

Early Childhood Activities

The Heads In, Hearts In family enrichment program encourages families to use their minds (putting their “heads in”) as a tool to expand their knowledge around a variety of topic areas. By creating a shared educational experience, the family unit will work, grow and learn together, putting their “hearts in” to the process.

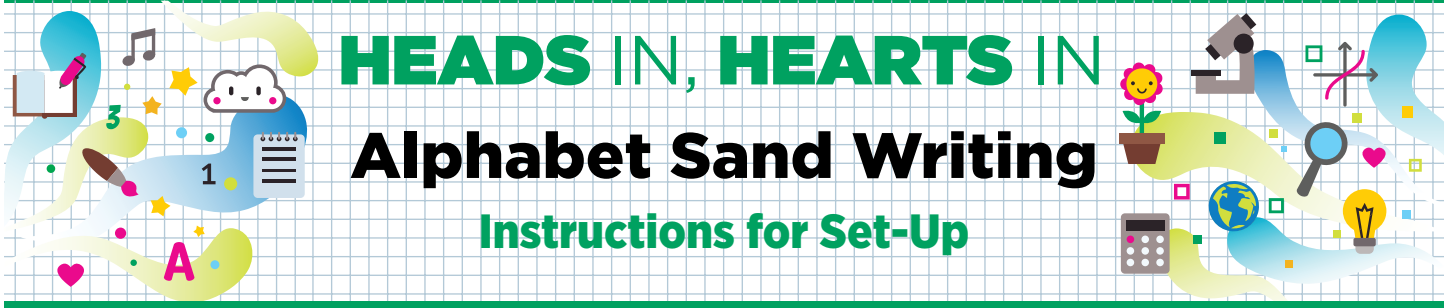
This unit contains the following:

- ▶ Alphabet Sand Writing
- ▶ Birds Eating Worms
- ▶ Clothespin Letters
- ▶ Cupcake Counting
- ▶ Feather Color Match
- ▶ Feelings Masks
- ▶ Flip Flop Rhyming Fun
- ▶ Flower Arrangements
- ▶ Let’s Read!
- ▶ Letter Hunt
- ▶ Matching Shapes and Blocks
- ▶ Measure It!
- ▶ Movement Dice
- ▶ Parts of a Book
- ▶ Sensory Play



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HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Alphabet Sand Writing

Instructions for Set-Up

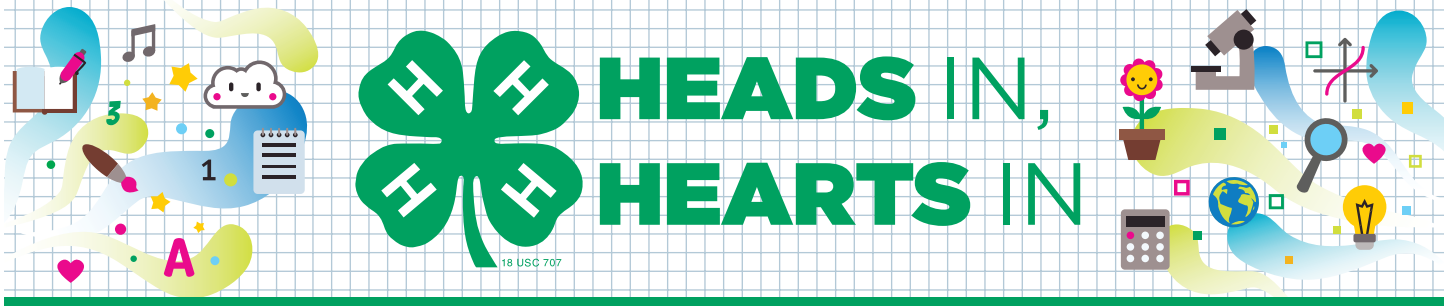
Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- “Letter Cards” handout
- Four 9-inch pie plates
- Play sand (approximately 2 pounds)
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print a copy of the “Letter Cards” handout on durable paper. Cut letter cards apart and laminate.
- ▶ Cover the bottom of each pie plate with play sand.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





Alphabet Sand Writing

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Literacy skills are an important part of school readiness. Young children don't need to know how to read just yet, but they can practice pre-literacy skills such as writing, recognizing letters and knowing letter sounds (the letter "b" makes a "buh" sound like you hear in "bear"). Early literacy skills can help children be ready to learn how to read when they get to school. Children need lots of hands-on practice to build strong muscles in their hands and to learn letter shapes so they are ready to learn to write once they get to school.

What you will do and learn:

Children will practice recognizing and writing letters in sand.

Instructions

1. Select a "Letter Card."
2. Encourage the child to copy the shape of the letter with a finger in the sand. He or she may need your help to write the letter.
3. Once you've practiced the letter a few times, choose a different "Letter Card" and practice writing that letter.
4. See if the child can write all the letters in his or her name.

Alphabet Sand Writing

Letter Cards Handout

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

Alphabet Sand Writing

Letter Cards Handout, continued

J

K

L

M

N

O

P

Q

R

Alphabet Sand Writing

Letter Cards Handout, continued

S

T

U

V

W

X

Y

Z

Alphabet Sand Writing

Letter Cards Handout, continued

a

b

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

Alphabet Sand Writing

Letter Cards Handout, continued

j

k

l

m

n

o

p

q

r

Alphabet Sand Writing

Letter Cards Handout, continued

s

t

u

v

w

x

y

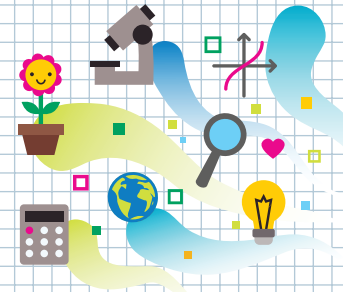
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HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Birds Eating Worms

Instructions for Set-Up



Supplies

- ❑ “Guide for Families” handout
- ❑ Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- ❑ Chenille stems (1/4 of a chenille stem for each participant, any colors)
- ❑ Wood or plastic clothespins with spring (5 per participant)
- ❑ “Birds” worksheet
- ❑ 3 medium-sized baskets
- ❑ Several glue sticks
- ❑ Several pairs of child-safe scissors
- ❑ Small sealable snack bags (1 per participant)
- ❑ Display table

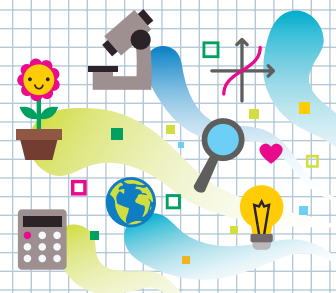
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Cut the chenille stems in 4 pieces and bend to resemble worms.
- ▶ Place the “worms” in a basket. Place the clothespins in another basket. Leave one basket empty.
- ▶ Print (on durable paper) one copy of the “Birds” worksheet per participant.
- ▶ Make several samples of the bird clothespins so participants understand where to glue the bird picture on the clothespin.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Birds Eating Worms Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Fine motor development and **hand-eye coordination** are important skills for developing early writing. Children develop fine motor skills when they use their fingers to manipulate toys, food or other objects. Young children need lots of opportunities to practice activities that will strengthen the muscles of the hand and require the eyes and hands to work together.

What you will do and learn:

Children will practice fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination by grasping, opening and closing clothespins. Encourage the child to develop math skills by counting while placing the “worm” in the basket.

