



# Activity Guide



READING  
**CHARACTER**  
**Connection**  
**Education Elevators**  
 Business **VOLUNTEER**  
 Elevator

Competence  
 Curiosity  
 Mentee  
 Elevate  
 Caring  
 Education

Confidence  
 Relationship  
 Student  
 SCHOOL  
**MENTOR**  
 Science  
**Fun**

**Education Elevators Program**  
**Activity Guide**

January 2014 • Charleston, West Virginia



**Table of Contents**

Acknowledgments ..... 2

Elevator Activities ..... 3

Competence ..... 4

Confidence ..... 10

Connection ..... 16

Character ..... 22

Caring ..... 27

Tips and Tricks ..... 32

Emerging Skills by Grade Level ..... 33

Notes on Reading ..... 34

Additional Resources ..... 36

Resources on Positive Youth Development and Literacy ..... 37

References ..... 38



803 Quarrier Street, Suite 500 • Charleston, WV 25301  
P: 1.866.314.KIDS • F: 304.342.0046  
info@educationalliance.org • www.EducationAlliance.org

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The Education Alliance is a 501(c)(3) organization whose vision is to ensure every West Virginia public school student will graduate ready to begin a career or pursue additional education and training.

## Acknowledgments

In 2007, Tom McJunkin started The Education Elevators program at Jackson Kelly PLLC in partnership with Piedmont Elementary School in Charleston, West Virginia. His commitment to education and positive youth development was truly inspiring. Following his passing in 2011, his family pledged to continue and expand his work. It is thanks to their generosity and his vision that The Education Elevators Program lives on. His daughter Alison has been especially instrumental in the expansion of the program.

The Education Alliance, founded in 1983, strives to advocate for students of West Virginia, especially in the arenas of college readiness, early literacy, and dropout rates, at the state government level. It's Partnerships in Education program strives to have every public school in the state partnered with a local business or community program to nurture and strengthen student development. The Education Alliance is pleased to support the Education Elevators program, as part of it's Partnerships in Education initiative. The Education Elevator program promotes a specific kind of relationship that seeks to foster positive youth development and promote early literacy. To learn more about the work of The Education Alliance visit their website at [www.educationalliance.org](http://www.educationalliance.org).

The Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP) is an alliance of nineteen schools that aims to encourage the study of poverty and human capabilities. Its flagship program is the Shepherd Internship Program, which matches students from member institutions with agencies that work with impoverished members of society. The consortium is administered by Berea College, Spelman College, and Washington and Lee University, and its website is [shepherdconsortium.org](http://shepherdconsortium.org). In the summer of 2013, two interns from Washington and Lee University worked at The Education Alliance to develop materials for the Education Elevators program. Special thanks go to Dr. Harlan Beckley, SHECP Program Director; Dr. Howard Pickett, Program Director of the Shepherd Poverty Program at Washington and Lee University; and Francile Elrod, Associate Director for Community-Based Learning.

## Elevator Activities

The goal of the Elevator program is to elevate the social, emotional, and educational aspirations and abilities of participating students. The model is based on the positive youth development framework that utilizes the “5 C’s”:



The Activity Guide was created as a resource for Elevators to provide them with an easy-to-use description of activities that they may implement with their student to reinforce positive youth development. The Activity Guide was developed as a companion document to the Handbook which provides a comprehensive overview of the program.

The activities in this guide are organized according to the 5Cs and the list is not exhaustive. While the activities are organized into a specific category, they can be mixed and matched. Many activities fall under multiple Cs because the principles of positive youth development are so interrelated. Each activity has a suggested grade level, a list of materials, and an approximate activity time. The index at the end of the manual catalogs these differences for easy reference.

As a general guideline, it is recommended that Elevators pick out and bring materials for two to three activities (more than would normally be needed based on time) and let the children have input on which activities they would like to do. If the child takes the lead and suggests an activity, it would obviously be ideal to use that suggestion. Again, communication is the key. If an activity is not working, do not be afraid to abandon it for something else.

Some of the activities are designed for meeting individually with the child and some of the activities are designed as group activities. The group activities can be used when two or more Elevators are meeting together with their children. Many of the group activities can be tailored for individual activities as well.

After an activity is completed, it is recommended to involve the student in cleaning up before moving onto the next activity. With that in mind, make sure to wrap up the last activity a few minutes before you return the children to the classroom. It is important to leave the dedicated space tidy for the next Elevator. Respecting the space also helps to make a good impression with the school.

At the end of each activity, in italics, is a brief summary of the skills promoted by that activity. Activities denoted by the ® symbol are not registered trademarks. Rather, they are activities that specifically focus on early literacy skills essential to Reading such as letter sense, pattern recognition, and vocabulary.

Finally, in order to document the progress of the student throughout the school year, Elevators are encouraged to use a notebook for each student that can capture the student’s successes as the activities are implemented. A sample Notebook entry page is provided at the end of the Program Handbook.

## Competence

*Competence is a positive view of one's actions in specific areas, including social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational.*

*Strategy is a commodity, execution is an art.—Peter F. Drucker*

Competence comes in many forms, but its underlying principles are knowledge and understanding. One kind of competence that elementary school students need is reading, and certainly picking up a book builds such skills. However, other areas like science, motor skills, and social studies are important as well. By exploring practical applications of these topics, students can become excited about learning and find their passions.

### Creative Space (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies, scissors

Before anyone begins coloring, cut a shape out of the center of the piece of paper. (A circle is the easiest to start.) Then, try to use the extra space in the drawing. Is it a donut now? A window? The beginnings of a mask? The blank space can take on many forms, depending on the whims of the artist.<sup>i</sup>

*Promotes:* spatial awareness and creativity

### Memory Game (K-2) ®

*Preparation Time:* 10 minutes

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* Index cards, markers OR premade matching game

If using premade matching cards skip to the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. If making your own game, take the index cards and create pairs of cards that have the same thing on them. This could be a picture of a cat on each card or perhaps vocabulary words. Some suggestions are short words, months, days of the week; check to see what sets of words are displayed in the classroom for inspiration. Other ways to play it are with simple math problems, like 1+2 and then 3 for the pair. Or you could play with letter sounds, having and, an, ant with the letter A and so on.

Shuffle the cards and arrange them into a rectangle, face down. Make sure the students know the rules. They are only allowed to try two cards, and if they get a match, they get another turn. The person with the most pairs after all the pairs have been found is the winner. Play at least twice so that the students can get a hand on it. If the game is too hard, or too easy, subtract or add more pairs as needed. This game may also be played with the Elevator and child.

*Promotes:* memory and spatial awareness

### Peter Piper (K-2)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* internet access

The tongue twister is, of course, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, how many peppers did Peter Piper pick?" The goal is to say the tongue twister as quickly as possible. To go along with the tongue twister is the website "Science of Cooking: Picklelab" (<http://www.exploratorium.edu/cooking/pickles/picklelab.html>). In the lab, students can use trial and error to find a pickle recipe. The website also gives hints, if necessary. If the students make an incorrect guess, ask them what they should try. Should they raise the temperature or lower it? What about the salt? There is extra information about the pickle-making process on the "What's going on?" tab after you try a combination of temperature and salt.

*Promotes:* phonemic awareness, scientific exploration, and speaking skills

### Ride On The Magic School Bus (K-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* varies

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* The Magic School Bus books by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen, internet access (optional)

The Magic School Bus is a series of books that explore science topics. Before reading, you may want to talk about what the students know about the book's topic before you begin. After you read the book, talk about what you learned. What was something new? If time and internet access permits, you can look up activities on the Scholastic website for the series, <http://www.scholastic.com/magicschoolbus>.

*Promotes:* scientific exploration, computer literacy, and love of books

### Sidedness (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, writing utensil, coin, seashell or phone, paper towel or toilet paper tube or rolled paper

One of the adults should be the recorder, and the other should be the scientist. The recorder should write "hand," "foot," "eye," and "ear" in the rows of a table, and then the names of the different children in the columns. The recorder should then write "left" or "right" if the child uses the left or right side for the various tasks. The scientist should then instruct the child to write his or her name on the piece of paper (hand). The second task is to sit on a chair and then step on a coin that is placed on the floor (foot). Thirdly, ask the child to look through the tube (eye). Lastly, ask the subject to listen to the phone or shell (ear). Once each of the students has gone through the tasks, debrief them on the science.

By kindergarten, most children know whether they are right- or left-handed. However, not all right-handed people are right-footed, or right-eared, or right-eyed, though statistically, the right side is favored. In ears, for example, the right is favored over the left in only a little over half of cases.<sup>ii</sup> This activity may also be done individually a child.

*Promotes:* scientific exploration, math skills, and individuality

### Match Up (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* Deck of cards, pencil, and paper

Each person gets a suit, from ace to king. The first person shuffles his or her suit, and then flips them over one by one. That person should say, "First, second, third..." all of the way through. Then, the player gets one point for everything that matches up, that is, if the eight is in the eighth slot. This continues for each person. The first person to get 150 points wins, or game play ends after the 10<sup>th</sup> round.<sup>iii</sup>

*Promotes:* number sense and math skills

### Bean Bag Balance (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* varies

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* bean bags

If you don't have bean bags handy, you can loosely fill a sandwich bag with something that acts like a fluid—beans, rice, water (if careful). Then, the first person balances the bag on a part of their body, like a head, an arm, a knee, or a wrist. Everyone else must copy the movement. If someone drops the bag, they are out. Otherwise, the next person moves the bag to another place.

For something a little trickier, you can try to pass a beanbag from person to person without letting it touch the ground or using your hands to move it. Or you can play the game, but add movements, like standing on one foot, or clapping while balancing it on your head.<sup>iv</sup> This activity can be adapted to be used in an individual session.

