

FAMILY

Connections Pre-K

For the family of _____

A Special Message for Parents

Children love to learn. They want to make sense of their world. Parents and family members can help them. The learning guide you are reading is part of a series created especially for families. Each issue in this series includes the following:

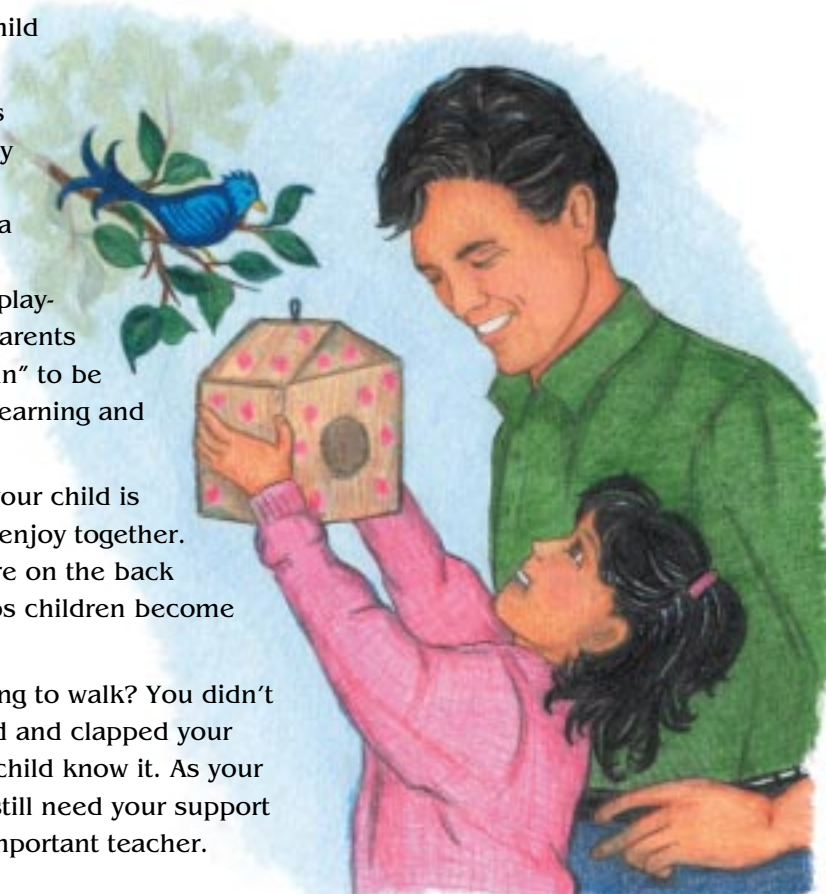
A message for family members who care for young children. Front-page messages talk about things like discipline, food choices, and child development.

Fun learning activities. These activities make use of items you have at home. They help children learn about basic ideas like size, shape, and color. They give children a chance to develop muscle skills and to imagine. (A cardboard box can become a playhouse—or, with your help, a birdhouse!) Parents might worry that such activities are “too fun” to be of value. But play is the starting point for learning and discovery. It is a child’s work.

A read-aloud verse. Reading aloud to your child is another “fun but serious” activity you can enjoy together. That’s why a verse and related activities are on the back page of every issue. Hearing you read helps children become ready and eager to become readers.

Remember when your child was learning to walk? You didn’t say, “No, don’t do it that way!” You smiled and clapped your hands. It was a big deal, and you let your child know it. As your children learn new words and skills, they still need your support and approval. You are your child’s most important teacher.

For years, families have used this series with their children. This new version has even more things you can do together. Not every child will enjoy every activity. Do those your child enjoys, and skip the others or try them later. (We may refer to a child as “him” in some places and “her” in others, but all activities are suitable for both boys and girls.) Enjoy!



Helping families and schools work together for the benefit of young children

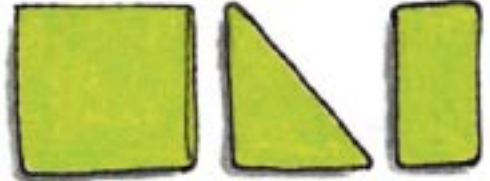
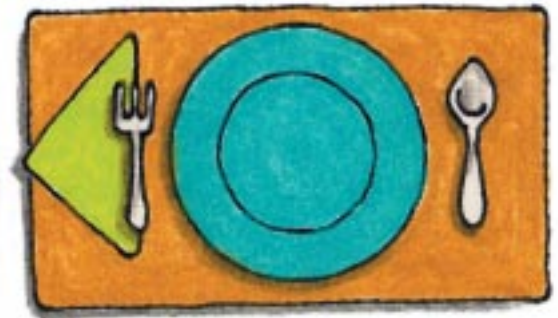
Let Your Child Help

Your child likes to be with you and to help around the house. Simple chores might take longer when your child is "helping," but important learning takes place. Children feel important when they help at home and hear your words of praise.

