

Small Wonders

big ideas to get families talking



Here's what's in this packet:

- Meet the characters!
- Books! Ten Hot Tips
- Picky Eaters! Ten Tasty Tips
- Talking! Ten Hot Tips
- Coloring Pages
- Two App Bingo Cards
- Fun recipes
- Stickers just for fun



We hope you have as much fun playing with all this as we did making it for you!

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!

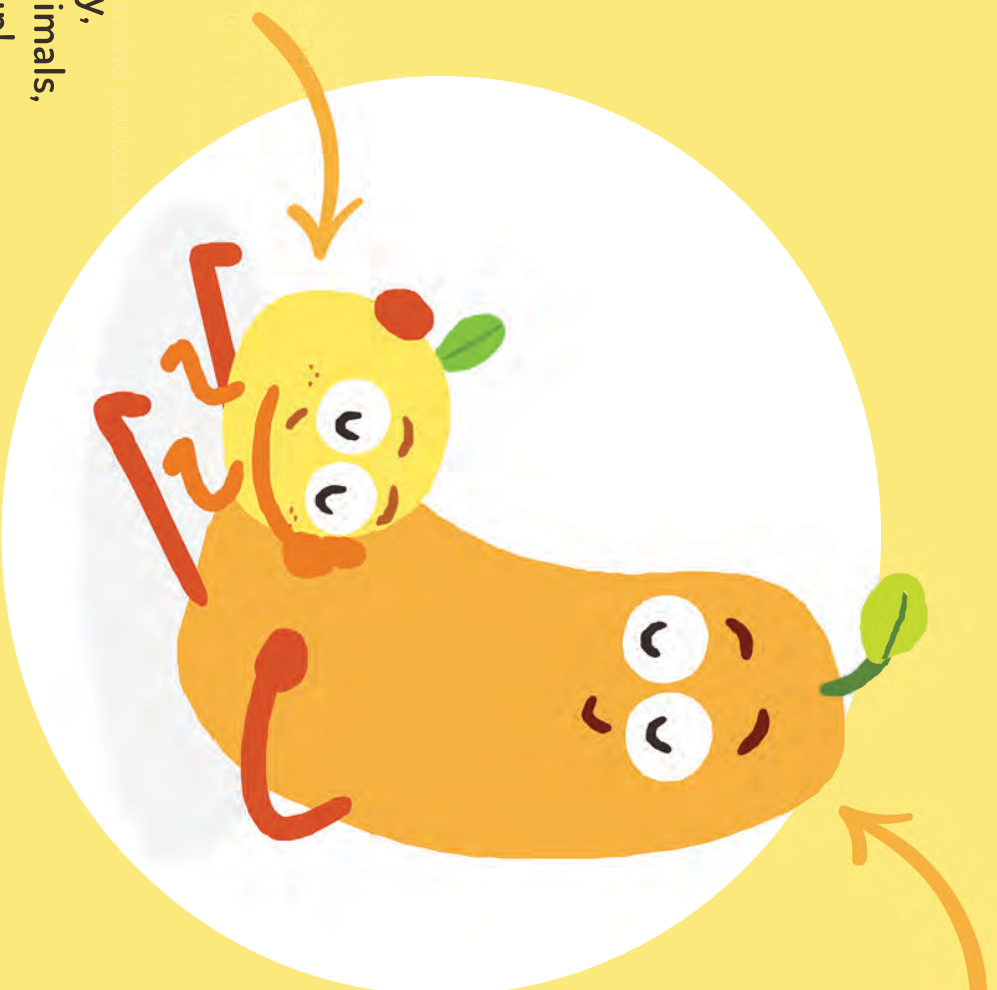
Small Wonders was developed through the Reach Every Reader Initiative at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. For more information about what families can do to support early literacy, please visit Reach Every Reader's website: <https://reacheveryreader.gse.harvard.edu>.