*Promotes:* motor skills and teamwork

NIM (K-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> sixteen identical objects	
Place the objects in four rows: one, three, five, and seven. This should create a triangle. The goal is to make your opponent pick up the last stick. To accomplish that, you may pick up as many sticks as you desire, but they must be from the same row. There are plenty of opportunities. <sup>v</sup>	
<i>Promotes:</i> reasoning, healthy competition, and number sense	

Object Improv (K-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> one random medium/large object	
Take an everyday object, and transform it into something creative. A cup could become a crown, and a book could become a serving tray in a restaurant. Using only gestures, everyone else needs to guess what the object is supposed to be. To make the game more elaborate, you could have the students collaborate to come up with a more skit-like demonstration. <sup>vi</sup> This activity may be adapted for an individual session as well.	
<i>Promotes:</i> public speaking skills, creativity, and imagination	

Word Games (K-3) ®	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> varies	<i>Activity Time:</i> varies
<i>Materials:</i> varies	
Several suggested word games are crossword puzzles, word searches, Boggle Junior, and Scrabble Junior. For younger children, another word game is to try and list all the words that start with the same sound, ex. all words that start with the letter b. You can also pick a category, maybe animals, and go through the alphabet listing animals that start with that letter, i.e. ant, bear, cat, dog, elephant, et cetera.	
<i>Promotes:</i> a variety of basic literacy skills	

Origami (K-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> 10 minutes	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> Square piece of paper, origami instructions	
Check out an origami website/app/book/video, and test run the creation you wish to make. If origami paper is not available, fold the corner of piece of paper diagonally, and cut off the extra rectangle. Some suggestions are: How to Make Origami app (iTunes and Google Play, free) Easy Origami: <a href="http://www.instructables.com/id/Easy-Origami/">http://www.instructables.com/id/Easy-Origami/</a> Origami for Kids Board: <a href="http://pinterest.com/catfrilda/origami-for-kids/">http://pinterest.com/catfrilda/origami-for-kids/</a>	
Walk through the origami step by step with the students. After the first try, you can repeat the pattern or try a new one. While working on this second step, you can talk about where origami comes from (Japan). If you're making cranes, there is a legend that anyone who makes a thousand cranes will be granted a wish. Make sure that the origami is not too hard for little hands, which have less motor control.	
<i>Promotes:</i> fine motor skills and cultural awareness	

Sound Wave Experiment (1-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 30 minutes
<i>Materials:</i> music device, headphones, sealable plastic bag, salt or water, recycled cardboard carton/box (preferably a metal bottom)	
<p>Slip the device into the plastic bag to protect it. Flip the carton upside down and slip the headphones underneath it. Sprinkle a thin layer of salt or a tiny bit of water on the top. Turn the device on. Experiment with the types of music. Generally the bass will work better, but there's no perfect experimental answer. Let the students make guesses and then test them.<sup>vii</sup></p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> scientific exploration and music skills (including pattern recognition)	

Which Way To The North Pole? (1-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> 5 minutes	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> bowl with water, paper clip or needle, magnet, small piece of paper	
<p>Explain the idea of a compass to the students. That is, a compass' needle always points north because the Earth is a really big magnet. Then, run the needle along the magnet in one direction more than fifty times. (You can count along with the students.) Place the piece of paper in the middle of the bowl of water, then lie the needle on top of it. Tap the needle so that it starts to spin. When the needle and the paper have stopped moving, it should be facing north.<sup>viii</sup> You can combine this activity with the Map-Making one, if you'd like. Or you could make a game where one person calls out a direction—North, East, South, West—and a number of steps, and everyone has to follow that instruction (which could nicely work with Simon Says Please [Character]). If the compass starts to weaken, just dry it off and follow the above steps again.</p> <p>Notes: make sure to keep the magnet away from cards with magnetic stripes (think IDs, credit cards, library cards) and from electronics. Be very careful if using a needle. Keep the magnet and any metal away from the bowl to make sure it does not interfere with the compass.</p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> scientific exploration and procedural skills	

Map Making (1-3) ®	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 20+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> paper, coloring supplies	
<p>Together, pick a place to map (each child can pick something different if they'd like). This could be the school, the neighborhood, the US, the solar system, Neverland, Hogwarts, or a fictional place of the child's imagination. The picture might be a street level view or an aerial one. If you're familiar with the area, you can ask questions like, "Do you know the name of this street?" or, "What's your favorite flavor of ice cream? Use the map as a conversation starter, and be sure to save it in your Elevator notebook when everything is done.<sup>ix</sup></p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> spatial recognition and memory	

Chromatography (2-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 20+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> coffee filter, washable markers, pencil, glass, water, paper towel	
<p>On the coffee filter, draw a line in pencil about an inch or two from the bottom of the paper. On that line, make several dots in different colors of markers with some space between them. In the glass, add a little bit of water—enough to coat the bottom, but not so much that it will be higher than the pencil line. Fold the coffee filter in half and place it in the glass. Let it sit for 10-15 minutes. Take the filter out when there is a definitive end to the color but the water is moving on OR when the water line is about half an inch from the top. Lay it on the paper towels to dry.</p> <p>When the filter is done drying, make some observations. What colors do all of you see? Do they match with the colors of the original markers? Which colors moved the farthest up the filter paper? The science behind this is</p>	



the water and the filter paper fight over the ink in the markers. Depending on the size of the molecule of the ink, the paper or the water wins.<sup>x</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration and recognition of cause and effect

### Color-Changing Dots (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* construction paper, hole punch, bowl, timer

Punch out five paper dots from three to five different-colored pieces of paper. Each dot represents a different colored animal within the dot species. Mix the dots in the bowl, and then spread them out on a surface in front of you. Now, close and open your eyes, and pick up the first dot you see. Repeat this process until about three-quarters of the dots are gone. Then, for each dot that still remains, create the new generation by punching out three new dots of the same color. Mix the new ones with the old ones, and start picking again. Go through three or four generations. What colors are left? Which colors, if any, are gone? Try the experiment again on a different surface. Does the end result change? (Remember to make sure to pick up all the dots at the end of the activity.)<sup>xi</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration and recognition of cause and effect

### Jenga Plus (2-3) ® Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* 15 minutes

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* Jenga game, markers

Before your visit, write vocabulary words on one side of each Jenga block (you can get these from the teacher) and math problems on the other side. Then, play the game normally with the students. The trick is that when someone pulls out a block, the person must attempt to define the word or solve the math problem. You may need to help the students pick out appropriate pieces so that the tower doesn't fall too quickly. When you play the game a second time, make sure to shuffle the blocks around so the same words and numbers aren't used all the time.

*Promotes:* math skills, spelling, and vocabulary

### Desktop Explorers (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* internet access

Using Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com> and <http://google.com/streetview>) or the Google Earth application (for desktop or mobile, <http://earth.google.com>), you can explore vast parts of the world together. If the students have a favorite nonfiction book set in another part of the world, you can explore that together. You can also check out satellite shots of local things, like the roof of the school or the main street of the town. Work together, to create the shortest route from the school to a local landmark. Then check the map's recommendation with your guess. Or check out the Diagon Alley sets from Harry Potter and the Amazon River.<sup>xii</sup>

*Promotes:* global awareness, cultural awareness, and computer literacy

### Spiraling Decorations (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, scissors, varies

Cut a large circle out of the piece of paper. You can decorate the circle by drawing on it at this point if you wish. Then, within the circle, cut a spiral pattern that goes from the outside edge to the center. At this point, when you pick up one of the ends of the spiral, it should stretch out to create a three-dimensional spiral that can be hung. You can attach various ornaments onto the spiral as long as they aren't too heavy. To transport the spiral, of course, you can collapse it again into the two-dimensional shape.<sup>xiii</sup>

*Promotes:* creativity and motor skills

### Storybird Time (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* internet access

On Storybird (<http://storybird.com>) is the artwork for creating a book. The only thing that the story needs is the words. This story can then be saved and shared. You will need to register a (free) account before your visit. Make sure not to divulge any student information; use your own or a pseudonym. Explain that you're going to make a story together. Who are the characters? What are they doing? Log onto the website and click create. Browse the images with the students. Ask them which of the images match up with what they had in mind. Enter the story text into the digital book. (Most likely, you will be the one typing.) Save the presentation and email it to someone. You can also write one page poems onsite.

*Promotes:* storytelling skills, narrative awareness, and critical thinking

### Thesaurus Rex (2-3) ® Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* Thesaurus Rex by Laya Steinberg and Debbie Hart, timer, a thesaurus (optional)

Explain what a thesaurus is. As you read the book, focus on the rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. Then, play a game with synonyms. One person thinks of a word, and then the next person has to think of a synonym. Go around the circle like this until someone makes a mistake. Count how many words you all came up with, and compare that against the thesaurus (if you have one). The person who made a mistake or ran out of ideas then starts a new round. The goal isn't to win by taking other people out; rather it is to work as a team to get as many words as possible.<sup>xiv</sup> Remember to help younger children participating in this activity.

*Promotes:* vocabulary, includes reading

### Finger Knitting (3)

*Preparation Time:* 15 minutes

*Activity Time:* 30+ minutes

*Materials:* yarn, instructions

Before the visit, read up on how to finger knit. Some resources are "Finger\_Knitting" by jmcullian (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3LKAIDz9ig>) and "Finger Knitting How-to" by Anne Weil (<http://www.flaxandtwine.com/2012/01/finger-knitting-how-to.html>). The basic premise is to weave a piece of yarn between your fingers two times, then bring the bottom layer over the top layer. Then you continue this pattern for the length of your chain.

During the visit, show the students how to go through the process. (You might want to show a video if you have internet access.) If the students are frustrated at first, encourage them to try again until they get the hang of it. If they knit a significant amount, it can even be a scarf to wear.

*Promotes:* fine motor skills, pattern recognition, and procedural skills

## Confidence

*Confidence is internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy.*

*“Will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed. (98 8/4% guaranteed.)” –Dr. Seuss, Oh the Places You’ll Go!*

Confidence is the idea that the child matters and that the child can do well in things that he or she tries. Activities that encourage confidence are focused on the talents of the child, rather than learning something completely new. Children who feel valued will in turn value themselves.

### Letter Contest (K) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* index cards, writing supplies, book

Photocopy a few pages of a book (novel, nonfiction, something on an adult reading level with lots of text). Blow up the text so that it is easier to read for little eyes. Create letter cards for each letter of the alphabet except J, Q, V, X, and Z. Shuffle the cards and place them face down on the table. Everyone should pick one card. Then, picking one paragraph on one page, everyone takes turns searching that paragraph for that letter. For example, if I had picked the paragraph before this and the letter O, there would be sixteen of them. The person whose letter appears most wins. You can play again with different letters and/or a different paragraph. The purpose of the game is not to read the page; it is simply to find and count the letters.<sup>xv</sup>

*Promotes:* letter recognition

### Dance Party (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* music, electronic device

Start with a freestyle dance, and then maybe show off some moves. These can be silly moves, like the Shopping Cart, or something more formal.<sup>xvi</sup> Then end with a freestyle dance. Try to pick a playlist that includes some slower music as well as upbeat music.