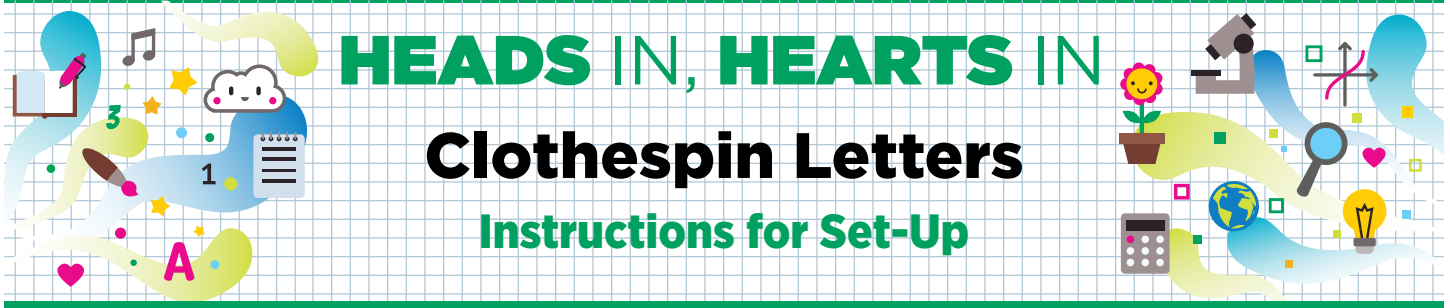
Instructions

1. Take a clothespin.
2. Take a copy of the “Birds” worksheet. Help the child cut out the birds using the child-safe scissors.
3. Using the glue stick, help the child glue each bird onto a clothespin. Allow glue to dry.
4. Take 8-10 chenille stem “worms” from the basket.
5. Encourage the child to use the clothespin “birds” to pick up the chenille stem “worms” by pinching the clothespin with their fingers to make it open and close.
6. Place each “worm” into the empty basket, one by one, using the different colored “birds.”
7. Count the worms as the birds drop them into the basket.
8. When complete, place the clothespin “birds” into the sealable snack bag to take home.

Birds Eating Worms

Birds Worksheet





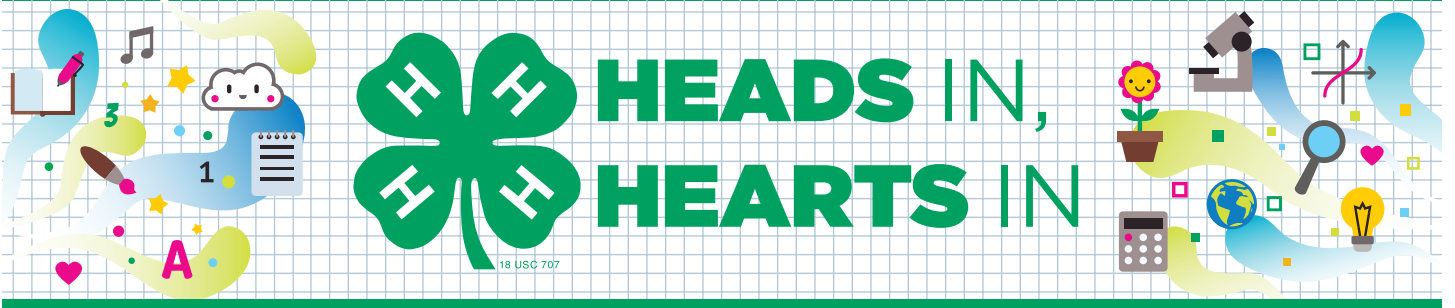
Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- At least 50 wood or plastic clothespins with spring
- Several fine-tip permanent markers
- 2 medium-sized baskets
- “Common Words” Worksheet
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Write a letter of the alphabet (A to Z) on each clothespin. Write frequently used letters such as A, C, D, E, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, R, S, T and U on multiple clothespins.
- ▶ Place clothespins in a basket.
- ▶ Print several copies of the “Common Words” Worksheet on durable paper or laminate. Cut words apart. Place in a basket.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





Clothespin Letters

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

This activity will help a child learn and recognize letters, which will eventually become a combination that creates a word. Letter recognition, which is an important developmental milestone, is instrumental in the success of future reading ability. When participating in this activity, children will also be using the small muscles (fine motor muscles) in their fingers and hands to open and shut the clothespins. Exercising these small muscles is crucial for handwriting abilities in the future.

What you will do and learn:

The child will learn to recognize letters and spell words as they practice and develop their fine motor skills by matching clothespin letters to letters in a word.

Instructions

1. Choose a word from the basket.
2. Look through the basket of clothespins for the letters that in combination make the word.
3. When you find a letter, squeeze the clothespin to open it, and then close it on the piece of paper, aligning it with the correct letter.
4. Repeat the step above until all of the letters needed to spell the word are covered by clothespins.
5. Once you find and cover all of the letters of the word, remove the clothespins and place them back into the basket.
6. Choose a different word and repeat.

Clothespin Letters

Common Words Worksheet

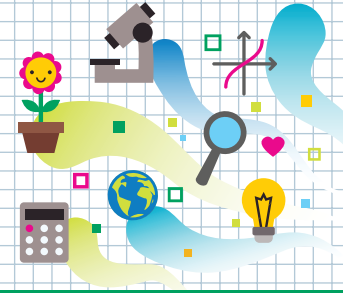
cat	ball	dog
mom	dad	one
two	a	has
my	me	the
she	he	go
can	is	it
are	at	play
no	yes	I



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Cupcake Counting

Instructions for Set-Up



Supplies

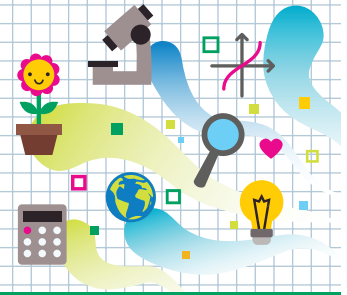
- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- 15 cupcake liners (color, print, foil or other)
- Marker
- Tape (optional)
- Several craft pompoms in various colors and sizes
- Display table
- Small tongs

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Using the marker, in the bottom of the cupcake liners, write numbers 1 to 15 (one number in each liner).
- ▶ Place the pompoms and cupcake liners on the table. If desired, use the tape to attach the cupcake liners to the table.



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Cupcake Counting Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

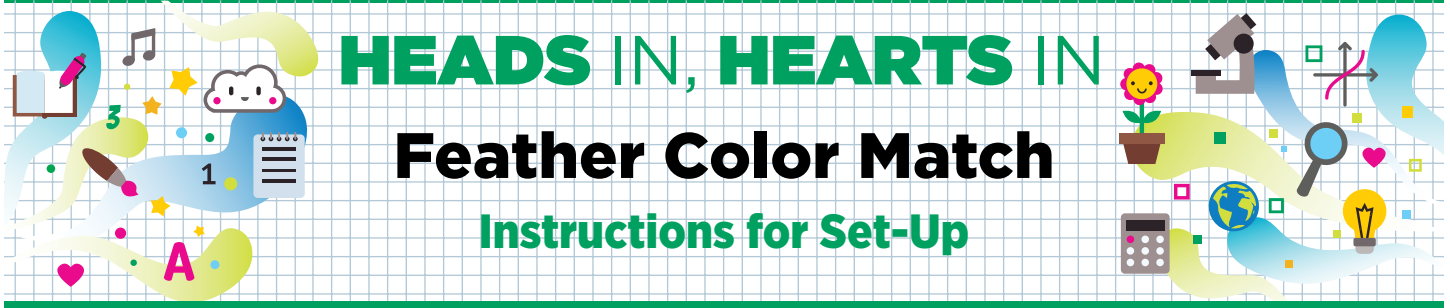
Fine motor development and **hand-eye coordination** are important skills for developing early writing. Children develop fine motor skills when they use their fingers to manipulate toys, food or other objects. Young children need lots of opportunities to practice activities that will strengthen the muscles of the hands and require the eyes and hands to work together. This practice will prepare them to complete self-care tasks such as brushing teeth or tying shoes as well as learning how to hold a pencil and write.

What you will do and learn:

In this activity, adults will encourage and support children as they practice their fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and counting by placing the correct number of pompoms in the cupcake liner.

Instructions

1. Take a pair of tongs.
2. Look at the bottom of the cupcake liner. Encourage the child to read the number aloud. Assist if needed.
3. Have the child use the tongs to pick up the pompoms, one by one, and place them in the cupcake liner. (If tongs are too difficult, encourage the child to use their fingers.)
4. Encourage the child to count the number of pompoms as they put them in the cupcake liner.
5. Stop adding pompoms when you reach the number on the bottom of the cupcake liner.
6. Remove the pompoms from the cupcake liner and place them back on the table.
7. Choose another cupcake liner to place pompoms into.



Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- A variety of feathers in solid colors (red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange and others)
- 3–4 medium baskets
- Permanent markers that coordinate to the various colors of feathers
- 12-inch by 6-inch by 1-inch plastic foam (such as Styrofoam) piece (A piece this size will serve 8 participants.)
- Display table

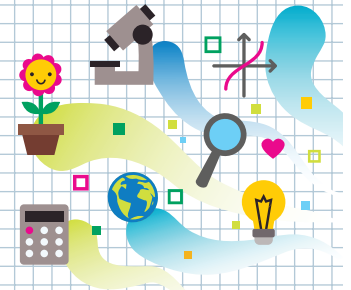
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Put several feathers in a basket, making sure that each color of feather is represented.
- ▶ Using the permanent markers, draw dots in a variety of colors that match the feathers, in no particular order, approximately the size of a dime, all over the piece of plastic foam.
- ▶ Set up the display table with the necessary supplies.





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Feather Color Match Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Fine motor development and **hand-eye coordination** are important skills for developing early writing. Children develop fine motor skills when they use their fingers to manipulate toys, food or other objects. Young children need lots of opportunities to practice activities that will strengthen the muscles of the hands and require the eyes and hands to work together. This practice will prepare them to complete self-care tasks such as brushing teeth or tying shoes as well as learning how to hold a pencil and write.

What you will do and learn:

In this activity, adults will encourage and support children as they practice their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination by matching the colors of feathers to dots on a piece of plastic foam.

Instructions

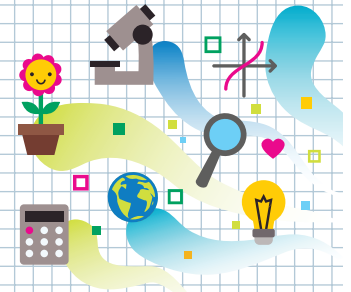
1. Take a piece of plastic foam and have the child place it on a flat surface.
2. Select a basket of feathers and encourage children to use their senses to explore the feathers. Ask questions such as “What colors do you see? What is the texture of the feather? (Is it rough, soft, smooth, silky or bumpy?) What does it smell like?”
3. Have the child identify the color of a feather and look for the matching colored dot on the plastic foam.
4. Encourage the child to poke the feather into the matching color dot on the plastic foam.
5. Repeat with the remaining feathers in the basket.
6. Remove each feather and place them back into the basket.



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Feelings Masks

Instructions for Set-Up



Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- “Emotion Cards” handout
- One 9-inch paper plate (1 per participant)
- Large craft stick (1 per participant)
- Masking tape
- “Feeling Faces” handout (1 per participant)
- 4-5 pairs of child-safe scissors
- Glue sticks
- Display table

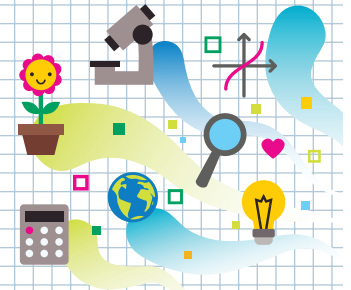
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print a copy of the “Emotion Cards” handout on durable paper. Laminate if desired. Place on the table.
- ▶ Depending on time and space, you may want to prepare masks ahead of time. To do this, attach one large craft stick to the back of each paper plate using masking tape.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Feelings Masks Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Children who have strong **social emotional** skills tend to do well in school because they are prepared to express their emotions in healthy ways, deal with conflict, form friendships and solve problems. One way to support children's development of these skills is to teach them to identify and express different emotions. To do this, they need to understand what different emotions are, know "feeling words" such as "mad," "sad" or "excited," and be able to express them by saying things like "I feel mad because you took my book."

What you will do and learn:

You will explore emotions with the child by creating a mask that represents a feeling or emotion.

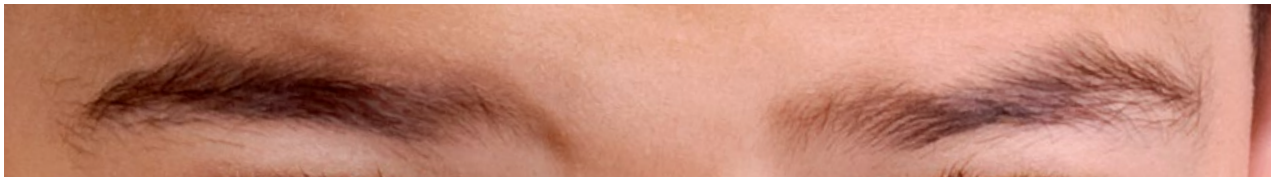
Instructions

1. Take a paper plate and attach a large craft stick to the back of the plate using masking tape.
2. Encourage the child to choose an emotion for the mask. Use the "Emotion Cards" to help pick the emotion.
3. Take a "Feeling Faces" handout. Allow the child to select the eyes to use on the mask and cut them out. Repeat for eyebrows and mouth.
4. Using the glue stick, glue the eyes, eyebrows and mouth on to the paper plate.
5. Hold up the mask and talk with the child about what the mask expresses.
6. Encourage them to show what it looks like to express that emotion. (They might stomp if pretending to be mad or laugh if pretending to be happy.) Ask, "What would your body look like? What about your words? What do you say when you feel that emotion?"
7. Use the rest of your "Feeling Faces" handout to make more feelings masks at home.
8. Additionally, try playing feelings charades by having the child act out an emotion and you try to guess what it is.

Feelings Masks

Feeling Faces Handout

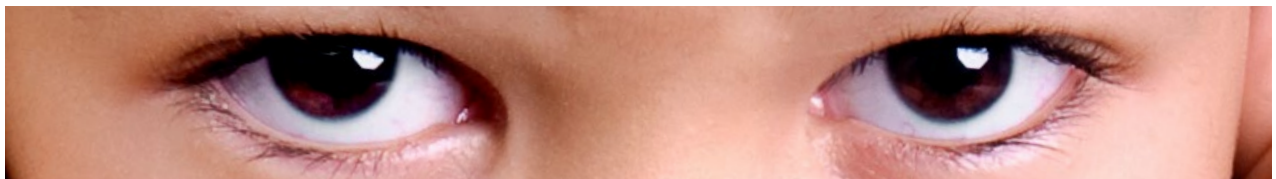
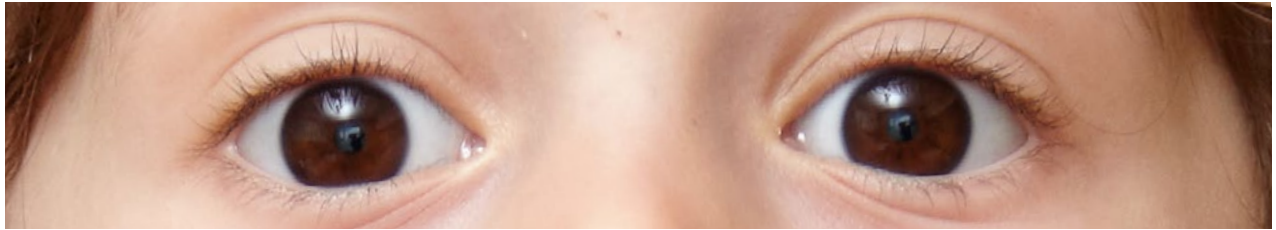
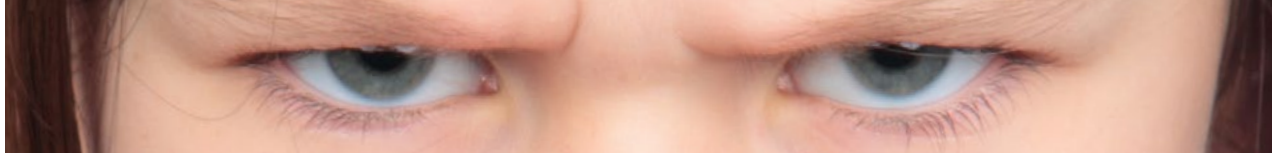
Eyebrows