Zing

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

Coloring Pages

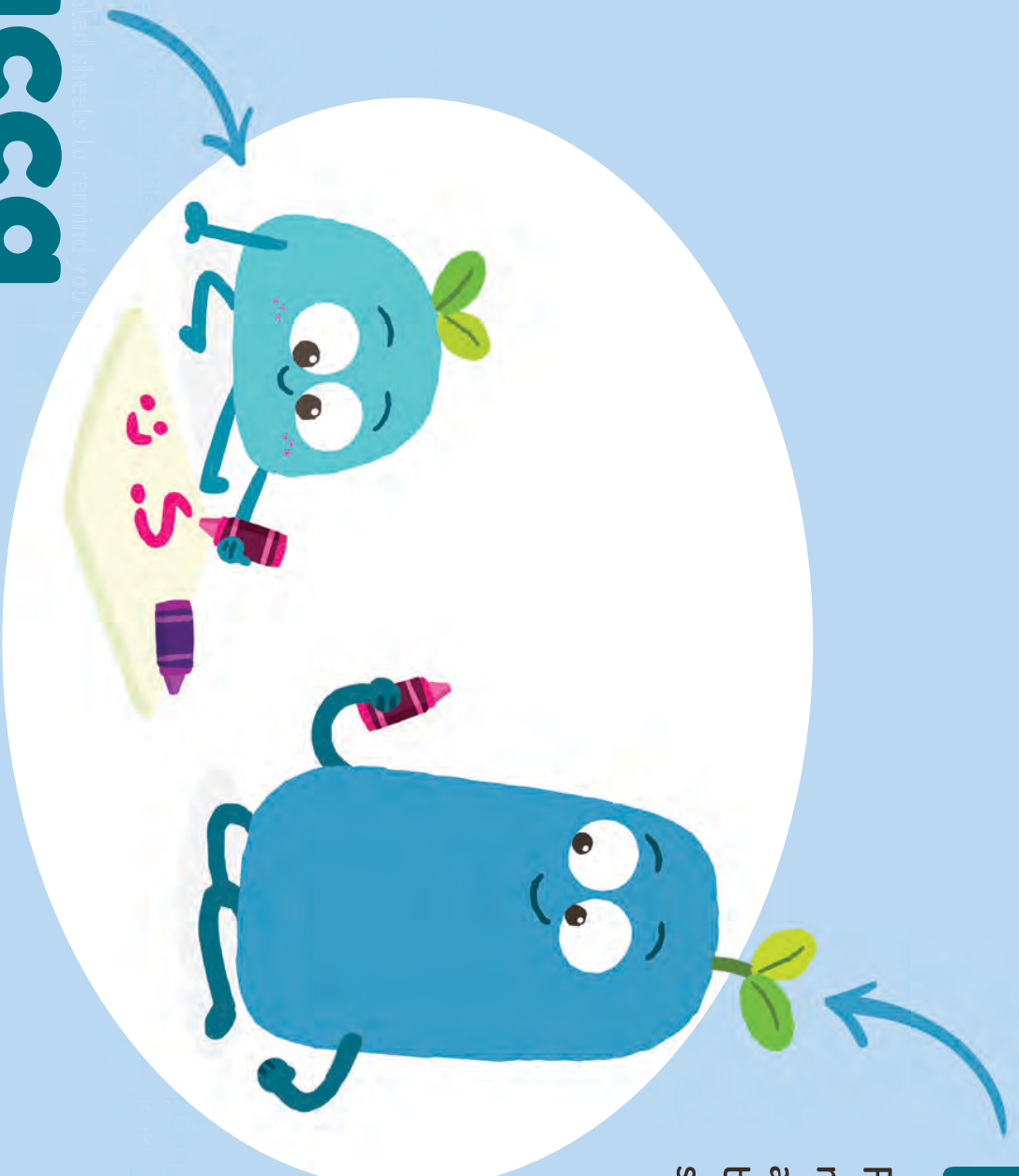


Rad

Rad loves being silly, drawing magical animals, and playing dress-up!

Fen

Fen cooks with Tacca as much as possible. Fen also loves building things, taking pictures – and silly jokes!

