Benny’s Everyday Detectives · Complete companion

Complete adult setup, family conversation and classroom guidance for every discovery. Use the named materials and supervision in each chapter.

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Something changed.

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Notice and describe a change

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/something-changed

Wonder together

Three things. Take a good look.

Materials

One empty plastic cup, one large wooden spoon and one folded cloth napkin. A stable reachable surface.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult chooses the three large safe objects and places them apart on a stable surface. Adult chooses large safe objects and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp items, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome.

Try together

1. Adult chooses the three large safe objects and places them apart on a stable surface.
2. Look together. Point to each object and where it sits.
3. Child looks away while the adult moves exactly one object. No blindfold is needed.
4. Child looks again and points to or describes what changed. Compare the old and new place.
5. Swap roles: the child moves one thing while the adult looks away, or directs an adult to move it.
6. Repeat with the same objects, moving a different one if wanted.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: the same cup, spoon and napkin; spoon and napkin positions; the comparison view.

What changes: Only the cup's position.

Look for: The blue cup moves from beside the spoon to beside the napkin. The spoon and napkin stay in their places.

Explain with care

Compare two arrangements and show which object moved. The blue cup moves from beside the spoon to beside the napkin. The spoon and napkin stay in their places.

This is a before-and-after observation game, not a memory or speed assessment. Keep all objects visible when comparing; remembering without help is optional.

Talk about it

Where was the cup before?

Answer cue: Beside the spoon.

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Where is it now?

Answer cue: Beside the napkin.

What stayed the same?

Answer cue: The spoon and napkin stayed put, and all three objects are still there.

A parent move: Ask what helped the child notice. Going back to compare is welcome; no timer or score.

Start simply: Use two objects. Keep an adult-taken before-photo of only the objects beside the setup if remembering is tiring; nothing needs to be uploaded.

Explore further: Let the child move a different object and guide the adult through the old and new places.

Return to it: Return with the same objects and move a different one. Ask which nearby object helped describe the change.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the three objects and invite noticing.

4 min · Read and compare

Read pages 1–4, pause to compare, then check page 5.

6 min · Try together

Model one round, then let pairs swap observer and mover roles with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Invite each child to show an old and new place; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show the object's old and new place, with words, pointing or an adult-directed move.

Answer guidance: The blue cup moves from beside the spoon to beside the napkin. The spoon and napkin stay in their places.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Use two objects. Keep an adult-taken before-photo of only the objects beside the setup if remembering is tiring; nothing needs to be uploaded.

Words to explore

clue — Something you notice that helps you work out an answer.

compare — Look at things together to notice what is the same or different.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask what helped the child notice. Going back to compare is welcome; no timer or score.

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These are shared activities inspired by Benny's story world. Suggested ages and times are editorial starting points; they are not standardized assessments or measured learning outcomes.

Related reading

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Scientific sources

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Find the real match.

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Notice matching details

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/find-the-real-match

Wonder together

Meet the mystery sock.

Materials

Four large clean socks: one matching pair and two different socks. A clear stable surface or clean floor cloth.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult chooses one matching pair and two other socks with clearly different visible details. Adult selects large safe objects and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp items, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Looking, pointing and directing an adult are welcome. No speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult chooses one matching pair and two other socks with clearly different visible details.

2. Show one sock from the pair. Look at a detail such as stripe count or pattern; color alone may not be enough.

3. Put the other three socks in view. Child points to or brings over the match. Compare the two side by side.

4. Adult asks which detail helped; accept pointing, tracing a stripe or a short description.

5. Mix the socks and swap matcher/clue-giver roles.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: sock shape and size; base blue color; stripe width; knit material.

What changes: Stripe count distinguishes candidates; matching pair is then brought together.

Look for: The middle candidate is the match: it has two cream stripes, like the target sock. The other candidates have one and three stripes.

Explain with care

Match a sock by its visible stripe pattern, then make a matching game together. The middle candidate is the match: it has two cream stripes, like the target sock. The other candidates have one and three stripes.

The pictured match is defined by stripe count and pattern, not color alone. At home, choose a visibly matching pair and explain the detail being compared.

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Talk about it

What stayed the same?

Answer cue: All picture socks are blue and the same shape.

Which detail helped?

Answer cue: Both matching socks have two cream stripes.

How can we check?

Answer cue: Put the two socks side by side and compare their details.

A parent move: Ask for a helpful detail after the child chooses; let them compare again without scoring.

Start simply: Offer only two candidates or keep the target directly beside the choices.

Explore further: Invite the child to choose a different detail for a new matching round using the same safe socks.

Return to it: Try the same game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask what helped you notice this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Show the two stripes on both matching socks, comparing side by side. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show the two stripes on both matching socks, comparing side by side.

Answer guidance: The middle candidate is the match: it has two cream stripes, like the target sock. The other candidates have one and three stripes.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Offer only two candidates or keep the target directly beside the choices.

Words to explore

match — Things that share the detail or pattern we are looking for.

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detail — A small part you can look at closely.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask for a helpful detail after the child chooses; let them compare again without scoring.

The pictured match is defined by stripe count and pattern, not color alone. At home, choose a visibly matching pair and explain the detail being compared.

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Longer row. More things?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Check by counting

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/longer-row-more-things

Wonder together

Which row has more?

Materials

Eight large safe objects, preferably the same kind, such as clean socks or large blocks. A stable surface with room for two rows.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult makes two rows with four large safe objects in each. Adult selects large safe objects and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp items, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Looking, pointing and directing an adult are welcome. No speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult makes two rows with four large safe objects in each.
2. Spread one row farther apart, keeping all eight objects on the surface.
3. Child predicts which row has more; guessing is welcome.
4. Touch or point to each object once while counting each row.
5. Slide the objects into pairs, one from each row. Notice that no object is left over.
6. Swap roles and rearrange the same objects; check again.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: eight identical large wooden spoons; one spoon per count; four per row; spoon design and size.

What changes: Spacing only; final alignment makes one-to-one pairing visible.

Look for: Each row has exactly four wooden spoons. Spreading one row changes its length, not its number. Pairing gives four pairs with none left over.

Explain with care

Notice that a row can look longer without containing more objects, then check by counting or pairing. Each row has exactly four wooden spoons. Spreading one row changes its length, not its number. Pairing gives four pairs with none left over.

Spacing does not change the count when no object is added or removed. If the number changes in a later game, count again instead of keeping the equal answer.

Talk about it

Which row looks longer?

Answer cue: The more spread-out row.

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Did we add any objects?

Answer cue: No. Only their spacing changed.

What does pairing show?

Answer cue: Each object has a partner; neither row has an extra.

A parent move: Welcome a first impression, then model checking with a count or a partner for each object.

Start simply: Use two objects in each row. Point together or let the adult move each pair.

Explore further: After checking equal rows, ask the adult for one extra large safe object, add it to a row and ask what changed. Count again; do not keep the equal answer when the number changes.

Return to it: Try the same game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask what helped you notice this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Count each object once or make four pairs with none left over; show that only spacing changed. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Count each object once or make four pairs with none left over; show that only spacing changed.

Answer guidance: Each row has exactly four wooden spoons. Spreading one row changes its length, not its number. Pairing gives four pairs with none left over.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Use two objects in each row. Point together or let the adult move each pair.

Words to explore

row — Things arranged in a line.

pair — Two things we put together.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Welcome a first impression, then model checking with a count or a partner for each object.

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Spacing does not change the count when no object is added or removed. If the number changes in a later game, count again instead of keeping the equal answer.

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What comes next?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Find a repeating pattern

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/what-comes-next

Wonder together

Spoon. Napkin. Spoon. Napkin.

