



The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!

ACTIVITY

EXPLORING MAPPING SKILLS



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Overview

Does your child enjoy searching for hidden objects by following clues? You can help him learn the vocabulary of math by giving him clues that include words that describe an object's location. Following clues that point to a specific location helps your child build skills he will need later in life to create and use maps.

The Math Idea

Math is much more than numbers and calculations. Math is also about language. When you talk with your child, it is important to introduce and reinforce the vocabulary of math. Vocabulary that helps your child understand where objects are in space—words that define an object's location or the direction of an object in motion—prepares a child for learning to read a map or a graph. Position and direction vocabulary includes words and phrases such as *up*, *down*, *under*, *over*, *next to*, *on top of*, *right*, *left*, *behind*, and *in front of*.

Skills: Mapping skills, following directions
Ages: 3–6

What to Do

- [Thinga-ma-jigger Hide-and-Seek](#)
- [Take It Further](#)

Getting Ready

As you go about your daily life, be conscious of the words you use when talking with your child about where things are. Pepper your conversation with words and phrases that describe an object's position in space. At the dinner table, don't just ask your child to "pass the salt." Ask him to "pass the salt that is *next to* the water pitcher." As your child gets dressed in the morning ask him to get his shoes that are *under* the bed or a shirt from *inside* his closet. As you prepare a meal, ask your child to get the bowl that is *on top of* the cabinet, a spoon that is *in* the drawer, or a cup that is *beside* the toaster. Ask your child who lives *next door* to you and *across* the street.

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Thinga-ma-jigger Hide-and-Seek

What You Need

- A picture of the Thinga-ma-jigger carrying the Cat, Sally, and Nick
- Scissors
- Crayons
- Heavy paper such as poster board or cardboard
- Glue

How to Do It

1. Print out the picture of the Thinga-ma-jigger carrying the Cat, Sally, and Nick.
2. Ask your child to color the picture.
3. Glue the printout to a piece of heavy paper. Once the glue has dried, cut out the picture. Now you are ready to play Thinga-ma-jigger Hide-and-Seek!
4. Tell your child that the Thinga-ma-jigger will “fly” around the backyard (or the house or a nearby park) and land in different places.
5. Ask your child to close his eyes while the Thinga-ma-jigger flies to its first landing spot. Place the Thinga-ma-jigger on a bush, in a tree, on a piece of lawn furniture, or on the ground next to one of these objects.
6. Lead your child to the Thinga-ma-jigger’s location by giving him verbal clues such as *It is next to a tree, It is between a tree and a bush, It is under a chair, It is on top of a table, or It is behind the bird bath.*
7. When your child finds it, congratulate him and reinforce the vocabulary by saying, “Great job! You found the Thinga-ma-jigger under that bush!”

Note: This activity can also be done by hiding a small toy or other object.

Take It Further

You can continue the fun by challenging your child to take his turn hiding the Thinga-ma-jigger and then leading you to it with verbal clues. This will give your child an opportunity to practice the vocabulary he just learned.



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More Ways to Discover and Learn

Look in a Book

The Secret Birthday Message by Eric Carle

Over, Under & Through by Tana Hoban

The Thinga-ma-jigger Is Coming Today! by Tish Rabe; illustrated by Christopher Moroney

New Words

Position vocabulary: *around, beneath, above, below, beside, in front of, behind, next to, on top of, under, over.*

Related Game

Play the Beehive & Seek game on PBS KIDS

(<http://www.pbskids.org/catinthehat/games/beehive.html>)