



# The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!

## ACTIVITY

### EXPLORING SPATIAL SENSE





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## Overview

Does your child like to go on treasure hunts? Did you know that treasure hunts are a great way to build early math skills? Whether you are using a map or a series of clues to lead your child to the “treasure,” your child uses skills that lay the foundation for doing geometry later in life. She also learns to follow directions, another important skill that she’ll need when she starts school. And, most important of all, she’ll have a lot of fun while building these essential skills!

## The Math Idea

Being able to describe an object’s position in space relative to other nearby objects is a basic math concept that your child will apply when she does geometry later in life. It is not too early to begin laying the foundation for understanding this concept by helping your child learn vocabulary that describes an object’s position or location. These are words and phrases such as *between*, *under*, *over*, *next to*, *above*, *inside*, and *outside*.

**Skills:** Geometry and spatial skills, following directions  
**Ages:** 3–6

## What to Do

- [Hunting for Treasure Up, Down, All Around](#)
- [Take It Further](#)

## Getting Ready

Talk with your child about where things are relative to where she is standing. Ask her questions such as *What do you see behind you?* *What is in front of you?* *When you look up, what do you see above your head?* and *What is under your feet?*



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## Hunting for Treasure Up, Down, All Around

### What You Need

- Box or bag to be as a “treasure chest”
- Small objects (e.g., toys, books, candies, pack of crayons) to be the “treasure”
- Paper
- Marker or pen

### How to Do It

1. Create a “treasure” by putting a collection of small, inexpensive objects into a box or bag.
2. Hide the treasure in your house or backyard.
3. Write a series of five or six clues that will lead your child to the “treasure.” Place the clues in different locations. The first clue will lead to the first location, where the child finds the next clue, and so on. Each clue should contain position vocabulary to direct the child. For example: *You’ll find the next clue under the table in the dining room* or *The next clue is behind the coffee pot in the kitchen*. Be sure the coffee pot is not on! If your child is not old enough to read, you will have to read the clues to her. Other examples of position words and phrases are *on top of*, *inside*, *next to*, *above*, *in front of*, and *between*.

## Take It Further

Play a simple “location” game with your child by asking questions such as *What can you see under the table?*; *What do you see on top of the refrigerator?*; *I see something next to the fireplace. What is it?*; *What is on the bottom shelf of the bookcase?*; or *Can you name something you put inside the refrigerator?*



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## More Ways to Discover and Learn

### Look in a Book

*Above and Below* by Tami Johnson

*Over Under* by Marthe Jocelyn; illustrated by Tom Slaughter

### Related Game

Play the Deep Sea Follow Me game on PBS KIDS

(<http://pbskids.org/catinthehat/games/deepseafollowme/index.html>)