COMMUNITY HELPERS



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Language and Literacy

Build a Letter: Themed Alphabet

EZ.001.LA.1001A-1002A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify letters of the alphabet.
Students will distinguish between features of letters.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Students use small classroom manipulatives to form uppercase and lowercase letters on letter mats with a community/neighborhood theme. Magnetic alphabets are tactile and allow children to learn through hands-on exploration while engaging multiple senses.

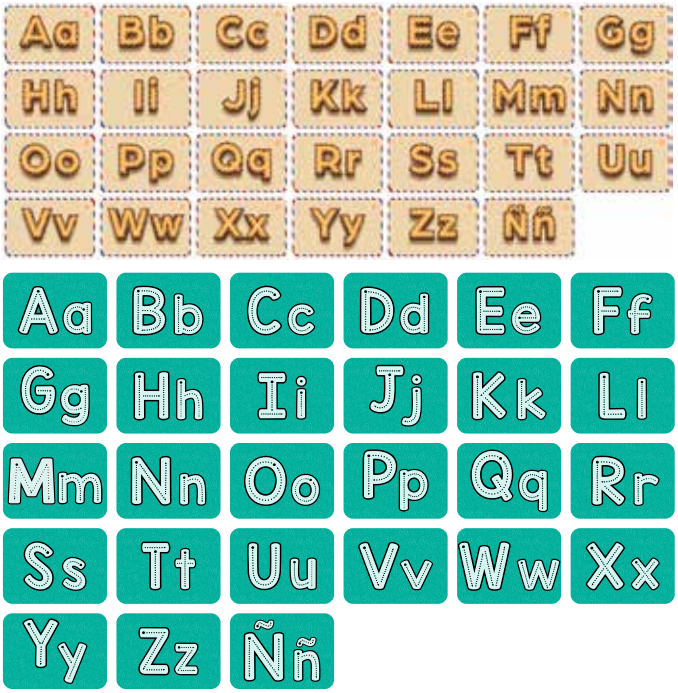
WHAT TO DO

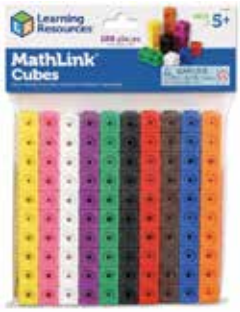
Using the themed magnetic letters as a reference or pre-activity review, encourage students to "trace" letters on letter mats. Students use the manipulatives (math link cubes and color chips) to form uppercase and lowercase letters on the mats.

PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to form uppercase and lowercase letters using the manipulatives without tracing. In this instance, the letter mats will serve as a guide.
- Create your own letter cards. Present letters in a variety of fonts to help students begin to recognize letters in the environment. This activity helps to develop environmental print awareness.

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Mathematics

What's Missing?: Number Cards

EZ.001.LA.1003A-1004A

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objectives:
Students will begin to recognize numerals 0-10.
Students will compare quantities of objects by using number recognition and one-to-one correspondence.

Each themed classroom includes themed number cards. A featured activity will be included with each set of themed number cards. Students begin to recognize numerals by participating in number line activities. In What's Missing? students will determine the missing numeral in a number line after reviewing the complete number line. Number cards aid in developing subitizing, which is the ability to instantly recognize the number of items at a glance.

WHAT TO DO

1. Align the numbers in order in a number line, then have students (as a group) say the numbers with you, pointing at each number as you go.
2. Align the numbers in order again, this time removing a number. Have students say the numbers with you, prompting students to determine what number is missing. Continue with this activity, removing more numbers as students are able to recognize the missing number(s).

PLAY TIP

Turn the number cards over, face down, and mix them up. Leave one card out of the mix. Have students flip the cards over and align them in numerical order, determining the missing card.

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Mathematics

Counting and Measurement

EZ.001.LA.1005

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will count items up to 10 with one-to-one correspondence.
Students will begin to add to and take away items.
Students will begin to use nonstandard measurement tools.

Students use counting manipulatives, non-standard forms of measurement like Unifix Cubes, and themed counters, to practice one-to-one correspondence and early practices of measurement using themed math cards. Measurement can be an abstract concept for young children. Manipulatives like blocks, cubes, or cups provide a tangible way to understand concepts like length, and height. By physically comparing and ordering objects, they can build a foundation for understanding measurement units later.

