes.

This dress is made of thin fabric. Let's put it in the delicate load.

Can you find all the blue socks and put them together?

## Ways to say it

# More ideas for Sort and separate

## Try this way

- ❖ Teach your child some words used for sorting laundry, e.g. "light load," "dark load," "delicate fabric," "heavy material," etc.
- ❖ Show your child how to combine piles sorted by colour to create light or dark piles, e.g. "We need to make a bigger pile to save water. Let's put the blue and green piles together because they are both dark."
- ❖ Talk about different materials and how they feel, e.g. "This shirt is nylon. Feel how slick and smooth it is."
- ❖ With older children (ages 4-5), use more descriptive words, e.g. "sky blue shirt," "velour jacket," etc.
- ❖ Talk about how to sort clothes that are multi-coloured and/or have patterns, e.g. "I'm going to put the blue and white shirt in the blue pile, because it has more blue than white."



## Sorting Laundry

Sorting laundry one by one,  
Sorting laundry 'til it's done.  
Sorting laundry two by two,  
That one's red and this one's blue.  
Sorting laundry three by three,  
Look at the grass stain on that knee!  
Sorting laundry four by four,  
Into the basket by the door.  
Sorting laundry five by five,  
Into the piles we're going to dive.  
Sorting laundry six by six,  
The washing machine whirs and clicks.

Judith Scott

## Craft activity

Cut out pictures of clothing from a catalogue or newspaper. Draw several ovals on a piece of paper for sorting the pictures. Invite your child to sort the pictures into piles of laundry and glue them onto the paper.

## Counting activity

As you put a pile of laundry into the washing machine, count how many items you have, e.g. "How many socks are going into this load?"

## Book links

**First Colours** by Jo Litchfield

**Whose Clothes Are Those?** by Shaheen Bilgrami



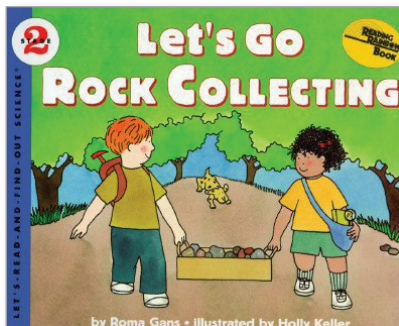
# Sorting stones

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Look around for interesting stones. Pick up some stones and look at them carefully.
- ❖ Talk about the stones one by one. Use words that say how they look and feel.
- ❖ Sort the stones into groups, e.g., big, medium, small.
- ❖ Make patterns with the stones, e.g., by putting the stones in a row (big, medium, small, big, medium, small).



## A good read-together book



**Let's Go Rock Collecting** by Roma Gans

## Hints for success

- ❖ Start by talking about one stone that you like and say why.
- ❖ Invite the child to do the same.
- ❖ Choose one way to sort at a time (e.g., by shape, or size or colour).

Where shall we put this stone? In the brown group or the white group?

I like my stone because it is shiny.  
What do you like about your stone?

## Ways to say it

You will need some interesting stones and a flat place to sort them.

This activity is good for learning new words, making groups and patterns and talking about how things are the same or different.

# More ideas for Sorting stones

## Try this way

- ❖ Put the stones in water. Notice how they change when they are wet.
- ❖ Look for stones with different shapes and textures. Sort them by how they feel.
- ❖ Make groups of stones and count them, e.g., "Can you make a group of three small stones? How about five big ones?"
- ❖ Start a collection of favourite stones. Talk about why you like each of your favourite stones.



## Talking and writing

Make up poems together about your favourite stones. Follow an easy pattern, describing size, shape, colour, how it feels or what makes it special.

### Art

Draw and colour pictures of your favourite stones. Make a display of favourite stones.

## Book links

**Rocks and Minerals** by Jan Brennan  
**Stone Soup** adapted by Marcia Brown  
**Sylvester and the Magic Pebble** by William Steig  
**Everybody Needs a Rock** by Byrd Baylor

## Stones

I like my favourite stone.  
 It is not too big.  
 It is shaped like an egg.  
 It is mostly brown.  
 It feels rough.  
 And what makes it special is that  
 it has sparkles in it.  
 I like my favourite stone.

Anonymous

## Safety tip

Very young children might put small stones in their mouths. Keep an eye on your child.