Feelings Masks

Feeling Faces Handout, continued

Eyes



Feelings Masks

Feeling Faces Handout, continued

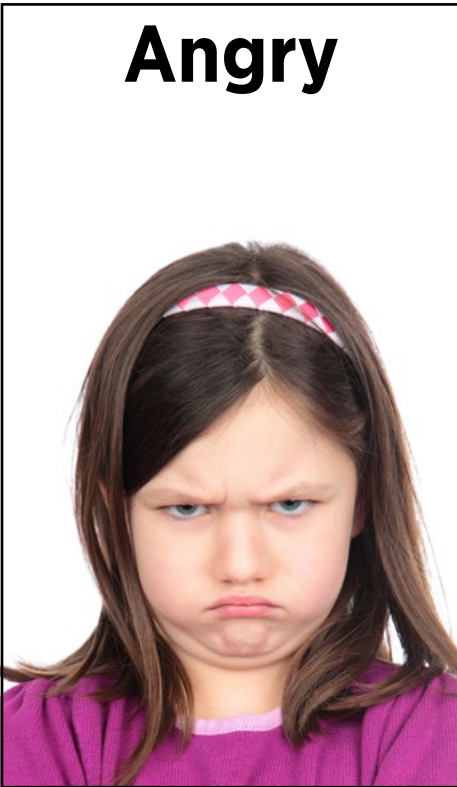
Mouth



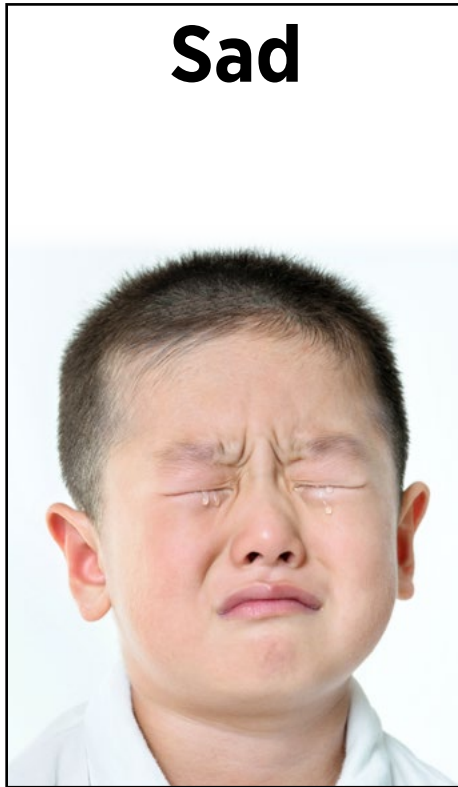
Feelings Masks

Emotion Cards Handout

Angry



Sad



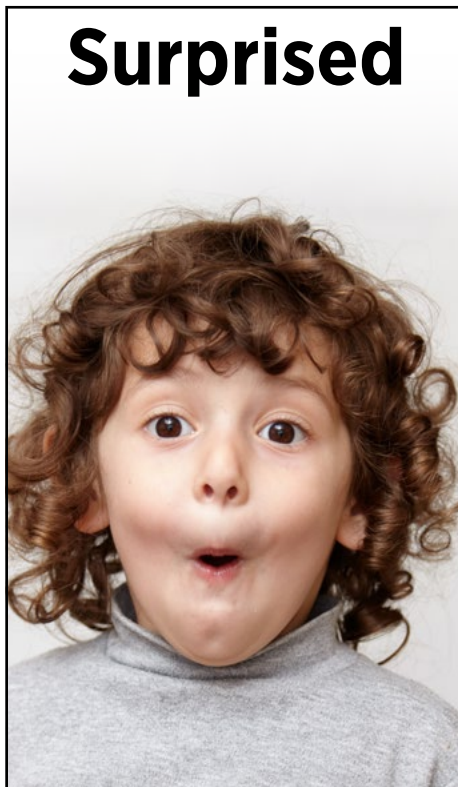
Happy



Worried



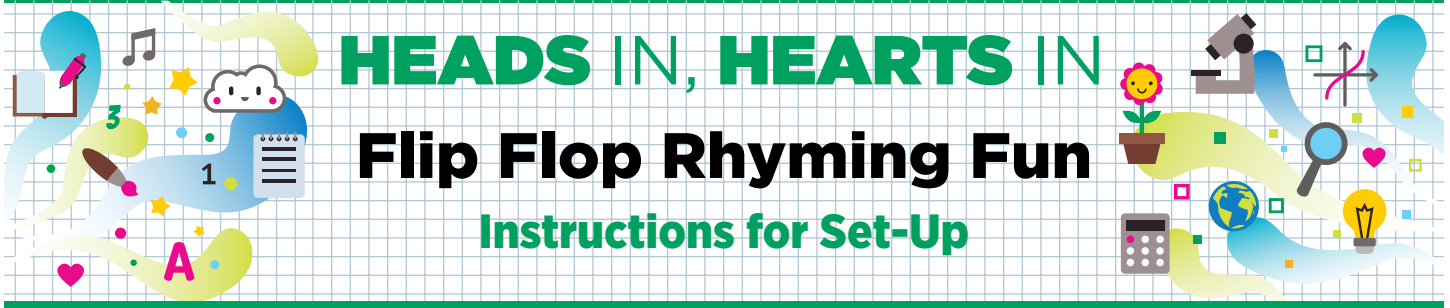
Surprised



Afraid



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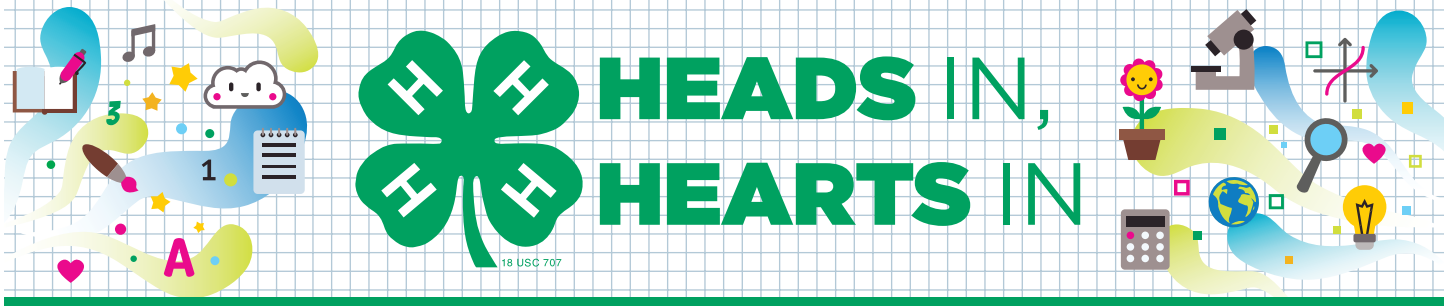
Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- “Flip Flop Rhyming Pairs” handout
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print a copy of the “Flip Flop Rhyming Pairs” handout on durable paper. Cut flip flops apart and laminate.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





Flip Flop Rhyming Fun

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Literacy skills are an important part of school readiness. Young children don't need to know how to read just yet, but they can practice pre-literacy skills such as writing, recognizing letters and knowing letter sounds (the letter "b" makes a "buh" sound like you hear in "bear"). Early literacy skills can help children be ready to learn how to read when they get to school.

What you will do and learn:

The child will practice understanding how rhyming words start with different letters or sounds, but end the same way. They will match up words that rhyme by matching halves of pairs of flip flops.

Instructions

1. Select a half of a pair of flip flops.
2. Encourage the child to say what the picture is that they see.
3. Explain to them that when words rhyme they end with the same sound.
4. Help the child find the other half of the pair of flip flops with a picture of something that rhymes with the picture on the first half.
5. See how many pairs of flip flops you can create.

