

Build from my clues

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes after setup · Describe, listen and check

<https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/build-from-my-clues>

Wonder together

Can you make the same relationships from spoken clues?

Materials

Two empty plastic bowls; Two large wooden spoons; Two large blocks; An opaque freestanding book or folded card as a low screen.

Adult setup – read before trying

Give each player the same three objects: bowl, spoon and block. Use an upright low book or card between the players to hide the grown-up's model while the child builds. Both sides face their own identical arrangement; directions use in and beside, never ambiguous left/right.

Try together

1. Grown-up and child each take a bowl, spoon and block. Place a low stable screen between the two play spaces.
2. Grown-up secretly puts the spoon in the bowl and the block beside it.
3. Grown-up says "Put your spoon in the bowl." Child can ask for the clue again.
4. Grown-up says "Put the block beside the bowl." Either side is accepted; no left/right match is required.
5. Remove the screen and check the two relationships: spoon in bowl, block beside bowl. Adjust together if helpful.
6. Swap roles: child arranges their objects and gives two simple position clues to the adult.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: Each player has a matching empty plastic bowl, large spoon and large block. In the first model, the spoon is in the bowl and the block beside it.

What changes: Benny follows one spoken clue at a time, then lifts the screen to compare. For the new turn, he puts the block in the bowl and spoon beside it.

Look for: A match here means the same two relationships: spoon IN the bowl and block BESIDE the bowl. The block may be on either side, and the spoon angle may differ. Comparing checks whether the clues were clear, not who performed better.

Explain with care

A match here means the same two relationships: spoon IN the bowl and block BESIDE the bowl. The block may be on either side, and the spoon angle may differ. Comparing checks whether the clues were clear, not who performed better.

Beside accepts either side: the two blocks can be on opposite sides of their bowls. Match the stated relationships, not every angle or left/right position. The camera sometimes shows the model while Benny's view is screened.

Talk about it

What did the word in ask us to do?

Answer cue: Put the spoon inside the empty bowl; point to where it rests.

Can the block be beside the bowl on either side?

Answer cue: Yes. Beside means next to; neither left nor right was specified.

What could we do if our arrangements do not match?

Answer cue: Ask for the clue again, explain or point, then adjust together. A mismatch can show that a clue needed clarification.

A parent move: Give one short clue at a time, welcome questions and check shared understanding. Accept either side for beside.

Start simply: Use two objects and one clue with the model visible. Point or gesture, or ask an adult to place an object.

Explore further: Swap roles and change the arrangement, such as putting the block in the bowl with the spoon beside it. Keep objects large enough to handle safely.

Return to it: Another day, try a new familiar pair of objects and one clear position clue.

In the classroom

Flexible 15-minute small-group sequence; prepare materials first and shorten or pause as needed.

3 min · Share the matching objects

Give each player a bowl, spoon and block. Place a low stable screen between the play spaces; show in and beside with a visible practice model if useful.

4 min · Give one clue at a time

Hide the model. Say spoon in the bowl, then block beside the bowl, allowing a repeat, pointing or a question after each clue.

5 min · Reveal, compare and swap

Lift the screen and check the two relationships. Accept either side for beside. Help the child build a new model and give the adult clear clues.

3 min · Show the relationships

Ask which object is in the bowl and which is beside it. Discuss a mismatch as a reason to clarify a clue, without comparing children.

Understanding check

Ask the child to show what is in the bowl and what is beside it.

Answer guidance: A match here means the same two relationships: spoon IN the bowl and block BESIDE the bowl. The block may be on either side, and the spoon angle may differ. Comparing checks whether the clues were clear, not who performed better.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, gestures, home-language words or directing an adult. Use two objects and one clue with the model visible. Point or gesture, or ask an adult to place an object.

Words to explore

in — Inside something.

beside — Next to something, on either side.

clue — Information that helps someone decide what to do.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Give one short clue at a time, welcome questions and check shared understanding. Accept either side for beside.

Beside accepts either side: the two blocks can be on opposite sides of their bowls. Match the stated relationships, not every angle or left/right position. The camera sometimes shows the model while Benny's view is screened.

These are authored shared-play examples. Suggested ages and times are starting points, not an assessment or evidence of measured learning outcomes.

Related reading

Meet Benny in Benny the Forest Detective, an interactive Little Clue Tales forest mystery about noticing clues, counting, matching, sequencing and sharing. This household detective game is a new editorial adaptation, not a page from the book. Explore the digital story in Kiddos Books and browse Amazon for the physical titles currently available; no matching paperback is promised.

Activity sources

Kiddos — Build from my clues: authored game rules and pictured answer —
<https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/build-from-my-clues>

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