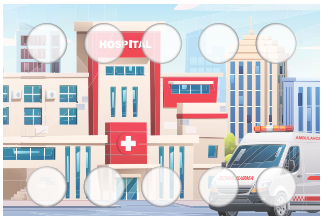
WHAT TO DO

After modeling how to use the mats, place the counting and measurement mats in a learning center as a teacher-directed or student-directed experience. As a teacher-directed experience, guide students to use manipulatives to show one-to-one correspondence and length. As a student-directed experience, allow students to freely explore the manipulatives and mats.

PLAY TIPS

- Use the math manipulatives to reinforce sorting by color and type. Encourage students to count how many are in each category. Encourage students to think of other ways to sort the manipulatives.
- Ask students to use the manipulatives to create patterns. Create simple pattern mats (ABAB, AABB, ABB) for additional support and guidance.

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Mathematics

Making Patterns

EZ.001.LA.1006A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize common 2-D shapes.
Students will sort by features and attributes.
Students will recognize patterns.

Students explore patterns and properties of shapes as they create whole images using pattern blocks and themed pattern block mats. Pattern blocks boost students' ability to think critically, make predictions, and test their predictions.

WHAT TO DO

Pattern block mats and pattern blocks work well as a self-directed activity. The intuitive nature requires little direction. Place the mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the whole image.

PLAY TIPS

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place the design on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill in the design with pattern blocks.
- Have students take a two-handed scoop of pattern blocks and sort by shape or color. Use graphing paper or a graphing mat to visualize the sorting process.
- Students can use mirrors to create patterns and make observations in the reflections. Ask students to describe what they are seeing as they create patterns in the mirrors.

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Language and Literacy

Pre-Writing Line Tracing

EZ.001.LA.1007

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will build pre-writing skills by tracing curved, notched, and zigzag lines. Students will recognize directionality in print and writing.

Students work on emergent literacy and transition to letter formations by tracing lines, patterns, and shapes with a theme in a dry erase, reusable format. To connect to fine motor development, students are encouraged to add detail. Themed templates are included for tracing.

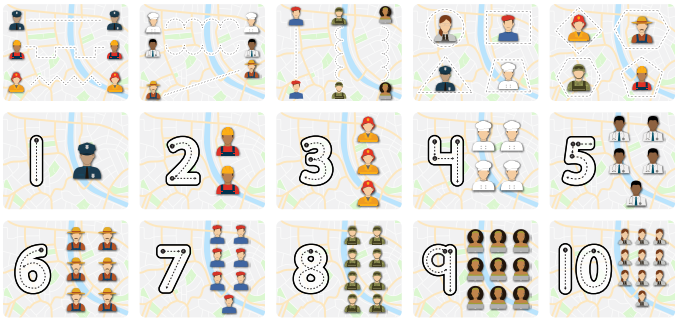
WHAT TO DO

1. Place the dry erase templates in the writing center. Students have the choice to use dry erase markers on the dry erase templates or place paper on the template and trace using a pencil/crayon. Remind students to start from left to right and top to bottom.
2. Encourage students to make their own tracing templates using the dry erase templates as a guide. Students can work on tracing shapes, lines, and numbers by repetitively tracing the same shape, line, or number using a different color crayon each time.

PLAY TIPS

- Include the themed tracing patterns in the writing center to align with other free-choice writing exercises. Using a clipboard will help students control the writing utensil.
- Tape the template vertically, on an easel or teacher board, to encourage the strengthening of fine motor development.

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Language and Literacy

Syllable Awareness

EZ.001.LA.1009

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to blend and segment syllables in words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Recognizing that words can be broken down into syllables or units of sound is a phonological skill.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the vocabulary cards as a guided activity or free choice center activity. Have students clap the number of beats on the vocabulary card and indicate the number by moving the clip.

PLAY TIPS

- Provide simple instruments to reinforce the number of syllables. Rather than clap the number of syllables in a word, students can shake the number of syllables.
- Students can use their body to emphasize syllables in a word. Have students jump up and down, tap their toes, march in place, do jumping jacks, or tap their head to count syllables.

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Language and Literacy

Rhyming Awareness

EZ.001.LA.1010A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to recognize rhyming words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Rhyming activities help children listen for ending sounds in words, a precursor to phonics activities in late preschool.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the rhyming cards as a small group or free choice activity. Say the words on the cards together and help students to identify the rhyming pairs. Students can connect the rhyming pairs by placing the cards side by side on the table.