Flip Flop Rhyming Fun

Flip Flop Rhyming Pairs Handout

 <p>cat</p>	 <p>bat</p>	 <p>star</p>	 <p>car</p>
 <p>house</p>	 <p>mouse</p>	 <p>tree</p>	 <p>bee</p>

Flip Flop Rhyming Fun

Flip Flop Rhyming Pairs Handout, continued

 <p>moon</p>	 <p>spoon</p>	 <p>bed</p>	 <p>sled</p>
 <p>shell</p>	 <p>bell</p>	 <p>clock</p>	 <p>sock</p>

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Flip Flop Rhyming Fun

Flip Flop Rhyming Pairs Handout

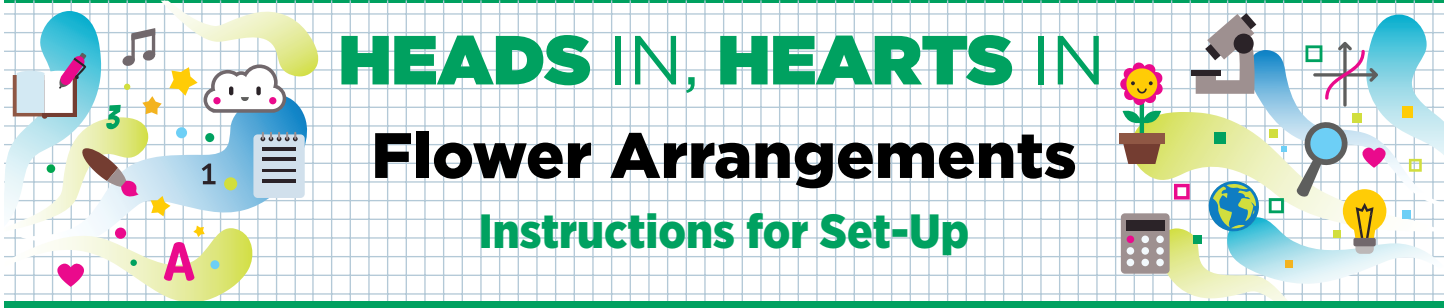
 <p>pear</p>	 <p>bear</p>	 <p>fan</p>	 <p>pan</p>
 <p>egg</p>	 <p>leg</p>	 <p>pie</p>	 <p>tie</p>

Flip Flop Rhyming Fun

Flip Flop Rhyming Pairs Handout, continued

 <p>yarn</p>	 <p>barn</p>	 <p>phone</p>	 <p>bone</p>
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 <p>goat</p>	 <p>boat</p>	 <p>dog</p>	 <p>frog</p>
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HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Flower Arrangements

Instructions for Set-Up

Supplies

- ❑ “Guide for Families” handout
- ❑ Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- ❑ Four to six 5-quart or larger colanders with large holes
- ❑ 4–6 half-circles of plastic foam (Styrofoam) that will fit under a colander
- ❑ A variety of artificial flowers (approximately 10–20 flowers per participant)
- ❑ A variety of items that will fit into the holes of each colander such as straws, feathers or chenille stems
- ❑ 4–6 medium-sized baskets
- ❑ Display table

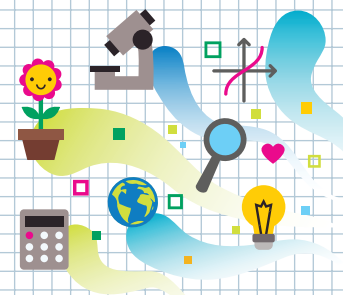
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Place the plastic foam under each colander.
- ▶ Remove tags, leaves and any other items from the artificial flowers.
- ▶ Put the flowers in baskets next to the colander on the display table, as well as any additional materials (feathers, straws, chenille stems).





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Flower Arrangements Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Fine motor development and **hand-eye coordination** are important skills for developing early writing. Children develop fine motor skills when they use their fingers to manipulate toys, food or other objects. Young children need lots of opportunities to practice activities that will strengthen the muscles of the hands and require the eyes and hands to work together. This practice will prepare them to be able to complete self-care tasks such as buttoning a shirt or pulling a zipper as well as learning how to write.

What you will do and learn:

Children will develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination by poking artificial flowers through holes in a colander into plastic foam. Encourage their efforts and help them keep trying, even if it is challenging.

Instructions

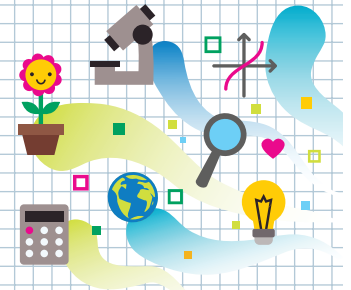
1. Choose a colander and basket of flowers.
2. Encourage children to use their senses of touch, sight and smell to explore the flowers. Ask, "What colors do you see? What does the flower feel like? What is the texture of the flower? (Is it rough, soft, smooth, silky or bumpy?) Does it smell like a real flower?"
3. Encourage the child to pick up a flower and poke the stem through a hole in the colander and into the plastic foam.
4. Repeat this action until you run out of flowers or the colander is full.
5. Remove each flower, one at a time, and place them back into the basket.



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Let's Read!

Instructions for Set-Up



Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- 10–15 popular children’s books
- Large craft sticks (5 per participant)
- Several permanent markers
- Sealable plastic snack bag (one per participant)
- “Tips for Reading With Children” handout from the Michigan State University Extension MI Stronger Family series (one per participant) (Find at https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/234/59099/Tips_for_Reading_with_Children.pdf.)
- Display table

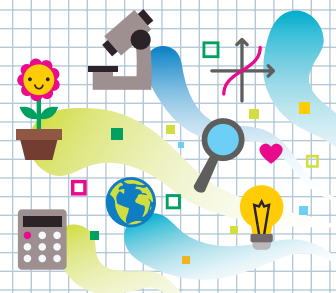
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Review the popular children’s books.
- ▶ Create an example of the craft sticks by taking five sticks and writing one word on each:
 - Who?
 - Where?
 - What?
 - Events
 - Ending
- ▶ Print “Tips for Reading With Children” handouts.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Let's Read! Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Reading is an essential skill. Pre-reading skills begin to develop just after birth and develop rapidly during the first five years of life. Early literacy skills play a big role in a child's school success, and it's crucial that children have lots of opportunities to practice early literacy skills. These early literacy skills include letter and letter sound recognition, pre-writing skills, vocabulary and oral language skills. Early experiences with books play an important role in literacy skill development.

What you will do and learn:

Children will choose a book to explore and read. Work with them to recall and identify what happened during the story.

* The questions listed here come from Michigan State University Extension's "The Retelling Glove," part of the MI Stronger Family series.

Instructions

1. Let the child choose a book.
2. Explore and read the book together.
3. Take five craft sticks and write one word on each. (See the example sticks.):
 - ▶ Who?
 - ▶ Where?
 - ▶ What?
 - ▶ Events
 - ▶ Ending
4. Work with the child to recall what happened during the story by asking the child to choose a craft stick, reading the word on the craft stick, and then asking questions* such as:

Who?: Who is the main character in the story? Name some other characters in the story. Tell me about one of the characters.

Where?: Where does the story take place? Where do the characters live?

What?: What is the problem in the story? What happened in the story?

Events: Retell the events in order: beginning, middle and end. Tell what happened first, second and so on. Tell me about a specific event.

Ending: Tell me about the end of the story. Where you surprised at the way the story ended? Tell me another way the story could have ended.
5. Place all five of the craft sticks in the plastic bag to take home and use with another book.
6. Take home a "Tips for Reading With Children" handout.



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Letter Hunt

Instructions for Set-Up

Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- Foam letters (the kind you would use in a bathtub)
- Large durable paper
- Markers
- Cornmeal (at least 1 pound)
- Medium- or large-sized plastic tub
- Display table

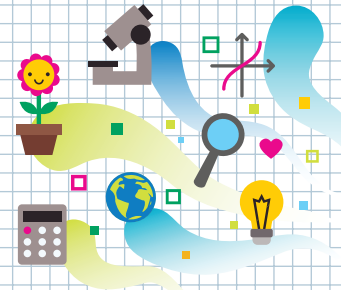
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Using the markers, trace the foam letters on to several durable paper sheets. Place on table.
- ▶ Place cornmeal in the plastic tub.
- ▶ Place the tub of cornmeal on the floor or other stable location where children will be safe looking for letters.
- ▶ Place the foam letters on the table.





