



Tools of the Mind

PreK Parent

Learn at Home Kit



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Supporting Tools of the Mind learners at home

Welcome!

If your child needs to learn from home for a period of time, this resource provides some Tools of the Mind materials to support you. Our goal is to help you offer your child a learning experience at home that has continuity with their Tools of the Mind classroom experience.

Resources Included:

Let's Pretend eBooks (in English and Spanish): In a Tools of the Mind PreK classroom, make-believe play is a daily experience that is central to learning. One of the many resources used by Tools PreK teachers to support make-believe play are Let's Pretend eBooks. These eBooks help children become familiar with play theme settings and scenarios and engage children in practicing language and actions they can use in make-believe play. After reading a Let's Pretend eBook to your child, engage them in pretend play of the situation shown in the book. Or, use the story in the eBook as a launching point for a new, related play scenario. As play themes change about every four weeks, be sure to ask your child's teacher which play theme the class is currently exploring.

Self-Regulation Tip Sheet: The Self-Regulation Tip Sheet offers a way to understand children's behavior in terms of the development of self-regulation. When children's behavior veers off-track, it is helpful to understand it in terms of self-regulation development, rather than the child intentionally misbehaving.

Math Activity—Venger Drawing: In Venger Drawing, children learn shape names as they explore how shapes are parts of bigger wholes. For example, a square could be a window in an apartment building, and a circle could be a plate on a table. Have your child think about what each shape could be, and then draw a picture incorporating that shape.

Literacy Activity—Story Lab Connections: In Tools of the Mind classrooms, teachers read books aloud every day. Before reading a book aloud, the teacher selects a comprehension strategy to focus on. The strategy card is read before reading the book and is visible while the book is read to remind children what they're paying attention to. In Story Lab Connections, children are thinking about personal connections they can make to the story. Does the story remind them of an experience they've had? Or of something they've heard about in a book, or seen in a TV show? During and after reading aloud the book, have your child share with you the connections they made.

Sound Map: The Tools of the Mind Sound Map (a unique "alphabet chart") has icons that help children remember letter sounds. Children will be familiar with many of these icons from drawing and writing activities in the classroom. When children are ready, they begin to write the letters representing sounds in their daily Play Plans. You can engage children in using the chart by helping you with simple writing tasks like making a grocery list. "We need carrots—what sound does carrots start with—k, like 'car,' or j, like 'jet'?" Some children may use the Sound Map to make their own list or can write a plan for their play or for home activities.

We hope these resources offer helpful guidance during the time your child is at home. As always, reach out to your child's classroom teacher with questions or for further guidance.

Let's Pretend eBooks

Note: All links are case-sensitive. Be sure to type them in exactly as they appear here, including capital letters.

Video to learn about how to use the eBooks:

English: bit.ly/Toolsplayathome

Spanish: bit.ly/Jugarencasa

Link to all 10 eBooks:

[Dropbox link: bit.ly/All10books](http://bit.ly/All10books)

Links to eBooks, organized by play theme:

Grocery Theme: bit.ly/Grocerytheme

- Flower Shop
- Produce

Medical Theme: bit.ly/Medtheme

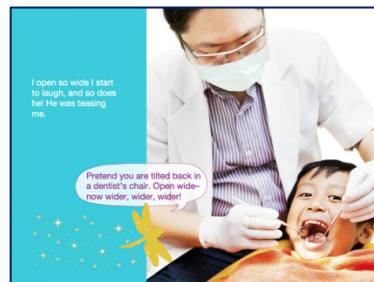
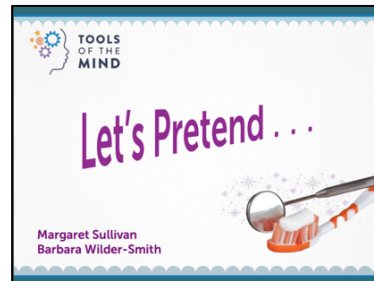
- Dentist
- Eye Doctor
- Hospital

Pet Theme: bit.ly/Pettheme

- Groomer
- Veterinarian

Restaurant Theme: bit.ly/Restaurantheme









- Deli
- Ice Cream Shop
- Pizzeria



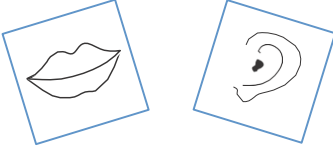

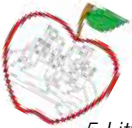


What is self-regulation and why does it matter?

