



The InvestiGator Club™ Prekindergarten Learning System

Investigation

PARENT'S
EDITION

Integrated Activities for Exploring, Experimenting,
and Making Discoveries



Wheels and Wings

Does your child enjoy playing with toy cars, trucks, boats, planes, and trains? With these miniature vehicles and a bit of imagination your child can go any place he or she chooses. Wheeled vehicles and other forms of transportation are both fascinating and familiar to all children. The activities in *Wheels and Wings* are sure to generate interest, investigation, and invention and help satisfy your child's yearning to get up and go! So tell your child to buckle up the seatbelt and let the investigation begin!

Part 1 The Wheels Go 'Round

Assessment



To assess your child's skills development, refer to the questions on page 13 as you complete each activity.

To introduce *Wheels and Wings*, remind your child that he or she is a member of the InvestiGator Club. Explain that investigators are good listeners and explorers and like to learn new things just like Dilly and her friends. Then tell your child: **We are going to investigate vehicles on wheels like cars, trucks, vans, and buses that take us to places we want to go. We will take an imaginary road trip, learn map skills, ride along on a fire truck, experiment with wheels, and much more.**

On the Road

Summary



Help your child visualize how people get from place to place. By engaging your child in conversation, you can help him or her develop oral language skills, tap into prior knowledge, and encourage him or her to think about different types of transportation.

Tell your child that the InvestiGators are always eager to take a road trip somewhere. Say: **The bus is the easiest way to get around City Square.** Point out to your child that roads, streets, and highways where you live are busy with traffic too. Cars, vans, trucks, and buses carry people and things from place to place. Ask your child to think of his or her favorite places to go. Then invite your child to describe how to get to those favorite places.

The next time you and your child travel to a familiar location in your community, count the number of streets you take to get there with him or her. Ask your child to point out signs, buildings, and other landmarks along the way.

Rhyme and Ride



Summary

Play this fun game to help children recognize words that rhyme. The ability to recognize rhyming words is one of many skills that lead to reading success in the early school years and beyond.

Materials

- toy passenger vehicle
- figurines of people or animals

Explain that rhyming words end with the same sound. Tell your child that words such as *truck/duck*, *wheel/peel*, and *drive/hive* rhyme. Have them say the pairs several times to listen for the rhyming sounds.

Set out a toy passenger vehicle and toy figures to serve as passengers. Say pairs of words, having children repeat them after you. For each pair that rhymes, have a child put a passenger in the vehicle. When the vehicle is full of passengers, drive them to their destination. Use these word pairs:

go/slow *hood/wood* *trunk/seat* *road/load* *ride/wide*
car/jar *fast/past* *fly/sky* *tire/flat* *walk/talk*

Your child should put a passenger in the vehicle for every word pair except *trunk/seat* and *tire/flat*. If your child has trouble, repeat each word pair as necessary.