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Letter Hunt Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Sensory skills and **literacy skills** are important parts of early childhood development. **Sensory play**, or play that involves the senses, is important for young children. When they are free to play using touch, sight, smell, taste, movement and balance, children learn about the world around them in a fun way. Early **literacy skills** play a big role in a child's school success, and it's crucial that children have lots of opportunities to practice them.

What you will do and learn:

You will encourage the child to search for the hidden letters in the cornmeal and then match each letter up with the letter on the letter sheets.

Instructions

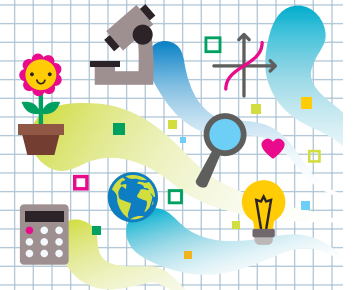
1. Hide about 10 to 15 foam letters in the tub of cornmeal.
2. Encourage the child to look and feel for the foam letters in the cornmeal.
3. When he or she finds a letter, exclaim in an enthusiastic tone, "You found one!" Your excitement will be contagious and will make this a fun learning activity.
4. When the child finds a letter, help him or her place it on top of the matching letter on the letter sheet.
5. Encourage the child to name the letter, think of a word that starts with that letter or make the sound that the letter makes.



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Matching Shapes and Blocks

Instructions for Set-Up



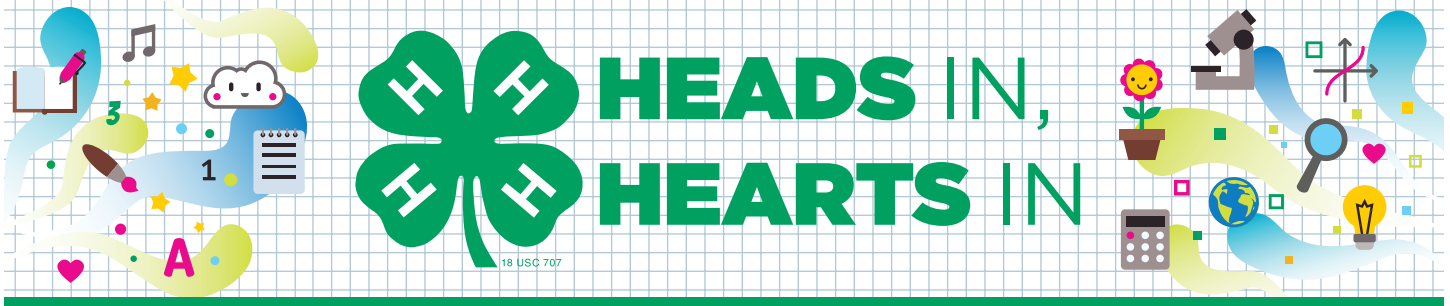
Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- Ten to fifteen 2- to 4-inch blocks in varying shapes and colors
- 4–6 large sheets of paper to make shape outline activity pages
- Crayons or markers in colors that match the blocks
- Additional crayons or markers in colors that match the blocks (optional)
- Extra paper (optional)
- Masking tape (optional)
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ To create a shape outline activity page, trace each shaped block using a crayon or marker in the same color as the shape. You should end up with an outline of each shape on the sheet of paper. Make 4 to 6 of these pages. Arrange the shapes in a different way on each.
- ▶ Place blocks and shape outline activity pages on the table. Tape the activity pages down, if desired.
- ▶ Place additional blank pages and crayons or makers on the table (optional).





Matching Shapes and Blocks

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Through block play, young children learn important math skills such as **geometry** and **spatial reasoning**. They also practice fine motor skills or build strong muscles in their hands, as well as develop hand-eye coordination. Spatial awareness, the building block to geometry, involves shapes, sizes, space, position, directions and movement. While playing with blocks, you can use words to help children learn math concepts, such as **above, below, in front of, next to, circle, rectangle, rhombus, edge, corner, face** and **side**.

What you will do and learn:

Children will work on geometry and spatial reasoning by selecting a block and finding the matching shape outline in the same color.

Instructions

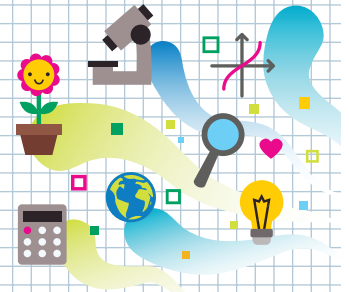
1. Select a shape outline activity page.
2. Encourage the child to select a block and find the matching shape outline. Have them place the block on top of the outline.
3. While matching the blocks, talk to the child about color, shape and number of sides. Using positional words, such as **above, below** and **next to**, describe the location of each shape outline. (For example, the triangle is next to the circle.)
4. Older children may want to trace the blocks themselves using the crayons (or markers) and paper supplied.



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Measure It!

Instructions for Set-Up

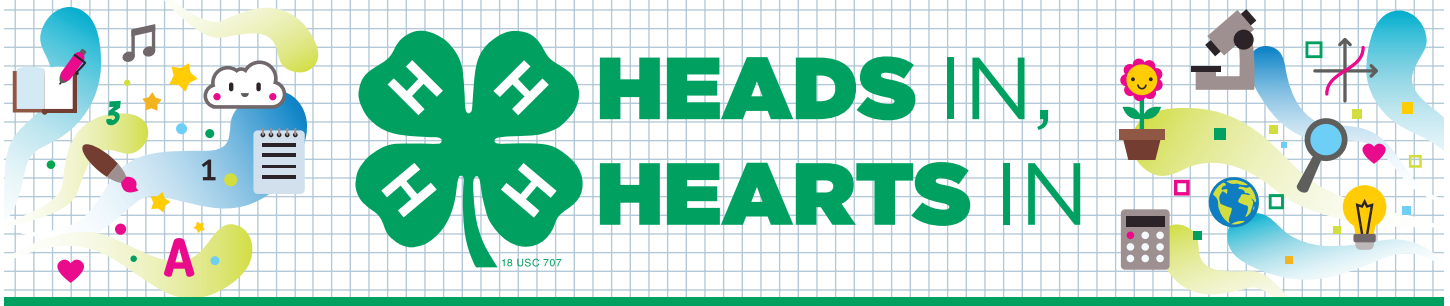


Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- “Measuring Activity” worksheet (1 per participant)
- 8–10 various items to be used as measuring tools (feather, block, car, plastic animal, book, die or other)
- 10–12 various items to measure (teddy bear, doll, car, basket, shoe or other)
- Writing utensils
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print the “Measuring Activity” worksheets on durable paper.
- ▶ On the table, place the “Measuring Activity” worksheets, items to measure and tools to measure with.



Measure It!

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Measuring is an important part of early math learning, but young children do not need to measure with standard tools like rulers and tape measures. By measuring with everyday objects, children practice **classification**, or exploring the characteristics of different items, comparing those items and measuring the different features of an object such as height, length, width and weight.

What you will do and learn:

Using everyday items, children will work on early math skills such as classification, comparison and measuring.

Instructions

1. Choose an item to measure.
2. Choose a tool to measure with.
3. Use your tool to measure your item. How tall is it?
4. Once you have measured your item, keep track of how tall it is on your “Measuring Activity” worksheet.
5. Choose another tool and measure the same item. Is it the same length? Is it different? Why?
6. Keep measuring your item or choose another item to measure.

Measure it!

Measuring Activity Worksheet

Write or draw the item you are measuring. Then keep track of your measurements.