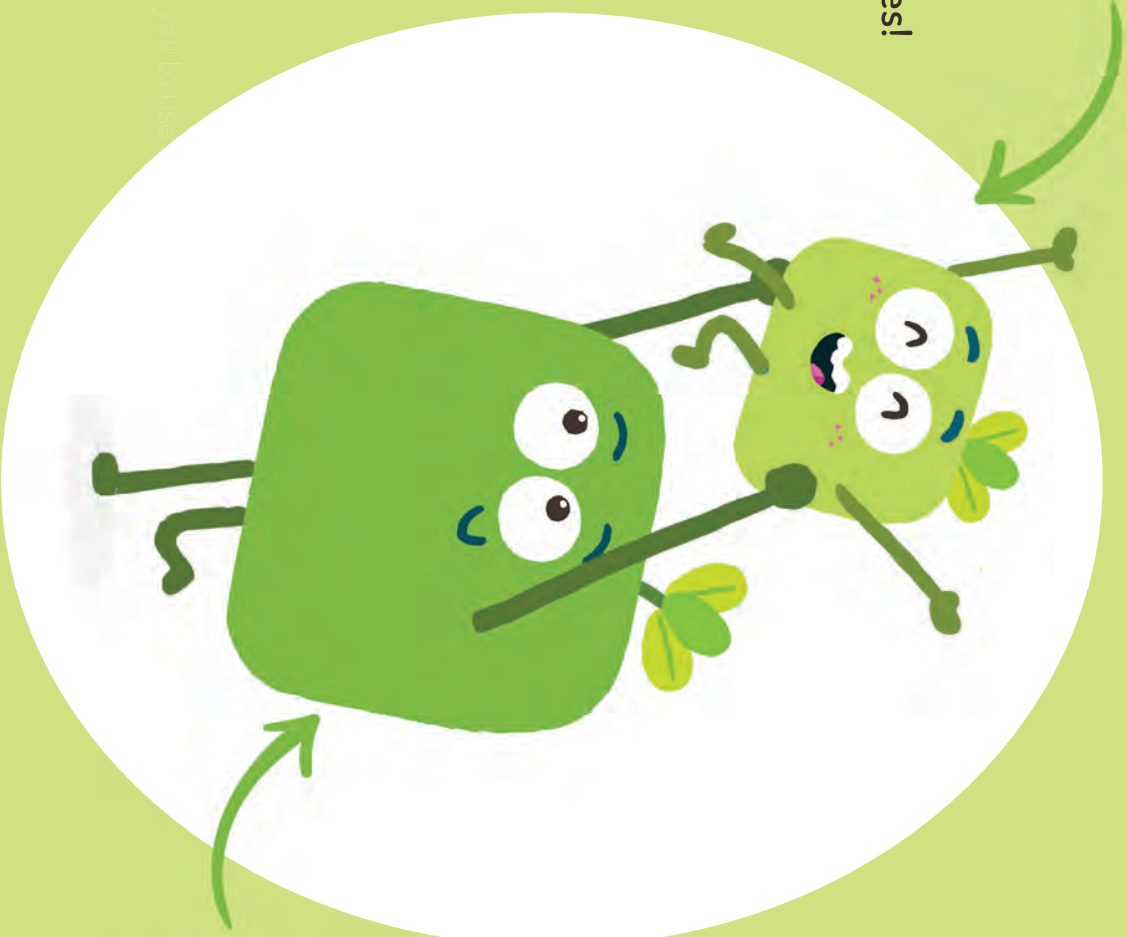


Tacca

Tacca loves fuzzy animals, collecting things, and helping others!

Yufo

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



Coloring Pages

Cuma

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

Use these printed sheets to remind you to use

Books – 10 Hot Tips!

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 together, waiting in line, or going to the doctor's office.

Reading Together

Sit Comfortably

Snuggle up! You can read together anywhere – on a couch, in a bed, on the floor, or at a table. Just make sure you both can see the pages and can point to the pictures and words.

Read Slowly

Give your child time to think about the story. Read slowly and pause a bit after each page. You can also talk about what's happening in the story or what you see in the pictures.

Ask Questions

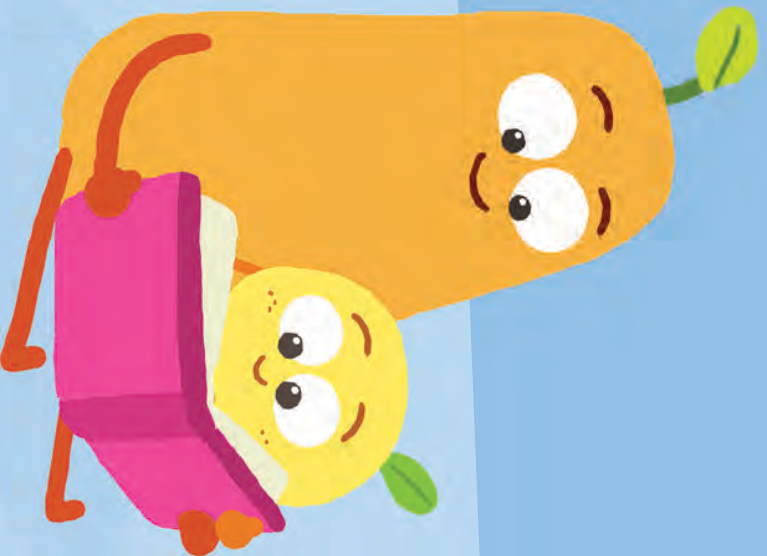
You may be surprised by how your toddler understands the world! Ask your child about what's happening in the pictures or why they think the characters act and feel the way they do.

Add More to the Story

Talk about family experiences that the story reminds you of, or imagine together about what might happen next.

Bring the Stories to Life

As you go through your day, talk about things that remind you of the books you've read together. Or, see if your child would like to act out a story as you read it!



Picky Eaters – Ten Tasty Tips!

The Right Foods

You Choose the Foods

You should decide the menu. Make sure there is something healthy on the table your child likes.

Explore New Tastes

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

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 more comfortable with new foods.

Be Consistent

Avoid Distractions

It's important for kids to pay attention to their food and to be aware of what they're eating so they begin to learn that there may be lots of food items they like. It's good to take away books, toys, phones, and television at mealtimes!

Support Good Behavior

Praise your child for good behavior at the table. Say something like, "Great job eating that green bean. I like green beans, too!" This will help kids remember the right way to behave. Ignore bad behavior, and slide plates out of reach until it stops.

Rules About Tasting

Set rules about what your kids must taste before being excused from the table or eating dessert.

Eat Together

Sit Together

It's best if everyone can sit together at mealtimes. It's safer, and everyone can enjoy talking with each other. Your children will also learn good behavior from watching you!

Set a Good Example

Put all the food on the table before you sit down. When you stay at the table during meal-times, your kids will want to stay with you, and they will eat better.

Most Importantly

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.

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.

These tips were provided by Arlene Hill, a speech and language pathologist who has seen many infants and children with feeding and swallowing disorders enter the last twenty six years.

She is co-owner of Children's Speech & Feeding Therapy, Inc. in Needham, MA. speechandfeeding.org



Talking – Five Tips!

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 together. Talk about ingredients and the different foods you can prepare from them. Fruits are especially great for questions and conversation.

Compare shapes and sizes – and don't forget that fruits look different when you cut into them.

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, or sad? Do you know anyone like that? Would this character be a good friend?" After you finish the book, ask your child to tell you the story all over again!