*Promotes:* creativity and imagination

### Connect The Dots (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* board and pencils or online game

Print out a board of dots ([http://www.donnayoung.org/f13/homeschooling-f/game-files/connect\\_dots.pdf](http://www.donnayoung.org/f13/homeschooling-f/game-files/connect_dots.pdf)) or find an online version. The goal is to gain the most squares on the board. Players take turns drawing lines. If a player closes a square, they can color it in with their designated color and draw another line. Once all the possible lines are drawn, count the number of squares. The person with the most wins.

*Promotes:* spatial skills and healthy competition

### Paper Five (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring materials

First, trace a hand on the piece of paper. Then, inside the outline, have the students write (or dictate to you) the traits they like about themselves. If they have trouble coming up with enough to fill the hand, offer what traits you see in them. You might just surprise them. Include the paper five in the Elevating Notebook.<sup>xvii</sup>

*Promotes:* self-esteem, coloring skills, and vocabulary

### Faster Than A Speeding Feather (K-2)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* feathers, tape, timer

Mark two lines on a hard surface, a start line and a finish line. If there is enough space, everyone should line up with a feather before them. (If there isn't, each person should go separately and someone should time the results.) Without touching the feather at all, everyone should try to blow each feather across the surface as quickly as possible. After the first run, try switching feathers to see if that makes a difference. Do bigger feathers move more quickly, or smaller ones? Try out different combinations, and make predictions when you get comfortable with the races.<sup>xviii</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration and healthy competition

### Shadow Puppets (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* light source

Turn off half of the lights in the room (but do not turn them all off), and find a dark corner. Shine the light source towards a blank wall. You now have a canvas for shadow puppets on the wall. Create random funny shapes or an elaborate narrative. See what kind of shadows everyone can create if they work together, like a landscape or a huge animal. You can check out some shadow puppet ideas and instructions online if need be.

*Promotes:* creativity, imagination, and motor skills

### 1,000 Things To Do With A Rubber Band (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* rubber band/hair scrunchie

Separate into two teams. Each team gets one stenographer (one of the adults) and one rubber band. The goal is to list as many semi-plausible ways to use a rubber band in three minutes. Get together and compare lists at the end of the three minutes. If both lists contain the same item, cross off that item. The group that has the most items listed, after you finish comparing, wins the game.

Alternatively, you can all work on one team together, or use another common household item, like a paper clip or a piece of tape. Use the time limit to create a sense of urgency and to keep the activity from getting boring, but feel free to adjust the amount of time if it feels too short or too long.

*Promotes:* critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, and healthy competition

### Learning A Foreign Language (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* 10 minutes

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* paper (optional)

Pick a language and find the numbers 1-10 online. It is probably best to pick an Indo-European language, and it is fine to pick a language that you already speak. Check to make sure it's not a language that is taught to the students in the classroom. Make sure you have a reasonable grasp on the pronunciation.<sup>xix</sup> Using your hands, learn the numbers with the students. You can also talk about the similarities and differences between the language you're "learning" and English. This works better with the Indo-European languages; for instance, compare acht (German), ocho (Spanish), a hocht (Irish), octo (Greek), huit (French), or hasht (Farsi) to eight. You can follow up at another meeting with other basic vocabulary (colors, animals, etc.) or look up books about the culture of the people that speak the language. This activity may require two sessions.

*Promotes:* cultural exploration, compare and contrast skills, and literacy exploration

### Vocal Recording (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* recording and listening device

Using a recording device, such as a tape recorder or a phone with an application, create messages. These messages could be random facts you've learned that day or positive, uplifting messages. You could even record a to-do list of what your students want to do at your next visit and the supplies or activities you may need. Come up with something creative, and then play them back later in the school year. <sup>xx</sup>

*Promotes:* confidence and planning skills

### Missing Piece (K-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* none

Study a side of the room for a minute or two. Then, cover your eyes as one person takes one object away and hides it. The rest of the group then tries to guess what was removed. Whoever guesses first then gets to take the object next time. For a variation, move the piece and then try to find its new location.

*Promotes:* memory and spatial skills

### Hot Potato (K-3) Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* potato/object, music

Everyone sits in a circle except for the appointed DJ. The DJ turns around and plays the music without seeing the rest of the group. Meanwhile, everyone else passes the potato. When the music stops, whoever has the potato is out. That person then is DJ for the next round, and the game repeats until there is only one person left.

*Promotes:* healthy competition

### The Never-ending Story (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* clock/timer

Start a story using whatever settings or characters that you'd like. After exactly a minute, even if you are in the middle of a sentence, the next person picks up the story and continues it however they'd like. Keep switching every minute until at least everyone has gone. Try to keep the story going until the end. For a faster version each person is only allowed one word. You can have a rule that when someone says popcorn, the next person has to pick up the story.

*Promotes:* memory, attention, and story structure skills

### I Spy (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* none

One person gives a clue or two about an object in the room by saying, "I spy with my little eye, something that is round and has numbers." Everyone else then tries to guess what the object is. Whoever guesses first picks the next object. If there is an object that is giving people trouble, the spy may help by giving new clues.

*Promotes:* attention, focus, memory, and critical thinking

**Sparkle (1-3) ® Group Activity***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes*Materials:* none

One person picks a word. The next person says the first letter in the word. This continues around the group until the last letter. After the last letter is said, the next person repeats the word. Then the next person says “Sparkle,” and the person after that picks a new word. If anyone says the wrong letter, or forgets the “Sparkle” at the end, that person is then out. The game continues until there is only one left.

*Promotes:* spelling skills**Vanishing Bead (1-3)***Preparation Time:* 5 minutes*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes*Materials:* two beads, paper cup, scissor, instructions

Look over the instructions on About.com’s website (listed in the footnote) before your visit. Cut a hole in the bottom of the paper cup, enough that the small object bead can pass through it easily. Put the other object in your pocket. You are then ready to perform the magic trick. Drop the bead into the cup, but allow it to fall through the hole so that you are actually holding the bead in your hand, rather than in the cup. Turn the cup upside down, and the bead will look like it has disappeared. Then, pull the matching object out of your pocket. Help the students master this magic trick. Add magic words and hand gestures as feels appropriate. Make it theatrical.<sup>xxi</sup>

*Promotes:* reasoning and the ability to follow and complete steps in a task**Fontifier (1-3) ®***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes*Materials:* computer with scanner, internet access, paper, pen/black marker

On Fontifier (<http://www.fontifier.com/template.html>), you can take handwriting and make a computer font out of it. Follow the instructions on the page. You may want to do this activity as a gift to an adult in the student’s life for a special occasion (it costs \$9 to save the font) or simply to show the font might look. Make sure that the students can write small enough so that the letters fit in the assigned boxes. This activity may require more than one session.

*Promotes:* writing skills and computer literacy**Business Cards (1-3)***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes*Materials:* business card, index cards, coloring materials, a scanner/copier (optional)

Pull out a business card. Talk about what business cards do. Then explain that you are going to be making business cards today for the students. On the blank side of an index card, have the child write her name. You can then write a silly title or the title of what the child would like to be when she grows up. You might also want to include the name of her school or her teacher. Then draw and color a logo on the top left corner. Don’t forget to make your own business card this way alongside the students. If you have access to a photocopier, you can make copies and cut them out so that the students can share the cards with their friends and family.<sup>xxii</sup>

*Promotes:* goal-setting and creativity

### Letter to the Author (1-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, writing supplies, stamps, envelopes, internet access

Research with the students the contact information for their favorite authors online. Check the writer's, agents', and publishers' websites. If you can't find specific contact information for the author send the letter to the publisher. For a return address, either use the school's (check with the administration first) or your own. Have the students dictate their letters to you. What do they like about the book? What did they learn from the book? The students sign their own letters, and have them draw a picture on the back if they wish. Then seal the envelope. You may get a response; if so, share it with the students. This activity may require more than one session.

*Promotes:* love of books, book recall and application, and writing skills

### The Modern Twelve Days of Christmas (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* lyrics, paper, pencil/pen

Go over the lyrics to "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with the students. Sing the song with them. Then, looking at the lyrics, come up with new things for your true love to give to you. Watch the rhymes, alliteration, and syllables of the original verse. When you are happy with the result sing the new version. Alternate who gets the different numbers; that is, someone should sing "two turtle doves" while someone else sings "three calling birds," or whatever you've come up with on your own.<sup>xxiii</sup>

*Promotes:* rhyming and poetic skills

### Whatever You Do, Don't Smile (2-3) group activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* none

The rules are simple. Everyone should stand in a circle, and one person should be "it." That person starts by facing another and saying, "Whatever you do, don't smile." That person must then respond with, "Whatever I do, I won't smile." As the phrase suggests, the second person can't smile. If they do, they become it. If not, the person who is it goes to the next person in the circle until someone breaks.<sup>xxiv</sup>

*Promotes:* healthy competition

### What Am I? (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* index cards, coloring supplies

Before your visit, take 10-20 index cards and either write a simple word or draw an animal or object on each of them. Then, stack them in a pile for your visit. One child draws a card, and, without looking, holds the card to his or her forehead. That person then asks questions about the word or picture on their forehead. "Does it start with an f?" "Does it eat grass?" The rest of the group answers that question with yes, no, sometimes, or maybe, until the person with the card is ready to make a guess. If the guess is right, the next person picks up a new card. If the guess is wrong, the game continues. A variation is to use a deck of playing cards, and then guess the suit and the number with questions about the color or the number (higher or lower, face or not).

*Promotes:* vocabulary, creativity, and critical thinking

**Bookmarks (2-3) ®***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes*Materials:* Paper, coloring supplies, scissors, books

Cut the paper into book-sized strips for the bookmarks. Then let the students color one side of the bookmark. On the other side write a quote from one of their favorite books. Older students can use the bookmark for independent reading of small chapter books while younger children may just want to use them to mark their favorite books on the shelf to find them easily. You can also make bookmarks for other people with small notes to them showing how much you care. You can also make bookmarks out of nontraditional materials. Try feathers, leaves, flowers, and other materials inspired by nature.<sup>xxv</sup>

*Promotes:* love of reading



## Connection

*Connection is positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and his/her peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.*

*Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike. –J.K. Rowling*

Connection means two things in terms of positive youth development. One, connection is the relationship between the Elevator and the child. You can use activities as starting points for conversations or have a completely unrelated conversation as you play a game, draw, or act. Two, connection is the relationship between the child and the world at large. Students who know more about their history, their community, and their world are more conscious citizens. With these kinds of activities it is not important that you know everything about a subject. Rather, learn something new that then humanizes a life that a child may not ever personally experience.

