



# PLAY!®

for ages 3-6



## Parents Guide

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# HOME ROOM

## **Exciting Activities**

*Kids can create art, music and more. Save projects or print them out to share!*

## **Parents Center**

*Check your child's progress any time you want, print out activities and more!*

## **Visit Characters**

*Children play and explore where their favorite characters live!*



## **Games Level Up**

*Game levels adapt to your child. More than 50 games to choose from.*

## **Videos On Demand**

*Choose from over 150 PBS KIDS episodes whenever you want!*

# GAME LEVELS

As your child progresses, **PBS KIDS PLAY!** adapts to his or her ability by automatically opening up new game levels to try. This is particularly important because once a child masters a pattern of game play, he or she begins to react in a rote way. Advancing to a higher level creates changed conditions that challenge your child to adapt to a new way of thinking. Constant challenge is part of what makes games such fun, as well as a great learning tool.

## **Games in PBS KIDS PLAY! are divided into three levels:**

Game levels in **PBS KIDS PLAY!** correspond to the following target ages, which may vary based on each child's individual capacity in a given skill:

**Level 1** is intended for ages 3 to 4.

**Level 2** is intended for ages 4 to 5.

**Level 3** is intended for ages 5 to 6.

All **PBS KIDS PLAY!** games begin at Level 1 with a blank Progress Chart. Relatively mature children will move through the first game level quickly to get to a level they will find more challenging, whereas younger children may take more time to progress.

When a child returns to play later,

**PLAY!** will remember his or her level in each game.



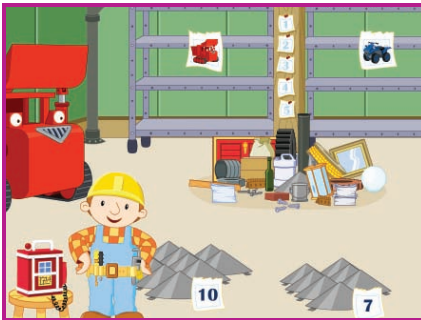
*Please bear in mind that the intended age is an average. Each individual child learns at a different pace in each skill area.*

The Bob the Builder *Mission: Count It* game (illustrated below) provides an example of how the leveling works:

In Level 1, the player is shown two sets of items labeled with numerals. The quantity of items provides a clue as to which set is larger and which is smaller. Muck, who is the larger of the two machine friends, only accepts the larger quantity, while Scrambler only accepts the smaller quantity.

In Level 2, your child sorts heavier and lighter items, each with numerical values attached. This time, the game shows two items that cannot be differentiated by quantity and the player must rely on his or her number ordering skills to distinguish them. (Level 3 is not shown here.)


The levels are designed so that, as kids advance, they build on what they have already learned in previous levels.




**Level 1**



# TRACKING YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

Parents' Center Main Menu More Info Tell a Friend Subscribe Exit 

[Home](#) **Progress Chart** [Activity Search](#) [TV Programs](#) [Curriculum](#) [My Account](#) [Help](#)

Progress Chart for   Click a skill area below to learn more about your child's progress in this area and to get suggestions for activities. Or, click [More Info](#) to learn more about how this progress chart works.

Creativity	Healthy Development	Language	Literacy	Math	Science	Social Studies
Art ○○○	Emotional Development ○○○	Listening Comprehension ○○○	Early Reading ○○○	Addition & Subtraction ○○○	Earth & Space ○○○	Geography ○○○
Dramatic Play ○○○	Self Care & Safety ●●○	Sentence Formation ●●●	Letters ●●○	Geometry ●●●	Inquiry Skills ●●○	History ○○○
Invention & Imagination ○○○		Vocabulary ●●○	Phonic Skills ○○○	Measurement ●○○	Life Sciences ●●○	Maps & Directions ○○○
Music ○○○			Rhyming Words ●●○	Numbers ○○○	Properties of Objects & Materials ●○○	People & Environment ○○○
Reasoning & Problem-Solving ●●○			Spelling ○○○	Patterns & Classification ●●●		Rules & Fairness ○○○

One of the many unique features of **PBS KIDS PLAY!** is the ability to track your child's learning progress across the entire early childhood curriculum. To do this, click on the *Parents Center* > *Progress Chart* tab and select your child's screen name. His or her skill level for each game will have three small circles. When you see a circle filled in, it means that your child has passed a level in the relevant skill. You can then click the skill name for more educational information.