Materials

Three large wooden spoons. Three folded napkins or small cloths, all folded the same way. A stable clear surface.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult sets out spoon, napkin, spoon, napkin in a left-to-right row. Adult selects large safe objects and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp items, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Looking, pointing and directing an adult are welcome. No speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult sets out spoon, napkin, spoon, napkin in a left-to-right row.
2. Say or point to the repeating pair together: spoon, napkin.
3. Child adds the next spoon, then a napkin. Compare the repeated pairs.
4. Swap roles. Child makes a new two-kind pattern with the same large safe objects; adult continues it.
5. Ask which part repeats. If a different rule was intended, let the child show it rather than marking a guess wrong.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: one straight row read left to right; wooden spoon design; folded yellow napkin design; camera and surface.

What changes: Append one spoon to the four-item repeat, then one napkin to continue it.

Look for: The shown pattern is spoon, napkin, spoon, napkin, spoon; a napkin continues this repeating pair. Other invented rules are possible, but this episode explicitly asks for the shown spoon–napkin repeat.

Explain with care

Find the two-object part that repeats and use it to continue a pattern. The shown pattern is spoon, napkin, spoon, napkin, spoon; a napkin continues this repeating pair. Other invented rules are possible, but this episode explicitly asks for the shown spoon–napkin repeat.

This story asks for the shown spoon–napkin repeating pair. A child may invent another rule; ask them to show it before judging their continuation.

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Talk about it

What is the little part that repeats?

Answer cue: A spoon followed by a napkin.

What follows a spoon in this pattern?

Answer cue: A napkin.

How can we check the next two things?

Answer cue: Look back at the spoon–napkin pairs already in the row.

A parent move: Name the repeating part with the child, then let them be the pattern maker.

Start simply: Keep just two complete pairs visible and place the two next objects nearby as choices.

Explore further: Use a different two-object pair, or let the child make spoon–spoon–napkin with enough large safe objects. Say the new rule before continuing.

Return to it: Try the same game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask what helped you notice this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Show the spoon–napkin unit and continue the next complete pair. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show the spoon–napkin unit and continue the next complete pair.

Answer guidance: The shown pattern is spoon, napkin, spoon, napkin, spoon; a napkin continues this repeating pair. Other invented rules are possible, but this episode explicitly asks for the shown spoon–napkin repeat.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Keep just two complete pairs visible and place the two next objects nearby as choices.

Words to explore

pattern — A rule or part that happens again.

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repeat — Do the same part again.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Name the repeating part with the child, then let them be the pattern maker.

This story asks for the shown spoon–napkin repeating pair. A child may invent another rule; ask them to show it before judging their continuation.

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What’s your sorting rule?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Sort and explain a rule

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/whats-your-sorting-rule

Wonder together

Four things. Many details.

Materials

One large clean sock and one folded cloth napkin. One rigid empty plastic cup and one large wooden spoon. A clean floor cloth or stable surface.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult selects the four large safe objects and clears a reachable surface. Adult selects large safe objects and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp items, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Looking, pointing and directing an adult are welcome. No speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult selects the four large safe objects and clears a reachable surface.
2. Look and, if comfortable, feel each one. Adult can describe its feel; no blindfold is needed.
3. Child makes a soft group and a hard group. Place each of the four objects once.
4. Ask the child to show or explain one choice using the shared rule.
5. Child chooses a different rule, such as a visible shape or something they use the objects for. Adult tries that rule.
6. Accept more than one reasonable grouping when the rule is clearly explained and used consistently.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: same four object designs; all four objects retained; soft/hard rule for the demonstration.

What changes: Placement into two groups; later home extension may use an explicitly new rule.

Look for: For the shown feel rule, the cloth sock and napkin are the soft group; the rigid plastic cup and wooden spoon are the hard group. Other groups may be reasonable under a clearly explained different rule.

Explain with care

Use one clear rule to group four familiar objects, then invent and explain another fair grouping. For the shown feel rule, the cloth sock and napkin are the soft group; the rigid plastic cup and wooden spoon are the hard group. Other groups may be reasonable under a clearly explained different rule.

Soft and hard describe these selected materials. Another clearly stated rule may give different groups; some objects do not fit a simple either/or category.

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Talk about it

What rule are we using?

Answer cue: How these particular objects feel: soft or hard.

Where does the napkin go for this rule?

Answer cue: With the soft cloth sock.

Could another rule give different groups?

Answer cue: Yes. Name the new rule and check each choice against it.

A parent move: Ask “What is your rule?” before judging a different arrangement.

Start simply: Use two very different objects and sort together. Touching is optional; offer a description or demonstration.

Explore further: Let the child suggest a new rule and explain one surprising but reasonable choice. Discuss objects that do not fit neatly, without forcing a false binary.

Return to it: Try the same game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask what helped you notice this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Place each object once using the named rule, then show one placement under a new rule. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Place each object once using the named rule, then show one placement under a new rule.

Answer guidance: For the shown feel rule, the cloth sock and napkin are the soft group; the rigid plastic cup and wooden spoon are the hard group. Other groups may be reasonable under a clearly explained different rule.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Use two very different objects and sort together. Touching is optional; offer a description or demonstration.

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Words to explore

sort — Put things into groups using a rule.

rule — The idea we use to decide what belongs together.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask “What is your rule?” before judging a different arrangement.

Soft and hard describe these selected materials. Another clearly stated rule may give different groups; some objects do not fit a simple either/or category.

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Hidden… or gone?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Change your viewpoint

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/hidden-or-gone

Wonder together

Two things. Both in view.

Materials

A large rigid opaque empty plastic cup. A cloth napkin folded narrow enough to be hidden by the cup from the chosen front view. A stable reachable surface and a seated viewing position.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult first tests the setup: place the narrow folded napkin behind the opaque cup and check that it is fully hidden from a comfortable seated front view. Adjust the setup now, before the comparison begins. Adult selects large safe objects and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp items, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Looking, pointing and directing an adult are welcome. No speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult first tests the setup: place the narrow folded napkin behind the opaque cup and check that it is fully hidden from a comfortable seated front view. Adjust the setup now, before the comparison begins.

2. Once ready, keep both objects still. First look from the side together so both objects are visible.

3. Look from the front at the tested comfortable seated height. The cup blocks the napkin. If an adjustment is needed, restart from the side after correcting the setup.

4. Keep the objects still. Lean or shift gently back to the side within comfortable reach and look again.

5. Compare what each view shows. Swap roles choosing a view.

6. An adult may show two photos of only the objects from different angles if moving position is difficult; no child image or upload is needed.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: cup and napkin position; object designs; stump; light.

What changes: Camera/viewpoint, with Benny looking from the new angle.

Look for: The folded napkin stays behind the cup. The cup blocks it from the front view; looking from the side reveals it again. The objects stay still while the view changes.

Explain with care

Notice that an object can be hidden from one view and visible from another without moving the objects. The folded napkin stays behind the cup. The cup blocks it from the front view; looking from the side reveals it again. The objects stay still while the view changes.

A hidden object can still be there. The cup must actually block the whole folded cloth from the chosen front view; test this before comparing and restart if the setup changes.

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Talk about it

Did the napkin move?

Answer cue: No. It stayed behind the cup.

What blocked our front view?

Answer cue: The opaque cup.

How could we find out more?

Answer cue: Look from a different comfortable position or compare an adult's two object-only views.

A parent move: Ask what changed—an object or the view—then let the child direct the next look.

Start simply: During setup, start with the napkin partly visible, then find a comfortable front view that hides it. Restart the side–front–side comparison with both objects still.

Explore further: Try a taller folded cloth or a smaller cup and notice whether the napkin can still be hidden from the same view. Keep all objects large and safe.