### Slowly, Slowly, Slowly, Said the Sloth (K) group activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* “Slowly, Slowly, Slowly,” Said the Sloth by Eric Carle

As you read the book, encourage the students to name the other animals (besides the sloth) on the page. After you read the book, one child can be the photographer in the jungle. The photographer turns around, facing the wall, and covers his or her ears. Everyone else picks an animal to mimic. One person is the sloth, however, and that person moves very, very slowly. When the photographer turns around, everyone acts out their animals. The photographer then has to find the sloth. Once the photographer picks the sloth, the photographer and the sloth switch places, and the game repeats.<sup>xxvi</sup>

*Promotes:* silliness, motor skills, and love of reading

### Stuck Together (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* magnets

Talk about what magnets do. Then take the magnets and try to find what they will stick to, and what they will not. Make sure to keep the magnets away from computers, credit cards, and other electronic devices. If you bring multiple magnets, try to predict which ones will be stronger. You can make a list of the different items or create a tally. Alternatively, if you keep some of the mechanisms of magnets a secret, you can make hypotheses and test them about what kinds of objects magnets will stick to. You can also see under which circumstances magnets will be attracted and which they will be repelled.<sup>xxvii</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration and critical thinking

### The Monster Under My Bed (K-1) group activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies, instructions, two dice

Each child gets a piece of paper. In the middle, they draw a shape to be the body of their monster. Then, one child rolls a die. The number that they roll corresponds to a part of the body—1 for head, 2 for eyes, 3 for mouth, 4 for nose, 5 for arms and hands, 6 for legs and feet. Then the child rolls the second die. The number here corresponds to the number of that body part that the child must draw, so three feet, for example. Then the dice go to the next student. The first student to get all the body parts wins!<sup>xxviii</sup>

*Promotes:* creativity, imagination, and healthy competition

### Ice Cube (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* varies

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* ice cubes, cooler, paper towels, different sturdy and waterproof materials, block, timer/clock

You are probably going to want several ice cubes to keep in the cooler so that they do not melt as quickly. Take a solid surface and prop it up on an angle with the block or similar object. Then, start an ice cube at the top of the surface and see how long it takes to reach the bottom. See on what kinds of surfaces the ice cube moves the fastest. Alternatively, you can add food coloring to the ice cubes before you freeze them, and then race ice cubes against each other. Make sure to bring paper towels to mop up any excess water.<sup>xxix</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration and critical thinking

### Penguin Walk (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* computer and internet access

There are plenty of resources online about penguins and their habits and habitats. To name a few:

Penguin Cam from Discovery (shows real time video of penguins in an exhibit)

<http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows/frozen-planet/games-and-more/penguin-cam.htm>

Click on Penguin Cam

Frozen Planet: Criminal Penguins (a computer game where kids need to pick up all the rocks and bring them back to the nest without bumping other penguins) <http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows/frozen-planet/games-and-more/frozen-planet-criminal-penguins.htm>

Now, to walk like a penguin, kneel down, and try to keep your legs together as much as possible, waddling forward. In proper penguin form, one bends one's arms in half like wings and flap them as one move. To really get into it, make penguin noises too. Note- make sure that you have adequate space and that the noise does not disturb other classes.<sup>xxx</sup>

*Promotes:* motor skills, computer literacy, and social skills

### Family Crest (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies

Explain what a family crest is to the students. (Bring in example pictures if necessary.) Brainstorm as to what could be on their family crests. What are they good at? What are other family members good at? Draw a shield on their papers, and divide it into four sections. After they are done, talk about what the pictures symbolize.<sup>xxxi</sup>

*Promotes:* cultural awareness, self-identity, and familial bonds

### American Sign Language (K-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* varies

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* instructions (online)

Print out a copy of the American Sign Language alphabet, and walk through it. Then, learn a few of the signs with the students. Try to spell the student's names and maybe a basic word. You can talk about the differences in ability among people, and how a disability doesn't make anyone inferior.<sup>xxxii</sup>

*Promotes:* cultural awareness and letter sense

### Set the Table (K-3) ® Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* 10 minutes

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* see preparation instructions

Before the visit prepare two bags. There should be the same things in each bag. That is, if there is a playing card in one bag, then the other should have a playing card, too. Try to put around ten items in each bag.

During the visit, it is adults versus children. The adults set a scene using six of the objects. The adults can layer the objects or place them in various positions. They get one minute to set up the scene while the students strategize. Then, the kids use their bag to recreate the scene. After they are done, the adults inspect the result. Point out the differences, and showcase what they did well. Then, switch teams. The children go first (give them a little bit more set up time), and then the adults try to copy them. Emphasize that this is about team work, and that they can all win if they get the design right. If you want to make it harder or easier, just add or subtract pieces for the next puzzle.<sup>xxxiii</sup> You can also adopt this as an individual activity.

*Promotes:* spatial skills and teamwork

### There and Back Again (K-3) Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* timer, writing supplies

Designate a catwalk. The length of the room would work well if you have enough space. Then, time the kids as they move up and down that length with whatever kind of action that they would like—skipping, tiptoeing, or crawling for instance. Record the time, action, and child for each run. Try to come up with the slowest and the fastest movement for every person. What are different people’s strengths and weaknesses?<sup>xxxiv</sup>

*Promotes:* creativity and silliness

### Repeat Week (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* varies

*Activity Time:* varies

*Materials:* varies

Towards the end of the school year, make sure to ask the students what their favorite activities over the past year have been. Then, strive to repeat those activities in the last week or two if at all possible in a “repeat week.” Try to bump up the difficulty level to reflect the change in the students’ skills.<sup>xxxv</sup>

*Promotes:* confidence and Elevator-child bonds

### In Grandmother’s Trunk (K-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* none

“In grandmother’s trunk I packed...” The first person names an item. “In grandmother’s trunk I packed a sweater.” Then the second person will say the whole sentence, and add a new item. “In grandmother’s trunk I packed a sweater and a yardstick.” This will continue until someone makes a mistake by skipping an item or saying them in the wrong order. “In grandmother’s trunk, I packed a sweater, a bunch of bananas, three tennis shoes, and a yardstick.” At that point, they are eliminated from the game.<sup>xxxvi</sup> This can be played in an individual session with the Elevator and the child as well.

*Promotes:* memory, pattern recognition, and creativity

### Human Knot (K-3) Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* none

Form a circle. Then grab hands with two different people. Now, the goal is to untangle the knot without letting go of the other people's hands. Remember that you can move your arms over someone's head, step over someone's arms, duck under someone's arms, or turn yourself. It may be easier to play this just with people of similar heights, but experiment to see what works the easiest.

*Promotes:* problem solving and interpersonal relationships

### Go Fish (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* deck of cards

Each player is dealt five cards. The goal is to gain four cards with the same number. You ask someone if he or she has any threes. If he or she does, he or she has to give them to you. If not, you must pick a card up from the remainder cards that were not dealt out. Once you gain four cards, you set them down for everyone to see. The first person to get rid of all their cards wins. If no one reaches that point, the game ends when then draw pile is gone. The person with the most sets wins. This can be played in an individual session with the Elevator and the child as well.

*Promotes:* healthy competition, shape awareness, and number sense

### Makeshift Plastic Telephone (1-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* plastic cups, string, paper clips, scissors

Punch a small hole in the bottom of each cup with the scissors. Thread the string (make sure it's long for this to be impressive) through the hole at the bottom of each cup. Then, tie the end of the string to the paperclip and place the paperclip in the cup. This should keep the string from sliding out of the cup.

Give one cup each to two people. Then, one person should walk away until the string is straight and tight. One person should whisper while the other person holds the cup to their ear. Experiment with what works—will a slack string work? What happens if someone else holds the string? This can also be a group activity where everyone has a turn to both hear and speak.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration and communication skills

### Extra! Extra! Read All About It! (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 25+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, writing supplies, camera (optional), word processor (optional)

This is a time-intensive project that can be repeated to create a collection. You are going to create a newspaper. In it, you can have objective articles about recent happenings; editorials in which the students express their opinions about issues and events; reviews of books and movies they've seen recently; and interviews with whomever will take your questions. The Elevator should take down what the students dictate. For a polished final copy, you could copy these original messages, or type them up and print them out. A printed copy might be distributed to adults or added to the Elevating Notebook. Make sure that the news articles about people are positive and fair.

*Promotes:* writing, storytelling, vocabulary, research skills, and computer literacy

### Family Tree (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* varies

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies

On the piece of paper, have the students draw a tree. Then, ask them about their families. Do they have siblings? Aunts and uncles? Cousins? Grandparents? This activity is better to do if you have a general sense of your child's living situation because not all children may live with both parents, or even have a parent as a primary caretaker. Be sensitive to nontraditional family structures, and do not judge. (With younger children, it might be easier to just have them draw a picture of their family instead of tracing a tree.) If the students have more information later, you can add to the tree.

*Promotes:* cultural awareness, familial bonds, and historical perspective

### Make Your Own Galaxies (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* markers, balloons

Scientifically, we know the universe is expanding, so the galaxies that we see at night are constantly moving apart from each other. Have the students draw galaxies on their balloons while deflated. The galaxies can be spirals, stars, or lines, whatever they would like. Then blow up their "universes" for them slowly, and see how stars that were next to each other start to pull apart. Tie off the balloons so that the students can have their own to carry around if they would like, or take home at the end of the day.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

*Promotes:* scientific exploration

### Chinese Tangram Puzzle (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* scissors, paper, pattern, coloring supplies, computer and internet access

A tangram is a square cut into seven pieces—five triangles, one square, and one rhomboid; find the basic pattern here (<http://math.about.com/od/geometr1/ss/tangram.htm>). Trace the pattern before you visit but have the students color the shapes and help them cut the shapes out. The shapes can now be rearranged into new figures. Try a bunny, for instance, or a cat. There are examples online of classic tangram shapes. PBS Kids GO has an online version to play with tangrams without the crafting (<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/math-games/tanagram-game/>).<sup>xxxix</sup>

*Promotes:* spatial awareness and problem solving

### Where in the World (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* several different colors of paper, coloring supplies, scissors, glue, hole punch, binder ring or pipe cleaner or string, round things to trace

To prepare for the activity, trace several circular objects on the colored pages, making sure the circles are different sizes. (Bowls work well, as do lids to various round containers.) Cut them out; then, during the visit, each child will have six circles that will represent home, city, state, country, continent, and planet. Label the circles, and then have the students draw on each level of the circles the object which it represents. (It might be helpful to print out coloring pages of the state and the country for students to fill in, but that is not necessary.) The pictures do not need to be literal, either. The United States, for one, could be represented by the flag. Then, once the students are done, punch a hole in the top of each circle, and then link the circles with the binder ring or string so that they are stacked, smallest to largest, to represent the different levels of our society. This activity may require more than one session.<sup>xl</sup>

*Promotes:* cultural awareness

### Rube Goldberg Machine (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 25+ minutes

*Materials:* whatever is available

Rube Goldberg was famous for, among other things, drawing highly complicated machines that did fairly simple tasks. You might want to print out one of his cartoons to help explain this to the students. Then, as a group, you can make a machine like his. First, brainstorm ideas about what this machine could do, and what materials are available. Then, try to construct the machine. The easiest way to make a Rube Goldberg machine is to work backwards, from the end task to the beginning one. See how many steps you can come up with? Three? Five? Ten? For a simpler way to complete the task, draw your machines rather than building them. This activity can be adapted for an individual session.