PLAY TIPS

- Play rhyming words with body parts. Have students touch their head, nose, arm, etc. and think of a word that rhymes with the body part.
- Play, *I Spy with My Little Eye*, using target items in the classroom. For example, decide on something in the classroom, like *door* as the target word. Then state, "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with *floor*." The students look around the classroom for something that rhymes with floor.

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Language and Literacy

Onset and Rime Awareness

EZ.001.LA.1011A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to identify and segment one-syllable words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Onset and rime activities help children identify patterns in words.

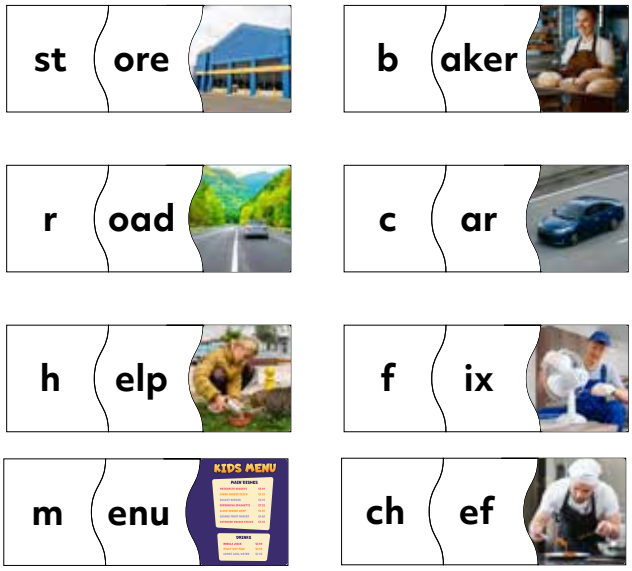
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the picture puzzles as a small group or free choice activity. As a small group exercise, model saying the onset together, the rime together, and the picture that identifies the word. As a free choice exercise, have the students put the pieces together to create a word.

PLAY TIP

Attach beginning and ending sounds to a set (2) of large dice. Have students roll the dice and say the word created, putting the onset and rime together.

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Language and Literacy

Shaving Cream Words: Word Bank Words

EZ.001.LA.1012A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify letters of the alphabet.
Students will recreate letters of the alphabet in unconventional ways.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Students use shaving cream as a medium to practice writing word bank words. Young students gain from having numerous chances throughout the day to enhance their fine motor skills and finger dexterity by using different writing tools and mediums.

WHAT TO DO

Place the word bank words and craft trays filled with a layer of shaving cream in the writing center. Students can practice writing word bank words, their name, and/or the alphabet in the layer of shaving cream. To practice a new word or letter, students simply spread the shaving cream layer again.

PLAY TIPS

- Students can use a spatula to spread the shaving cream into a thin layer or use the opposite end as a writing utensil.
- Provide opportunities for students to draw freely in the shaving cream.

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Fine and Gross Motor

Street Safety

EZ.001.LA.1013A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will build coordination skills as they participate in a sequence of movements.

Rules keep us safe. Students learn the rules of the road by exploring and engaging with large scale road and safety signs through creative and imaginative play. Ride-on trikes add to the exploration and support in the development of gross motor skills.

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the road signs and review the meaning behind each. If applicable, have students perform the action as part of the review.
2. Block off an area of the classroom that will serve as the designated “ride-on” area to avoid collision with others (use painter’s tape or string to create boundaries). Encourage students to build a riding course within the designated area, placing the signs along the course. Encourage students to perform the action on the sign as they are riding through the course.

PLAY TIPS

- Take this activity outside to incorporate more space.
- Use orange traffic cones, empty cans, cardboard boxes, and chalk to create an obstacle course inside or outside. Be sure there aren’t any sharp corners or narrow areas that students might find difficult to navigate.

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Mathmatics

Multicolor Mail

EZ.001.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will sort by characteristics and attributes.
Students will begin to use symbols and letters to communicate.

Students sort mail by color in this self-directed activity. Using color-coded envelopes, letters, and stamps, students sort mail by color and place in the appropriate color sorting bin. Students can use the classroom USPS Postal Box to "mail" letters after sorting. Sorting by color is one of the first steps towards developing foundational math skills. It introduces students to the concept of classification, or sorting objects based on a shared characteristic.

