Big Ideas to Get Families Talking

Small Wonders was developed through the Reach Every Reader Initiative at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. For more information about what families can do to support early literacy, please visit Reach Every Reader's website: https://reacheveryreader.gse.harvard.edu.

Here’s what’s in this packet:

- Meet the characters!
- Books! Ten Hot Tips
- Picky Eaters! Ten Tasty Tips
- Coloring Pages
- Making it for fun with all this as we did
- Two App Bingo Cards
- Fun Recipes
- Stickers just for fun
- Talking! Ten Hot Tips
- Playful Exercises Ten Easy Tips
- Coloring Pages

We hope you have as much fun playing with all this as we did making it for you! This app is here to help you build your kid’s language skills when you’ve put the app down, doing everyday activities like going shopping or walking down the street. The app also has tips to help you build your kid’s language skills when you’ve put the app down together every day. Make sure you’re keeping the conversation going as you play!

Section off!

There’s even a pair of bingo cards you can stick on the fridge so you can check each section off. You can stick on the fridge so you can check each section off!

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big ideas to get families talking

Your child is only a few years old and probably isn't reading words yet. But you can get him or her ready to read, just by talking together, playing together and going about your everyday lives together!

The Small Wonders app is here to help. It's designed for you and your kid to enjoy together every day. Make sure you're keeping the conversation going as you play!

The app also has tips to help you build your kid's language skills when you've put the app down, during everyday activities like going shopping or walking down the street.

Use these printed sheets to remind you to use the app and talk together every day. There's even a pair of bingo cards you can stick on the fridge so you can check each section off!

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- Picky Eaters! Ten Tasty Tips
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Rad loves being silly, drawing magical animals, and playing dress-up!

Zing enjoys reading to Rad at bedtime. Zing also loves singing, playing games, and reaching things on high shelves!
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Stickers just for fun

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Fen

collects, building things, and helping others!

Tacca loves fuzzy animals, collecting things, and silly jokes!

Fen cooks with Tacca as much as possible. Fen also loves building things, taking pictures - and silly jokes!
The Library.
Blanker, and going to
also loves movies, cozy
walks with Yufo. Cuma
enjoys taking

Yufo loves learning new
things, eating fruit – and
has amazing dance moves!

Cuma enjoys taking
walks with Yufo. Cuma
also loves movies, cozy
blankets, and going to
the library.

There's even a pair of bingo cards you can stick on the fridge so you can check each section off!

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Let's Color Faces!

Color with your child and talk about what's in the picture!

Choosing Books

Expand Your Child's World

Reading together helps your child learn about the world! Find books that show new things and ideas.

Explore Different Countries and Cultures

Share books about many cultures and places, including the ones that are important to your family. Search online for recommendations of great children's books with diverse characters.

Plan Regular Trips to the Library

Having fun isn't hard when you have a library card! Did you know that many libraries have activities and toys for families as well as books?

Make Reading a Habit

Read with Your Child Every Day

Read a mix of favorite stories and new ones to keep reading time interesting for both you and your child. Reread books you haven't shared in a while or find totally new ones at the library!

Keep Them Happy While They Wait

Bring books to read when you're riding the bus, waiting in line, or going to the doctor's office. Reading books is an important part of the library experience for both you and your child.

Reading Together

Sit Comfortably

You can read together anywhere - on a couch, in a bed, on the floor, or at a table. Snuggle up! You can read together anywhere - even comfortably.

Read Slowly

Give your child time to think about the story. Read slowly and pause a bit after each page.

Ask Questions

You may be surprised by how your toddler understands the world! Ask your child about what's happening in the pictures or why the characters act and feel the way they do.

Explore Different Countries and Cultures

Great children's books with diverse characters. Search online for recommendations of books that are important to your world and books that show new things and ideas.

Read books that show your child learn about the world together.

Books — 10 Hot Tips!
Let's Color Faces!

Color with your child and talk about what’s in the picture!