*Promotes:* scientific exploration, critical thinking, teamwork, and creativity

## Character

*Character is respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.*

*Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. –C. S. Lewis*

Character development aims to create a framework in which a child can grow and live a healthy and respectful life. Rather than ordaining rules, it builds a compass that can guide students long after the certainties of childhood are gone. How can the student make a good first impression? Understanding and exceeding expectations is an important part of character.

Toes, Knees, Shoulders, and Head (K-1)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 5+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> none	
You can sing “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” but you can also sing it backwards. That would be “Toes, Knees, Shoulders and Head.” The second part backwards would be “Nose and Mouth and Ears and Eyes.” Remember to do the gestures in reverse, too. You can also try another nursery rhyme backwards; ask for suggestions.	
<i>Promotes:</i> motor and speaking skills	
Jigsaw Puzzle (K-2) ®	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> a drawing, scissors	
Take a drawing of the child (ask permission, or take a picture of the child the session before *with parental permission and print it and bring it with you) and cut it into four or five jigsaw pieces with wacky, uneven borders. Then, let them try to put the puzzle back together. The larger the picture the better. In a variation, you could give the students each other’s pictures, or you could use photos from a magazine. If you’d like to make a more permanent puzzle, you could glue the picture to something a bit sturdier, like poster board or the cardboard from a cereal box, before you cut the picture. <sup>xii</sup>	
<i>Promotes:</i> shape recognition and order recognition	
Feel the Burn (K-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 5+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> none	
Jumping jacks, shoulder rolls, or just shaking the tension from your body can help burn off some extra energy and tension. You can also stretch, especially between full activities; try reaching high and then touching your toes. If the room you are in has a tiled floor, you can make an impromptu hopscotch on the floor by agreeing on a pattern. Talk about how it feels after doing physical activities. Talk about how physical activity affects our emotions and mental abilities. Exercise can help you to relax or calm yourself down.	
<i>Promotes:</i> exercise and tension release	
Homemade Charades (K-3)	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> 5 minutes	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> index cards, writing supplies	
On the index cards, write emotions—happy, sad, angry, sleepy, and so on. Then play the game as with the normal charades rules. You can ask questions, too, like, “What makes you happy?” And of course, you can also play homemade charades with any category. Get creative! <sup>xliii</sup>	
<i>Promotes:</i> vocabulary and communication	

**Quilt-Making (K-3) ®***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes*Materials:* scissors, construction paper, coloring supplies, tape or glue

Cut the pieces of paper into uniform squares. Then, decorate the squares as you please. Arrange these squares into rows and columns, and attach them together to create your “quilt.” For a little more variation, create a pattern. You might give each of the students a different color. Or, you could choose a theme, such as animals, and draw various creatures. For older students, draw animals whose names begin with different letters to create a pattern that spells out a secret message.

*Promotes:* pattern awareness and creativity**Simon Says Please (K-3)***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes*Materials:* none

The basic premise is the same as Simon Says; one person gives instructions, but unless that leader says “Simon says, please,” the other people (the followers) should not follow the instructions. If someone does not follow an instruction with the word “please,” or follows an instruction that did not have the word “please,” that follower is out. However, after each activity, the leader has to say “thank you.” If the leader fails to do that, the leader becomes a follower, and one of the people who is already out becomes the leader. The instructions can be as silly as possible, but make sure they are not something that is potentially dangerous. Exercise common sense.<sup>xliii</sup> After the activity, talk about the importance of following instructions at home and at school.

*Promotes:* listening, procedural skills, and motor skills**Sock Puppets (K-3)***Preparation Time:* none*Activity Time:* 25+ minutes*Materials:* socks, other available materials

Some materials that would make good sock puppets are markers, paper, glue and yarn. The main thing is to create unique socks with the students. Make sure to name the socks, too. After they are made, you can use them for almost everything. Use them for role playing conversations, or for reenacting scenarios from books. Or make up your own story as a group. If you keep the socks stored, you can pull them out at a later date; however, students may want to take them home.<sup>xliiv</sup>

*Promotes:* imagination and creativity**Sun Salute (K-3)***Preparation Time:* 10+ minutes*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes*Materials:* instructions, space

The Sun Salute is an easy set of yoga poses for beginners of any age. That being said, it is probably helpful to have knowledge of the routine before trying it with a child, or at least to walk through the instructions. A basic set of instructions can be found at the website “Yoga Just for Kids” (<http://yogakids.com/>). You may want to walk through the cycle slowly first, explaining each step, and then try it at a normal pace. Make sure you have access to a yoga mat to ensure proper safety.

*Promotes:* motor skills, cultural awareness, and relaxation



<b>Survivor: Imagination (K-3)</b>	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 10+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> none	
<p>Describe a slightly over-the-top survival situation. Maybe the children are on the school bus, and a dragon appears in the middle of the road. Or perhaps they are on a space ship that is going to Mars to meet the Martians, but the Martians don't speak English. Then ask how they would save the day. Once they give you a response, try to make them elaborate on it, or add new complications. If they say they want to kill the dragon with swords, for example, ask where they are going to get the swords, or what they are going to do about the fire. You shouldn't frustrate the students with the complications, but rather stretch their imaginations and problem-solving skills. Eventually wind it down by telling them that sounds like a pretty good plan. Remember that there are not right or wrong answers, just slightly logical and fantastical ones.<sup>xiv</sup></p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> creativity, problem solving, teamwork, and imagination	
<b>Make Some Noise (K-3)</b>	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 15+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> varies	
<p>Most percussive instruments and surfaces can be percussive instruments. What happens when you tap a box rather than a table? Count the beats in a favorite song. Are some songs faster than others? How can you tell? Invent a beat. Try to keep it steady. Do books and poems have rhythms when you read them out loud? You can clap, snap, or stomp, too, to find a beat. More ambitiously, you can set up a few glasses with different levels of water in them. Then, after wetting your finger, make ringing noises by swirling your finger around the rim of the glass.</p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> musical sense	
<b>No One Else Is Like Me (K-3)</b>	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 5+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> ink pad/paint, Elevating notebook	
<p>Have the students press their thumbs in the ink pad, and then leave a fingerprint on the front cover. You might want to do with multiple fingers, or use their hands and track their growth over the year. Remember to make sure the ink is off before the students touch anything else. Talk about the uniqueness of their fingerprint and how no one else has the exact same print.</p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> individuality	
<b>Dinner Party (1-3)</b>	
<i>Preparation Time:</i> none	<i>Activity Time:</i> 15+ minutes
<i>Materials:</i> play dinnerware, table	
<p>In this case, play dinnerware can be toy plates and cups, or it can be paper plates and silverware. Go through the motions of having a formal dinner. Set the table, and sit properly. Fake British accents, and refer to each other by last name only. Have a proper conversation while "drinking" tea. Clear the dishes after you are done. You can also work on various soft skills, like practicing a good handshake.</p>	
<i>Promotes:</i> manners, conversation skills, and patience	

### It's a Numbers Game (1-3) Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* deck of cards

Take the 10s and the face cards out of the deck. Aces will equal one. The rules are that you flip over two cards, and one child needs to read the number. (The first card that you turn over is the tens place and the second is the ones place.) If the child gets it right, he or she can keep the pair, and the play passes to the next person. If the first child gets it wrong, the next child gets a chance. If that child still does not get it right, the cards are returned to the pile. When you get to the bottom of the deck, shuffle it and begin again. The game ends when every card is exhausted. The person with the most pairs wins.<sup>xlvi</sup>

*Promotes:* number sense

### Mystery Words (1-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* index card, pen

Write different letters on a set of index cards. (Repeat the more common letters for variety.) Then pick three letters that form a simple word. Shuffle them, and then place them down on a table. The goal is to move around the cards to form a word. Sometimes the same letters can form two words—cat and act, for example—and so ask the students if they can find the bonus word(s).<sup>xlvii</sup> Younger children may need your assistance to create the new words.

*Promotes:* letter and pattern recognition, basic literacy, and spelling

### I'm Just a Bill (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 25+ minutes

*Materials:* internet access, paper

First, watch the "I'm Just a Bill" video from Schoolhouse Rock with the students ([http://www.teachertube.com/view\\_classroom.php?user=Jillfriend](http://www.teachertube.com/view_classroom.php?user=Jillfriend)). Then, act as secretary as you encourage them to come up with a bill of their own. What's a law they want? It could be on the school, local, or national level. Discuss the pros and cons of the law. When everyone has agreed on the details of the law, write down the text on a clean piece of paper. Present it to someone in authority if appropriate. Or you could mail it to a congressman if it is a well-designed bill. Discuss the importance of citizenship.

