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.

Words to explore

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

hidden — There, but blocked from your view.

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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.

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

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

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