Self-regulation is a set of underlying abilities that allow children to be successful in social interactions and learning. It's tied to brain development that occurs in the early childhood years and can be influenced by a child's early environment. **The good news:** Parents and teachers can support the development of children's self-regulation, which will have a long-term positive impact in children's lives.

What does self-regulation look like in young children?

<i>Without Self-regulation</i>	<i>With Self-regulation</i>
	
<p>Children have a hard time waiting, sharing materials and toys. They may know the "rules" but can't yet inhibit behaviors like grabbing or pushing.</p>	<p>Children can take turns, share materials, and wait for their turn. They can use strategies like asking for something they want, or playing with something else while they wait.</p>
	
<p>Children have a difficult time with transitions like clean up or bedtime – ending something they want to do and doing something they don't want to do! They may melt down and find it difficult to stop and transition.</p>	<p>Children can manage a transition like bedtime or clean up time, even when they are disappointed that a fun time is coming to an end. Young children may still need support—but self-regulation is what's needed to be successful at this.</p>
	
<p>Children without self-regulation may not be able to stay seated and listen to a story, sit through dinner or a game.</p>	<p>Children can control their attention enough to listen to a story, play a game, and sit through a meal. Their attention may wander, but they can bring it back to the task at hand.</p>
	
<p>When facing a difficult learning challenge, children without self-regulation can get easily discouraged and give up. Their minds and attention wander to other things.</p>	<p>With self-regulation, a child can persist at challenging learning tasks, focusing his attention and intentionally using strategies to be an independent, self-regulated learner.</p>

What can I do to support my child's development of self-regulation?

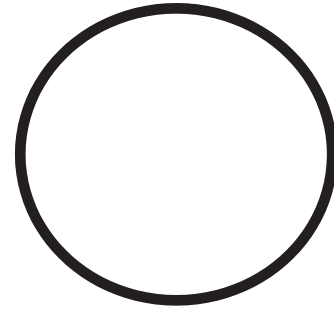
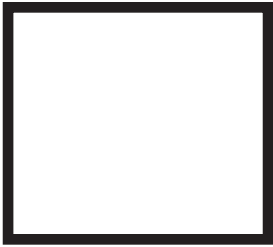
<p>Visual Reminders</p> 	<p>A visual reminder makes it easier to remember a 'rule.' In Tools of the Mind, we use pictures of Lips and Ears to help children remember when it is their turn to talk or listen. You can use similar pictures to help children take turns when playing with siblings or friends.</p>
<p>Self- talk or Private Speech</p> 	<p>Talking aloud to yourself helps children stay on task and not get distracted. This works for adults too – we say aloud phone numbers we are trying to remember or repeat directions we will follow when driving. Next time you hear your child talking to herself when putting a puzzle together, you'll know that she is using an effective self-regulation strategy.</p>
<p>Self-regulation Recharging Activities</p>  <p><i>5 Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed . . .</i></p>	<p>Maintaining self-regulation is hard and young children cannot do it for long periods of time—they need breaks. When something demands a lot of self- regulation from your child, like waiting a long time in line at the grocery store, follow it with something fun and playful. You can skip to the car or walk to the car pretending to be a cat. You can sing a song or play a game like 'I spy' as an activity to recharge your child's self-regulation.</p>
<p>Planning and Decision-making</p> 	<p>At school, your child makes a plan before he or she plays – planning can happen at home, too. It's important that the plan truly be your child's—but you can guide your child so that a plan is reasonable. For example, before going to the zoo, your child can draw pictures of the animals she wants to see first.</p> <p>Your child will have a much easier time doing chores or going to bed when he decides what he will do (or when or how he will do it). For example, instead of telling your child it's bedtime, you can have the child set up an alarm clock or timer for a few minutes before bedtime. When the alarm goes off your child will know that it is time to go to bed!</p>
<p>Make- Believe Play</p> 	<p>The best way for young children to practice self-regulation is to engage in make-believe play. In Tools classrooms, children enjoy acting out pretend scenarios like eating in a restaurant or going to the doctor. You can help your child learn more about what people do in these places by turning errands into mini-field trips! Ask your teacher about the current play theme and when you and your child do an errand, you can talk about what the people are doing and saying. Turning recycled boxes and common household materials into 'props' for play and supporting make-believe play at home is another great activity you can do to support your child's self-regulation!</p>