Summary

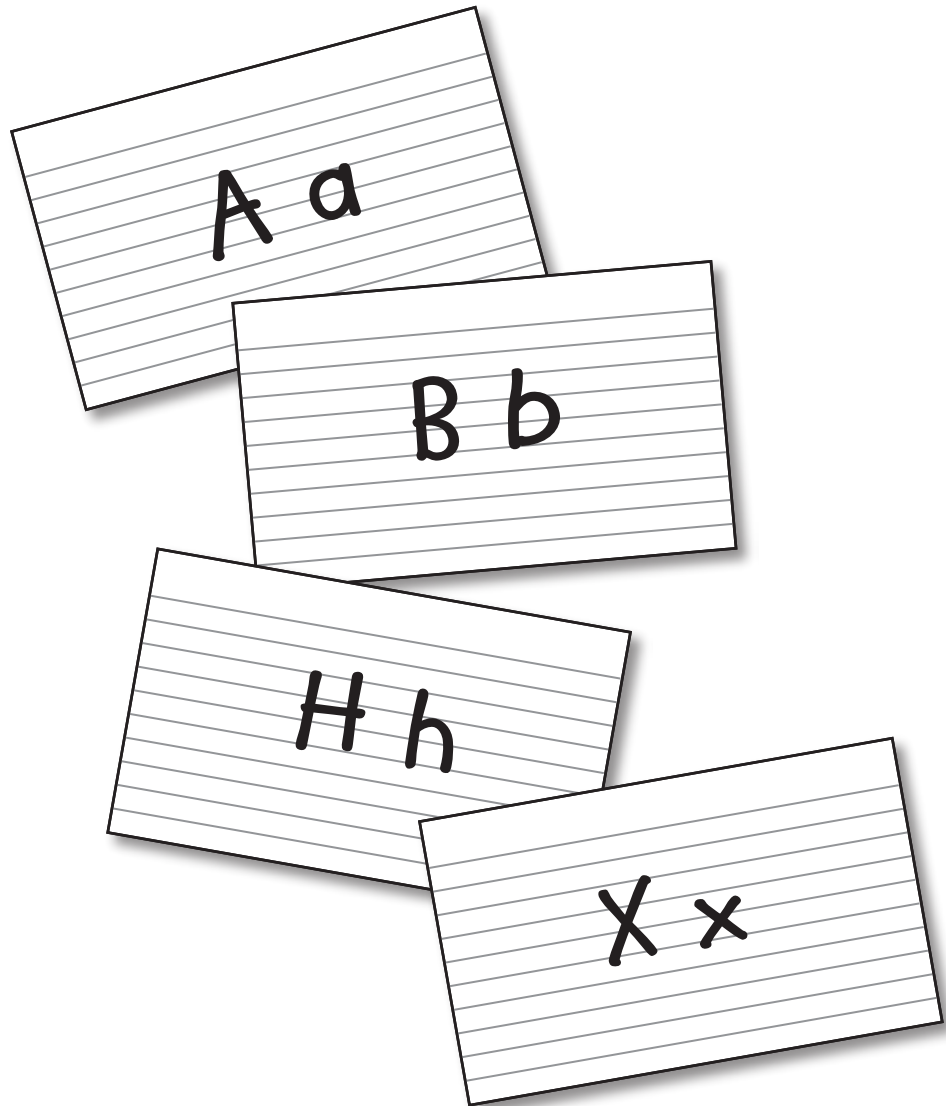
Reinforce your child's knowledge of the alphabet with a letter hunt. Practicing letter identification skills is an important step in young children's reading development.

Favorite Letter

Materials

- index card
- marker, crayon, or pencil

Tell your child to think of his or her favorite letter of the alphabet. Then ask him or her to tell you about that letter. If your child has trouble deciding on a favorite letter, suggest that the first letter in his or her name or the name of a friend might be a good choice. In large print, write the capital and small letter that your child chooses on an index card. For example, if your child says "A" write *Aa* on the card. Give your child the card and tell him or her to look for that letter in various places around the house. Suggest that your child look at labels, in books, and other printed materials.



My Spot on the Map



Summary

To help your child become familiar with the purpose of maps, explore a map of your community together.

For 3-year-olds

3

Make a simple map of your home and label each room. Prompt your child to trace a route from one place to another on the map.

Materials

- map of your community
- magazines or paper and crayons
- scissors
- tape

Remind your child that JT loves to travel. He has been to many places and likes to bring back a souvenir of each place he has visited. Tell your child that JT always gets a map when he visits a new place. Explain that visitors to your community need a map. Display a simple map of your community.

- Tell your child: **A map shows where places are. Maps show how you can get from one place to another.**
- Explain what the lines and symbols on the map represent. Call attention to the names of places and streets and point out geographical features, such as lakes, rivers, bridges, or forests.
- Show your child where his or her school or home is located on the map. Have your child choose a destination in the community, such as the library or a favorite park. Then demonstrate how to use a finger to trace a route from the school or your home to that place.
- Have your child draw and cut out a small vehicle or cut one from a magazine. Help him or her tape the vehicle to the map to show the place he or she would like to go.