The screenshot shows the 'Parents Center' interface for 'PBS KIDS PLAY!'. A blue-bordered window titled 'Math > Patterns & Classification for Dash' is open. An arrow points to the title bar. The window is divided into two columns. The left column has a heading 'About Patterns & Classification' followed by a paragraph explaining patterns. Below this is a link to click on a level for a detailed description, followed by three buttons: 'Level 1 Description >>', 'Level 2 Description >>', and 'Level 3 Description >>'. The 'Level 3 Description >>' button is selected. Underneath is a section for 'Deductive and Additive Reasoning' with a paragraph and a note about children's abilities. The right column has a heading 'Demonstrated Skill Level for Dash' with a paragraph, a 'Recommended Game for Dash' section with a paragraph and a link to 'Inukshuk - Level 2 >>', and a 'Related Activities:' section with a paragraph and three links: 'Video: Dragon Costume >>', 'Video: Foot Prints >>', and 'Game: Shoe Shop Shuffle - Level 3 >>'. At the bottom right of the window is a 'Close' button. The footer of the window says '© 2008 Public Broadcasting Service. All rights reserved.'

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**PBS KIDS PLAY!** features a recommendations engine that highlights specific games to help your child develop new skills. Activities such as games, projects and episodes, in a variety of skill areas, are displayed based on your child's progress. This is designed to encourage a good balance of learning across skill areas.

**There are many ways to find recommended games for your child:**

- On the character bar, located at the bottom of your child's Home Room, click on a character icon. One game featuring this character and appropriate for your child's level will display above the character's head.
- Go to the Play Room, which is decorated with the blue blocks. Recommended games display by default. (If you're seeing only games from a single character, just click the smiley icon.)



- Go to the *Parents Center* > *Activity Search* tab and look for games with the smiley icon next to them.
- Go to the *Parents Center* > *Progress Chart* tab and click a skill area of interest to you. This will open a pop-up window that provides recommended activities in that skill area.

Three recommended games also display each time your child signs in.



# EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

**PBS KIDS PLAY!** is designed to develop essential preschool and kindergarten skills, divided into 7 core areas:

1. Creativity
2. Healthy Development
3. Language Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Science
7. Social Studies

*These 7 core areas cover more than 30 skill areas, each of which is addressed by leveling games and projects in **PBS KIDS PLAY!***

## **What is a leveling game?**

Games in **PBS KIDS PLAY!** each address one skill area that aligns with educational standards and benchmarks from McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning). Each game has three levels that enable a child to progress at his or her own pace. In order to complete a game level and move on to the next, a child will need to play the level a certain number of times and with a certain rate of success, which varies by game.

## **What is a project?**

In addition to leveling games, **PBS KIDS PLAY!** contains a number of interactive projects that encourage creative play. These projects allow children to exercise their imagination and engage in experimental use of objects, sometimes in unexpected ways. Projects in **PLAY!** explore art, music, drama, construction, and much more. Kids can save their projects and work on them over the course of days, weeks or months.

## **What are printables?**

**PBS KIDS PLAY!** provides dozens of fun, offline printable activities that reinforce the online learning objectives.

## **What educational videos are included?**

An extensive menu of episodes from leading **PBS KIDS** television series (plus online exclusives!) is accessible on demand in the TV Room.

# CREATIVITY



## **Art**

This skill is about creating and forming opinions about art. It also involves applying specific artistic techniques and using art as a vehicle for self-expression.



## **Dramatic Play**

Your child uses dramatic play (e.g., make-believe acting or dress-up) to understand the world around him or her and for self-expression. This skill also involves using props to make the drama more realistic.