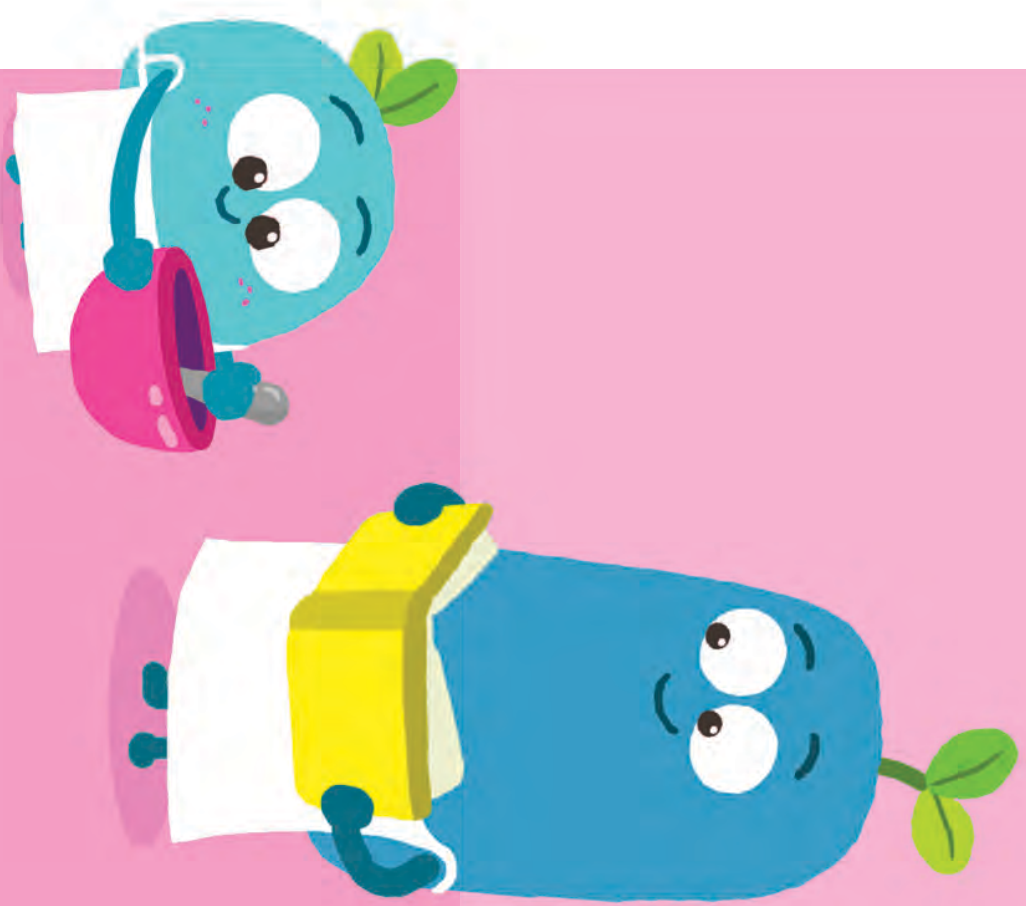
Family Chores

Doing laundry

Working 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? Whose clothes are these? How can you tell?"

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?" Talk about foods you can eat more than one way (raw, baked, fried...)



Talking - Five More Tips!

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 seat do you want? We're moving! What do you see out the window?"

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

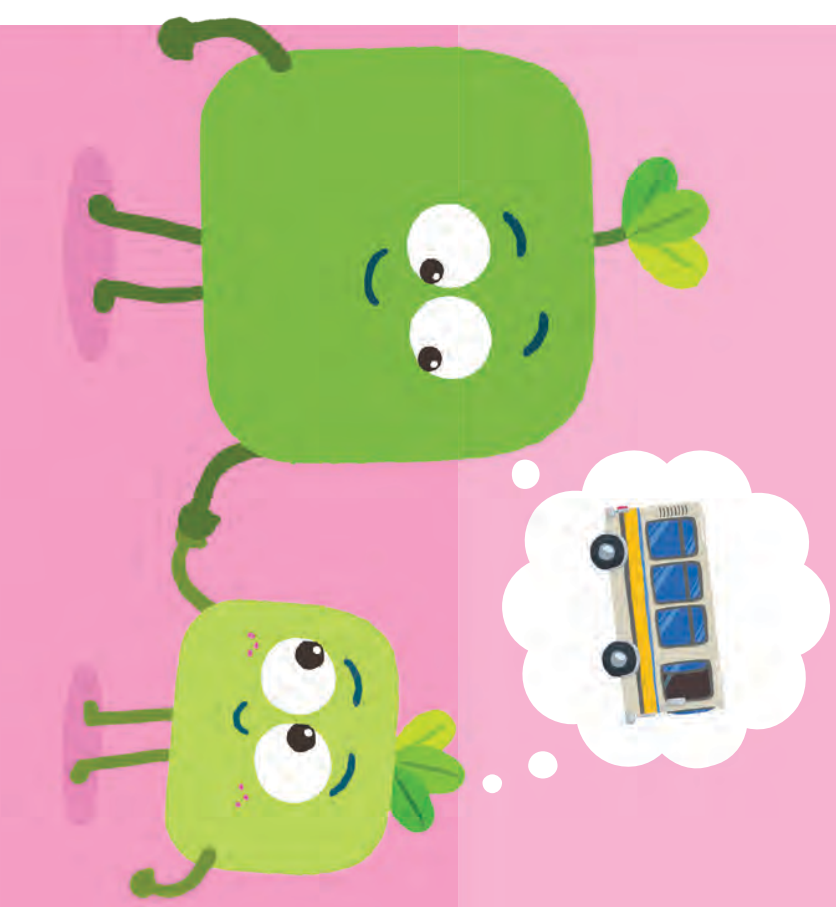
Help your child learn to think about things that haven't happened yet, and plan things you can do together! "Do you think it's going to rain?" Talk about what you might do this weekend, or for an upcoming holiday. "Would you like to go to the park on Saturday? Do you know who's coming to visit us for Thanksgiving?"