Read a Book About Signs



Summary

Read a book about signs to help your child understand that the words on signs give important information.

For 3-year-olds

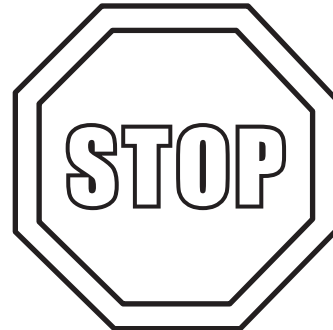
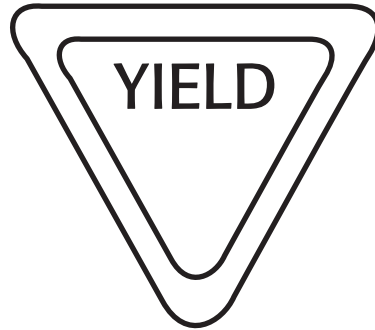
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To help younger children better understand that signs carry meaning, read a sign in the book and pantomime an associated action, such as *walk* and *don't walk*.

Materials

- a book about signs

Read a book about signs, such as *I Read Signs* by Tana Hoban or *City Signs* by Zoran Milich. Check your local library for these titles or related titles. Begin reading by pointing to the title and author's name as you read each aloud. As you read the book, discuss the signs in each photograph. Point to the words as you read them aloud. Talk about each sign's meaning and where it might be found. Ask questions, such as: **How many words are on this sign? What should you do if you see this sign?** Encourage your child to look for signs when you are traveling around your neighborhood.



Getting to School



Summary

Discuss the different ways that children go to school, write about it, and then sing a song together.

Materials

- toy vehicles or pictures of vehicles
- paper and pencil

Display toy vehicles: car, bus, truck, and van, or show pictures of each. Say: **Dilly and her friends walk to school. Some children at your school may walk too. Some may ride in a vehicle such as a car, bus, truck, or van. How do you get to school?**

- Talk about how your child gets to school. Print a sentence telling about it.
- Tell your child that words are read from left to right and are separated by spaces. Read the sentence as you point to each word. Ask your child to read with you and invite him or her to point to the words as you read them again.
- Teach your child the song "This Is the Way We Go to School" (to the tune of "Mulberry Bush"). Have your child sing the song in the morning as he or she is going to school.

This is the way we go to school, go to school, go to school.

This is the way we go to school early in the morning.

Some of us go in a car . . . early in the morning.

Some of us go in a van . . . early in the morning.

Some of us go in a bus . . . early in the morning.

Some of us go in a truck . . . early in the morning.

Some of us walk to school . . . early in the morning.



Red Light, Green Light



Summary

Play an outdoor game to teach your child the meaning of traffic light colors. Outdoor games are also a fun way for your child to practice following directions and to develop his or her physical abilities.

Materials

- paper
- red, yellow, and green construction paper
- crayons or markers

Draw a traffic light on a sheet of paper: a rectangle with three circles in the middle. Color the top circle red, the middle circle yellow, and the bottom circle green. Talk about the purpose of traffic lights. Use the following rhyme to teach your child the meaning of each color:

What does a traffic light say to you?

Does it tell you what to do?

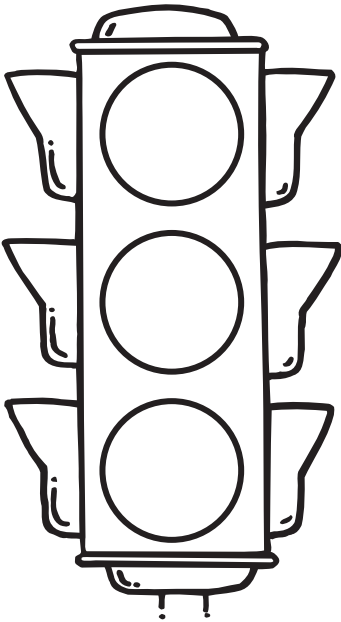
Green tells you that you may go.