## **Invention & Imagination**

Invention is about exploring ideas and approaching situations from a fresh or unexpected angle. Adults often see a world full of limitations. Children, on the other hand, are free to discover and imagine. They will naturally learn and invent through trial and error.



## **Music**

This skill is about learning to appreciate, understand and play music. It also involves using music as a means of self-expression and learning how music can change the “feel” of the nearby environment and the people in it.



## **Reasoning & Problem-Solving**

Early reasoning is about taking a systematic approach to cause and effect, in addition to continuing with trial and error learning. Children begin to make observations, accumulate data (evidence), and then draw conclusions.

# SAMPLE CREATIVITY GAMES



**GAME** – *Monkey See Monkey Do*

**SKILL** – *Reasoning & Problem Solving*

Your child arranges monkeys of different shapes, sizes and colors into a wide variety of formations. These formations grow increasingly complex as the game progresses, thus sharpening your child's observation and reasoning skills.

**PROJECT** – *Henrietta's Musical Kitchen*

**SKILL** – *Music*

Create rhythms from everyday objects with Henrietta Pussycat and X the Owl in the Neighborhood of Make-Believe. Choose from an ensemble of homemade instruments, including bottles, pans, pasta, and dry beans. Save your child's rhythm tracks!



**PROJECT** – *Make a Flake*

**SKILL** – *Art*

Your child will fold, cut, unfold, and decorate a virtual snowflake in this classic art project. Snowflakes are also perfect for showing the effects of reflective geometry. Your child can save his or her one-of-a-kind snowflakes!



# HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

## **Emotional Development**

Early childhood is the time to build a sense of security, self-confidence and trust in others. Familiar faces and places provide an important foundation for emotional growth. This area also covers understanding and controlling one's own emotions, as well as understanding the emotions of others.

## **Self Care & Safety**

This covers the basic rules of physical health and safety, as well as self-care habits such as sleep, cleanliness and hygiene, and dressing.

# SAMPLE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT GAMES



**GAME** – *My Journal*

**SKILL** – *Emotional Development*

Daniel Striped Tiger invites your child to make a journal with him. This is a special picture book about what your child did today and how it made him or her feel. Encourage your child to save each journal to share with you!

**GAME** – *Mission: Safety*

**SKILL** – *Self-care & Safety*

Can we be safe? YES WE CAN!

In this game, your child will help Bob and his friends practice important safety rules and identify unsafe situations. The safest way is the best way to get the job done.



# LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## ● **Listening and Comprehension**

Listening skills are essential for many tasks in life: asking questions, following directions, and understanding when people try to explain things. This skill area also includes understanding how different tones of voice convey meaning and may be appropriate or inappropriate in different situations.

## ● **Sentence Formation**

Sentence Formation includes the basic ingredients needed to speak in sentences. It involves organizing thoughts into a coherent message, understanding some basic rules of grammar and sentence structure, and also relies on other skills such as vocabulary.

## ● **Vocabulary**

Early vocabulary involves words that your child hears and, by hearing, begins to recognize and understand the meaning.

Vocabulary in **PBS KIDS PLAY!** includes receptive vocabulary, but does not include either sight words or expressive vocabulary. Sight words and word recognition are addressed under Spelling.

# SAMPLE LANGUAGE GAMES



**GAME** – *Rhyme & Reason*

**SKILL** – *Listening Comprehension*

Prince Tuesday is settling in for his bedtime story, but all of the storybook pictures are wrong! Your child sets things right by listening to rhymes that provide the necessary clues.

**GAME** – *Broken Billboards*

**SKILL** – *Sentence Formation*

A big windstorm has blown words off of a number of billboards on the Island of Sodor. Fortunately, with some assistance from Thomas and his friends, your child can help repair the billboards by finding the missing words.



**GAME** – *Savanna Hide & Seek*

**SKILL** – *Vocabulary*

The African savanna is the perfect place to play hide and seek. Children find animal friends hiding in this beautiful, natural landscape. They also practice vocabulary words that describe the location of each hidden animal.



# FOREIGN LANGUAGES

## **Foreign Languages**

Foreign language skills are becoming increasingly important in schools and workplaces. Exposure to foreign languages has also been shown to enhance both native language development and cognitive development.