Inner Pet

Your child can pretend to be a dog or a cat. Let your child crawl around on the floor, and ask questions about what it feels like to be a pet! "Hi Kitty! What does it feel like when I ruffle your fur (hair)? What is the most fun thing to do when you play with other kitties? What do you like to eat?"

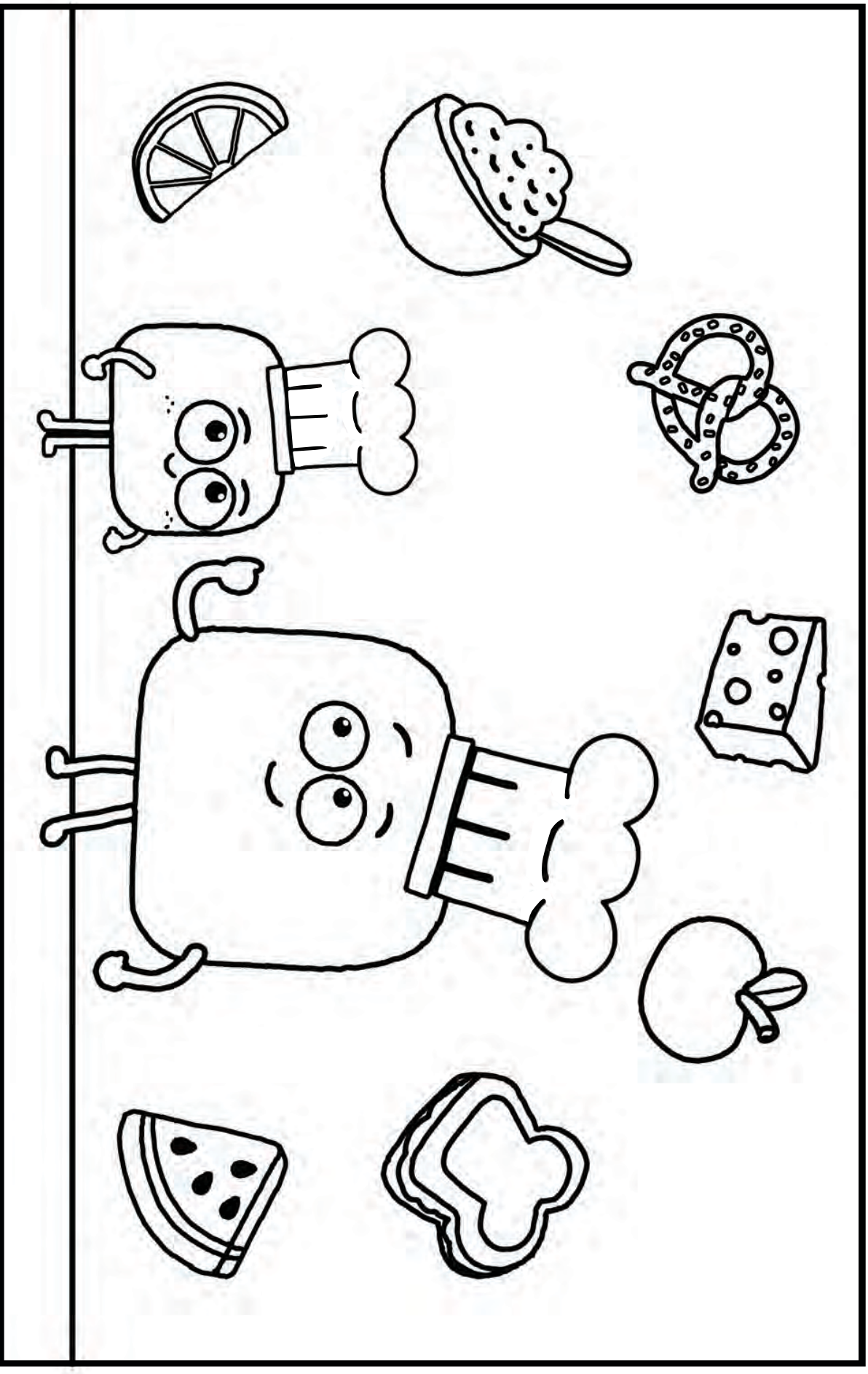
Growing Up

Imagine together how your child will grow, and all the changes that come with growing up. "Will you be as tall as your friend? Or even as tall as I am? Will you still be wearing the same clothes you have on now? How will you feel about starting in daycare, or after that, going to school?"