Return to it: Try the same game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask what helped you notice this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Show that both objects stayed in place and that changing the view revealed the napkin. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show that both objects stayed in place and that changing the view revealed the napkin.

Answer guidance: The folded napkin stays behind the cup. The cup blocks it from the front view; looking from the side reveals it again. The objects stay still while the view changes.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. During setup, start with the napkin partly visible, then find a comfortable front view that hides it. Restart the side–front–side comparison with both objects still.

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Words to explore

view — What you can see from where you are looking.

hidden — There, but blocked from your view.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask what changed—an object or the view—then let the child direct the next look.

A hidden object can still be there. The cup must actually block the whole folded cloth from the chosen front view; test this before comparing and restart if the setup changes.

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Which is longer?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Compare from the same starting point

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/which-is-longer

Wonder together

Which end goes farther?

Materials

Two large straight paper strips, one clearly longer than the other. An adult prepares them before the game. A flat stable surface.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult prepares two wide strips of different lengths, such as about 25 cm and 18 cm. Put cutting tools away. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. An adult prepares the paper and puts cutting tools away. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult prepares two wide strips of different lengths, such as about 25 cm and 18 cm. Put cutting tools away.

2. Lay them straight and parallel. Shift the shorter strip so its far end reaches beyond the longer strip's end.

3. Invite a first idea, then ask whether the strips start at the same place.

4. Slide one strip until the near ends line up. Keep both flat and straight; do not stretch, fold or trim them.

5. Compare the other ends. The farther end belongs to the longer strip.

6. Swap roles arranging and checking. Try another pair, including equal lengths if wanted.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: length, width and color of both strips; flat surface; camera and light.

What changes: Only the yellow strip's horizontal position.

Look for: The blue strip is longer. The yellow strip initially reaches farther right only because it starts farther right. When their left ends line up, the blue strip extends farther.

Explain with care

Line up one end of two straight paper strips to compare their lengths. The blue strip is longer. The yellow strip initially reaches farther right only because it starts farther right. When their left ends line up, the blue strip extends farther.

Compare straight, flat strips from one aligned end. Moving a strip changes its position, not its length. The pictures are not a ruler or a calibrated scale.

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Talk about it

Why did the yellow strip reach farther at first?

Answer cue: It started farther along the surface.

What stayed the same when we slid it?

Answer cue: Both strips kept their lengths.

How can we compare more clearly?

Answer cue: Line up one end and look at the other ends.

A parent move: Welcome the first guess. Ask what would make the comparison easier to check.

Start simply: Start with the ends already aligned and a very clear length difference. Let the child point to the farther end.

Explore further: Try two equal strips with offset starts. Align the ends and discover that neither is longer.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Show aligned starting ends before identifying the longer strip; distinguish moving a strip from changing its length. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show aligned starting ends before identifying the longer strip; distinguish moving a strip from changing its length.

Answer guidance: The blue strip is longer. The yellow strip initially reaches farther right only because it starts farther right. When their left ends line up, the blue strip extends farther.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Start with the ends already aligned and a very clear length difference. Let the child point to the farther end.

Words to explore

length — How far something reaches from one end to the other.

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align — Put things in line with each other.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Welcome the first guess. Ask what would make the comparison easier to check.

Compare straight, flat strips from one aligned end. Moving a strip changes its position, not its length. The pictures are not a ruler or a calibrated scale.

These are shared activities inspired by Benny's story world. Suggested ages and times are editorial starting points; they are not standardized assessments or 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 game is a new carousel activity, not a page or experiment from the book. Browse Kiddos Books for the digital story and Amazon for the physical titles currently available; this link does not promise a matching paperback.

Scientific sources

NAEYC — Making Math Meaningful for Young Children — https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2014/making-math-meaningful

Stanford DREME — Math Talk: Measurement at Home — https://dreme.stanford.edu/news/math-talk-measurement-at-home/

Two clues. One choice.

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Use two clues together

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/two-clues-one-choice

Wonder together

It is blue. Which could it be?

Materials

Two rigid empty plastic cups and two soft cloths or napkins. Choose a pair of colors so there is one cup and one cloth in each color; exact blue/yellow colors are optional. A stable reachable surface.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult sets out four large safe objects: a cup and cloth in each of two colors. Check that the intended clues have exactly one joint match. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult sets out four large safe objects: a cup and cloth in each of two colors. Check that the intended clues have exactly one joint match.

2. Secretly choose one cloth. Name its color as the first clue.

3. Child points to every object that fits this first clue; there should be two.

4. Add “It is soft cloth.” Keep the first clue too.

5. Check each possible object against both clues, then reveal the intended cloth.

6. Swap roles. The child chooses a target and gives two usable clues. If more than one object still fits, ask for another clue.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: all four designs and materials; one of each color/type combination.

What changes: The available clue changes; then Benny selects the single object meeting both.

Look for: The blue cloth napkin fits both clues: blue and soft. The blue rigid cup fits only blue; the yellow cloth napkin fits only soft; the yellow rigid cup fits neither.

Explain with care

Find an object that fits two clues together, instead of stopping at the first match. The blue cloth napkin fits both clues: blue and soft. The blue rigid cup fits only blue; the yellow cloth napkin fits only soft; the yellow rigid cup fits neither.

Keep both clues. The selected set has one blue soft cloth; another set may have several matches and need another clue. Color is optional at home if another clear feature is more accessible.

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Talk about it

Does blue alone tell us which object?

Answer cue: No. Both the blue cup and the blue napkin fit.

Does the yellow napkin fit both clues?

Answer cue: It is soft, but it is not blue.

What if two choices fit all the clues?

Answer cue: Ask for another useful clue; do not pretend the answer is unique.

A parent move: Ask “Does it fit both?” rather than saying a quick guess is wrong.

Start simply: Adult names and points to the color groups. Offer two objects after the first clue, then compare their materials.

Explore further: Try a different target or reverse the clue order. If colors are difficult to distinguish, replace color with a clearly indicated location or another accessible feature and recheck that the clues identify one object.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Show why the selected object fits both clues and why one tempting alternative fits only one. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Show why the selected object fits both clues and why one tempting alternative fits only one.

Answer guidance: The blue cloth napkin fits both clues: blue and soft. The blue rigid cup fits only blue; the yellow cloth napkin fits only soft; the yellow rigid cup fits neither.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Adult names and points to the color groups. Offer two objects after the first clue, then compare their materials.

Words to explore

clue — A detail that helps us work something out.

both — The two together.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask “Does it fit both?” rather than saying a quick guess is wrong.

Keep both clues. The selected set has one blue soft cloth; another set may have several matches and need another clue. Color is optional at home if another clear feature is more accessible.

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NAEYC / NCTM — Early Childhood Mathematics — https://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/mathematics

First. Next. Ready.

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Plan and tell steps in order

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/first-next-ready

Wonder together

What could come first?

Materials

One clean cloth, one empty plastic plate and one large spoon. A stable clear surface or clean floor mat.

Adult setup — read before trying

Set the folded cloth, plate and spoon separately within comfortable reach. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Set the folded cloth, plate and spoon separately within comfortable reach.
2. Explain the plan: cloth underneath, plate on the cloth, spoon on the plate.
3. First, spread the cloth. Pause and show what changed.
4. Next, put the plate on the cloth. Last, place the spoon on the plate.
5. Point to the finished setup and retell the three steps with first, next and last.
6. Swap roles. Child directs the grown-up, using words, gestures or pointing. They may choose another safe arrangement and explain their own order.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: same three objects; same clearing and camera for the steps.

What changes: Cloth is unfolded, then plate and spoon are placed in the stated order.