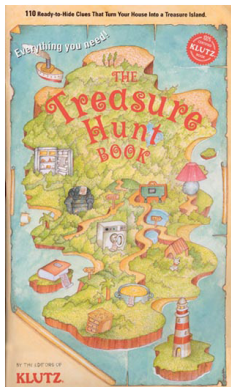
# Treasure hunt

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Hide a treasure somewhere in your home or outdoor play space.
- ❖ Make a treasure map with pictures of familiar landmarks on it, e.g. a big rock, a path, a tree.
- ❖ Help the child or children read the map and signs as they search for the treasure.



## A good read-together book



The Treasure Hunt Book by Klutz Press

## Hints for success

- ❖ Encourage older children to help younger ones figure out the map.
- ❖ Don't make it too hard or too easy to find the treasure.

Now which way  
do we go?

You're getting  
warmer!

**Ways to say it**

You will need a treasure to hide, and some paper and markers to make the map.

This activity is good for learning to interpret symbols and follow directions.





# More ideas for Treasure hunt

## Try this way

- ❖ For younger children (ages 1-3), hide a toy or favourite object and give the child spoken clues, e.g. "Look near the TV" or "I think it is hiding in a corner."
- ❖ For older children (ages 4 and up), give clues that help them learn to follow directions, e.g. "First take three steps toward the house, then turn to face the tree."
- ❖ For extra clues, put up a few signs that lead toward the treasure, e.g. arrows, footprints. Put them along the route of the treasure hunt so that each clue leads to the next.



## Drawing and writing

Help your children make their own treasure maps.

## Physical activity

Go for a treasure walk with your children. Use local landmarks for clues, e.g. "Go past the bakery and stop at the corner," "Go past two white houses." End up with a healthy treat.

## Healthy eating

Take your children on a treasure hunt to the grocery store. Look for healthy foods in different categories. Look at **Treasure Hunt with the Munch Crunch Bunch** for ideas.

## Book link

**Treasure Hunt with the Munch Crunch Bunch**  
by Jan Wolterman

## Point to the Right

Point to the right of me.  
Point to the left of me.  
Point up above me.  
Point down below.  
Right, left, up,  
And down so slow.

Author unknown

Use both arms to do the actions. Start slowly, then go faster each time you say the poem.

# Tri-spy

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ While you are on a walk, invite your child to look for three things: something **special**, something **strange** and something **beautiful**.
- ❖ As you walk along, share what you notice. Point out your choice for each category and ask your child to do the same.
- ❖ Encourage your child to use words that describe each choice.
- ❖ Explain why you chose each item and ask your child to do the same.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Go slowly so you can look carefully.
- ❖ Start with just one kind of choice, e.g. "Let's look for something special."
- ❖ Help one another find interesting choices.

## A good read-together book



**Each One Special** by Frieda Wishinsky

This activity is good for observing carefully, learning descriptive words, and explaining choices.

I spy something beautiful! Can you guess what it is?

Oh look! There's something strange about that sign. A letter is missing.

**Ways to say it**

# More ideas for Tri-spy

## Try this way

- ❖ For younger children (ages 2-3), show your child how to play this game by pointing out things that are special, strange or beautiful whenever you can.
- ❖ Invite older children (ages 4-5) to choose or change the category of things to look for, e.g. something **happy**, something **slimy**, something **funny**, etc.



## Drawing and writing

Take a camera or sketch pad on your walk, and draw or photograph some of the things your child chooses. Use the pictures to make a story about the walk. Write down what your child has to say about each picture.

## The Rainbow

Boats sail on the rivers,  
And ships sail on the seas;  
But clouds that sail across the sky  
Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,  
As pretty as you please;  
But the bow that bridges heaven,  
And overtops the trees,  
And builds a road from earth to sky,  
Is prettier far than these.

Christina G. Rossetti



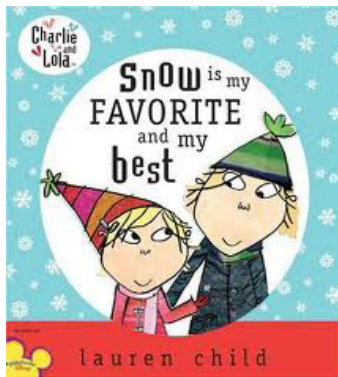
# TV talk

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Watch TV with your child. Talk together about what you see and hear.
- ❖ Ask your child to tell you about favourite programs. Listen and ask questions. Find out what your child likes and why.
- ❖ Ask your child to choose one show and re-tell the story.