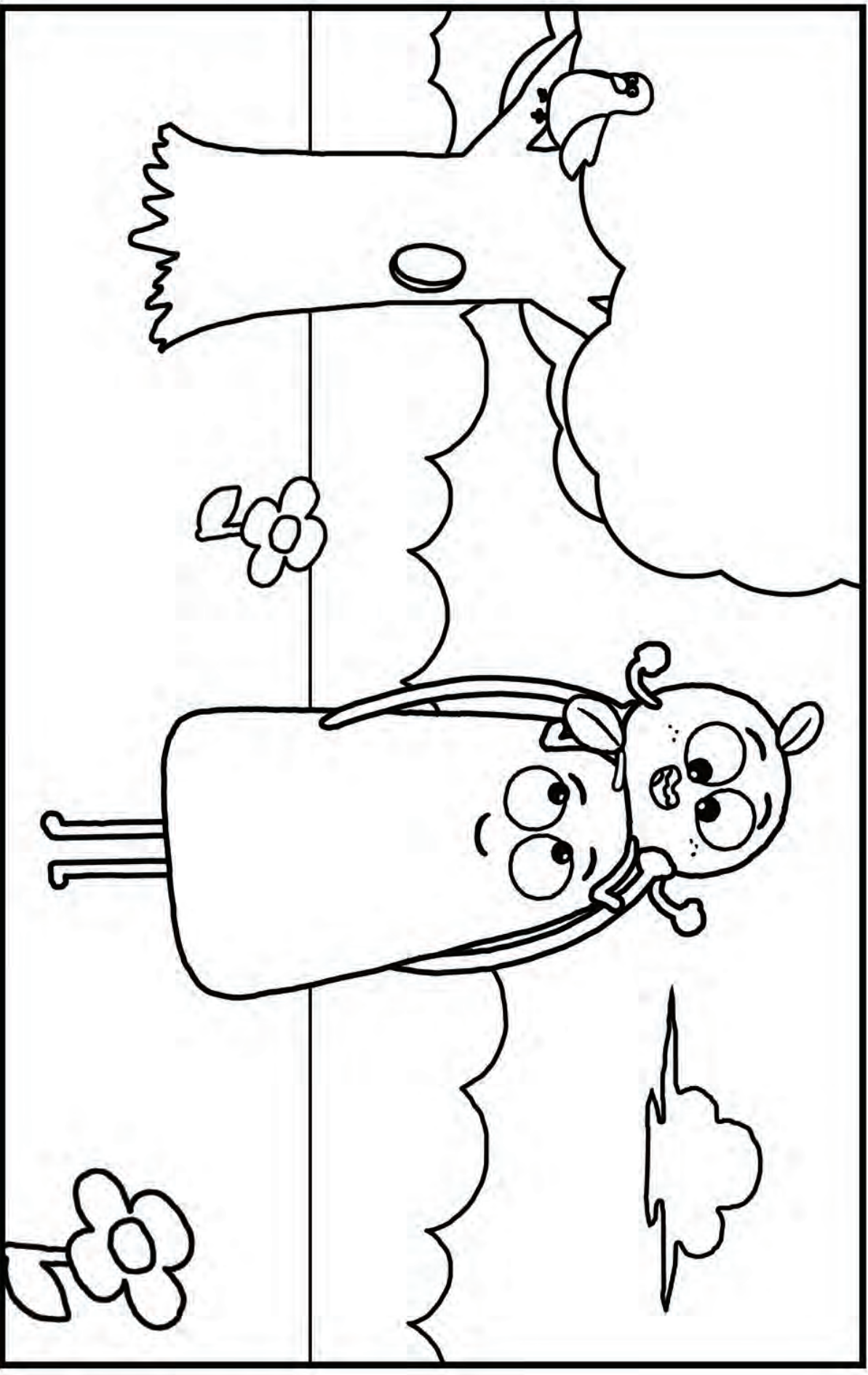
Let's Color Food!