Look for: Benny's shown plan is: first spread the cloth; next put the plate on the cloth; last put the spoon on the plate. This describes his chosen simple order, not the only physically possible way to arrange the objects.

Explain with care

Use first, next and last to follow and retell a three-step setup. Benny's shown plan is: first spread the cloth; next put the plate on the cloth; last put the spoon on the plate. This describes his chosen simple order, not the only physically possible way to arrange the objects.

This is Benny's chosen workable order, not the only possible plan. Welcome another safe order when the child can show how it works.

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Talk about it

What did Benny do first?

Answer cue: He spread the cloth.

What happened after the plate was placed?

Answer cue: He added the spoon to the plate.

Could someone choose another workable plan?

Answer cue: Yes. This is Benny's clear three-step plan; explain and check a different one instead of calling every alternative wrong.

A parent move: Pause after each action and let the child tell or show what comes next.

Start simply: Model one step at a time with the real objects. The child can indicate the next object rather than remember all three steps.

Explore further: Retell a familiar routine in three steps, or have the child invent a safe new arrangement and direct you through it. Ask whether a changed order still works.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Retell or demonstrate the shown cloth–plate–spoon order, using words, pointing or an adult helper. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Retell or demonstrate the shown cloth–plate–spoon order, using words, pointing or an adult helper.

Answer guidance: Benny's shown plan is: first spread the cloth; next put the plate on the cloth; last put the spoon on the plate. This describes his chosen simple order, not the only physically possible way to arrange the objects.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Model one step at a time with the real objects. The child can indicate the next object rather than remember all three steps.

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Words to explore

first — Before the other steps.

next — The step that follows.

last — After the other steps in this plan.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Pause after each action and let the child tell or show what comes next.

This is Benny's chosen workable order, not the only possible plan. Welcome another safe order when the child can show how it works.

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NAEYC / NCTM — Early Childhood Mathematics — https://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/mathematics

Turn it. Still a triangle?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Recognize a shape when it turns

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/turn-it-still-a-triangle

Wonder together

Three sides. Three corners.

Materials

One large, firm paper or card triangle, prepared by an adult with three clear straight edges. A stable clear surface.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult prepares a large easy-to-handle triangle and puts cutting tools away. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. An adult prepares the paper and puts cutting tools away. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult prepares a large easy-to-handle triangle and puts cutting tools away.

2. Lay the triangle flat. Point along its three straight sides and to its three corners, without sliding fingers along a paper edge.

3. Turn the triangle on the surface. Do not fold, trim or stretch it.

4. Count or point to the sides and corners again. It is still a triangle.

5. Let the child choose another turn and ask the adult to check.

6. Try the same question with a square if wanted; distinguish turning the whole shape from changing its edges.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: three straight sides; three corners; card size, color and outline; mat, light and camera.

What changes: Only the card's orientation.

Look for: The same flat paper triangle has three straight sides and three corners before and after the turn. Orientation alone does not change it into a different kind of shape.

Explain with care

Notice that turning a triangle changes the way it points, while its three straight sides and three corners stay the same. The same flat paper triangle has three straight sides and three corners before and after the turn. Orientation alone does not change it into a different kind of shape.

Turning the same flat triangle does not change its three straight sides or three corners. Folding, stretching or cutting would be a different change.

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Talk about it

What changed when Benny turned the card?

Answer cue: The direction it points.

What stayed the same?

Answer cue: Its three straight sides, three corners and the shape itself.

Would cutting a corner be the same as turning?

Answer cue: No. Cutting changes the edges; a turn does not. Cutting is not part of the child's activity.

A parent move: Ask what stayed the same, and let the child show the sides or corners instead of naming the shape immediately.

Start simply: Adult turns the card while the child watches. Point to one corner together, then find it in its new place.

Explore further: Try a large square card and turn it to stand on one corner. Count its four sides and corners again; it is still a square.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Identify three sides and three corners after a turn; explain or show that direction changed without cutting or folding. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Identify three sides and three corners after a turn; explain or show that direction changed without cutting or folding.

Answer guidance: The same flat paper triangle has three straight sides and three corners before and after the turn. Orientation alone does not change it into a different kind of shape.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Adult turns the card while the child watches. Point to one corner together, then find it in its new place.

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Words to explore

corner — Where two sides of this flat shape meet.

triangle — A flat shape with three straight sides and three corners.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask what stayed the same, and let the child show the sides or corners instead of naming the shape immediately.

Turning the same flat triangle does not change its three straight sides or three corners. Folding, stretching or cutting would be a different change.

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One for each.

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Make two equal groups

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/one-for-each

Wonder together

Six spoons. Two plates.

Materials

Six matching large spoons or six other large safe objects of one kind. Two plastic plates or two clear spaces on a cloth.

Adult setup — read before trying

Adult sets out six large safe objects and two plates or spaces. Count the six together. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Adult sets out six large safe objects and two plates or spaces. Count the six together.
2. Explain the goal: put the same number in each place.
3. Child gives one object to the first place, then one to the second.
4. Repeat, one for each place, until all six are used.
5. Count each group or pair one object from each group. Three in each, with none left over.
6. Swap roles. Try four objects and two places, or revisit the six-object setup in a new arrangement.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: six spoons total; two plates; spoon design and scale; same view and light for sharing.

What changes: Move one spoon to each plate per round until none remain.

Look for: Six spoons shared equally between two plates give three spoons on each plate, with none left over. The goal here is equal counts, not a claim that every real-life fair decision means identical amounts.

Explain with care

Share six objects between two places one at a time, then check that both groups have the same number. Six spoons shared equally between two plates give three spoons on each plate, with none left over. The goal here is equal counts, not a claim that every real-life fair decision means identical amounts.

Six whole objects divide equally between two places as three in each. This game compares equal counts; it does not claim every real-life fair decision requires identical amounts.

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Talk about it

How many spoons are there before we start?

Answer cue: Six.

After giving one to each plate, how many are still waiting?

Answer cue: Four.

How do we know both plates have the same number?

Answer cue: Count three on each, or make three pairs with one from each plate.

A parent move: State the equal-count goal, then let the child distribute and choose how to check it.

Start simply: Use four objects, give one to each place together, and repeat once. Check two in each place.

Explore further: Try six objects with three places. If the child proposes a number that leaves leftovers, notice the remainder without forcing objects to disappear or dividing unsafe materials.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Make two groups of three from six and verify both counts or three complete pairs, with no missing or extra object. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Make two groups of three from six and verify both counts or three complete pairs, with no missing or extra object.

Answer guidance: Six spoons shared equally between two plates give three spoons on each plate, with none left over. The goal here is equal counts, not a claim that every real-life fair decision means identical amounts.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Use four objects, give one to each place together, and repeat once. Check two in each place.

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Words to explore

equal groups — Groups with the same number of things.

left over — Still there after the sharing is done.

Full adult notes and honest limits

State the equal-count goal, then let the child distribute and choose how to check it.

Six whole objects divide equally between two places as three in each. This game compares equal counts; it does not claim every real-life fair decision requires identical amounts.

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The missing picnic thing

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Notice what changed

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-missing-picnic-thing

Wonder together

Which picnic thing is missing?

Materials

Large wooden spoon; Empty plastic cup; Folded napkin; Basket.

Adult setup — read before trying

Set out a large wooden spoon, an empty plastic cup and a folded napkin, with a basket nearby. Choose a single safe reachable search area and keep the remaining objects in place. A local photo of only the starting objects is optional.

Try together

1. Together, lay out a cup, spoon and folded napkin. Look at each one.
2. Child looks away. Grown-up hides ONE object nearby, leaving the other two where they were.
3. Child looks back and says or points to what is missing. Looking at a starting photo is welcome.
4. Ask for one useful clue, such as “Look behind the basket.” Search only the agreed reachable area.
5. Find the object and check it against the starting three.
6. Swap: the child hides one while the grown-up looks away, then gives a clue.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The same blue cup and folded yellow napkin stay in their starting places. The basket stays nearby, separate from the three-object row.