## A good read-together book



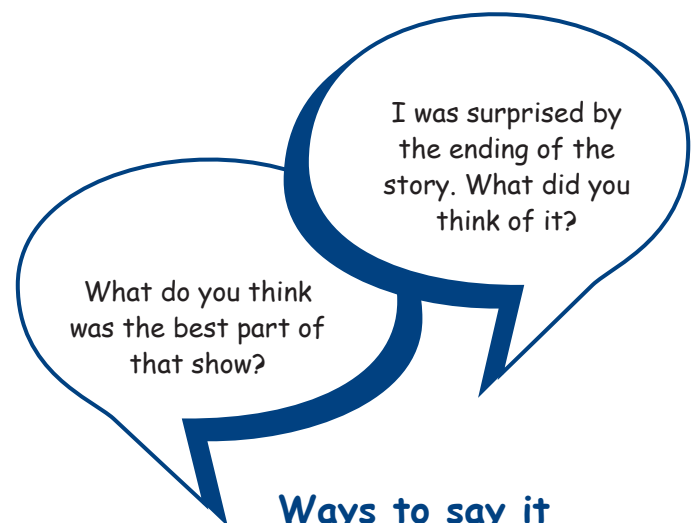
**Snow Is My Favourite and My Best**  
by Lauren Child

This activity is good for learning to remember and re-tell stories. It will also help you and your child talk about good programs to watch on TV.

You will need a TV, a TV schedule, a comfortable place to watch TV, and some paper and markers for re-telling a TV story on paper.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Sit side-by-side with your child and focus on the TV and your child's responses.
- ❖ Let your child take the lead in the conversation. Listen carefully with an open mind to your child's ideas.
- ❖ Ask questions that encourage your child to talk about his or her interests, likes and dislikes.



## Ways to say it

# More ideas for TV talk

## Try this way

- ❖ Make a three-part storyboard by putting three rectangles in a row on a piece of paper. Help your child draw the beginning, middle and end of a favourite TV show in the rectangles. Write words together to go with the pictures.
- ❖ Make a TV schedule of good children's programs with your child. Put the schedule where your child can see it, and look at the schedule with your child to decide what you will watch together.
- ❖ Limit TV time each day. Encourage your child to choose which programs to watch during TV time.



## Language development

Help your child re-tell stories from TV by using prompts such as "At the beginning...", "And then...", "Next...", "At the end...". This will help your child learn the language of putting events in order.

## Early numeracy

Make a chart that lists several of your child's favourite TV programs. Each time you watch a program, put the date on the chart and rate the show by putting stars beside the date, e.g. 3 stars for outstanding, 2 stars for OK, 1 star for not very good, and 0 stars for terrible. Talk about your ratings. Compare favourite programs over time to see which you like best.

## Book link

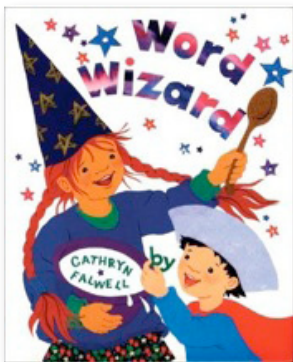
**Brian Wildsmith's Favourite Nursery Rhymes**  
by Brian Wildsmith

# Wacky words

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Cut out some large print letters from newspapers or magazines.
- ❖ Use some letters to make a word your child knows, e.g. "Mom," "stop," "go," or the child's name.
- ❖ Glue the word onto a sheet of paper.
- ❖ Ask your child which word he or she would like to make next.
- ❖ Help your child find the letters needed to make the next word.

## A good read-together book



**Word Wizard** by Cathryn Falwell

You will need scissors, paper, glue and old newspapers or magazines.

This activity is good for learning letters, connecting letters to sounds, and helping children identify the same letter in different forms and colours.



## Hints for success

- ❖ Begin the activity with only a few different letters. Choose letters bigger than the width of your thumb.
- ❖ Cut out letters which form words your child already knows.
- ❖ Start with capital letters first, because they are less confusing for young children.

Here's a B! Which words do we know that start with B?

Let's make your name. Can you find a K?

## Ways to say it





# More ideas for Wacky words

## Try this way

- ❖ Choose one letter. Talk about the letter: its shape, its name, and the sound it makes at the beginning of a word. Find the same letter in different sizes, shapes and colours. Cut them out and glue them all onto a sheet of paper.
- ❖ Make a list of several words that start with the same letter. Cut out some examples of the beginning letter. Glue the letters onto a sheet of paper, and print the rest of each word with coloured markers.
- ❖ Invite your child to choose a favourite word. Find the letters for the word, cut them out and glue them onto a sheet of paper. Then find a picture to match the word, and glue it next to the word.



## An Alphabet

A was once an apple pie,  
Pidy Widy Tidy Pidy  
Nice insidy  
Apple Pie!

