

# To and From



*Can you run to  
the big tire?*

Suggest that your child move to and from a variety of locations.

Your child will get some exercise, and his direct, active experience will lead to a deeper understanding of position words.



## Why this is important

Talking about *to* and *from* increases your child's understanding of these basic directional words and helps him learn how to use them. Little words like *to* and *from* show specific relationships between actions and objects. In this activity, you are giving names to his actions. *To the table* conveys a different idea than *from the table* or *on the table*.

## What you do

- Name your child's actions as he plays. Talk about what he is doing (*running*) and in what direction (*from* or *to the big tire*).
- Invite him to repeat the action, but change the direction. For example:

*You're running to the tree. Can you run to the fence? It's farther.*

*You're skipping from the swings to the sandbox. Can you skip from the sandbox to the slide? It's uphill.*

- Add labels such as *uphill* or *farther* to introduce new descriptive concepts.
- Invite him to suggest an action to you. Talk about the action as you carry out his directions.

## Ready to move on?

Increase the number of prepositions used in this activity. Try words such as *behind*, *between*, *beside*, etc. Sometimes ask, *Where are you going?* Listen for his answers to include the new words he has learned.

### Let's read together!

*Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!*  
by Candace Fleming

# My Favorite Things

*These are my  
favorite instruments!*

Help your child become aware of her favorite things by asking questions that prompt her to think about her own opinions.

Your child will learn that her ideas tell information about herself and are interesting to other people.





## Why this is important

By supporting your child's personal choices, you send her the message that her choices are of interest to you and you respect her opinions. Though her tastes may change, the good feelings she gets from having them respected stays with her. This helps her to feel good about herself and to continue to make thoughtful personal choices.

## What you do

- Invite your child to play a word game with you.
- Make a statement about her favorite things, but leave out the last word for her to complete.
- Use her name in each statement to give her a stronger sense of how important her own tastes are.

For example:

*Jennie's favorite person is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Jennie's favorite hat is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Jennie's favorite story is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Jennie's favorite food is \_\_\_\_\_.*

- Affirm each statement without making a judgment about her choice: *Oh, green is your favorite color. Is that why you are wearing a green shirt?*

## Another idea

Sometimes play this game by inviting her to gather some of her favorite items together. Encourage her to talk about each one. Remember that her tastes may change each time you play the game.

### Let's read together!

*If the Dinosaurs Came Back*  
by Bernard Most

# Search in Pairs

*I found it!*

Invite your child and a playmate (a pair) to search for objects such as a brush and a comb (another pair).

The children will start to understand that things and people sometimes need a partner to do a complete job.





## Why this is important

Your child will learn that partners work together well if they each do their own special part of the whole task. By playing this game several times, he may begin to notice objects in the world that function in pairs. Awareness of partnerships helps him begin to understand that people and things are often interdependent.

## What you do

- Introduce a game to your child and one of his friends by naming an object, such as a key. Then ask, *What goes with a key? What does a key need in order to work?*
- Prompt them with as many questions as necessary to help them determine the answer: *Where do we put the key to turn it?*
- Take them to the door when they answer *door* or *lock*. Invite them to use the key in the keyhole.
- Explain to the children that they are a pair, too, who will be working together.
- Invite them to help you think of a pair of objects, such as a toothbrush and toothpaste. Together, decide who will be responsible for finding each part of the pair.
- Tell the children, *Bring it back here. Or, Think of a way to show it to me.*
- Talk about each object the children bring and how the objects need each other to function.
- Point out how the children worked together to find the objects that go together.

## Another idea

A few other pairs that work well are light and switch, brush and comb, soap and water, shoe and sock, and paper and pencil.

### Let's read together!

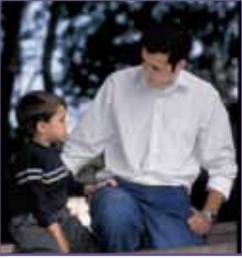
*Two Little Trains*  
by Margaret Wise Brown

# Serious Questions

Why did our  
turtle die?