Eat Together

Sit Together

It's best if everyone can sit together. This helps kids become more comfortable with new foods. If you have more than one child, they will learn how to get along better.

Set a Good Example

When to Get Help

Meet with a feeding professional if your children gag or throw up a lot when eating; don't eat like other children their age; avoid entire food groups; or aren't growing properly.

The Right Foods

You Choose the Foods

You should decide the menu. Make sure there is something your child likes. Explore New Tastes

Try new foods together! This helps kids become comfortable with more foods. Talk about how they look, taste, and smell.

Cook Together

Cooking with kids makes them part of the team! They can help with measuring, pouring, or other simple tasks. Serving food "family style," with everyone eating the same thing, makes kids feel more comfortable.

Support Good Behavior

Praise your child for good behavior. Say something like, "Great job eating your green beans! I like green beans, too!" This will help kids remember the right way to behave. It's important for kids to be aware of what they're eating so they can learn to like new foods.

Avoid Distractions

It's important for kids to pay attention to their food and to be aware of what they're eating so they can learn to like new foods. It's good to take away books, toys, phones, and television at mealtimes.

Be Consistent

Make time to eat with your kids – with no phones! If this isn't possible at every meal, pick one meal a day during the week to eat together. Try to do more on the weekends.

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Talking - Five Tips!

Let's Color Faces!
Color with your child and talk about what's in the picture!

Everyday Routines

Getting Dressed
Make your child a partner in your morning routine – and make it a time for talking! Ask, “What should we put on first? Which of these shirts do you want to wear? Why do you like that one better than this one?” You can talk about colors and patterns, and ask about what people in the family wore yesterday.

Eating
Sing the Let’s Cook song from the app, and then make something simple to eat together. Ask questions and talk about ingredients and the different foods you can prepare.

Bed Time
Sing the Reading song from the app, and then read a story together. Have a conversation about the characters. “Why is that character happy? Why is that character sad? What makes you happy?”

Family Chores

Doing Laundry
Work together, folding clothes or cleaning house, is a great time to talk. For example, ask questions while doing the laundry: “Why is it important to wash our hands? Do we wash our clothes the same way we wash our hands?”

Grocery Shopping
Play the Let’s Shop game on the app, then make a grocery list with your child. Talk about what you are going to buy: “Do you remember when we ate these at grandmother’s house? Would this be good to share when your friend comes over?”

Talking - Five Tips!

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Imagination Games
Taking a Trip
Imagining a trip to some faraway place is a great way to encourage conversation and build vocabulary. Where do you want to go? Pretend that you are taking a train trip to visit someone. “First, we need to buy a ticket. Now, what do you see out the window?”

Growing Up
Imagine together how your child will grow, and all the changes that come with it.

Making Memories
Play “remember what” and “remember when” games. “Do you remember when we went to the doctor? What did the doctor tell you? How did you feel when we got home? Remember what we did for your birthday? How did you feel when you opened your presents?”

Looking Ahead
Help your child learn to think about things that haven’t happened yet, and plan things you can do together! “Do you think it’s going to rain? Talk about what you might do this weekend, or for an upcoming holiday. “What do you think we’ll do in the future?”

Inner Pet
Your child can pretend to be a dog or cat and crawl around on the floor, and ask questions about what it feels like to be a pet! “What does it feel like when I rub your nose?”

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Five More Tips!

Talking –
Let's Color Food!

Color with your child and talk about what's in the picture!
Color with your child and talk about what's in the picture.

Let's Color Outdoors!
Let's Color At Home!

Color with your child and talk about what's in the picture!
Let's Color Faces!

Color with your child and talk about what's in the picture!
Grown-Ups - Try Them All!

The Small Wonders app has two main areas - one for you to explore with your kid, the other is just for you. There are four topics in each section: Food, Outdoors, Home and Faces. Make sure you look at all 20 of the tips and activities in the Grown-Ups section. Check off all the ones you try!
Family Play - Try Them All!