B was once a little bear,  
Beary! Wary! Hairy! Beary!  
Taky cary!  
Little Bear!

C was once a little cake,  
Caky Baky Maky Caky  
Taky Caky,  
Little Cake!

D was once a little doll,  
Dolly Molly Polly Nolly  
Nursy Dolly  
Little Doll!

## Writing

Ask your child to think of a simple message you could write with letters from a newspaper or magazine. Write out the message on a piece of paper. Then look for all the letters you need to make the message. Cut them out and glue them onto a sheet of paper. Read the message together.

## Book link

ABC of Canada by Kim Bellefontaine

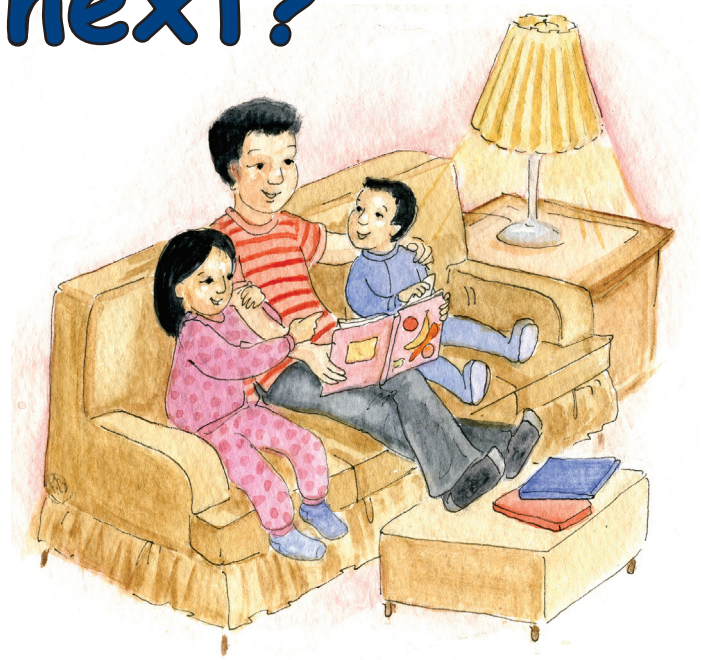
Edward Lear



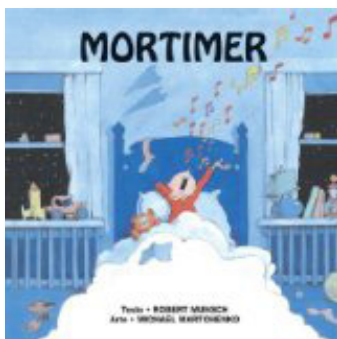
# What comes next?

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Read a familiar children's book with your child.
- ❖ From time to time, stop reading and ask your child "What comes next?". Encourage your child to re-tell what he or she remembers from the next part of the book before you turn the page.
- ❖ When you finish reading the book, help your child re-tell the whole story, either with or without the book. Prompt your child by saying, "And then...?".



## A good read-together book

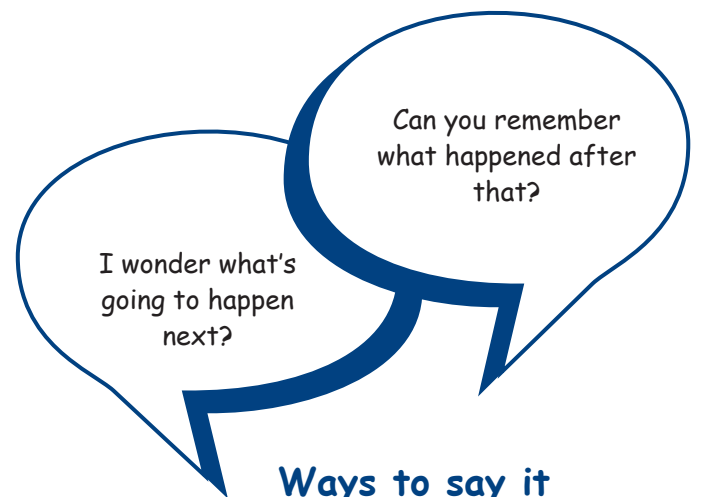


**Mortimer** by Robert N. Munsch

This activity helps children remember a story and put the parts in order. It is good for learning to predict what comes next during reading.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Show your child how to play the game by giving a few examples yourself.
- ❖ When you first try this activity, stop at the points where you think your child can easily remember what comes next. Once your child understands the activity you can make the re-telling more challenging.
- ❖ Encourage your child to try remembering something about what comes next, even if the ideas may not be complete or correct.