Give simple but thoughtful answers to your child's *how* and *why* questions.

From your honest answers to serious questions, your child will begin to build his own viewpoint and values.



## Why this is important

Answering your child's serious questions with brief, honest replies helps your child build knowledge and learn your values. Asking questions is a way for your child to get information on facts and attitudes. Children build their value system on the answers others give them, how those answers are given, and their own experiences.

## What you do

- Give your child serious answers to questions as they naturally come up during your day together.
- Keep your answers brief and sincere. A detailed, scientific explanation is often not needed.
- Remember that your child will ask for more information if interested. Even questions about topics such as sex, death, or divorce can be answered very simply.
- Assume that when your child asks a question such as *Why did our turtle die?* he is also asking the implied question, *What do you feel about pets and death?*
- Consider this activity as a way to pass on your important values and attitudes.
- Share answers with your child as often as necessary to make him feel at ease with the subject.

## Another idea

You may notice your child's anxiety about a topic before he has asked a question. Feel free to approach him and welcome any questions he has. Remind him that you are always available to talk with him openly about serious subjects.

### Let's read together!

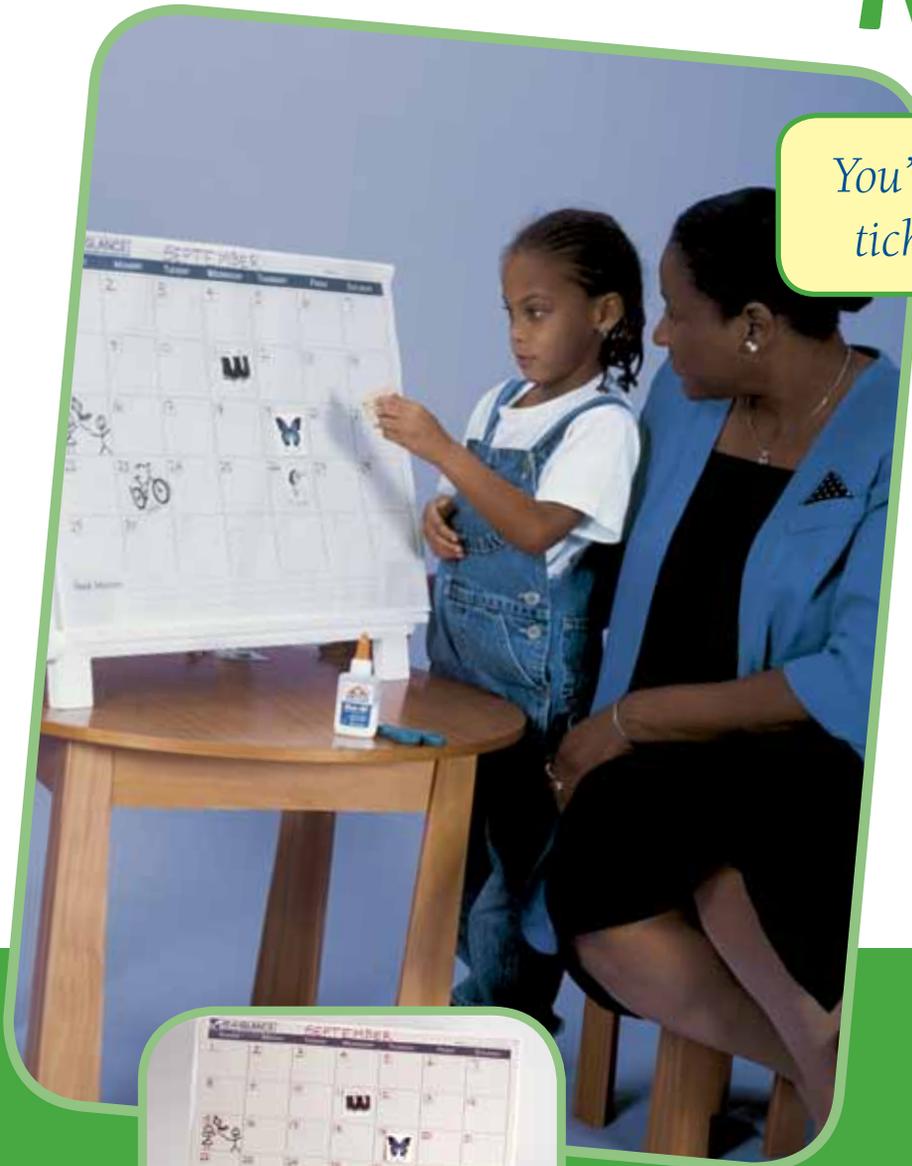
*Two Homes*  
by Claire Masurel

# A Calendar of Special Memories

*You're putting the movie ticket on the calendar.*

Help your child put pictures and words on a calendar to remind her of recent events.

The calendar will act as a memory aid, helping your child extend her ability to remember.





## Why this is important

A calendar can include pictures and words that will help your child recall an event and tell about it. Putting written words under pictures stimulates her interest in print and literacy. Using words to express her memories can give your child the pleasure of sharing her memories and ideas. Memory is necessary for all learning. Using records to jog the memory is an effective tool.

## What you do

- Find or make a calendar with day spaces large enough to contain a small picture.