Yellow says be careful, go slow.

Red is the light that's at the top.

When you see red, you must stop!

Play a version of the classic game "Red Light, Green Light" outdoors with family members or your child's friends. Use three large circles cut from red, yellow, and green construction paper. One person is the "traffic light" and holds the three circles. Have children get in their imaginary cars, buckle up their seatbelts, and line up along one side of the playing area. When the traffic light shows green, the drivers race their cars across the area toward the opposite side. When the traffic light wants drivers to slow down and then stop, the yellow circle is held up to give a warning. Then the red one goes up. If any car continues to move, that driver must go back to the starting line. Once all the cars have reached the opposite side, the game is over.





Summary

Sing a song and have your child guess whom it is about. Sharing songs can help your child develop a rich and varied listening and speaking vocabulary.

Firefighters' Song

Sing the following song to the tune of "She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain." Tell your child to listen closely to the song and guess whom the song is about.

They'll be riding in a big red truck when they come.

They'll be riding in a big red truck when they come.

They'll be riding in a big red truck,

They'll be riding in a big red truck,

They'll be riding in a big red truck when they come.

Continue with these lyrics.

They'll be bringing a hose and ladder when they come . . .

They'll be sounding a loud siren when they come . . .

They will put out the fire when they come . . .

Ask: **In the song, who is coming?** (firefighters) Have your child share what he or she knows about a firefighter's job. Then sing the song again together.



How Many Words?



Summary

Say sentences aloud and have your child clap for each word. Developing your child's awareness of sounds in spoken language helps set the stage for reading.

Say this short sentence: **Fire is hot.** Say it again, and clap once as you say each word. Repeat the sentence several times, encouraging your child to clap the words. Repeat with these sentences:

Fire trucks are red.

The fire alarm rings.

Do not play with matches.

Fire is dangerous.

Praise your child each time he or she successfully claps the correct number of times.

F Is for Firefighter



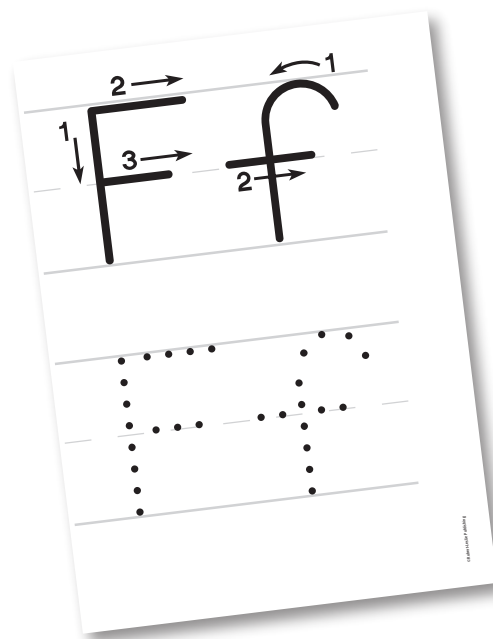
Summary

In this activity, your child practices writing capital and small *Ff*.

Materials

- paper and pencil (optional)
- dried beans or a shallow pan and liquid soap

Write *F* and *f* in large print on a sheet of paper or point to *F* and *f* shown below. Tell your child that the word *firefighter* begins with the letter *f*. Have your child practice writing *F* and *f* in the air. Together, practice forming *F* and *f* using various materials such as dried beans. Or spread liquid soap foam in a shallow pan and have your child practice writing *F* and *f* in the soap.



Traffic Patterns



Summary

Your child practices creating and extending patterns using toy vehicles. This skill lays the foundation for math concepts taught in later school years.

For 3-year-olds **3**

A younger child may have trouble extending the pattern. In this case, try focusing only on colors.

