

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.

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.

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.

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 — The little treasure map: authored game rules and pictured answer —
<https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/the-little-treasure-map>

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