*Promotes:* citizenship, teamwork, and communication skills

### Joke Book (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies, stapler

Take a moment for each child to draw an illustration of their favorite joke while they tell you the joke. Then staple these pieces of paper together to form a joke book. Collect more jokes as you come across them throughout the year, but only the most hilarious jokes that induce the most laughter can seriously be considered for this honor. At the end of the year, you should have a robust collection.<sup>xlviii</sup>

*Promotes:* creativity, social skills and cultural sensitivity

### Goal Cards (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* note cards, writing supplies

On the unlined side of the card, write or draw a picture of a goal. Then, once everybody has a card with a goal on it, brainstorm on each card what steps the person who wrote the goal can do to achieve that goal. Try to get the students to help each other, but try not to give too much advice yourself. Once there is a coherent plan, write that on the lined side. Continue doing this for everyone. The students can then take these cards and hang them somewhere they will remember, like a locker or a bedroom, or you can put them in the Elevating Notebook, and refer back to them every once in a while. Remember to ask about the steps, and see what the students have done towards the goals.<sup>xlix</sup>

*Promotes:* planning and self-esteem

### Paper Chain (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* construction paper, scissors, markers, tape, class list

Cut pieces of construction paper into inch-wide strips. (Make sure, if the students are helping, that they use safety scissors.) Then the students can write their names on the slips of paper. On the other side, write a small sentence about the child, such as, "Krissy likes cake." With older children, or later in the school year, you could use a class list from the teacher to make strips about classmates, with their names on one side and a compliment on the other. Then, take one strip and tape it into a circle. Thread the next strip through the center of the first ring, and then tape that into a circle as well. Repeat this until you create a long chain; you can coordinate with other Elevators who work with students in the same class to expand the chain even more.

*Promotes:* friendship, individuality, pride, and spelling

### Pause (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* none

Sitting on the floor might work best for this activity. Everyone should sit comfortably with a straight spine. Then, very calmly, tell everyone to focus on their breath. The goal is not to alter the breath, but just to be aware of it. While doing so, everyone should try to clear their minds. Just breathe in, and then out. Encourage the students to put their hands on their stomachs to really feel the breath. Spend about five minutes just feeling the sensation of the breathing and not thinking of anything else. In a soothing voice, you might want to remind the students to relax. If they have trouble doing this while sitting up, try having them lay down. All of this can be really calming, especially on a day when everyone has a bit too much energy. After the activity, talk about how to calm yourself down in stressful situations or how to relax and stay calm when feeling overwhelmed.

*Promotes:* cultural awareness, emotional control, and relaxation

### When I Grow Up (2-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* none

This is a more active version of an activity like "Goal Cards." Instead of drawing or writing about a future aspiration, everyone should pretend that they are whatever they want to be when they grow up (including the adults). For example, you should refer to the child who wants to be a doctor as "Doctor Surname" and come to them with medical questions like headaches or bruises. For a research component, you may want to look at online resources like the Occupational Outlook Handbook (from the Bureau of Labor Statistics). While most job websites are aimed at older audiences, you can read and summarize the material for the students.

*Promotes:* planning and critical thinking

## Caring

*Caring is a sense of empathy and sympathy for others.*

*“Everybody—even monsters—needed a little attention once in a while.” –Rick Riordan*

Caring is often also called compassion within the 5 Cs. It is looking outside the self and trying to understand other people. Rather than focusing on how we feel, the caring individual tries to put the needs of others before themselves.

### Sometimes I Like to Curl Up in a Ball (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* Sometimes I like to Curl Up in a Ball by Vicki Churchill, illustrated by Charles Page

The wombat (the animal in the center of the story) is a marsupial from Australia. Some questions to ask could be, “Do you like to play alone?” or “How do you decide what to play with?” You can then incorporate these questions into the book by asking how the wombat would answer these questions. Some prompts could be for the various rhymes. Encourage a dramatic interpretation of the book and the wombat’s movements. Explore the different ways that the wombat moves, including jumping, walking, and curling up in a ball.<sup>i</sup>

*Promotes:* motor skills and love of reading

### The Doctor Is In (K-1) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 25+ minutes

*Materials:* two books by Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel)

Read two books by Dr. Seuss and compare them. What is he trying to say in the first book? What colors does he use in the second? Is there a difference? A contradiction? An elaboration? Talk about other authors who have written series of books. Who are the children’s favorite books? As an additional activity, you can talk about what would have happened, or what could happen after the story. What if the Cat hadn’t cleaned up? What happened after the mother came home? Also explore the stories from other characters’ perspectives. What was it like to be the fish?

*Promotes:* character education, phonemic awareness, and love of reading

### Hokey Pokey: Another Prickly Love Story (K-1)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 20+ minutes

*Materials:* Hokey Pokey: Another Prickly Love Story by Lisa Wheeler and Janie Bynum

There are several dances that are appropriate for kindergarteners, a very popular and fun one is the “Hokey Pokey”. You can use music, or you can sing the song, “You put your right hand in; you put your right hand out. You put your right hand in, and you shake it all about. You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around; that’s what it’s all about.”<sup>ii</sup>

*Promotes:* reading, music appreciation, and motor skills

### Squeeze It Out (K-2)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* Playdough, pillow

Some days, frustration just builds up, and children sometimes do not know how to express that frustration properly. Keep some kind of squishy device in the dedicated space with a lot of give and rebound, and let the students squeeze it while they are talking about having a particularly bad day. You can time them for, say, ninety seconds, and then give them a small break time. Ask them if they’ve squeezed it all out, and want to talk about it. Sometimes a physical stress reliever can be a huge help.<sup>iii</sup>

*Promotes:* expression

### Superhero For A Day (K-2)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 25+ minutes

*Materials:* varies

The first thing every good superhero needs is a name. This, of course, may be related to the powers of the superhero in question. From here, you can get creative based on what supplies you have on hand. Masks, tools, armor, and other accessories can be made from construction paper and scissors. Other props can be everyday items. You can role-play different scenarios. Perhaps there is a city that needs to be saved, you and the child can work together to come up with a way to save it. You can make up a specific problem for the city and use the Super Hero to solve it with their unique powers. Explore the practical uses of different powers. What can you do with invisibility, for instance? You can work together on superhero team projects.

*Promotes:* teamwork, creativity, and imagination

### Mood Meter (K-2)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* Elevating notebook, pencil/pen, ruler, markers, paper clip

Have the children draw lines to divide a page of the Elevating Notebook into four sections. The first section should be green, the second yellow, third orange, and fourth red. They should be labeled “happy,” “okay,” “sad,” and “mad,” respectively. The kids should then move the paperclip so it’s on the section that they currently feel like. Encourage them to think about how they feel every time that they pull out the Elevating Notebook and move the paper clip accordingly. Of course, if they feel mad or sad, you should ask what is the matter. Alternatively, you can verbally ask the children how they feel, and they can respond with a color rather than a word. Come up with feelings for the other colors if you want to expand the system.<sup>liii</sup>

*Promotes:* introspection and expression

### Color Me (K-2)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies

Everybody should get a piece of paper and access to a variety of colors. Then, it is about how their day has been going. Come up with colors and shapes to express their days. Has it been a yellow triangle day? Or a purple-with-red-stripes heart day? Share your drawings and your days when you are done.

*Promotes:* fine motor skills, expressiveness, and communication

### Balloon Fun (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* balloons, varies

With a balloon, you can draw silly faces, stick it to the wall by rubbing it on your sweater, or play a game to see how long it can stay up without touching the floor. All you need to do is blow a balloon up. With older students, talk about the science behind what makes the balloon stick to the wall and experiment with other surfaces to see if the balloon sticks to them or not.

*Promotes:* laughter and creativity

### Friends Forever (K-3) ® Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* writing supplies, Elevating notebooks

While one Elevator completes another activity with two of the students, the other Elevator should take the third to the side. Then, explain that you are going to write nice messages in the other students' Elevating notebooks. The child might want to dictate to you instead of writing the message. Repeat this process with each child, and then regroup to read the messages to each other.

*Promotes:* vocabulary and friendship

### The Perfect Babysitter (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, writing supplies

The purpose of the exercise is come to the best conclusion about who would be the ideal babysitter/teacher/Elevator. The list can be silly—must wear blue—or serious—must be nice. The Elevator should act as scribe, but also question assumptions about various traits. Why is it a good idea that a teacher be smart? Is it really important that a babysitter give the children candy? The mood should be fun, of course, but keep the activity going so that there are several items on the list. At the end of the list, come up with one question that everybody thinks will tell them the answer about a teacher or a babysitter.<sup>iv</sup>

*Promotes:* critical thinking and creativity

### If I Were A Rich Man (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies (optional)

The premise is “If you had a thousand dollars, but you had to give it all away, who or what would you give it to?” Brainstorm possible candidates, Family members? Friends? Organizations? Alternatively, the prompt could be, “What would you spend a \$1,000 on?” You could let the kids draw their ideas. Of course, it is important to be sensitive to the child’s financial situation.

*Promotes:* consideration for others and imagination

### Jeweler In Training (K-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* beads, string, scissors

First, measure the child’s wrist or neck with the string. The string should be loose so that the bracelet or necklace can be taken on and off, and there should be an extra inch or two to tie the ends with. On one end of the string, tie a knot to keep the beads from sliding off. Then, pick a pattern for the various beads. It could be by color or some other variable. String the beads onto the piece of jewelry. When the pattern is complete and the string is full, tie the ends together and snip off the excess string on the end. While the students might want to make this for themselves, ask them to consider making it for an adult woman in their lives to give as a present. If they decide that is something they want to do, use your own neck or wrist as a guide for size.<sup>iv</sup>

*Promotes:* pattern recognition and fine motor skills

### Sketch Artist (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* paper, coloring supplies

Two people pair up and sit back to back. One of them describes a scene, and the other person draws what they hear. The person who is drawing is allowed to ask clarifying questions, but the speaker is not allowed to look at the drawing. Once the speaker is done and the artist is satisfied, they should turn around and look at the art they have created together. Then try switching off.

*Promotes:* communication

### Telephone Party Line (K-3) Group Activity

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* none

Sit in a circle. The first person should whisper a sentence in the second person's ear. This person then whispers the secret to the next person, and so on until it goes to the last person in the circle. No one should repeat the sentence. The last person then announces what he or she thought the sentence was. The first person then says the original sentence. Compare the two. Talk about how the secret message changed when it spread. Talk about gossiping and how information changes from the original thought. Let everyone try to come up with a sentence, and encourage wild variety.

*Promotes:* relationships and consideration

### Thank You And Holiday Cards (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* Paper, coloring supplies, varies

Fold the piece of paper in half, and then let your imagination go wild. Birthday cards, thank you cards, holiday cards, just thinking of you cards—all of these are appropriate ways for the students to show someone that they care. Possible recipients could be parents, siblings, teachers, grandparents, the Education Elevators project coordinator, classmates. A basic card would have a drawing and a handwritten message (you can help here), but it's just as easy to add stickers or stamps or some kind of embellishment, or tell a story on the inside. Remember, however, the thought is the count, and many people would be thrilled with something simple from the heart.