- Record special events with your child by inviting her to paste or draw a picture of the event on the calendar.
- Talk with her about the event as you mark it on the calendar: *Here is a little picture of shoes like your new ones. Let's cut it out and stick it on your calendar. That will help you remember the day we bought them.*
- Look at the calendar with her a few hours later. Ask her to recall what the picture represents.
- Invite her to share these events with family members and friends. Limit the number of events marked. Choose events to remember based on what your child considers significant.
- Review all the pictures each time a new one is added to the calendar. Keep tape, glue, and magazines nearby so that your child can readily look for pictures as needed.

## Another idea

Slowly remove yourself from the choosing process. Allow your child to completely decide what to include on the calendar. She may surprise you with events she remembers.

### Let's read together!

*Diary of a Wombat*  
by Jackie French

# Our Story

*The eagle said,  
we can...*



Tell a story to your child, pausing at several points to let him add some parts.

Your child's creativity will blossom as he thinks of new ideas and tries them out in storytelling.

*...fly over the  
mountain.*



## Why this is important

Creative storytelling provides a safe opportunity for your child to try out new ideas. When he adds ideas, he can use his imagination to change the outcome of the story. Telling a story is good preparation for the later task of creative writing.

## What you do

- Invite your child to join you in telling a story. For the first few times, you may need to tell the majority of the story, only pausing occasionally to encourage him to add a word or sentence.
- Begin a story with simple details such as: *Once upon a time, a little rabbit was hopping down the forest path. He looked up in an oak tree, and he saw...*
- Pause for your child's idea, then continue with the details he provides: *Down came the squirrel and said, "Let's go to the...."* Continue the story this way.
- Tell short stories until he feels comfortable and confident with this storytelling format.
- Wait for him to offer more information about the characters and plot. He may provide more than just a one-or two-word answer after several practice stories. Prompt him by asking, *Did anything else happen?*