Materials

- toy vehicles

Tell your child: **Manny Salamander and Rosalita Sausalita like to watch the traffic go by from their apartment windows. City Square is a very busy place. There goes a car, then a truck, then a bus. Now three cars and a van go by. The traffic patterns keep changing.**

Talk about patterns using vehicles. Line up vehicles to form a pattern: car–truck–car–truck–car. Have your child tell what comes next. (truck) Then repeat with this pattern: car–car–fire truck–car–car. (fire truck) You can also show a color pattern: red car–red car–black car–red car–red car. (black car) Continue with other patterns for your child to finish. He or she may wish to create a pattern for you to guess what comes next.



Read a Book About Firefighters



Summary

Read a book about firefighters and talk about the equipment firefighters use.

Materials

- a book about firefighters

Read a book about firefighters, such as *Firefighters A to Z* by Chris Demarest, *Big Frank's Fire Truck* by Leslie McGuire, or *Tito, the Firefighter* by Tim Hoppey. Pause to allow your child to view each page. Ask: **Which word do I read first on this page?** (Your child should point to the first word on the page.) Have him or her look at the illustrations and talk about them. Point out important details on each page.

After reading, talk about the gear firefighters use—jacket, helmet, boots, gloves, air pack, face mask—and what's special about a fire truck—its hose, ladder, lights, and siren.

Sound the Fire Alarm



Summary

Teach your child a song about firefighters and have him or her make up actions to perform with the song.

Teach your child the song to the tune of "Frère Jacques." Ask your child to act out each part of the song. Encourage your child to move and dance to the song as you sing together.

Sound the fire alarm.

Get your gear on.

Climb in the truck.

Climb in the truck.

Hurry to the fire.

Hurry to the fire.

Ding, ding, ding. Ding, ding, ding.

Reach the fire.

Climb the ladder.

To the top. To the top.

Hurry to the fire.

Hurry to the fire.

Help is here. Help is here.

Turn the hose on.

Squirt the water.

Put it out. Put it out.

Fire is all out now.

Everyone is safe now.

Ding, ding, ding. Ding, ding, ding.

Safety List

Summary

Have a fire safety meeting that includes all members of your family.

Materials

- blank paper
- pens, marker

Talk about fire safety. Tell your child that you will write some safety rules to help him or her remember them. Ask your child to help you with the list. Write the list on paper as your child dictates. As you begin writing, say: **I want to write the word *Safety*. *Safety* begins with an S. Can you show me how to write the letter S?** Once the list of fire safety rules is complete, read each item aloud as you point to each word. Have your child repeat.

Safety Rules

- Do not play with matches.
- Do not play with lighters.
- Do not touch a lighted candle.
- Do not play near electrical cords.

Plan a family meeting about fire safety that covers what to do in case of an emergency. Utilize the local library or the Internet to come up with a detailed emergency plan that can be customized for your family and home.





Skills Check Up



As you complete each activity, note the following:

- **On the Road (p. 1):** Can your child answer questions about his or her favorite place and communicate ideas effectively?
- **Rhyme and Ride (p. 2):** Can your child recognize rhyming words?
- **Favorite Letter (p. 3):** Can your child match letters to examples in print around your home?
- **My Spot on the Map (p. 4):** Does your child understand that the map represents features in your community?
- **Read a Book About Signs (p. 5):** Does your child understand the purpose of signs?
- **Getting to School (p. 6):** Can your child point to each word as you read it aloud? Does your child understand the different ways that children get to school?
- **Red Light, Green Light (p. 7):** Is your child able to follow directions and control his or her movements?
- **Firefighters' Song (p. 8):** Is your child able to understand the song?
- **How Many Words? (p. 9):** Does your child clap once for each word?
- **F Is for Firefighter (p. 9):** Can your child recognize and write *Ff*?
- **Traffic Patterns (p. 10):** Can your child extend patterns?
- **Read a Book About Firefighters (p. 10):** Does your child understand the role of a firefighter?
- **Sound the Fire Alarm (p. 11):** Do your child's movements relate to the song?
- **Safety List (p. 12):** Does your child understand important safety rules?

If you are concerned that your child seems to be struggling with certain concepts or skills, plan to talk to his or her teacher about ways you can help your child develop in those areas.