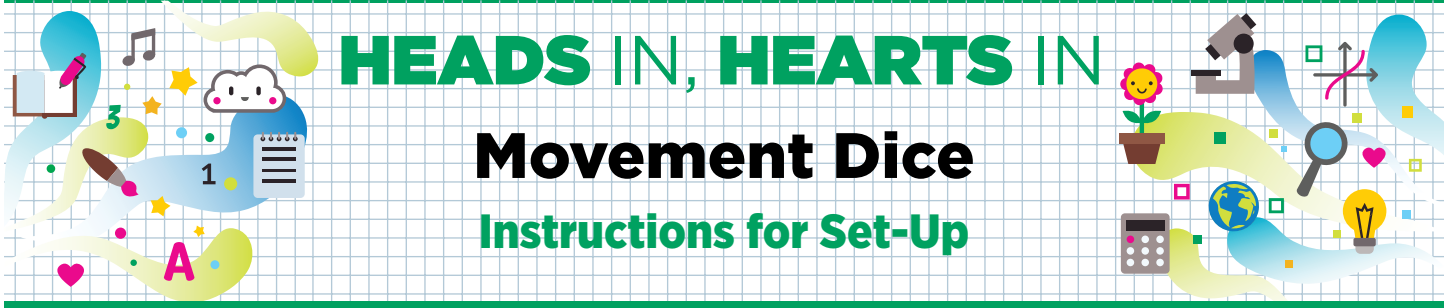
Item	Measurements
<p>Example:</p> 	<p>12 cars tall 10 dinosaurs tall 5 blocks tall 2 ribbons around 3 sticks wide</p>

Illustration © iStock.com



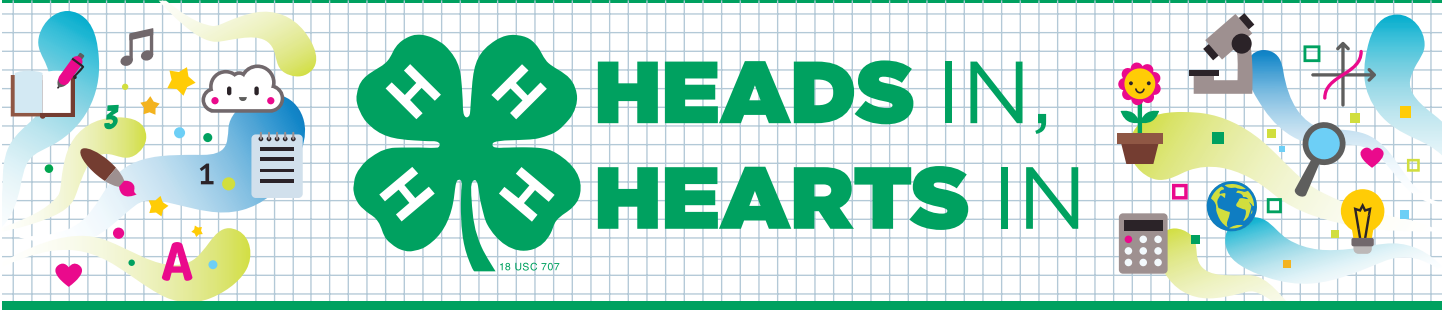
Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- Dice (1 per participant)
- “Motor Movements” handout
- “Move at Home” handout (1 per participant)
- Painter’s tape or masking tape (approximately 3 feet)
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print a copy of the “Motor Movements” handout on durable paper. Laminate if desired.
- ▶ Place approximately 3 feet of painter’s tape or masking tape on the floor. This needs to be in a place where participants can use it to balance and walk in a straight line.
- ▶ Print the “Move at Home” handout on durable paper. Laminate if desired. Cut apart.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.





Movement Dice

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Motor skills are important for a young child's development. When children practice their **gross motor skills**, or large muscle movements, they gain control over their bodies and their movements, build strong muscles, and gain coordination and balance. Help children practice these skills by encouraging them to get moving by running, jumping, skipping, hopping and much more!

What you will do and learn:

You will practice engaging in gross motor play with the child. By rolling dice to see what movement to try, children will learn and practice many ways to move their big muscles.

Instructions

1. Pick up one die. (A **die** is the singular form of dice.)
2. Roll to see what movement to try. Use the "Motor Movements" handout to find out which movement you will do. Encourage the child to practice moving in that way.
3. See if you can practice all six movements.
4. Try creating a movement pattern by putting two movements together and repeating them (for example, jump, march, jump, march). If you wish, roll two dice and use those combinations.
5. Take a "Move at Home" card.
6. Decide which actions you want to practice at home and write them down.
7. Take the card and one die home to continue practicing gross motor skills.

Movement Dice

Motor Movements Handout



Jump.

Jump up with both feet. Try to land with both feet together. Try jumping 10 times in a row.

Challenge Movement:

Try jumping on one foot ten times.

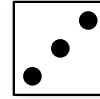


Skip.

Take a step and then hop with your left leg. Then take a step and hop with your right. Try skipping in a circle.

Challenge Movement:

Every time you hop, clap your hands.



March.

Lift up your legs one at a time with bent knees while swinging your arms. Try to get your knees up high!

Challenge Movement:

Point your toes to the ground when you lift your knees high.



Balance on one foot.

Lift up one foot and try to balance without falling over. Try hopping on one foot.

Challenge Movement:

When you lift one foot, also lift one arm high above your head.

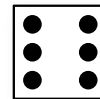


Walk along a line.

Walk by placing one foot in front of the other on top of the tape on the floor. Try to balance all the way to the end.

Challenge Movement:

Try putting your arms down at your side, put your arms straight out in front of you or lift your arms high above your head as you walk.



Gallop.

Step forward on your left leg, then rock back on your right leg. Repeat this movement until you are galloping like a horse.

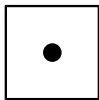
Challenge Movement:

Also, move your arms like you are holding the reigns of a horse.

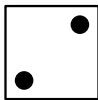
Movement Dice

Move at Home Handout

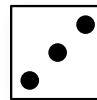
Instructions: Use this card to write in your own movements to practice at home.



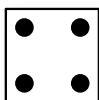
Movement 1:



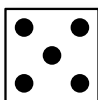
Movement 2:



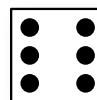
Movement 3:



Movement 4:



Movement 5:



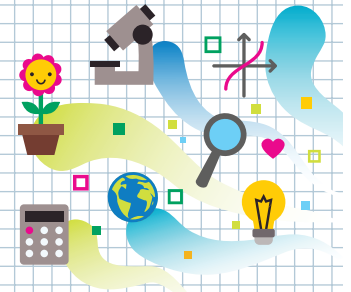
Movement 6:



HEADS IN, HEARTS IN

Parts of a Book

Instructions for Set-Up

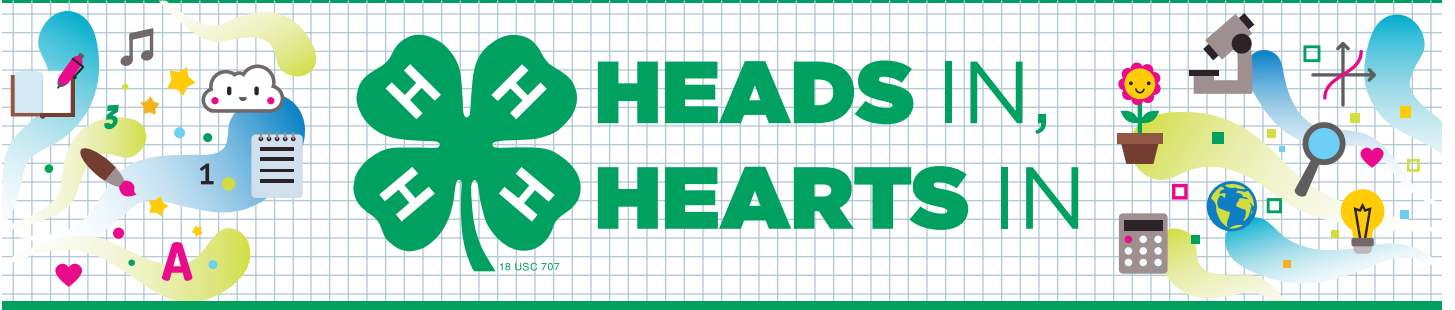


Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- 10–15 popular children’s books
- “Parts of a Book” worksheet (one per participant)
- Several crayons
- Display table

Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Print “Parts of a Book” worksheet.
- ▶ Set up the display table and arrange needed supplies.



Parts of a Book

Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Reading is an essential skill. Pre-reading skills begin to develop just after birth and develop rapidly during the first five years of life. Early literacy skills play a big role in a child's school success, and it's crucial that children have lots of opportunities to practice early literacy skills. These early literacy skills include letter and letter sound recognition, pre-writing skills, vocabulary and oral language skills. Early experiences with books play an important role in literacy skill development.