Early childhood is the ideal time to introduce foreign languages. During the first five years of life, our brains are highly receptive to learning multiple languages. Thereafter, this critical window begins to close and it gets exponentially harder to learn.

Foreign languages in **PBS KIDS PLAY!** focus on simple words and phrases used in everyday activities, such as sleeping, eating and playing. Each foreign language has a core vocabulary of 60 words that children begin to recognize and understand through the Entertainment Immersion Method™ developed by Little Pim. (Help is available in English.)

**PBS KIDS PLAY!** currently offers game and video content for three foreign languages:

- **Chinese (Mandarin)**
- **French**
- **Spanish**



# METHODOLOGY



## STEP ONE: DEMONSTRATION

In each of the foreign language games, Pim, an animated panda friend, introduces a new word or phrase by repeatedly reading it aloud in the target language. At the same time, the player sees a full-screen visual and an animation that gives context.

## STEP TWO: ACQUISITION

Next, Pim presents the new vocabulary word or phrase in a game context. Each game provides several rounds of interactive play. In this round, the player needs to find pictures of Pim eating yummy corn. Again, the word or phrase is spoken aloud in the target language.



## STEP THREE: VALIDATION

Pim now tests the player's comprehension of the new vocabulary through game play. In this example, the player is asked to find the item that goes with a scene in the play house.

# LITERACY

- **Early Reading**  
Early Reading covers book knowledge and appreciation, an awareness of printed letters and words, and comprehension of stories. Children will start “pretend reading” (following along with pictures to prompt recall of the words) before progressing to word-by-word finger-point reading.
- **Letters**  
This skill is about knowing the alphabet, in uppercase and lowercase, and how letters are used to form sounds and words.
- **Phonics Skills**  
This skill is about understanding how language sounds work together to make words and about isolating individual language sounds. This can help your child decode and form words.
- **Rhyming Words**  
Rhyming is about an awareness of similar sounds in spoken language. Rhyming helps children learn more speech sounds and, therefore, understand more words.
- **Spelling**  
Early spelling includes not only spelling in the way adults think of it (putting together letters to make words), but also invented spelling and “sight words.” The latter are words for which your child has memorized the letters but does not know the sounds the letters actually represent.

# SAMPLE LITERACY GAMES



**GAME** – *Jack and the Beanstalk*

**SKILL** – *Early Reading*

At the top of the Beanstalk, the Giant is upset again and is throwing one GIANT tantrum. Your child helps Super Why calm the Giant by using their reading power.

**GAME** – *Surprise Party*

**SKILL** – *Rhyming Words*

Shhh! It's Mama, Papa and Lizzie's birthday, and Sister and Brother Bear are planning a surprise party for each of them. Your child uses their rhyming and phonics skills to help Brother and Sister get ready for the party.



**GAME** – *Princess and the Pea*

**SKILL** – *Early Reading*

Princess Presto is having a hard time sleeping on her big pile of mattresses. Your child uses their spelling skills to help her figure out what is wrong so that she can get a good night's sleep.



# MATH

## **Addition & Subtraction**

This covers a broad area beyond addition and subtraction, such as the concepts of grouping items, dividing groups into parts, and relative values.

## **Geometry**

Early geometry is about recognizing, creating and manipulating shapes. This skill area also covers "spatial sense" (i.e., understanding the positioning of objects relative to each other).

## **Measurement**

This skill area is about measurement concepts and applications, such as measuring height, weight, time and speed. Comparing and estimating measurements is also covered.

## **Numbers**

This includes counting, ordering and comparing numbers, as well as recognizing written numerals.

## **Patterns & Classification**

Patterns are everywhere: They can be found in nature and things (such as pictures, clothing and carpets), or in letters, numbers and other abstract symbols. This skill area is about recognizing patterns, classifying and sorting items, and using clues in patterns to draw conclusions.