The Small Wonders app has two main areas - one for you to explore with your kid, the other is just for you. There are four topics in each section: Food, Outdoors, Home and Faces. Make sure you do all 16 activities together in the family play section. Check them off here. And try to play them more than once!
Set-Up:
1. Find space on your kitchen table or a counter to work together.
2. Make sure your child can reach the work surface.
3. Wash your hands together and say why that’s important.
4. Get a butter knife and a plate.
5. Make sure your child can reach the work surface.
6. Find space on your kitchen table or a counter to work together.

Ingredients:
1. A few graham crackers
2. Some fresh bananas
3. A small amount of cream cheese
4. Plate

Here’s what to do:
1. Break a graham cracker in half.
2. Spread a bit of cream cheese on each piece of cracker.
3. Place banana slices on one piece of cracker.
4. Add the other piece of cracker on top.
5. Put some banana slices on one piece of cracker.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 to make more Fancy Fruity Snack-sandwiches.
7. And then, let’s eat!

Here are some things to talk about:
- Let your child know that it’s great they’re helping make this snack with you.
- Talk about washing and how the water feels (cold! wet!) and why you’re washing.
- If you slice the bananas, talk about how to use a knife safely.
- Talk about washing and how the water feels (cool! wet!)
- Talk about the colors, textures, and flavors of the bananas, cream cheese, and crackers.
- Ask what other kinds of sandwiches your child would like to make with you.
- Even if it’s not a sharp one.
- Even if it’s not a sharp one.

Here’s a simple recipe for cooking and talking with your child. Making food together is a great chance for conversation.

Fancy Fruity Snack-sandwiches
Set-Up:
1. Find space on your kitchen table or a counter to work together.
2. Make sure your child can reach the work surface.
3. Wash your hands together and say why that’s important.
4. You’ll need a large bowl, mixing spoon, and some mini plastic bags.

Ingredients:
- Chocolate chips
- Raisins
- Mini pretzels
- Peanuts, almonds, or sunflower seeds

Here’s what to do:
1. Scoop or pour some chocolate chips into the mixing bowl.
2. Add in the nuts or seeds and mini pretzels for some crunch.
3. Put the raisins in for a little sweetness.
4. Use the spoon or your clean hands to mix it all up.
5. Scoop some of your trail mix into each plastic bag.
6. Seal or tie the bags closed.
7. Now they are ready for when you want a quick snack!

Here are some things to talk about:
- Talk about how dried fruit makes your trail mix sweet and crunchy.
- Talk about how the pretzels and nuts make it salty.
- Plan a trip, even if it’s just a walk down the street, where you can eat your trail mix!
- Have fun measuring your ingredients by counting the spoonfuls of each item out loud.
- Talk about how dried fruit makes your trail mix sweet and crunchy.
- Think about how the pretzels and nuts make it salty.

Trail Mix

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Set-Up:
1. Find space on your kitchen table or a counter to work together.
2. Make sure your child can reach the work surface.
3. Wash your hands together and say why that's important.
4. You'll need a sharp knife, a butter knife, and a plate.
5. Now place the raisins in a row on the log. These are your ants!
6. Enjoy!

Ingredients:
1. Some stalks of celery
2. A few scoops of peanut or sunflower seed butter
3. A small box of raisins
4. Lay a few pieces of celery on a plate.

Here's what to do:
1. Wash the celery in cold water.
2. Chop off the ends and cut the celery into 3-inch sections.
3. Lay a few pieces of celery on a plate.
4. Spread some peanut butter each a celery stick. This will be the log!
5. Now place the raisins in a row on the log. These are your ants!
6. Enjoy!

Here are some things to talk about:
• Talk about why you're washing and how the water feels (cold! wet!).
• Allow your child to try both crunchy and smooth peanut butter. Talk about the different textures and see which one they like better!
• Take some time to explain why this snack might look like they like better.
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Ants on a Log