What changes: The wooden spoon is removed from the row and hidden behind the basket. The next turn changes who hides and who searches.

Look for: The spoon was present at the start and is missing from the second arrangement. The cup and napkin stay in place. A location clue helps Benny find the spoon behind the basket.

Explain with care

The spoon was present at the start and is missing from the second arrangement. The cup and napkin stay in place. A location clue helps Benny find the spoon behind the basket.

One object is hidden at a time in an agreed reachable area. A starting picture is welcome: this game does not test unaided memory. The pictured hiding place is an example, not the answer to every home round.

Talk about it

Which thing was here before and is missing now?

Answer cue: The wooden spoon. Compare the three objects on page 2 with the two on page 4.

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Which clue tells Benny where to search?

Answer cue: The spoon peeks from behind the basket; a grown-up can give a location clue such as “Look behind the basket.”

How can we check that we found the right thing?

Answer cue: Bring the spoon back and compare it with the starting objects or their picture. All three are present again.

A parent move: Show the starting objects together, then hide exactly one while your child looks away. Wait for noticing before offering one helpful location clue. Swap hider and finder without a timer.

Start simply: Start with two objects. Keep the starting arrangement visible in a picture if helpful. The child can point or direct an adult.

Explore further: Let the child choose which of the same three objects to hide and give the grown-up one useful clue. Keep the search inside the agreed area.

Return to it: Try the same game another day with one different familiar object. Keep two or three choices and notice which clue helped this time.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Meet the picnic things

Name or point to the three objects and agree where searching is allowed.

3 min · Notice what is missing

Read to page 4 and compare with page 2 before revealing the search and check.

7 min · Hide, find and swap

Model one missing-object round. In pairs, one player hides while the other looks away; use one location clue, find and check, then swap with adult support.

3 min · Show the useful clue

Invite a gesture or short description of the missing object and the clue that led to its hiding place.

Understanding check

The child can indicate the missing object or use a clue to direct the search, with help or a starting picture if wanted.

Answer guidance: The spoon was present at the start and is missing from the second arrangement. The cup and napkin stay in place. A location clue helps Benny find the spoon behind the basket.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, home-language words or directing an adult. Keep the materials within comfortable reach; no spoken answer is required. Start with two objects. Keep the starting arrangement visible in a picture if helpful. The child can point or direct an adult.

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Words to explore

missing — Not in the place where you saw it before.

clue — Something that helps you work out an answer.

check — Look again to see whether your idea fits.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Show the starting objects together, then hide exactly one while your child looks away. Wait for noticing before offering one helpful location clue. Swap hider and finder without a timer.

One object is hidden at a time in an agreed reachable area. A starting picture is welcome: this game does not test unaided memory. The pictured hiding place is an example, not the answer to every home round.

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

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Activity sources

Kiddos — The missing picnic thing: authored game rules and pictured answer — https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-missing-picnic-thing

NAEYC — Making Math Meaningful for Young Children — https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2014/making-math-meaningful

The tiny-detail hunt

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Match a tiny detail

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-tiny-detail-hunt

Wonder together

Which whole object matches this tiny detail?

Materials

One close-up object picture; Three safe familiar objects.

Adult setup — read before trying

Prepare an object-only close-up photo for local viewing or draw a clear pattern. Place its whole object among two or three large safe choices. Check that only one choice matches; keep all choices reachable. Nothing needs to be uploaded.

Try together

1. Grown-up makes a close-up picture of one distinctive part of a familiar object. Take an object-only photo for local viewing, or draw the pattern.

2. Put the object among two or three reachable choices. Make sure only one matches the pictured detail.

3. Child looks at the clue, then searches for its whole object.

4. Compare the detail with each possible match. Ask “What is the same?” rather than naming the answer.

5. Place the clue beside the object and check the shape or pattern.

6. Swap: child chooses a detail for the grown-up to find.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The clue shows two broad cream stripes on blue knit. The sock, plain blue cup and yellow napkin keep their own patterns during this round.

What changes: Benny compares different possible objects, then brings the sock and clue together. The last page begins a new round with the striped yellow napkin.

Look for: The pictured clue matches the sock’s two broad cream stripes on blue knit. The blue cup has no stripes; the yellow napkin has three thin green stripes. Color alone does not settle the match.

Explain with care

The pictured clue matches the sock’s two broad cream stripes on blue knit. The blue cup has no stripes; the yellow napkin has three thin green stripes. Color alone does not settle the match.

A close-up must show a distinctive detail, and exactly one of the choices should fit it. If two real objects match, both are reasonable answers: change the choices or add a detail. The six-page story demonstrates comparison, not a timed visual test.

Talk about it

The cup is blue. Does that make it a match?

Answer cue: No. The clue also has two cream stripes and knitted texture; the plain blue cup does not.

What matches when Benny puts the card beside the sock?

Answer cue: Two broad cream stripes on blue knitted fabric. Point to the same pattern on both.

What could make a useful clue for the next turn?

Answer cue: The three thin green stripes on the yellow napkin, or a similarly distinctive detail on a safe familiar object. Check that only one choice fits.

A parent move: Make a close-up picture of one familiar object and put the real object among two or three reachable choices. Ask what is the same rather than naming the answer. Let the child choose a detail for your turn.

Start simply: Offer two objects beside the clue first. The child can point to the matching pattern; no search is required.

Explore further: Let the child choose a safe object and point to the detail the grown-up should draw or photograph. Check the possible choices together before the grown-up searches.

Return to it: Return with one new object and a different distinctive detail. Keep the clue next to the objects if comparison is more useful than searching.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Meet a small clue

Show a close-up and invite children to point to its color, marks or texture without naming the whole object yet.

3 min · Compare, then check

Read the six-page story. Pause at page 2 to compare the plain cup with the striped clue, then inspect the card and sock together on page 5.

7 min · Find a whole-object match

Use prepared picture clues and two or three real choices. In pairs, point to a match and place clue beside object to check. Swap chooser and finder with adult help.

3 min · Show the matching detail

Invite each child to show one feature shared by clue and object. If two choices fit, acknowledge both and refine the clue together.

Understanding check

The child can show a shared pattern, shape or texture between clue and object, with the picture kept alongside it.

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Answer guidance: The pictured clue matches the sock's two broad cream stripes on blue knit. The blue cup has no stripes; the yellow napkin has three thin green stripes. Color alone does not settle the match.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, home-language words or directing an adult. Keep the materials within comfortable reach; no spoken answer is required. Offer two objects beside the clue first. The child can point to the matching pattern; no search is required.

Words to explore

detail — A small part or feature of something.

match — Share the feature we are looking for.

compare — Look at things together to notice what is the same or different.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Make a close-up picture of one familiar object and put the real object among two or three reachable choices. Ask what is the same rather than naming the answer. Let the child choose a detail for your turn.

A close-up must show a distinctive detail, and exactly one of the choices should fit it. If two real objects match, both are reasonable answers: change the choices or add a detail. The six-page story demonstrates comparison, not a timed visual test.

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

Related reading

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Activity sources

Kiddos — The tiny-detail hunt: authored game rules and pictured answer — https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-tiny-detail-hunt

NAEYC — Making Math Meaningful for Young Children — https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2014/making-math-meaningful

Copy, cover, check

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Build and compare

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/copy-cover-check

Wonder together

How can we make the two models match?

Materials

Two matching sets of three large blocks; Cloth.

Adult setup — read before trying

Provide two identical sets of three large age-appropriate blocks on a stable reachable surface and an opaque cloth. Leave room between model and copy. Begin with a row and use one shared viewing side.