WHAT TO DO

Review all the colors on the envelopes. Students can attach the associated color stamp to the envelope, "write" a letter, and put the letter in the tabletop or classroom mailbox. The designated mail carrier adds the letters to the associated color sorting bin.

PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to sort mail in other ways, such as by recipient or letter length.
- Ask students to "write" letters to each other. Include a list of all students' names at the writing center and encourage students to write and mail a letter to a friend.

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Science

Motion: Push and Pull, Fast and Slow

EZ.001.LA.1020

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will experiment with slope, cause and effect, momentum, and gravity. Students will make scientific observations and predictions.

After reading *Motion: Push and Pull, Fast and Slow* by Darlene Stille, students can experiment with toy cars (with various sized wheels) and the classroom ramp. Educator can reinforce the concepts of force (push and gravity) and elevation by asking questions to encourage critical thinking. Experimenting with the materials allows students to make predictions, observe results, and ask questions. Through this play, they gain a deeper understanding of scientific concepts.

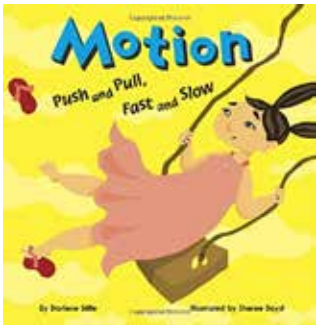
WHAT TO DO

1. Read *Motion: Push and Pull, Fast and Slow* by Darlene Stille, reviewing the concepts of motion throughout (movement, speed, force, and inertia).
2. Have students explore concepts of motion by experimenting with the ramp, cars, and trucks. Compare and contrast observations about what happens, what is the same, and what is different between the types of pulls, pushes, and resistance. Be sure to talk about car material (weight), wheel type (size), and resistance (textured path on ramp), and how they factor into movement.

PLAY TIP

Continue the push/pull conversation by engaging in additional activities around motion. Ask each student to bring in an item from home that they can make roll. Students practice making their item move and then sort by push/pull. Ask questions like, “How does your object move?,” “Can you make it move in a different way?,” and “How did you make it move?”

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Social Studies

Saving, Spending, Earning, and Giving

EZ.001.LA.1021A

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will begin to understand that items cost money and that bills and coins have different values.
Students will act out bakery-themed consumer scenarios by taking on roles such as bakers, cashiers, and customers.
Students will explore the concepts of earning, spending, saving, and giving within a play-based bakery setting.

Young children are just beginning to understand that we need money to buy things, we earn money by working, and there is a difference between items that we want and items that we need. By transforming the classroom into a bakery, students can explore how money works through real-life scenarios. Through buying, selling, labeling prices, and exchanging money, students practice recognizing more vs. less, attaching value to items, and understanding basic financial concepts, all while engaging in imaginative, joyful play.

WHAT TO DO

1. Display the cash register, play food, and packaging materials. Set up a bakery counter with trays or baskets and invite students to help "open" the bakery by arranging pastries and labeling the prices with blank labels. Encourage them to compare the price of items.
2. Invite students to take turns working as bakers mixing and prepping pretend treats, cashiers taking orders, and customers selecting items to buy. Reinforce vocabulary such as earn, spend, save, give, and buy as they engage with materials.

PLAY TIPS

- Add paper and clipboards so students can write orders, make shopping lists, or draw new pastry creations.
- Fill a jar with pretend bakery items like mini erasers shaped like donuts, pom-pom "cookies," or blocks for "rolls."

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Social Studies

Community Helpers Keep Us Moving Safely

EZ.001.LA.1024

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will sort vehicles used by different community helpers.
Students will begin to understand that communities have rules to keep people safe and organized.
Students will explain what happens when rules are followed (safety, helping others, getting where we need to go).

Community helpers use different vehicles to help people and keep communities safe. Rules help people know where to go and how to move safely. Students explore vehicles used by community helpers and sort them while discussing the safety rules. As students sort vehicles, educators guide conversations about the rules that help everyone move safely, such as stopping at lights, staying in lanes, and using sirens to alert others. By sorting vehicles and talking about the rules that guide them, students build early math skills while learning that rules help community helpers do their jobs, keep people safe, and make sure everyone gets where they need to go.

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce community helpers one at a time using picture cards. For each helper, ask, “What is their job?” and “How do they help us follow rules?” Create a simple chart titled “Rules Help Our Community” and add pictures or words that show what happens when rules are followed (safe bodies, happy friends, clean spaces).
2. Encourage students to sort the vehicles using the sorting mats.