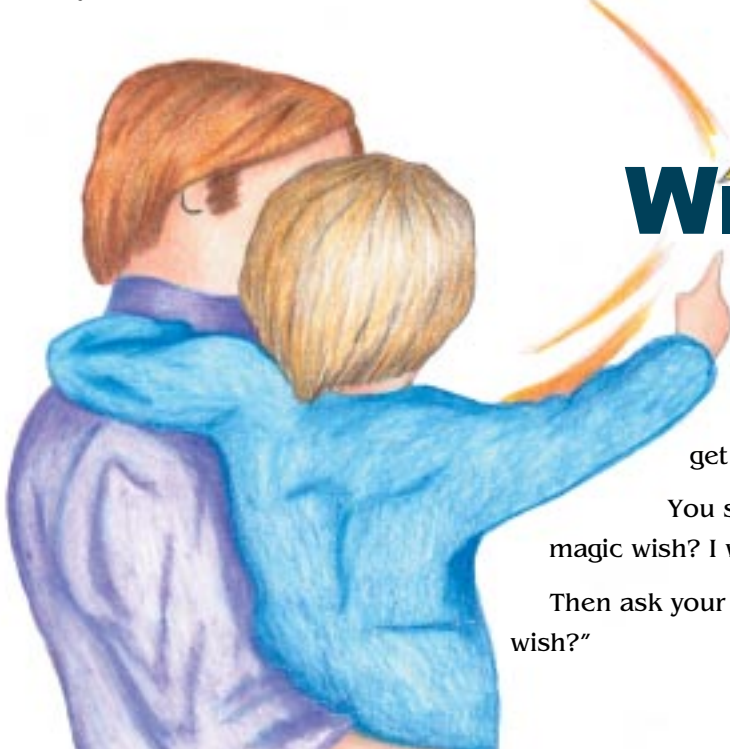
The next time you set the table for dinner, let your child fold a napkin for each place at the table. First, show how one fold can make a square napkin into a triangle. Let your child try it. Next, show how to make a rectangle. As you demonstrate, say the words (**square** or **triangle** or **rectangle**).

What's happening? The child is beginning to learn shapes, an important concept in mathematics. Once your child has mastered napkin folding, show him how to put a napkin on the left side of each place at the table and a spoon on the right. He will begin to see **left to right**, a component of learning to read.

The most important thing about such activities is that they occur naturally and are enjoyable to you and your child. Your time and attention make a real difference to your child's development.



square triangle rectangle

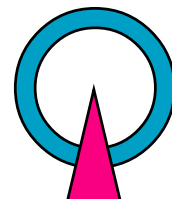
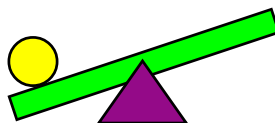
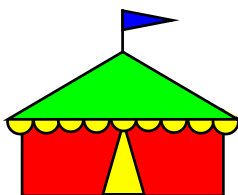


Wishing Together

This is a nice activity at bedtime. It will help develop your child's imagination and remind you of the magic of childhood. It will also help you and your child get to know each other better.

You say: "Do you know what I would wish for if I had one magic wish? I would wish for _____."

Then ask your child: "What would you wish for if you had one magic wish?"



Tell your child, "Five triangles are lost at the circus. Can you help me find them?"

You Are Somebody **Special**

Children need to know that they are important to their families. Have you told your child, "You are special to me?" Here is one way to say it:

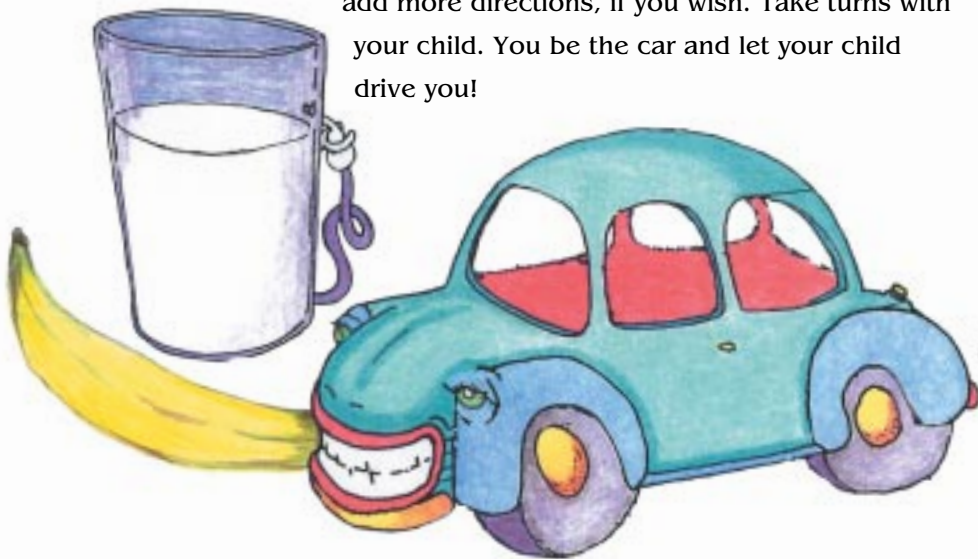
**Do you know who you are?
You are somebody special.
You're _____.**
(your child's name)

**There's nobody else just like you.
Think of it!
Nobody else like you in the whole, wide world.**



I Can Be a Car

Children love to pretend. Read "I Can Be a Car" aloud. Fill in the blank with your child's name. Then have your child follow the directions as you read the poem again. This time, pause to allow time for the "car" to start, stop, turn, and follow the other directions. You can add more directions, if you wish. Take turns with your child. You be the car and let your child drive you!



I can be a car,
_____**says.**
(your child's name)

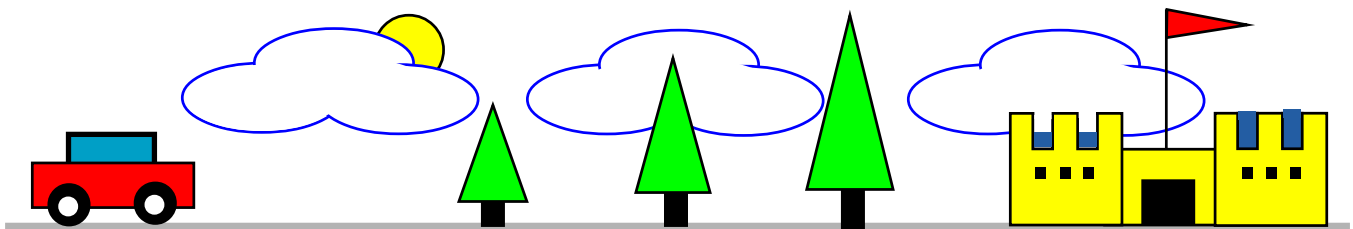
**You may drive me
If you're careful.**

**Tell me when to start,
When to stop,
When to turn,
and which way.**

**I can back up
and turn around.**

**I can go pretty fast!
I can go verrrry slow.**

**Milk and bananas
Will keep my engine
going.**



Point to the car and say, "Let's count the clouds together as we drive our car to the castle."

Read-Aloud RHYMES

Shadows on the Wall

**Shadows on the wall,
Shadows big and small,
Up and down,
All around,
They don't scare me at all.**

Carla Thomas McClure



Make Shadow Puppets

Do you remember making shadow puppets on the wall when you were a child? Now, it's your turn to show your child this magic trick! Use a bright lamp or a flashlight to cast light onto a blank wall, and use your hands to create interesting shapes. Some favorites are a barking dog and a flying bird. Your child will want to join the fun. You might think up new shapes, too. You can also put on a "puppet show" to go with the read-aloud:

Shadows on the wall,	<i>Make a shadow shape on the wall.</i>
Shadows big and small,	<i>Move hands toward the light source to make the shape bigger. Move hands toward the wall to make the shape smaller.</i>
Up and down,	<i>Move hands up and down.</i>
All around,	<i>Move hands in circles.</i>
They don't scare me at all.	<i>Stand in front of light source and make "muscle man" arms.</i>

Shadow Hunt

Go for a walk together, either indoors or outside. Hunt for interesting shadow shapes. Point out that buildings, trees, and people all make shadows. So do clouds and airplanes as they pass overhead. Show your child how to "catch" a shadow! Offer a piece of chalk and let your child trace your shadow on a sidewalk. (If indoors, use crayons and butcher paper or old newspapers.)

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