## Another idea

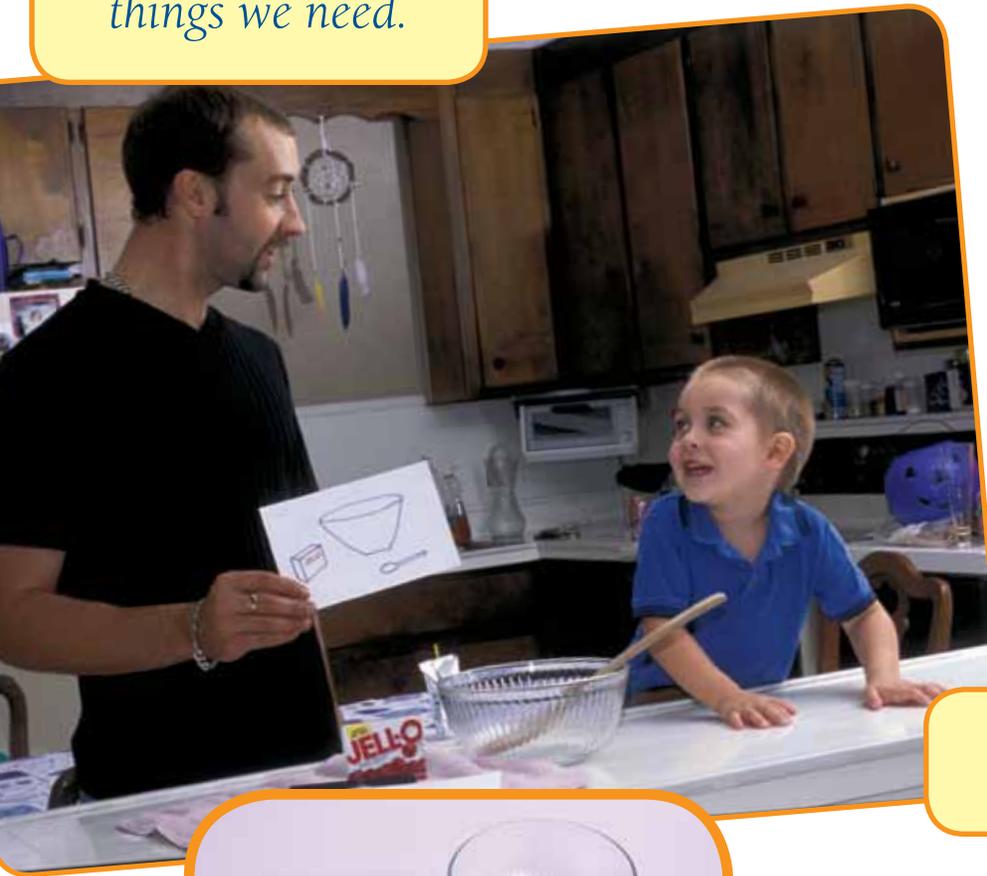
Use this game with your child and other family members or friends by letting them take turns adding to the story.

### Let's read together!

*Tuesday*  
by David Wiesner

# First, Next, Last

*First we find the things we need.*



Use picture cards and the words *first*, *next*, and *last* to teach your child a simple recipe.

You child's ability to remember the order of events in a process will improve.

*Yes!*





## Why this is important

This game provides a fun situation for learning sequencing. Your child will see that some events happen in a given order. Following a recipe builds skills that will help him remember the order of events. Many tasks such as telling a story, bathing, dressing, or riding a bicycle must be done in a particular order to be successful.

## What you do

- Invite your child to help you make something from a simple recipe.
- Show him three index cards, and explain that as you work you will draw pictures of what you did.
- Pick up one card and say, *This card is for what we do first. First, we collect the things we need. As you name the objects (bowl, spoon, measuring cup, and water), make a simple outline drawing of each object on the card.*
- Collect the items together, and review: *First, we found the things we needed.*
- Explain the next step and ask for his help. *Next, we have to put the JELL-O® and the hot water together. How could we do that?* Wait for his suggestion and respond: *Right, we put them in the bowl and mix them. That's the next step. Let me put that on the card.*
- Review the completed step, and then move on to the last step: *The last thing we do is put the JELL-O® in the refrigerator.*
- Illustrate the third step on a card before reviewing all three steps. Ask him to look at the cards and remember which came first, then next, and then last.

## Another idea

On another day, encourage him to make the recipe again so he can use the cards to remember the steps. Invite him to share the cards with a relative so that he can practice explaining the order of events.