*Promotes:* creativity and writing skills

### Snowflake Making (K-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 15+ minutes

*Materials:* white paper, scissors

Trace circles on the piece of paper, and then fold the circles into sixths or eighths. Have the students cut out little triangles and squares on the edges. Then open the circles back up to reveal the beautiful snowflake that can be displayed or added to the Elevating Notebook.

*Promotes:* fine motor skills

### Hand Inspection (1-3)

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* camera (optional)

Have the students inspect their hands, especially the lines and creases on their palms and their fingertips. What makes their hands different? Color, freckles, whirls versus loops, finger nails? If you have a camera, you can take pictures to examine the hands closer. To extend the activity, you might even bring back the pictures the next week, and the students can guess which picture belongs with which hand. If you print out pictures, you can include them in the Elevating Notebook as well.<sup>lvi</sup>

*Promotes:* individuality and acceptance

### Newspaper Hunting (1-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* 5 minutes

*Activity Time:* 10+ minutes

*Materials:* news articles, scissors

Before coming to the school, pick out two to three articles, probably a human interest piece or something informative, from a newspaper, magazine, or online news source. Try to find one that is relatively short and has at least one picture. Read the article with the child and discuss what is going on. (You may need to summarize what the article is saying in kid-friendly language.) What is happening? What would be the child's response in a similar situation? Try to make this a conversation about the people in the article, not just the situation.<sup>lvii</sup>

*Promotes:* reading and real-world connections

### Taking Turns (2-3) ®

*Preparation Time:* none

*Activity Time:* 5+ minutes

*Materials:* none

This game works on cause and effect. One person should say something like, "Because these are a few of my favorite things." The next person could finish the sentence saying, "I don't feel so sad." That person then comes up with a new dependent clause, and the person after them finishes the sentence. If you want to switch it up, put the independent clause first, for example, "The strawberries were blue..." "...Because it was so cold."<sup>lviii</sup> With younger children, make the cause or effect simpler to associate.

*Promotes:* understanding of sentences structure, grammar, and cause and effect



### **Emerging Skills of Children**

While there are certain expectations for students in each grade level, it is important to note that not all students reach the same milestones at the same time. It is entirely possible that a child referred to the Elevators program will be struggling with one or more traditional benchmarks. This is not just limited to academic areas, either. Some children, especially those coming from impoverished backgrounds, do not display age-appropriate social skills. This does not mean that a child is broken. Rather, it means that the child needs more experience. That means more experience with learning, with adults, and with other children. Rather than teaching or practicing any specific skill, Elevators give children organic ways to be themselves and test out the skills that they are learning elsewhere. Table 1, on the next page, gives a breakdown of skills by grade level.

### **The Age-Appropriateness of Different Activities**

Children and their abilities grow rapidly during elementary school. In four years, students learn most of the fundamental skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives. When they enter kindergarten, they may not be reading. When they exit third grade, they will have taken their first standardized test.

Writing, for instance, is one of the areas with dramatic growth. Kindergarteners start off school with very little writing abilities. They can write letters, yes, and their names and other basic facts. But, on the whole, kindergarteners are not expected to write full sentences. At the other end of the spectrum, third graders are expected to write short paragraphs. They are learning spelling and starting to use more complex sentence structures. Obviously, the kindergartener would rather draw during the activity, while the third grader may be comfortable writing instead. You may need to have the child dictate to you in the former case, while spelling help might be more appropriate in the latter.

There are also different emotional levels, and not every child is going to be ready for the same kind of relationship. At an age where a child should be open to adults, they may be withdrawn because of personal experiences. None of this is wrong, or right, but you do need to be aware that you may need to adjust your expectations from time to time. It is important to not approach the relationship hoping to specifically fix these problems. Successful mentoring and Elevating relationships are not prescriptive with a goal and benchmarks. Rather, they are friendships that are aware of the difficulties that the students face. The child should have as much say in the activities as the Elevator.

Use the grade levels on the activities in this book as a starting point. If they are boring, too hard, or too easy, adjust from there. Research on several different programs, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, shows that present-oriented and youth-purpose-serving mentoring programs are the most successful for elementary students. Collaborate with the student to see what works best. Give and take will build a healthy relationship.

## Emerging Skills by Grade Level

	Desirable Skills <sup>lx</sup>	Emerging Skills <sup>lx</sup>
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks for help</li> <li>Prefers one hand over the other</li> <li>Respects other people's rights</li> <li>Likes praise and wants to please</li> <li>Follows simple directions</li> <li>Knows failure is okay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands what numbers and letters represent</li> <li>Can count, add, and subtract with models</li> <li>Grasps parts of a whole</li> <li>Reads small words</li> <li>Answers simple reading comprehension questions</li> <li>Practices writing</li> </ul>
First Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tells a story using pictures</li> <li>Understands patterns</li> <li>Uses simple graphs</li> <li>Has self-confidence</li> <li>Adapts to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compares and contrasts</li> <li>Reads simple books</li> <li>Adds and subtracts within 20</li> <li>Understand places (i.e. tens versus ones, etc.)</li> <li>Writes and tells time</li> </ul>
Second Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes own choices about activities</li> <li>Completes tasks</li> <li>Shows empathy and caring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works with time and money</li> <li>Measures and estimates lengths</li> <li>Uses reason in arguments</li> <li>Appreciates structure</li> <li>Notices rhythm and patterns in poetry and songs</li> <li>Finds the structure in stories</li> </ul>
Third Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinks logically</li> <li>Understands different perspectives</li> <li>Focuses on friends, peer pressure</li> <li>Accepts feedback</li> <li>Understands and shares jokes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes standardized tests</li> <li>Learns fractions, multiplication, and division</li> <li>Finds areas, perimeters, volumes, and masses</li> <li>Recognizes the mood, characterization, and setting</li> <li>Masters independent reading</li> </ul>

## Notes on Reading

Reading with a child is an easy activity; it requires very little set up and allows you to engage the student in material that he/she likes. These are some easy, simple guidelines:

- Read the book all the way through before you read it aloud. Like the books that you read.
- Read with expression and voices.
- Let the child attempt to read a sentence or two, even if she isn't able to read the whole book.
- Ask questions about the pictures. Especially point out the cover and the clues it holds about the contents of the book.
- Make sure the child can see the pictures and the text as you read. Have her sit next to you.
- Use your finger to follow along as you read.<sup>lxii</sup>

### Reading Strategies

In elementary school, students are learning to respond to a text critically just as much as they are learning to read. Because their conversational skills are better developed, students can understand and discuss texts that are above their writing level or independent reading level. Through asking children about the books they read, adults can make sure that they are still developing their analytical skills along with their technical skills.

One way to do this is by turning the book into a discussion as it is read, a method called dialogic reading. At its core, these are four basic steps, which are represented by the acronym PEER:

**P:** adult *prompts* the child to say something about the book.

**E:** adult *evaluates* the response.

**E:** adult *expands* the child's response.

**R:** adult *repeats* the response.

A sample discussion might look like this:

ADULT: Why can't Sally and her brother go out? (**P**)

CHILD: It's raining.

ADULT: That's right (**E**), it's raining and their mother isn't home (**E**). Look at all that rain (**R**).

This method groups possible questions into the following five categories, with the acronym CROWD:

**Completion:** Offer a sentence with sound and context clues and let the child finish it.

Ex. "I do not like them in a house. I do not like them with a \_\_\_\_\_."

**Recall:** Ask about something that happened earlier in the text, or later if this is a second reading

Ex. "Where does he eat the eggs?"

**Open-Ended:** Ask a question is generally related to the pictures or text:

Ex. "Why do you think Sam wants him to eat the eggs?"

**Who/what/where/when/why/how:** Ask an interrogative question about the general story.

Ex. "What is Sam wearing?"

**Distancing:** Ask a question that relates to the child's life or other books.

Ex. "Would you eat green eggs and ham?"

Not every book needs to be read with this kind of formal structure. This is just a tool to help the child engage with the text. Generally, it is just important that you interact with the child while reading, rather than passively reading and turning pages.<sup>lxiii</sup>

### Matching Activities with Books

Books and activities often go hand in hand. You may find the topic of a book begs for more exploration. Or you may want to explore an activity through literature or nonfiction. If you have an idea, go for it! There are several databases where you can look for a related book on the topic, or you can ask the school librarian. This can sometimes be easier, especially if you have a hobby or an interest that you'd like to share with the child. The following list of books was specifically created with the activities in this manual in mind, and it lists the title and the section of each activity.

### Sample Book-Activity Matches

- Color Me (Caring), Homemade Charades (Character), and/or Mood Meter (Caring) with *Today I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell or *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain
- Dance Party (Confidence) and *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* by Ruth Sanderson
- Friends Forever (Caring) or Paper Chain (Character) and *I Like the Way You Are* by Eve Bunting

- I'm Just a Bill (Character) and *Woodrow for President* by Peter W. Barnes and Cheryl Shaw Barnes, *Grace for President* by Kelly S. DiPucchico and LeUyen Pham, or *If I Ran for President* by Catherine Stier and Lynne Avril
- Goal Cards (Character) and When I Grow Up (Character) and *The Little Engine That Could* (Imagination Library) by Watty Piper
- Map-Making (Competence) or Which Way to the North Pole (Competence) and *Follow the Drinking Gourd* by Alfred A. Knopf or *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg
- Origami (Competence) and *Sadako* by Eleanor Coerr and Ed Young, or *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr and Ronald Himler
- The Monster Under My Bed (Connection) and *Switch on the Light* by Ray Bradbury, Leo Dillon, and Diane Dillon
- Pause (Character) or Sun Salute (Character) with *A Boy and a Bear* by Lori Lite
- Penguin Walk (Connection) with *The Emperor's Egg* by Martin Jenkins and Jane Chapman or *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
- Superhero for a Day (Caring) and *Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy* (Imagination Library) by David Soman and Jacky Davis or *Superhero* by Marc Tauss
- Toes, Knees, Shoulders, and Head (Character) with *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes: And Other Action Rhymes* by Zita Newcome and *One Foot, Two Feet* (Imagination Library) by Peter Maloney and Felicia Zekauskas
- Quilt-Making (Character) and *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson
- Where in the World? (Connection) and *Rhymes Round the World* (Imagination Library) by Kay Chora