# SAMPLE MATH GAMES



**GAME** – *Bakery Brouhaha*

**SKILL** – *Patterns & Classification*

George has mixed up the goods at the bakery and he needs your child to help him put things back in order. Along the way, your child will match shapes, sizes and patterns and, in Level 3, will practice estimation skills.

**GAME** – *Curious George to the Rescue*

**SKILL** – *Measurement*

Fire Rescue Squad 86 needs to get ready for their next mission. Your child can help George rescue the cats in the tree by dragging the correctly sized ladder to get to the right branch. In later rounds, your child will need to stack ladders together in order to reach the cats and save the day.



**GAME** – *Mission – Count It!*

**SKILL** – *Numbers*

*Mission: Count It!* helps your child learn numerical order and values while helping Bob at the recycling center.



# SCIENCE

## **Earth & Space**

This skill area covers early geology, hydrology (the water cycle), and astronomy concepts.

## **Inquiry Skills**

This is about understanding and applying scientific method: investigating, collecting information and recording the results.

## **Life Sciences**

This is a broad skill area focused on early biology and questions of great interest to young children: What is alive versus not alive? Where do animals live? How is each living thing different from one another? How do living things grow?

## **Properties of Objects & Materials**

This is about learning that materials have different physical properties (hard or soft, smooth or rough, etc.) and how people can change these properties. It also covers the basic physics of motion (how and why things move) and basic fluid dynamics (how liquids like water or oil move and behave).

## **Seasons & Weather**

This skill area covers understanding of the natural seasons, weather and other atmospheric conditions, and the language used to describe them. It also covers concepts of time in relation to the natural seasons.

## **Sound & Light**

This skill covers exploration of the sources of sound and light, and what can alter their qualities (e.g., how people, and other things, can make different kinds of sounds, lights and shadows).

# SAMPLE SCIENCE GAMES



**GAME** – *Magnifying Monkey*

**SKILL** – *Earth & Space*

Kids love to explore the world around them just like Curious George, who wants to test out his new telescope.

In this game your child will explore the heavens to learn about planets and constellations with George.

**GAME** – *Find It!*

**SKILL** – *Inquiry Skills*

Can we find it? Yes we can! Bob the Builder and his Can-Do Crew are working in the woods. Spud, the silly scarecrow, decided to follow them into the woods, but got lost on the way back. Bob and his machine friends need your child's help retracing his path through the woods to bring Spud home.



**GAME** – *Fur & Feathers*

**SKILL** – *Life Sciences*

Animals look very different when up close and when far away. Your child matches close-up pictures of animal fur, feathers and other coverings with pictures of the related animal. Features real National Geographic™ photos!

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## **Diversity**

This skill area is about exploring diverse cultures and appreciating the variations among people and societies – from how we dress or talk, to where we live or what festivals we celebrate.

## **History & Family**

History primarily covers understanding family life now and in the past, and that cultures and places change over time.

## **Maps & Directions**

This skill area develops an understanding that maps represent actual places, and also covers basic mapping and graphical representation of places.

## **People & Environment**

This addresses how people can change the physical environment in both positive and negative ways.

## **Rules & Fairness**

This skill area is about sharing, understanding rules and why we have rules. It also covers the concept of fairness and applying rules equally.



# SAMPLE SOCIAL STUDIES GAMES



**GAME** – *Family Tree*

**SKILL** – *History & Family*

In this project, your child learns about the Berenstain Bears family tree and can discover something about his or her own family history along the way!

**PROJECT** – *Mission – Build It!*

**SKILL** – *People & Environment*

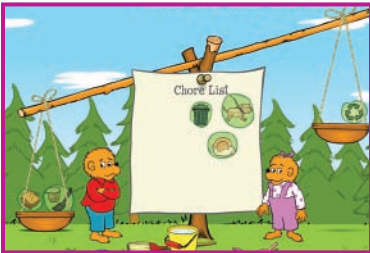
With the help of Bob the Builder, your child will build his or her dream homes in any of three locations. Your child plays the part of designer, builder and landscape artist in an environmentally friendly way.