Try together

1. Grown-up makes a simple arrangement with one set of three large blocks. Keep the second matching set separate.

2. Look together from the same side. Child may point to the order or describe the shapes.

3. Cover the model with an opaque cloth. Child uses the second set to build a copy; peeking is welcome.

4. Uncover both arrangements and compare from the same direction.

5. Move any blocks needed to make them match. In Benny's example, one end block moves to the other end.

6. Swap: child makes a model, grown-up copies, and both check it.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: Both sets contain one red cube, one yellow triangular prism and one blue cylinder. The first model stays red, yellow, blue from the shared viewing side.

What changes: The model is covered and uncovered. Benny first copies yellow, blue, red, then moves the red cube from the right end to the left. Page 7 deliberately begins a new model.

Look for: The model is red cube, yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder. The copy starts yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder, red cube. Moving the red cube from the right end to the left makes the rows match.

Explain with care

The model is red cube, yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder. The copy starts yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder, red cube. Moving the red cube from the right end to the left makes the rows match.

Covering is optional and peeking is welcome. This is a build-and-check game, not an unaided memory test. Compare from the same side; a different viewpoint can reverse how an order appears. The one-block move solves Benny's pictured copy, not every possible copy.

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Talk about it

What order do you see in Benny's first model?

Answer cue: From the shared viewing side: red cube, yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder. Shapes or pointing work as well as color names.

Which part of the first copy is in a different place?

Answer cue: The red cube is at the right end. The yellow and blue blocks come before it.

What move makes the two rows match?

Answer cue: Move the red cube from the right end to the left, then compare both rows again from the same side.

A parent move: Build a simple model and look together from one side before covering it. Offer another look whenever wanted. After uncovering, ask what differs and let the child move a block or direct your hands. Swap maker and copier.

Start simply: Leave the model uncovered and use two blocks first. The child can direct the grown-up's hands.

Explore further: Let the child make a new two- or three-block model for the grown-up. A low stable stack is optional; check shape and position together from the same side.

Return to it: Use the same blocks in a fresh simple arrangement. Ask whether keeping the model visible or taking another look helps today.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Meet the matching sets

Pair the matching blocks and choose one side from which to view both arrangements.

3 min · Watch a copy change

Read pages 1–5 and pause to compare the uncovered rows. Read page 6 after children suggest or show a possible move.

7 min · Build, cover and check

Adult models once. Pairs take maker and copier roles, leave the model visible or peek as needed, uncover both, revise and swap.

3 min · Describe a helpful check

Ask children to show how they checked the two arrangements rather than how much they remembered.

Understanding check

The child can compare a part of the model with the copy and move a block or direct an adult to make the chosen arrangement match.

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Answer guidance: The model is red cube, yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder. The copy starts yellow triangular prism, blue cylinder, red cube. Moving the red cube from the right end to the left makes the rows match.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, home-language words or directing an adult. Keep the materials within comfortable reach; no spoken answer is required. Leave the model uncovered and use two blocks first. The child can direct the grown-up's hands.

Words to explore

model — The arrangement you are trying to copy.

copy — Make another arrangement to match a model.

compare — Look at both to notice what is the same or different.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Build a simple model and look together from one side before covering it. Offer another look whenever wanted. After uncovering, ask what differs and let the child move a block or direct your hands. Swap maker and copier.

Covering is optional and peeking is welcome. This is a build-and-check game, not an unaided memory test. Compare from the same side; a different viewpoint can reverse how an order appears. The one-block move solves Benny's pictured copy, not every possible copy.

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Activity sources

Kiddos — Copy, cover, check: authored game rules and pictured answer — https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/copy-cover-check

NAEYC — Making Math Meaningful for Young Children — https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2014/making-math-meaningful

NAEYC / NCTM — Early Childhood Mathematics — https://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/mathematics

What’s in the mystery bag?

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Feel, describe and check

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/whats-in-the-mystery-bag

Wonder together

Which familiar object fits your touch clue?

Materials

Open cloth bag without drawstrings; Large wooden spoon; Soft folded cloth; Large smooth plastic cup; Three simple picture cards showing those objects; A place to conceal unused objects.

Adult setup — read before trying

Choose a soft open cloth bag without drawstrings, a large wooden spoon, a folded cloth and a large smooth plastic cup. Prepare their three picture cards and a separate covered place for unused objects. Check surfaces and keep the bag below the face.

Try together

1. Together, look at and feel three large familiar objects: spoon, folded cloth and cup. Lay out their three picture cards.

2. Child looks away. Grown-up puts one object into the open cloth bag and completely conceals the other two elsewhere. Leave all three cards visible.

3. Child may feel inside the bag without looking. Keep the bag below the face. Touch is optional: grown-up can feel and describe instead.

4. Describe one clue, then choose a picture. Any guess is welcome.

5. Pull out the object and check it against the chosen picture.

6. Swap roles. Keep unused objects hidden again so the next answer cannot be found simply by noticing what is missing.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The three possible objects are the spoon, folded cloth and cup, with their three picture cards visible. During the guessing turn, the two unused real objects stay completely hidden.

What changes: One object is put in the bag. Benny feels, chooses a picture and pulls out the spoon to check. The next turn uses a different object and swaps roles.

Look for: The spoon’s long handle and rounded bowl distinguish it from the folded cloth and open cup. Feeling suggests an answer; pulling it out lets both players check.

Explain with care

The spoon’s long handle and rounded bowl distinguish it from the folded cloth and open cup. Feeling suggests an answer; pulling it out lets both players check.

Touch is optional. A description suggests a choice; the reveal checks it. Keep all unused objects hidden so their absence does not give the answer away. Accept an uncertain or changed guess; this is not a test of

sensory ability.

Talk about it

What could a spoon feel like inside the bag?

Answer cue: A long handle with a wider rounded bowl. Use the actual large spoon to check; a grown-up may feel and describe it.

Why are the other two real objects hidden too?

Answer cue: So the child can use the touch clue rather than identify the answer by seeing which object is missing. All three picture choices stay visible.

How do we check the picture choice?

Answer cue: Pull out the object and compare it with the chosen picture. If it differs, explore which clue could help next time.

A parent move: Let the child explore the three objects first. While they look away, put one in the bag and fully hide the unused two. Offer to feel and describe for them; wait for a picture choice, then reveal and check without scoring.

Start simply: Use two very different objects. Touch is optional: the grown-up can feel and describe while the child chooses a card.

Explore further: Let the child choose which familiar object the grown-up will feel. Help conceal the unused objects, and let the child lead the reveal and check.

Return to it: Use the same three objects on another day, or replace one with a large safe familiar object and update its picture. Keep touch optional.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Meet the possible objects

Look at the spoon, cup and cloth with their cards. Offer optional touching and model describing one feature.

3 min · A clue before the reveal

Read to page 5. Invite a picture choice or a description, then reveal the spoon on page 6 and compare.

7 min · Feel or listen, choose and check

Adult hides one object in the bag and the other two elsewhere. Child may feel or listen to the adult's description, choose a card and reveal. Swap roles and reset all unused objects out of sight.

3 min · Share one useful feature

Invite a gesture, texture word or shape description that helped. A revised guess is welcome.

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Understanding check

The child can connect one felt or described feature to a picture choice, then compare it with the revealed object. Touching and guessing correctly are not requirements.

Answer guidance: The spoon's long handle and rounded bowl distinguish it from the folded cloth and open cup. Feeling suggests an answer; pulling it out lets both players check.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, home-language words or directing an adult. Keep the materials within comfortable reach; no spoken answer is required. Use two very different objects. Touch is optional: the grown-up can feel and describe while the child chooses a card.