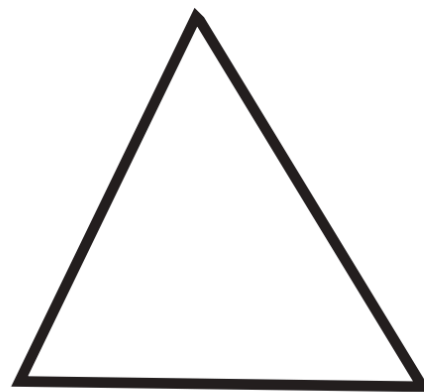
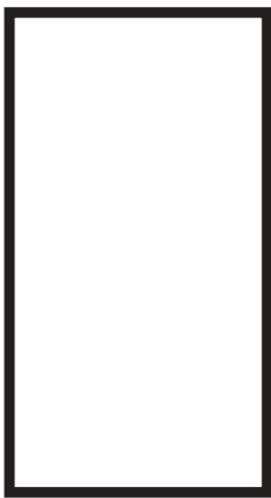


Math Activity: Venger Shapes

Activity Steps:

1. Print out all or some of the Venger shape sheets (below), and cut them in half. Your child will work with one shape at a time.
2. Introduce one Venger shape sheet. Name the shape and have your child say the name.
3. Ask your child, “What could this be? What can you make this into?” Turn the sheet and model brainstorming what the shape could be, looking from different perspectives. A triangle, for example, may look from one orientation like a roof or a hat. From other orientations, it may look like an ice cream cone or a bird’s beak. Have your child say their ideas. Encourage your child to think of the shape as “part of” their picture, rather than the whole picture. It is more complex to visualize a triangle as part of a house (its roof) or part of a dog (its ear) than to think of the triangle as the whole of an object (a tent).
4. As your child draws, you can comment on how your child has used the shape. Use positional words such as *on top of*, *next to*, *under*, *beside*, *to the left*, *to the right*, etc. Be sure to say the shape name.
5. When your child is finished, have them tell you about what they drew. If your child is doing some writing, encourage them to label their picture with a word.
6. It may be hard for you to recognize the object your child chose to draw a picture of, but what’s important is that your child recognizes it! Affirm your child’s efforts, however imprecise.





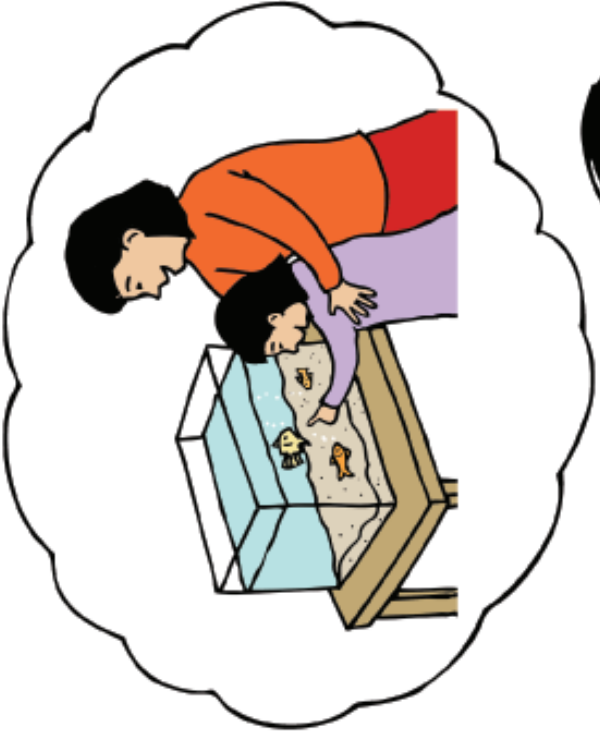


Literacy Activity: Story Lab Connections

Activity Steps:

1. Print out the Story Lab Connections card, either double or single-sided.
2. Choose a book to read aloud to your child, a book to which you think your child will make some connections. It's great to choose a book you've read aloud to your child before—rereading builds understanding and comprehension!
3. Before reading, choose three or four spots in the book when you'll pause and encourage your child to make a connection. You might want to put a sticky note at the spots you choose.
4. Also before reading, show your child the Connections card. While the image side (cartoon with children) is showing, read the page describing what the Connections card means, and how while you read your child will be thinking, "What connections can I make?" Place the card beside you so your child can look at it while you read.
5. Read the book, pausing at the spots you identified and asking your child, "What connection can you make to _____?"
6. After reading the book, summarize the connections your child made and invite your children to make further connections.