PLAY TIPS

- Paint with the vehicles. Add a variety of paint colors to paper plates and encourage students to press the vehicles into the paint and onto the paper.
- Add black rice or blocks to a sensory table to create roads. Include stop signs and traffic lights so children can practice following rules as they move helper vehicles.

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Fine Arts

Jobs Around Town: Dramatic Play

EZ.001.LA.1025

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will engage in associative and cooperative play for creative expression.
Students will create and recreate stories.

Students discover that a community can include many different groups of people such as a school community, a neighborhood community, and even your family! Students can create communities in the classroom by assuming new and different roles using dress-up materials, props, and other dramatic play items.

WHAT TO DO

Set the scene for a community exploration center by introducing the costumes and talking about the ways people help us (keep us healthy, keep us safe, maintain the city, help us commute, grow food, etc.). Ask students how they can be helpful at home and at school. Students can explore members of the community by role playing, using their imagination and creativity. Provide situations and prompts that help students get into character.

PLAY TIPS

- Invite family and community members into the classroom to talk about their careers, encouraging further interest and curiosity in students. If possible, visit a local library, museum, fire station, or other community location to help students feel the experience.
- Encourage students to make supportive materials like menus, mail, and medical records to enhance their role playing.

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Fine Arts

Fix-It Garage

EZ.001.LA.1026

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will use symbolic play to act out real-world experiences related to vehicles and repair service.
Students will develop early math skills by counting tools, identifying numbers, and exchanging money.
Students will build vocabulary related to vehicles, tools, jobs, and problem-solving.

Students engage in dramatic play by engaging in an auto repair shop in the classroom. Children take on roles such as mechanic, service writer, cashier, tow truck driver, and customer. Through pretend vehicle repairs, tool use, and service interactions, students explore how vehicles are cared for and how people work together to solve problems. This activity supports social-emotional development, language growth, and early numeracy in a meaningful, play-based context.

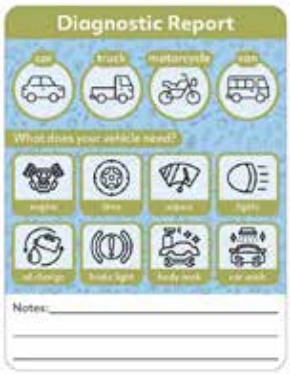
WHAT TO DO

1. Read *Bennett's Garage: A Preschool Book on Everything Cars* by Steph Winkeler and share photos of auto repair shops and mechanics at work. Ask guiding questions like, "Why do cars need repairs?," "What tools do mechanics uses?," and "What happens when a car won't work?"
2. Invite students to help set up the dramatic play area. Sort tools, park toy vehicles, and set up a "service desk." Display the picture service menus. Model several roles and scenarios, such as:
   - Mechanic: "I check the tires and fix the engine."
   - Service Writer: "I write down what the car needs."
   - Customer: "My car makes a funny noise."

PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to label parts of the car and introduce new vocabulary words like mechanic, repair, inspection, tools, and maintenance.
- Add a "car wash" station with sponges and blue fabric.
- Add measuring tools like rulers and tape measures to measure parts of the car.

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Mathematics

Doctor's Counting Lab

EZ.001.LA.1027

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objectives:
Students will practice listening and responding to directions.
Students will identify numbers quantities, and images.

In this cooking center, students take on the role of chefs preparing a variety of simple dishes. Using recipe cards with pictures and numbers, they gather themed ingredients and add the correct amounts to their pot or bowl. As they scoop, count, and mix, children practice number recognition, matching quantities, and following step-by-step directions. This activity blends dramatic play, sensory exploration, and early math skills into a flexible, collaborative cooking experience that can be adapted to any classroom theme.

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask students to dress up as chefs using aprons and chef hats, then choose a stew recipe card that shows the ingredients and how many to add. Using scoops or their hands, have students count out the ingredients and place them into the pot or bowl.
2. Once the stew is finished, students can pretend to cook, stir, and serve it. After making their stew, they invite a friend to sing a stew song or pretend to serve their creation.

PLAY TIPS

- **Create a New Recipe:** Students design their own stew recipe card by choosing ingredients and deciding how many to add.
- **Chef Teamwork:** One student reads or shows the recipe while another chef gathers and counts the ingredients.
- **Taste Test Station:** Students present their stew to classmates who count the ingredients together before "tasting."