### Let's read together!

*Rabbit Pie*  
by Penny Ives

# Build a Person

*You can use this button for a nose.*

Ask questions that will encourage your child to create a detailed person from playdough and craft materials.

Your child will practice using his fine motor skills while thinking about the parts of a whole.





## Why this is important

Playing with playdough will increase your child's skills in using his fingers. Building a person helps him remember which parts make up a whole. This game supports your child's fine motor development while increasing his awareness of how the body is put together.

## What you do

- Invite your child to make a person with playdough by offering a box of supplies such as popsicle sticks, toothpicks, buttons, and a variety of other small items. **Make sure that younger children do not have access to the small parts that could be a choking hazard.**
- Ask your child, *Which of these could you use to make a person?* If needed, prompt him with questions such as, *What could you use for the legs?*
- Notice how he selects items and attaches them in various ways to make a body.
- Make encouraging comments to your child, but do not participate in the game. Let him choose and create his way: *Those buttons make round black eyes. I see you're using popsicle sticks for legs. What a creative way to make a nose!*

## Another idea

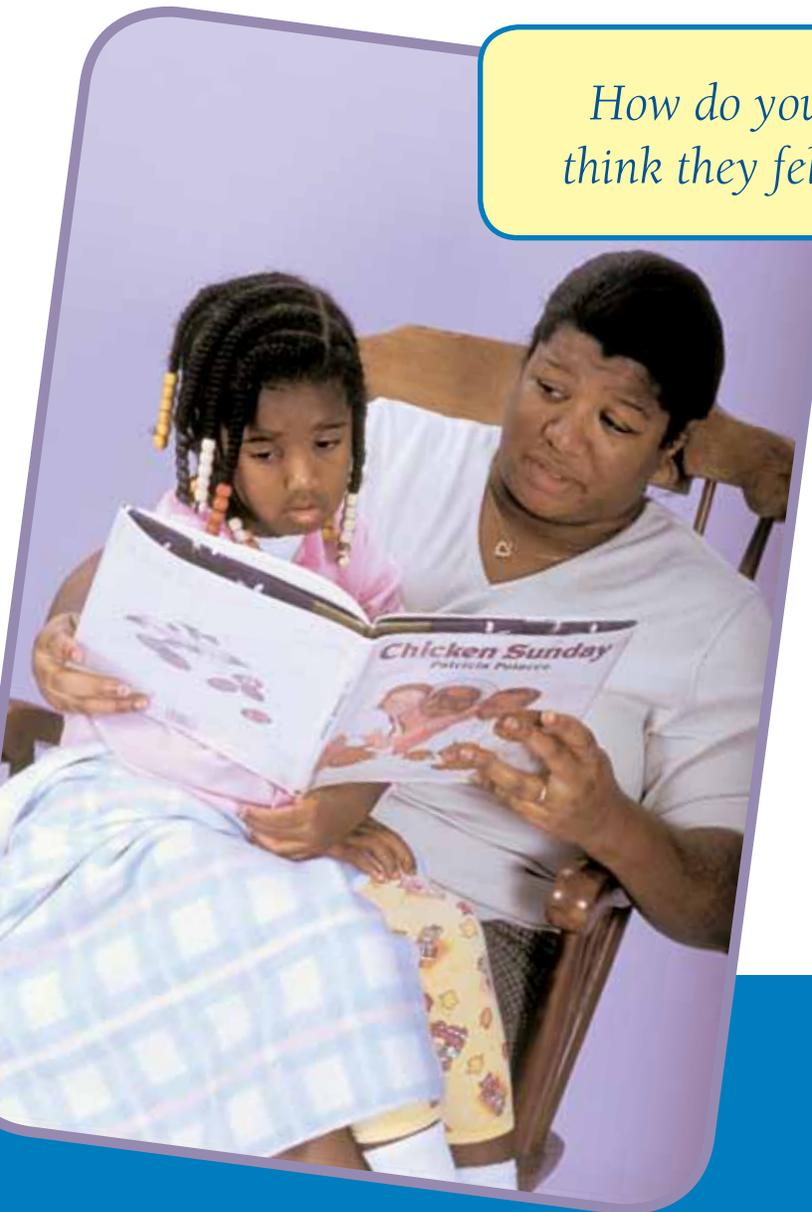
Your child could use his imagination to create farm animals, birds, or pets. If he seems reluctant to start, invite a few friends to play with him. The children may get ideas from one another.