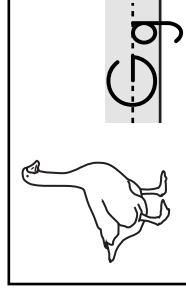
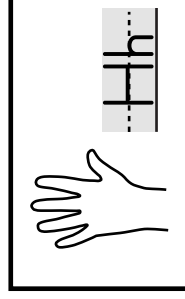
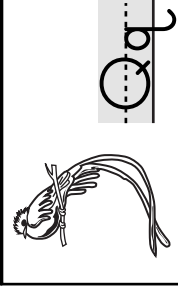
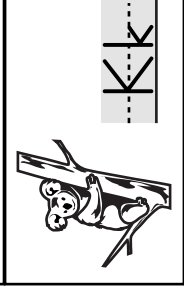
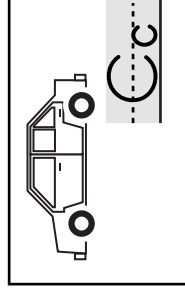
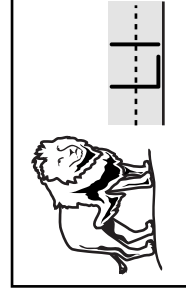
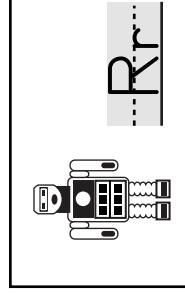
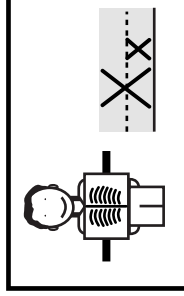
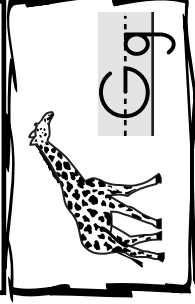
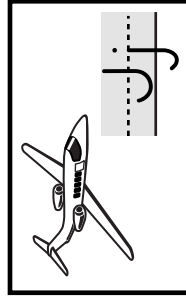
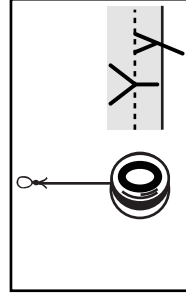
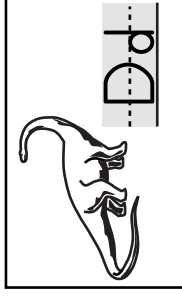
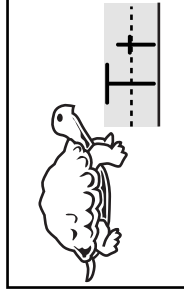
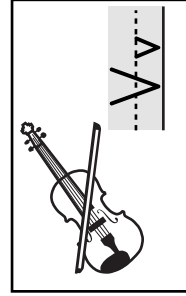
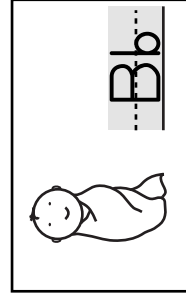
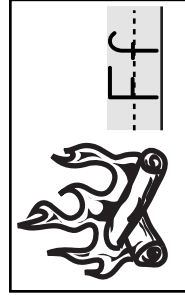
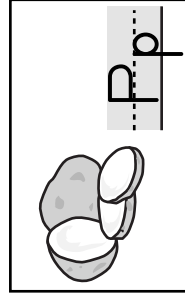
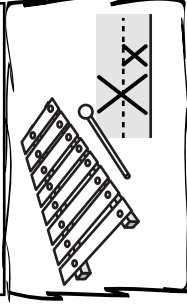
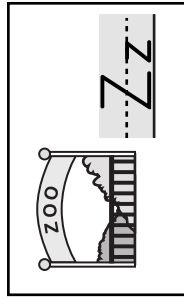
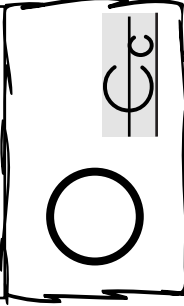
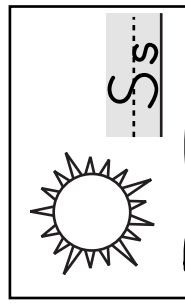
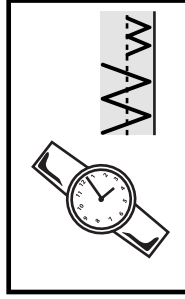
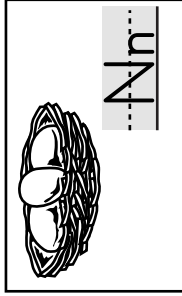
Can you make a connection?