Words to explore

texture — How a surface feels.

describe — Show or tell what you notice.

check — Compare your idea with the object you reveal.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Let the child explore the three objects first. While they look away, put one in the bag and fully hide the unused two. Offer to feel and describe for them; wait for a picture choice, then reveal and check without scoring.

Touch is optional. A description suggests a choice; the reveal checks it. Keep all unused objects hidden so their absence does not give the answer away. Accept an uncertain or changed guess; this is not a test of sensory ability.

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Follow the picture clues

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Follow and make clues

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/follow-the-picture-clues

Wonder together

Where does the next picture send you?

Materials

Three simple picture cards: basket, cup, cloth; Basket; Large empty cup; Cloth; Large toy.

Adult setup — read before trying

Choose one safe area with three low reachable stops: basket, large empty plastic cup and cloth. Use a large age-appropriate toy and picture cards that clearly match these objects. An adult prepares and cuts cards, then puts the scissors away. Check the whole chain before inviting the child.

Try together

1. Grown-up prepares three reachable stops in one agreed area. Hide a large toy under a cloth.

2. Place the CLOTH picture card in an empty cup. Place the CUP card inside a basket. Give the child the BASKET card.

3. Child matches the first card to the real basket, looks inside and finds the cup picture. Leave the basket card by the basket.

4. Follow the cup picture to the real cup and find the cloth picture. Leave the cup card by the cup.

5. Find the cloth, set its card beside it and lift it to reveal the toy.

6. Swap: child makes a one- or two-stop hunt for the grown-up. Adult checks the hiding places.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The three reachable stops remain basket, cup and cloth. Each card depicts exactly one of them; the large toy is under the cloth until the reveal.

What changes: Benny carries the current clue to its matching stop, leaves the used card there and takes the next card: basket, cup, cloth. Lifting the cloth reveals the toy.

Look for: Each picture names the NEXT place to look: basket, then cup, then cloth. Finding a new card advances the hunt; the toy under the cloth completes it.

Explain with care

Each picture names the NEXT place to look: basket, then cup, then cloth. Finding a new card advances the hunt; the toy under the cloth completes it.

Pictures show the next place to look, not a route map or a reading test. Prepare the chain backwards and check it before play. The illustrated three-stop route is one example; a one-stop hunt is a complete starting game.

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Talk about it

What picture do we give the child at the start?

Answer cue: The basket card. The cup card goes inside the basket, and the cloth card goes inside the cup.

Benny finds a cup picture in the basket. Where should he look next?

Answer cue: Inside the real cup. Leave the used basket card beside the basket.

What finishes the pictured hunt?

Answer cue: Following the cloth card to the real cloth and lifting it to find the large toy duck. Then the child can make a shorter hunt for the grown-up.

A parent move: Set the clue chain backwards: toy under cloth, cloth card in cup, cup card in basket, then give the basket card. Stay together within the agreed area and let the child choose or direct each next move. Help them make a short hunt for your turn.

Start simply: Start with one picture and one reachable stop. The child may point and direct the grown-up.

Explore further: Let the child draw or choose pictures for a one- or two-stop hunt. Help place the clues in reverse order and check the route before the grown-up follows it.

Return to it: Change one safe stop on another day and draw its matching picture. Keep the route short enough to follow together.

In the classroom

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

2 min · Match a picture and place

Show the first card and invite pointing toward its real match. Explain the agreed search area.

3 min · Follow Benny's chain

Read pages 1–4, pausing on page 3 to name the next place. Follow the cloth clue to the reveal on pages 5–6.

7 min · Take turns guiding a hunt

Try an adult-prepared one- to three-stop hunt. Leave each used card at its stop. Help children make a one- or two-stop version for a partner or grown-up, with adult-checked locations.

3 min · Retell the places

Use the cards to show where the hunt went first, next and last. Accept pointing or adult-directed movement.

Understanding check

The child can match the current picture to a reachable stop or direct another player there, then show the next clue. Remembering the full chain unaided is optional.

Answer guidance: Each picture names the NEXT place to look: basket, then cup, then cloth. Finding a new card advances the hunt; the toy under the cloth completes it.

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Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, home-language words or directing an adult. Keep the materials within comfortable reach; no spoken answer is required. Start with one picture and one reachable stop. The child may point and direct the grown-up.

Words to explore

next — What comes after the step you are doing now.

clue — Something that helps you work out where to look.

sequence — Things arranged in an order.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Set the clue chain backwards: toy under cloth, cloth card in cup, cup card in basket, then give the basket card. Stay together within the agreed area and let the child choose or direct each next move. Help them make a short hunt for your turn.

Pictures show the next place to look, not a route map or a reading test. Prepare the chain backwards and check it before play. The illustrated three-stop route is one example; a one-stop hunt is a complete starting game.

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The torn-picture mystery

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes after setup · Fit parts into a whole

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-torn-picture-mystery

Wonder together

Which picture lines and torn edges fit together?

Materials

One sheet of ordinary paper; A thick crayon; A flat clear place to play.

Adult setup — read before trying

Grown-up draws one large simple acorn across a sheet, shows it, then tears it into three large pieces. Child mixes and turns the pieces.

Try together

1. Together, draw and look at one large simple picture.
2. Grown-up tears the sheet into three large pieces; child mixes them.
3. Child turns and slides pieces, looking for picture lines and torn edges that meet.
4. Put all three together and check the whole picture. Looking at the original drawing before tearing is allowed.
5. Swap: child draws and directs the tearing; grown-up solves.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The three large pieces all come from one acorn drawing. Every piece is used once.

What changes: Turn and slide the paper pieces until both the drawing and torn edges meet. Make a new fish drawing for the next turn.

Look for: The three pieces form the same acorn picture when the brown cap line and body join, and the torn edges meet. A piece can need turning before it fits.

Explain with care

The three pieces form the same acorn picture when the brown cap line and body join, and the torn edges meet. A piece can need turning before it fits.

Color alone may not identify a fit. Check the continuing picture lines and torn edges together. Looking at the original drawing and asking for help are welcome.

Talk about it

What helped these two pieces meet?

Answer cue: Accept a matching torn edge, the cap line, a color or a part of the drawing; ask the child to point.

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What could you try when a piece does not fit?

Answer cue: Turn it or try a different neighbor. Looking again or asking for help is welcome.

How can we check that we made one whole picture?

Answer cue: The picture lines continue across the joins and all three pieces are used; there is no gap in the sheet.

A parent move: Ask “Which lines could meet?” and let the child turn a piece. Offer to hold a piece steady rather than placing it for them.

Start simply: Use two large pieces and keep the picture upright. The child can point while an adult moves the pieces.

Explore further: Make a new three-piece puzzle with a different picture. Try one piece turned sideways; do not add tiny pieces.

Return to it: Another day, draw a new simple picture and take turns making a puzzle.

In the classroom

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

3 min · Meet the picture

Show one large drawing and let children name or point to a useful line. An adult tears it into three large pieces.

4 min · Try the fit

Invite a child to turn and slide the pieces while a partner points to a line or edge that could meet. Use two pieces if helpful.

5 min · Check and swap

Check all the joins together. Children draw a new simple picture and direct an adult to tear it; the adult solves with their clues.

3 min · Show a helpful clue

Invite each pair to point to one joined line or torn edge. A child may direct an adult without moving the pieces.

Understanding check

Ask the child to show one line or edge that helped them join two pieces.

Answer guidance: The three pieces form the same acorn picture when the brown cap line and body join, and the torn edges meet. A piece can need turning before it fits.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, gestures, home-language words or directing an adult. Use two large pieces and keep the picture upright. The child can point while an adult moves the pieces.

Words to explore

whole — All the parts joined together.