### Let's read together!

*Parts*  
by Tedd Arnold

# I Wonder How She's Feeling

*How do you think they felt?*



Pause when reading a story to ask your child how she thinks one of the characters in the story feels.

This helps your child become more aware of others' feelings and be able to say a few words about them.



## Why this is important

You can guide your child to think and talk about the needs and feelings of characters in stories. Taking an active role in storytime builds early literacy skills and increases her vocabulary. We understand the feelings of others by mentally projecting ourselves into their situation. This skill will help your child begin to be more aware of the feelings and needs of others.

## What you do

- Invite your child to read a story with you.
- Pause occasionally as you read to encourage your child to wonder about the feelings or needs of one of the characters. For example, in the story of *The Three Bears*, pause when Goldilocks tastes the bowls of porridge. Say, *I wonder how she's feeling. What do you think?*
- Accept your child's answer and continue with the story. If she needs help answering the question, encourage her to use clues from the illustrations or give her a few choices: *Do you think Goldilocks is full or hungry? You were right. She is full now. She was hungry, so she ate all of the porridge in the little bowl!*
- Limit the number of questions you ask per story, and rephrase any question that seems to be too difficult for your child. You can change *How do you think she's feeling?* to *Do you think she's feeling scared?*

## Another idea

Ask your child how she would feel if she were in the character's place. *How would you feel if you lost your favorite toy?*

### Let's read together!

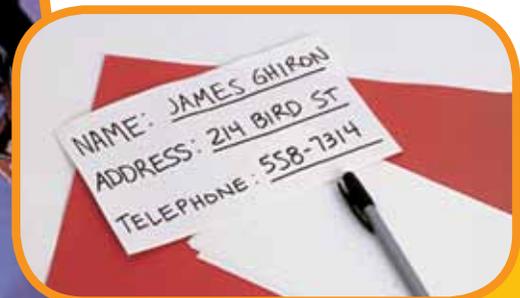
*Chicken Sunday*  
by Patricia Polacco

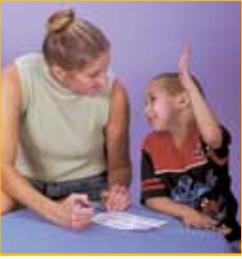
# This Is Who I Am

*And what does your phone number begin with?*

With your child, write and talk about his name, address, and phone number.

Your child will begin to memorize some identifying facts about himself.





## Why this is important

Identification data provide a link between children and their adult family members. Playing this game helps your child learn his family name, birth date, address, and telephone number. Especially in case of an emergency, knowing his identifying information gives him a significant form of protection. Seeing this important information about himself in print stimulates his interest in reading and writing.

## What you do

- Play word games that help your child remember important personal information. Sing *I am Eva Black. Daddy is Richard Black. Who are you?* Help him answer with his full name.
- Pretend to make a phone call to your house and say your phone number so your child can hear. Repeat it often.
- Talk about your address as you and your child come home: *Here we are at 310 Pine Street.* Ask him questions about his address. *Do you live on Oak Street or Pine Street?*
- Listen as your child repeats the information back to you.
- Show him an identity card such as a driver's license. Point out that it shows your full name, address, and birth date. Talk about how this lets others know who you are.
- Make him a card with his information that he can show to close friends and family members. Put the card in a safe place when you are not playing this game.

## Another idea

As your child grasps the information, add more details such as the name of the city where he lives and his zip code.

## Let's read together!

*Ruby in Her Own Time*  
by Jonathan Emmett