What you will do and learn:

Children will choose a book to explore. Work with them to identify the simple parts of a book.

Instructions

1. Let the child choose a book.
2. Explore the book together.
3. Take a "Parts of a Book" worksheet.
4. Work with the child to identify the parts of the book that they chose:
 - Front cover
 - Back cover
 - Pages
 - Spine
 - Title
 - Author
 - Illustrations
5. Encourage the child to complete the worksheet by drawing a line from the word to the part of the book.

Parts of a Book

Parts of a Book Worksheet

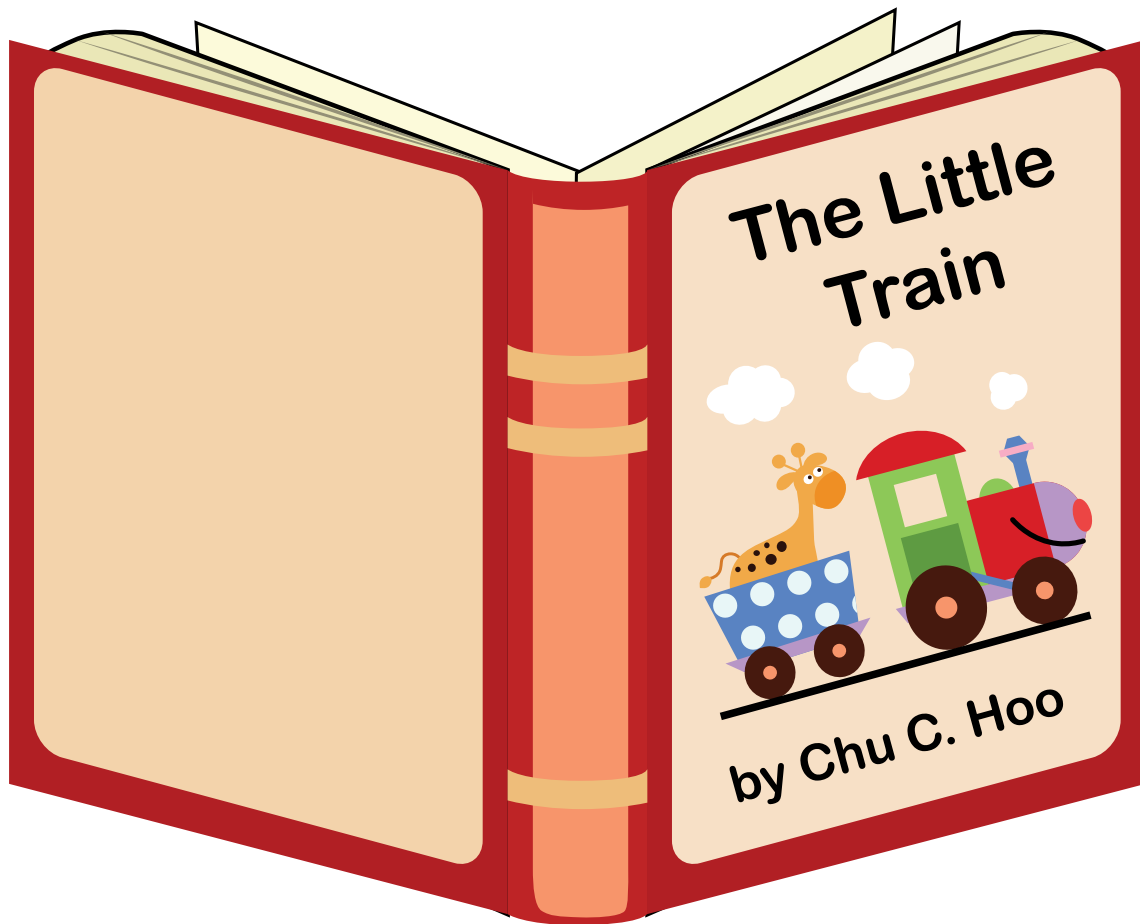
Complete the worksheet by drawing a line from the word to the part of the book.

pages

title

illustrations

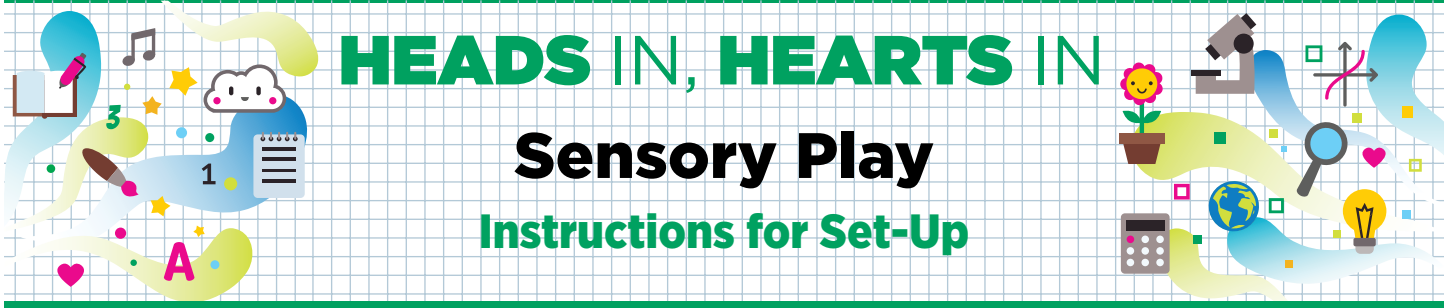
front cover



back cover

spine

author



Supplies

- “Guide for Families” handout
- Clear plastic standup display (optional)
- A medium-sized tray or tub
- Flour, rice or cornmeal (approximately 1 pound)
- A variety of measuring tools (1 cup, ½ cup, teaspoon, tablespoon and others), toys (dinosaurs, cars, balls, blocks and others) and household objects (drinking straw, spoon, cup, craft stick and others)
- Display table

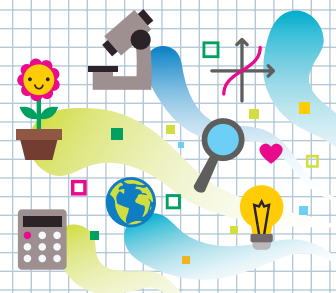
Activity Preparation

- ▶ Purchase or locate items on supply list.
- ▶ Print one copy of the “Guide for Families” handout. Laminate or place in a clear plastic standup display to allow participants to see it more readily.
- ▶ Place flour, rice or cornmeal in the tray or tub.
- ▶ Remove all stickers and tags from the measuring tools and toys.
- ▶ Place measuring tools and toys on table.





HEADS IN, HEARTS IN



Sensory Play Guide for Families

Learning Objectives

What you need to know:

Sensory play, or play that involves the senses, is important for young children. When children are free to explore materials and play using touch, sight, smell, taste, movement and balance, they are learning about the world around them in a fun way. Young children are concrete learners. They need to touch and manipulate things in order to understand them. Sensory play allows them to do this while also strengthening pathways in the brain that help with learning and healthy development. When children use their senses, they develop creativity, social skills, problem-solving skills, hand-eye coordination, science-related skills and more. Anything that is messy could be considered sensory play.

What you will do and learn:

The child will develop skills while freely exploring the sensory materials provided.

Instructions

1. Encourage the child to manipulate and explore the sensory material (flour or corn meal). They can explore the material with their hands by running it through their fingers, cupping it in their hands, and squeezing it in between the thumb and forefinger.
2. Begin adding measuring tools, toys and objects to the tray or tub.
3. Allow the child to play freely with the materials. You can also encourage him or her to draw shapes, letters and numbers in the flour or cornmeal.
4. They can pour the flour, rice or cornmeal into the measuring tools, toys or household objects to play. You can help children learn and use new vocabulary words as they play. You can talk about filling and emptying containers, "You are pouring/dumping/emptying," "I see that one scoop of cornmeal filled up the small container. How many scoops do you think it will take to fill up a large container?" "When you pour the rice, it sounds *louder* than the cornmeal." Give the child the opportunity to explore with their senses and get messy.