

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.

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

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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