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edge — The outside boundary of a piece.

turn — Change which way a piece faces.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask “Which lines could meet?” and let the child turn a piece. Offer to hold a piece steady rather than placing it for them.

Color alone may not identify a fit. Check the continuing picture lines and torn edges together. Looking at the original drawing and asking for help are welcome.

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The little treasure map

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes after setup · Connect a simple map with real places

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-little-treasure-map

Wonder together

Which real place matches the star on your map?

Materials

A blue cloth; A yellow cushion; A small open basket; One familiar large toy; Paper and crayon.

Adult setup — read before trying

Arrange the cloth left, cushion right, and basket farther between them. Grown-up draws these places and stars the basket. Child looks away while the adult hides the toy fully below the basket rim, laying it on its side if needed. Then give the child the map.

Try together

1. Grown-up arranges three familiar landmarks in one clear, reachable floor area. Draw them in the same arrangement and mark the chosen hiding place with a star.

2. Child looks away while the adult hides the toy at the marked place. In the pictured basket, lay the duck fully below the rim, on its side if needed. Then hand over the map.

3. Together, turn the map until its landmarks line up with the real space.

4. Child points to the star, identifies the matching place, and looks there.

5. Compare the found toy with the marked place, then let the child hide a toy and make a map for the adult.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The cloth is near-left, cushion near-right and basket farther between them. The first map keeps these three places and stars the basket.

What changes: Benny draws, hides, orients the map, follows its star and checks the basket. A new turn marks the cushion instead.

Look for: In the pictured map, the blue cloth is left, yellow cushion right, and basket beyond them. The star is on the basket drawing, so Benny checks the real basket and finds the toy duck.

Explain with care

In the pictured map, the blue cloth is left, yellow cushion right, and basket beyond them. The star is on the basket drawing, so Benny checks the real basket and finds the toy duck.

This is a map of one small play area, not a chain of picture clues or a test of left and right. Turn the paper to align familiar landmarks. Hide the toy out of sight before the finder receives the map.

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Talk about it

What does this little drawing stand for?

Answer cue: Point to the matching cloth, cushion or basket in the play space.

What could we do if the map seems the wrong way round?

Answer cue: Turn it until the landmarks line up with the real places. Walk around together only if comfortable.

Why did you look in that place?

Answer cue: The star is on its picture. Let the child point on the paper and in the play space.

A parent move: Ask “What is the same on your paper and in our play space?” Help turn the map; point out a landmark without naming the hiding place.

Start simply: Start with two landmarks or draw together. A child can point and direct the adult to retrieve the toy.

Explore further: Keep three landmarks and move the hiding mark to another reachable place. Turn the map together before searching.

Return to it: On another day, make a map for one small area with different familiar landmarks.

In the classroom

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

3 min · Match paper and place

Set three large landmarks in one clear area. Draw their arrangement and invite children to point between paper and real places.

4 min · Prepare the hiding turn

Mark the basket, ask the finder to look away and hide the toy fully below its rim. Show the map and turn it together to match the space.

5 min · Find, check and swap

Follow the mark and compare it with where the toy was found. Help the child make a new map and hide the toy at a reachable marked place for the adult.

3 min · Explain the match

Ask the child to point to one place on the paper and in the play area. A seated child may direct an adult throughout.

Understanding check

Ask the child to point to the same place on the map and in the play space.

Answer guidance: In the pictured map, the blue cloth is left, yellow cushion right, and basket beyond them. The star is on the basket drawing, so Benny checks the real basket and finds the toy duck.

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Participation choices: Accept pointing, gestures, home-language words or directing an adult. Start with two landmarks or draw together. A child can point and direct the adult to retrieve the toy.

Words to explore

map — A picture that shows where places are.

landmark — A familiar thing that helps you find a place.

mark — A sign that points out a place on the map.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Ask “What is the same on your paper and in our play space?” Help turn the map; point out a landmark without naming the hiding place.

This is a map of one small play area, not a chain of picture clues or a test of left and right. Turn the paper to align familiar landmarks. Hide the toy out of sight before the finder receives the map.

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Copy my secret moves

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes after setup · Remember a short action sequence

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/copy-my-secret-moves

Wonder together

Which move comes first, next and last?

Materials

A little clear space; A grown-up to play with; no objects needed.

Adult setup — read before trying

Sit or stand comfortably together. Agree on three comfortable movements. The pictured sequence is clap, touch both shoulders, then wave.

Try together

1. Grown-up is the first leader; child watches. Both sit or stand comfortably.

2. Leader slowly claps once, touches both shoulders, and waves. Pause between the movements.

3. Child tries the same sequence. Saying the actions aloud, watching again or copying alongside is welcome.

4. Leader and child repeat together to check the order. There is no score, speed target or required perfect memory.

5. Swap: child makes a short sequence of one to three comfortable moves; adult follows.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: The pictured first round has three actions: clap, touch both shoulders, then wave.

What changes: The leader shows one action at a time, the follower tries, then both check together. The child chooses the next sequence.

Look for: The pictured sequence is clap, touch both shoulders, then wave. Repeating together lets both players check the order. A different comfortable gesture or pointing to pictures is a valid adaptation.

Explain with care

The pictured sequence is clap, touch both shoulders, then wave. Repeating together lets both players check the order. A different comfortable gesture or pointing to pictures is a valid adaptation.

The three views on page 6 show successive actions, not three characters moving at once. This is shared imitation play, not a memory test. Repeating, copying together or choosing different comfortable gestures all count.

Talk about it

Which move came first?

Answer cue: Clap in the pictured round. Showing, saying or replaying together all count.

Would another look help?

Answer cue: Offer a repeat without judging memory. The game can be played by copying simultaneously.

What would you like me to copy now?

Answer cue: Accept one to three comfortable child-chosen gestures. The adult follows; there is no single right new sequence.

A parent move: Show one movement at a time. Invite another look whenever wanted, and follow the child's choices when roles swap.

Start simply: Start with one move and copy at the same time. Sit down, make smaller movements, say the move or direct an adult.

Explore further: Let the child change the order of the same three moves. Use at most three until both players want more.

Return to it: Try a new pair of gentle gestures another day and change the leader.

In the classroom

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

3 min · Choose comfortable moves

Sit or stand with space between players. Show a clap, shoulder touch and wave; offer smaller gestures or spoken descriptions.

4 min · Watch and try

Show the three moves slowly, one at a time. Invite children to copy, watch again or perform alongside you.

5 min · Check and change leaders

Replay together without a score. In pairs, let each child choose one to three comfortable moves for the other player or adult.

3 min · Name or show the first

Invite a child to show, say or point out which action came first. Another demonstration is always available.

Understanding check

Invite the child to show or name the first move; replay together if helpful.

Answer guidance: The pictured sequence is clap, touch both shoulders, then wave. Repeating together lets both players check the order. A different comfortable gesture or pointing to pictures is a valid adaptation.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, gestures, home-language words or directing an adult. Start with one move and copy at the same time. Sit down, make smaller movements, say the move or direct an adult.

Words to explore

first — What happens at the start.

sequence — Actions arranged in an order.

leader — The player who chooses and shows the moves for this turn.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Show one movement at a time. Invite another look whenever wanted, and follow the child's choices when roles swap.

The three views on page 6 show successive actions, not three characters moving at once. This is shared imitation play, not a memory test. Repeating, copying together or choosing different comfortable gestures all count.

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 — Copy my secret moves: authored game rules and pictured answer — https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/copy-my-secret-moves

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.

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Our discovery record

Point, draw, speak or ask a grown-up to write. Keep this record with you; nothing needs to be uploaded.

Discovery / date: _____

My question or prediction

What we kept the same / what changed

What I noticed

What I think now / what to try next