**Ways to say it**

# More ideas for What comes next?

## Try this way

- ❖ With a younger child, choose books that include repetition and rhyming words that make it easier to remember the story.
- ❖ Help your older child learn to re-tell stories by playing a game in which you take turns remembering parts of a story and then re-telling them to one another in order. Each time you finish your part, say "What comes next?" or "And then..." to the person who will take the next turn.



## Early literacy

When reading a book for the first time, encourage your child to guess what might happen next throughout the story. Learning to predict while reading is an important skill for literacy success.

## Early numeracy

Read books together that include counting patterns. After reading each page, encourage your child to predict what number will be added on the next page.

## Book link

**The Noisy Counting Book** by Susan Schade  
and Jon Buller



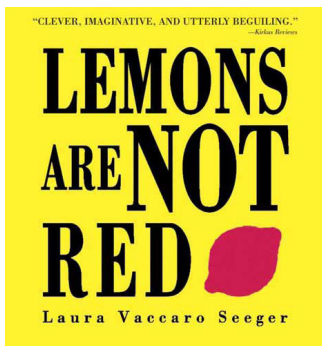
# What is not?

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Gather a collection of objects that can be sorted into "it is" and "it is not" groups, e.g. by colour ("This IS red, but this IS NOT red") or by size ("This IS tiny, but this IS NOT tiny").
- ❖ Show the child how to sort the objects into "it is" and "it is not" groups, e.g. say "This IS blue and it goes in this pile; this IS NOT blue, so it goes over here."
- ❖ Invite the child to take a turn choosing an object and putting it into the "it is" or "it is not" group.



## A good read-together book



**Lemons Are Not Red** by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

You will need a collection of familiar objects and two containers for sorting. Choose some objects that belong in a group, and some that do not belong in that group.

This activity helps children notice how things are similar and different.

## Hints for success

- ❖ Start with a simple way to sort, e.g. by colour.
- ❖ Sort into two containers to show that there are only two choices: "it is" or "it is not."
- ❖ Do one or two examples with the child. As you place each object, explain why it belongs where you put it.

Where shall we put this one?

Let's put things with wheels over here, and things with no wheels over there.

**Ways to say it**





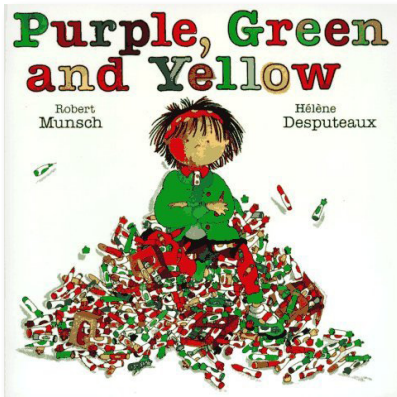
# Will you read to me?

## Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Invite your child to choose a favourite picture book.
- ❖ Look at the cover together. Talk about what the story is about.
- ❖ Ask the child to tell you the story as you turn the pages together.
- ❖ Listen as the child recalls the story or talks about the pictures.



## A good read-together book



**Purple, Green and Yellow** by Robert Munsch

## Hints for success

- ❖ Talk about why your child chose the book.
- ❖ Help the child use picture clues to remember what the book is about.
- ❖ Accept what the child is able to re-tell without expecting it to be correct.

This is my favourite page. What is your favourite part?

Look what's in this picture!

**Ways to say it**

You will need a picture book which your child enjoys.

This activity is good for helping children learn to read using picture clues.



# More ideas for Will you read to me?

## Try this way

- ❖ For very young children (ages 2-3), choose books with simple pictures of familiar objects on each page. Help the child turn the pages. Point to each object and ask, "What's this?" Connect the words with the pictures.
- ❖ For older children (ages 4-5), choose books with words or sentences that are repeated. When the child re-tells the story, join in on the repeated parts to show your enjoyment.
- ❖ Share picture books without words to show your child how to tell a story using only the pictures.



## Healthy eating

Make a simple sentence book about what you ate today. Put one sentence on each page:

Today I ate \_\_\_\_\_.

Then I ate \_\_\_\_\_.

Next I ate \_\_\_\_\_.

Read the book together.

## Physical activity

Take photos of your child doing different physical actions. Make an "I can..." book with one picture on each page, e.g. "I can run" or "I can stretch" or "I can jump."

## Book links

**The Very Hungry Caterpillar** by Eric Carle  
**What Colour?** by Debbie MacKinnon