**GAME** – *Chore List*

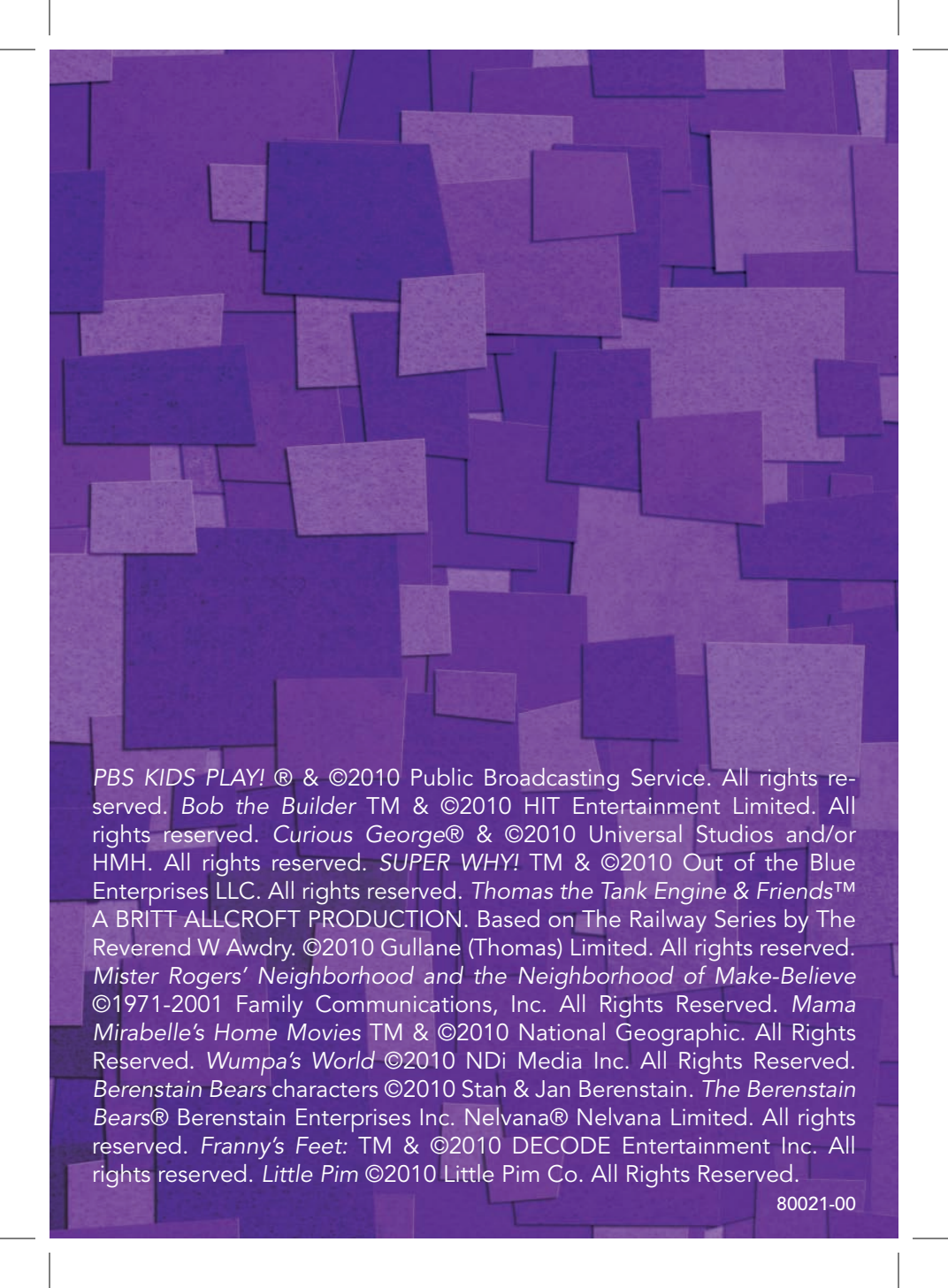
**SKILL** – *Rules & Fairness*

Brother and Sister Bear need help balancing their chore list to make it fair for both siblings. This game challenges your child to address issues of fairness in dealing with siblings and peers.









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