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



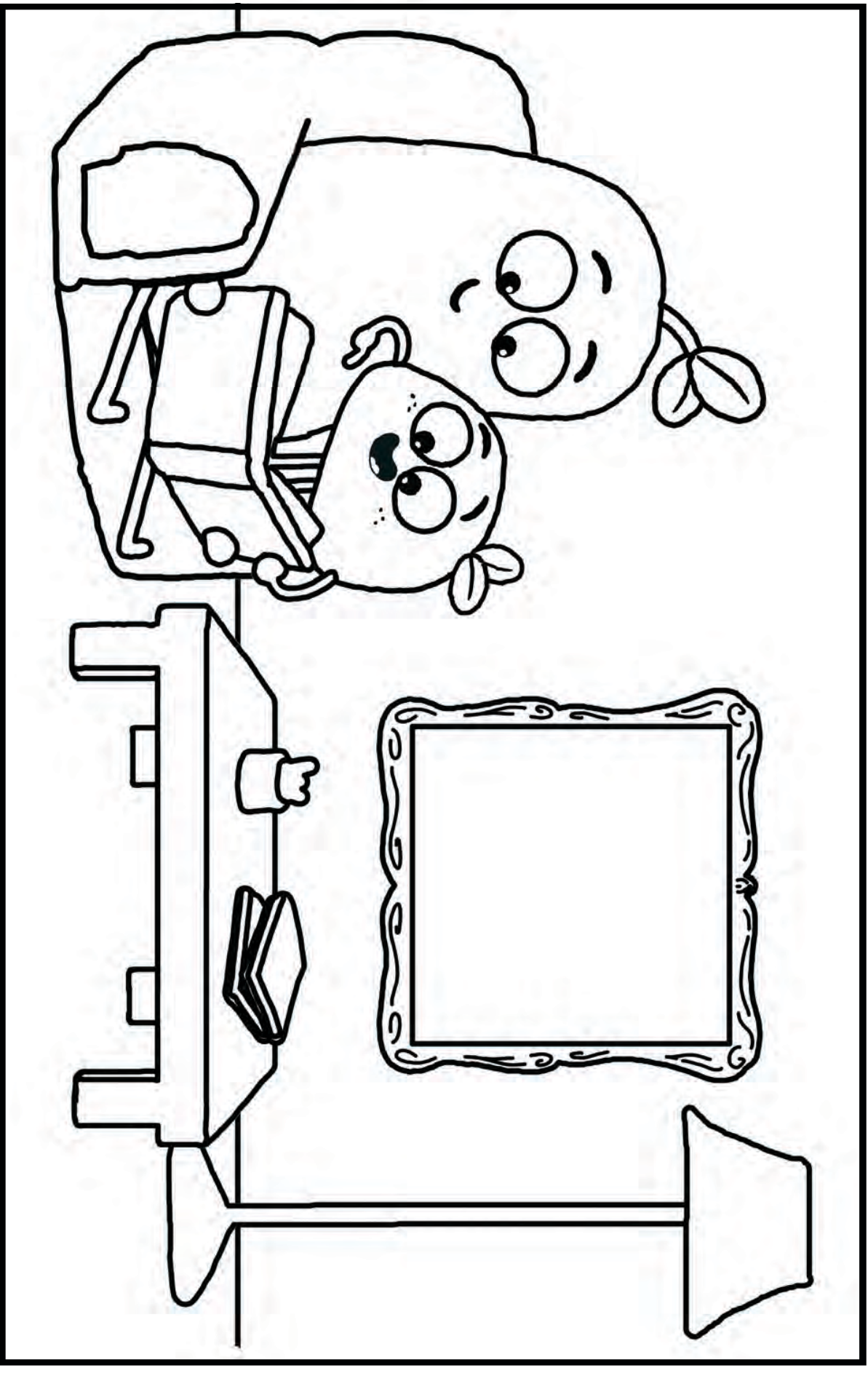
Let's Color Outdoors!

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



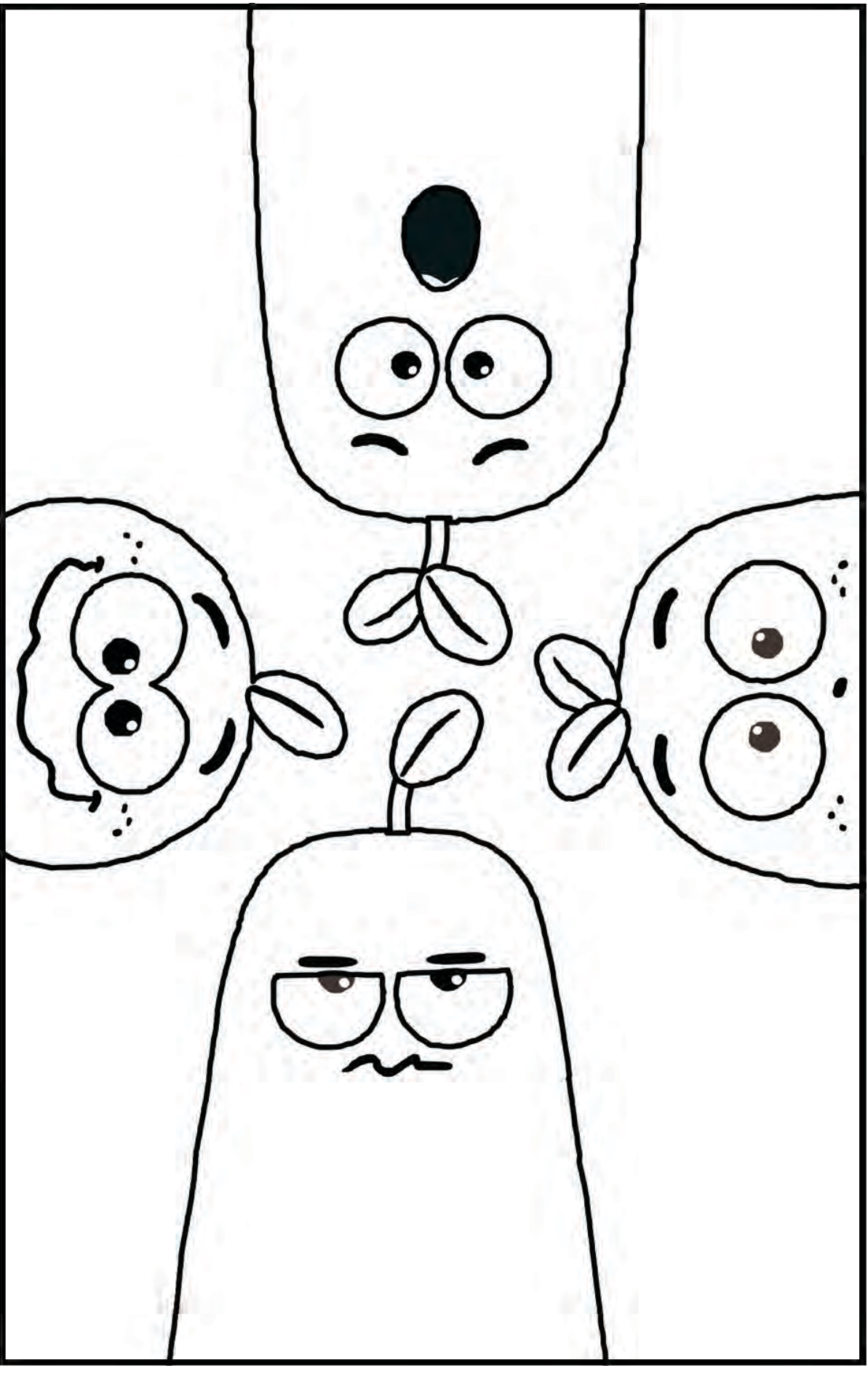
Let's Color At Home!