## Additional Resources

### Books to Read Together

- *The Giving Tree*. Shel Silverstein
- *hello! hello!* Matthew Cordell
- *One*. Kathryn Otoshi
- *Zero*. Kathryn Otoshi
- *A Bad Case of Stripes*. David Shannon
- *Big Red Lollipop*. Rukhsana Khan and Sophie Blackall
- *The Dot*. Peter H. Reynolds
- *Westlandia*. Paul Fleischman
- *Frindle*. Andrew Clements and Brian Selznick
- *Lauren Ipsum*. Carlos Bueno and Ytaelena Lopez
- *The View from Saturday*. E. L. Konigsburg
- The Magic Tree House series. Mary Pope Osborne
- The Harry Potter series. JK Rowling
- A Series of Unfortunate Events. Lemony Snicket and Brett Helquist

### Board Games

- **Checkers (K+)**: promotes healthy competition (Confidence)
- **Chess (2+)**: promotes strategic skills (Competence)
- **Cranium Cadoo (2+)**: promotes creativity (Connection)
- **The Game of Perfection (K-2)**: promotes shape awareness, geometry, and a sense of time (Competence)
- **Jenga (1+)**: promotes science and geometry awareness (Competence)
- **Scrabble (2+)**: promotes spelling, vocabulary, and math (Competence)
- **Uno (2+)**: promotes healthy competition and number sense (Connection)

### Educational Websites

Discover KIDS. <http://kids.discovery.com/>

NASA for Kids:

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>

<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/kids/>

<http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/kids/>

National Geographic Kids: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>

PBS Kids. <http://pbskids.org/>

Scholastic Website: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/play/>

### Smartphone Applications

- Alien Assignment
- Big Kid Life collection
- iStory Books
- NASA App
- PBS Parent Play and Learn

## Resources on Positive Youth Development and Literacy

Association for Library Service to Children (<http://www.ala.org/>)

This is the group behind all the major children's literature awards, from picture books to chapter books. They also have several awards for minority writers as well.

Character Counts! (<http://charactercounts.org>)

A website with resources about character development and activities meant to be character building. While aimed towards educators, there are still some good ideas about introducing the concepts of respect and trustworthiness to children.

*Character Education: A Book Guide for Teachers, Librarians, and Parents.* Sharron L. McElmeel.

This book details books and matching activities to develop character specifically (though it also brings up caring and confidence). An excellent guide not only for character development, but also as a way to learn more about pairing books and activities through examples. The books suggested are labeled by reading level.

Guys Read (<http://www.guysread.com>)

A website that lists books that specifically appeal to young guys. Some included genres are action/adventure, sports, and science fiction. Note that, while the list is targeted at boys, the books on it can just as easily be enjoyed by girls with interest in the subject material, too.

Imagination Library, West Virginia (<http://www.imaginationlibrary.wv.gov/>)

A program that puts books in the hands of children, many West Virginia counties and schools are currently participating. There is a new book every month, given either to the school or to the child.

International Children's Digital Library (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/> )

A database of free books that sorts hundreds of English titles by age and by interest. These books can be read online or on a mobile device.

The MY HERO Project (<http://myhero.com>)

A website that collects stories about heroes and leaders in communities. There are plenty of stories, of varying quality, that can act as inspiration.

Planet Esmé (<http://planetesme.blogspot.com/>)

Esmé Raji Codell is a librarian with plenty of recommendations on both reading to children and books. Her book reviews are on this blog.

Vanderbilt Children's Reading Activity Sheets

(<https://www.childrenshospital.vanderbilt.org/services.php?mid=7001>)

Each book on this page has an accompanying sheet of related activities. There are also similar recommended books and suggested prompts for dialogic reading.

We Give Books (<http://www.wegivebooks.org>)

This website is a digital repository of modern books that can be read online for free. You must register with the site to access their collection, but the books can be sorted by genre, age, and author.

*What to Read When* by Pam Allyn

This book groups children's books by age and by mood/interest. It also contains information on reading aloud and the different levels of children's reading ability.

*Your Five- and Six-Year Old* by Parents Magazine

A good resource if you're curious about what kindergarteners are going through developmentally on several different fronts. This book is part of a series that gives information about other ages as well.

## References

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- <sup>ii</sup> From “Side-Dominant Science: Are You Left- or Right-Sided?” by Science Buddies, (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=bring-science-home-dominant-side>)
- <sup>iii</sup> Adapted from “Match Up” on Education.com, (<http://www.education.com/activity/article/match-up/>)
- <sup>iv</sup> Adapted from *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, ed. Kathy Charner
- <sup>v</sup> From “Play the Simple Game of ‘Nim’” on Kid World Citizen, (<http://kidworldcitizen.org/2011/11/25/the-simple-game-of-nim/>). Online version at [http://www.archimedes-lab.org/game\\_nim/play\\_nim\\_game.html](http://www.archimedes-lab.org/game_nim/play_nim_game.html)
- <sup>vi</sup> Adapted from “Playing Vocab-Building Improv!” on Educator.com, ([http://www.education.com/activity/article/Improv\\_Activity/](http://www.education.com/activity/article/Improv_Activity/))
- <sup>vii</sup> From *Geek Mom* by Natania Barron et al.
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- <sup>ix</sup> Adapted from *Geek Mom* by Natania Barron et. al.
- <sup>x</sup> From “Chromatography for Kids” by Education.com ([http://www.education.com/activity/article/Color\\_Science\\_kindergarten/](http://www.education.com/activity/article/Color_Science_kindergarten/))
- <sup>xi</sup> From “Color-Changing Dots” by Molly Josephs, *Scientific American*, (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=color-changing-dots-bring-science-home>)
- <sup>xii</sup> Inspired by and adapted from “Explore Our World through Google Earth” by Kid World Citizen (<http://kidworldcitizen.org/2012/05/22/explore-our-world-through-google-earth/>)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Adapted from *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, edited by Kathy Charner
- <sup>xiv</sup> Inspired by *Read! Move! Learn!* by Carol Totsky Hammett and Nicki Collins Geigert
- <sup>xv</sup> From *Games for Reading* by Peggy Kaye
- <sup>xvi</sup> For inspiration or instruction for basic dances, check out About.com ([http://dance.about.com/od/stepsandmoves/Dance\\_Moves.htm](http://dance.about.com/od/stepsandmoves/Dance_Moves.htm)).
- <sup>xvii</sup> Adapted from *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- <sup>xviii</sup> Adapted from *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, ed. Kathy Charner
- <sup>xix</sup> A good site to explore for Spanish, Mandarin, and French is from the BBC. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primarylanguages/>
- <sup>xx</sup> Adapted from *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, ed. Kathy Charner
- <sup>xxi</sup> From “Magic Tricks for Kids: The Vanishing Bead” on About.com (<http://magic.about.com/od/libraryofsimpletricks/ss/121707bead.htm>)
- <sup>xxii</sup> Adapted from *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- <sup>xxiii</sup> From “Create Your Own Lyrics to ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’” on Education.com (<http://www.education.com/activity/article/rewrite-twelve-days-christmas/>)
- <sup>xxiv</sup> From *The Creative Family* by Amanda Blake Soule
- <sup>xxv</sup> Inspired by *The Giant Encyclopedia of Monthly Activities for Children 3 to 6* edited by Kathy Charner, Maureen Murphy, and Charlie Clark
- <sup>xxvi</sup> From *Read! Move! Learn!* By Carol Totsky Hammett and Nicki Collins Geigert
- <sup>xxvii</sup> From *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, edited by Kathy Charner
- <sup>xxviii</sup> From “Play the Build a Monster Game!” by Education.com. (<http://www.education.com/activity/article/build-a-monster/>) There is a printable form for this activity on the website.
- <sup>xxix</sup> From *The Giant Encyclopedia of Monthly Activities for Children 3 to 6*, ed. Kathy Charner, Maureen Murphy, and Charlie Clark
- <sup>xxx</sup> Inspired by “Penguins! Resources to Learn about these Unique Southern Birds” by Kid World Citizen, (<http://kidworldcitizen.org/2013/01/23/penguins/>)
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Adapted from *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett

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- xxxii From *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, ed. Kathy Charner
- xxxiii From *Games for Reading* by Peggy Kaye.
- xxxiv From “Off-The-Cuff Creative Babysitting Ideas” by The Babysitting Nook (<http://www.sitternook.com/creative-babysitting-ideas.html>)
- xxxv Inspired by *The Giant Encyclopedia of Monthly Activities for Children 3 to 6* edited by Kathy Charner, Maureen Murphy, and Charlie Clark
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- xxxvii From “Talk through a String Telephone” by Katherine Harmon for *Scientific American*, (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=talk-through-a-string-telephone-bring-science-home>)
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- xliiii From *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- xliiv Adapted from *Creating Readers* by Pam Schiller
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- xlvi From “Numbers Card Game” by Education.com (<http://www.education.com/activity/article/do-you-read-me/>)
- xlvii From *Games for Reading* by Peggy Kaye
- xlviii From *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- xlix Adapted from *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- <sup>i</sup> From *Read! Move! Learn!* By Carol Totsky Hammett and Nicki Collins Geigert
- <sup>ii</sup> From *Read! Move! Learn!* By Carol Totsky Hammett and Nicki Collins Geigert
- <sup>iii</sup> From *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- <sup>iiii</sup> Adapted from “Make a ‘Mood Meter’ Sign” from Education.com ([http://www.education.com/activity/article/mood\\_fire\\_safety\\_sign\\_kindergarten/](http://www.education.com/activity/article/mood_fire_safety_sign_kindergarten/))
- <sup>liv</sup> Inspired by “10 Quick And Easy Team Building Activities” from Huddle’s Blog (<http://www.huddle.com/blog/team-building-activities/>) and “Perfect Nanny” from *Mary Poppins* by the Sherman Brothers
- <sup>lv</sup> Adapted from ELL from The Fred Rogers Center (<http://ele.fredrogerscenter.org/activity/beat-a-necklace-explore-patterns>)
- <sup>lvi</sup> Adapted from *The Giant Encyclopedia of Circle Time and Group Activities for Children 3 to 6*, ed. Kathy Charner
- <sup>lvii</sup> From *365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids* by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett
- <sup>lviii</sup> Adapted from *Games for Reading* by Peggy Kaye
- <sup>lix</sup> Adapted from Leap Frog (<http://www.leapfrog.com>) and About: Child Parenting (<http://childparenting.about.com>)
- <sup>lx</sup> Adapted from the Common Core Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org>)
- <sup>lxi</sup> This list compiled from the websites of Esmé Raji Codell (<http://planetesme.blogspot.com/>)
- <sup>lxii</sup> You can find a video demonstration of CROWD prompts on Ele from the Fred Rogers Center, at <http://ele.fredrogerscenter.org/activity/demonstration-of-how-to-use-crowd-prompts?page=14>