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



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Fine and Gross Motor

Red Light, Green Light

EZ.008.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Small Group and Large Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize and identify symbols of street safety.
Students will understand the basic functions of street symbols.

Road and vehicle safety rules form the foundation of road safety, and teaching children these rules is essential for their well-being. Road rules keep both pedestrians and vehicles safe. Students can learn the rules of the road through play-based games and activities.

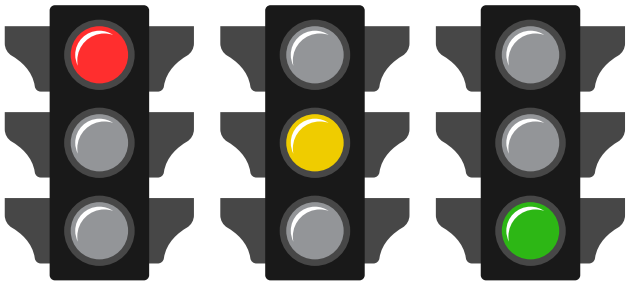
WHAT TO DO

1. Take this activity outside or to a spacious, open area. Review traffic light cards and symbols. Assign students roles, asking them to pretend to be cars or pedestrians.
2. Ask students to form a horizontal line in respect to your location. Hold up a traffic light symbol and prompt students to perform the appropriate action according to their role. During this activity, be sure to emphasize the importance of following traffic signals for both cars and pedestrians.

PLAY TIPS

- As you are taking walks around the playground or neighborhood, point out the many things in place to keep people safe such as traffic lights, stop signs, crosswalks, and crossing guards.
- Have students create additional traffic signs, such as “Do Not Enter,” “Road Work Ahead,” and “Speed Limit XX,” in the writing center.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED





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Mathematics

Coding: A Helping Hand

EZ.008.LA.1016

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will investigate the features and characteristics of a basic coding device.
Students will program a path for the coding device using visual cues and prompts.

Sometimes, we need a bit of assistance to move from one place to another. That help can come in physical, emotional, or even digital forms. Young students learn about assistance, direction, and the integration between communication, thinking, and problem solving by manipulating developmentally appropriate coding devices. After learning the term "command," students can program a simple coding device to follow a pathway using digital commands. The directional language students learn during coding exercises, such as "up" and "down," "backward" and "forward," and "left" and "right," can be easily integrated into everyday play. Introducing the basics of coding helps children grasp the digital world around them.

WHAT TO DO

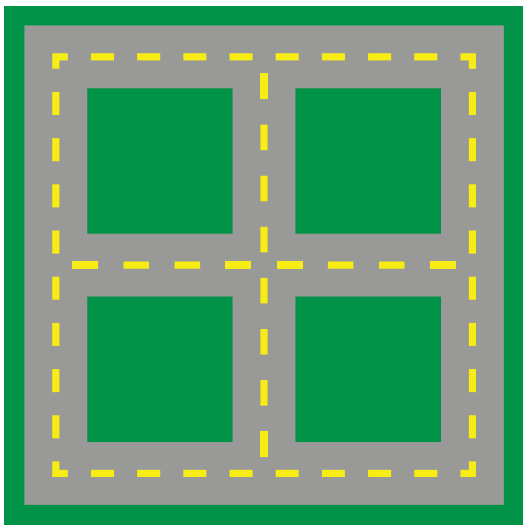
1. Demonstrate how to use the coding device (rescue robot), highlighting the buttons and explaining how to use its functions. Explain to students that by pressing the buttons, we are giving the robot "commands" to move in the direction we choose. Allow students to freely explore the robot and its functions.
2. Position the rescue robot at a starting point on the mat and use the directional arrows to guide students. For example, say, "Move the rescue robot two spaces forward," while holding up the forward arrow twice. Select a destination square on the graphing mat and have students observe and program the robot to reach the target.

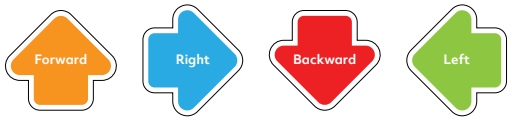
PLAY TIP

Have the students make "destinations" for the robot using art materials. Use the directional cards and graphing mat to guide students through the command and destination process. Students can make a police station, fire station, construction site, or other destination of their choosing.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED







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