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!



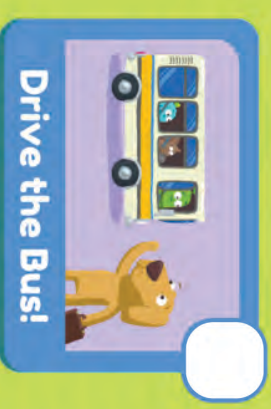
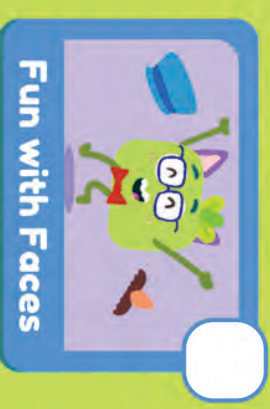
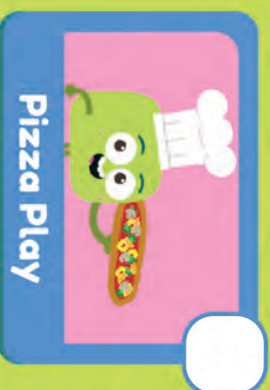
Grown-Ups - Try Them All!

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!



Fancy Fruity Snack-wiches

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

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.

Ingredients:

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

Here's what to do:

1. Break a graham cracker in two.
2. Spread a bit of cream cheese on each piece of cracker.
3. Peel the banana and slice it into thin pieces.
4. Put some banana slices on one piece of cracker.
5. Add the other piece of cracker on top.
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, even if it's not a sharp one.
- 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.

Trail Mix

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

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:

1. Chocolate chips
2. Mini pretzels
3. Peanuts, almonds, or sunflower seeds
4. Raisins

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 how the pretzels and nuts make it salty.
- Have fun measuring your ingredients by counting the spoonfuls of each item out loud.
- Plan a trip, even if it's just a walk down the street, where you can eat your trail mix!

Ants on a Log

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

Set-Up:

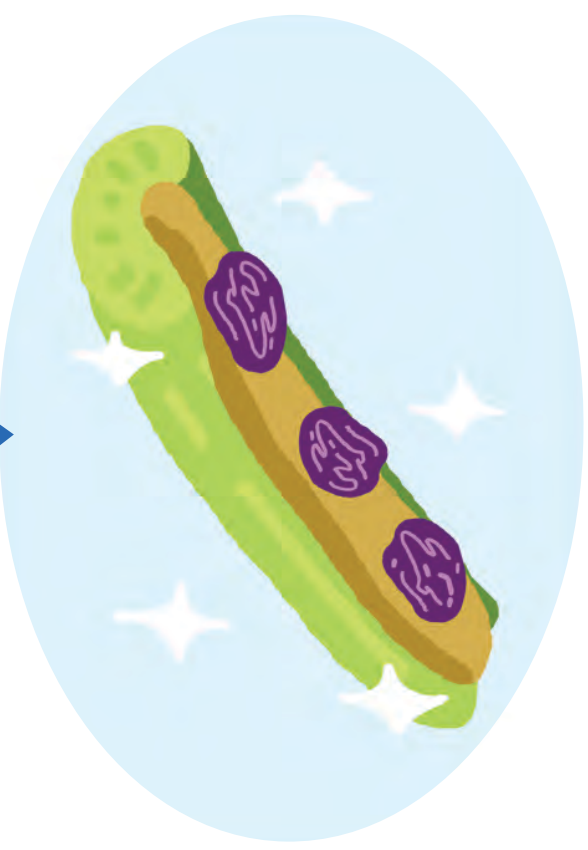
1. Find space on your kitchen table or a counter to work together.
2. Make sure your child can reach the work surface.
3. Wash your hands together and say why that's important.
4. You'll need a sharp knife, a butter knife, and a plate.

Ingredients:

1. Some stalks of celery
2. A few scoops of peanut or sunflower seed butter
3. A small box of raisins

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. (Do this part yourself.)
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 ants on a log.