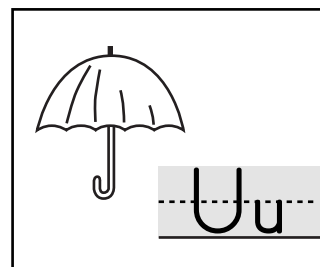
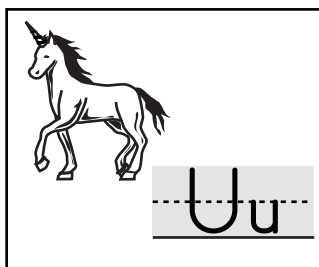
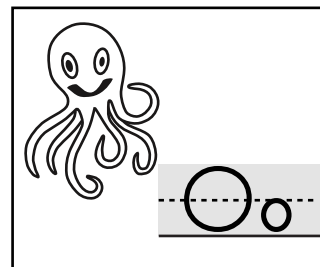
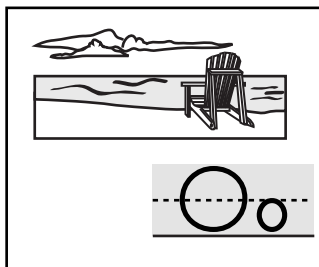
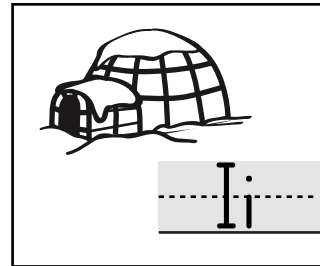
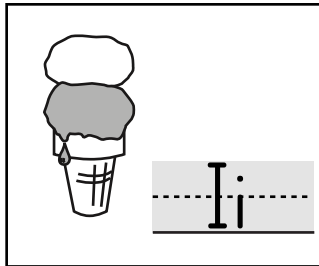
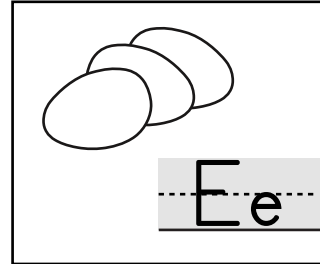
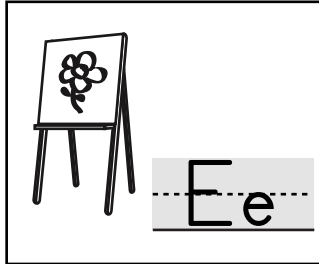
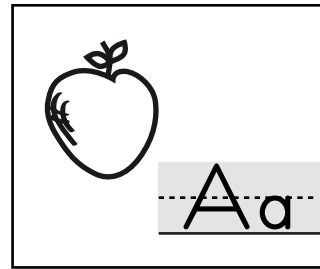
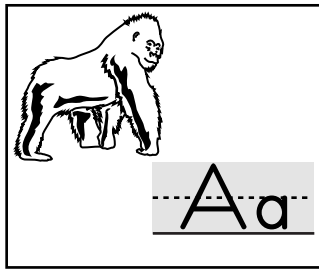


Connections is a Story Lab activity designed to teach children to intentionally make connections and learn to think about the kind of connections they are making.

Introducing the card to children:

You can say something like, “See these two children? They’re reading a book about fish and thinking ‘can I make a connection?’ The boy is making a connection to a TV show he saw about fish, and a book he read. The girl is making a connection to fish she has at home. Today when we read _____, you’re going to be thinking ‘what connection can I make?’ as I read. Then we’ll talk about what kinds of connections you’ve made.”





Vowel Sound Map

