



tinkergarten®

AT HOME



WEEK OF MAY 10

This Week's Focus: **Going on a Hunt!**

The thrill of discovery engages kids of all ages. Going on a walk may feel tired 8 weeks into shelter-in-place, but going on a “hunt” never fails to excite. This week, pick from a few ready-made scavenger hunts designed to print and go. Scroll to find a handful of other, easy ways to set up hunting and sorting play for your explorers this week

Step 1: Choose a hunt.

Print one of the ready-made hunt grids linked below.

Or, fill in a blank “make-your-own” grid below, and include what is exciting to spy in your outdoor or indoor space as well as what interests your kiddo.

Step 2: Invite kids to the hunt.

Once in your hunting space, say something like, “Guess what I found? A special hunt kids can do, right in our {insert place}! Do you want to see it?!”

Unveil the sheet with an air of excitement, and read the directions together. Wonder, “What kinds of things could you find using this list?”

Pull out a pencil or crayon to check or draw with, then let the hunting begin. Your kiddo might dive right into it. If not, search together for the first couple of items and show them how to check off what they find.

Step 3: Step aside and let the play roll!

Once your child is on a roll, step aside and let them go! Or, enjoy the hunting together. You can also print out a sheet for each of you so you build independence as you hunt side by side.



PARENT TIP

Remember to keep these three things in mind:'

- 1 Offer hunts as 'invitations'.
- 2 Give kids the freedom to hunt their way.
- 3 Don't focus on completing the grid. It's the process of hunting that matters!

— Download THE HUNT that's right for you! —

[Nature Hunt \(preschoolers\)](#)

[Sensory Hunt \(preschoolers\)](#)

[Nature Hunt \(school-age kids\)](#)

[Sensory Hunt \(school-age kids\)](#)

[Make Your Own Hunt \(4x4 Grid\)](#)





Leaning into the Learning

Framing an experience as a ‘hunt’ piques kids’ curiosity and gets them to slow down, focus, and use all of their senses. Kids feel joy and satisfaction when something they see on paper matches with something they see in real life. And that very act of matching is how kids learn to make connections and categorize ideas—really big life skills.



Scavenger hunts can offer a great and playful way for kids to develop these skills, but there are other approaches that drive at the same goals. The following ideas also help kids learn connection making and categorizing and do so outside of the traditional scavenger hunt activity.



See pages 3 and 4 for additional ideas for toddlers, preschoolers and school-age kids.

Babies: Discovery!

As babies explore their world, they discover that each object has its own unique set of characteristics—size, shape, weight, texture, color (and even taste). With experience, babies are able to make connections between objects with similar features (i.e. things that are round will roll).

Set up: Place objects from around the house or outside in a bin.

Offer an invitation: Put the bin of objects within your baby’s reach.

Support and extend play:

- Try offering a variety of materials that are all the same color, or all a similar shape or texture. As baby plays with the materials, offer descriptive words such as “soft,” “round” and “heavy.”
- Add rice, beans or sand to the bin to hide objects and invite baby to uncover, bury and uncover again.





Toddlers: Sorting Fun

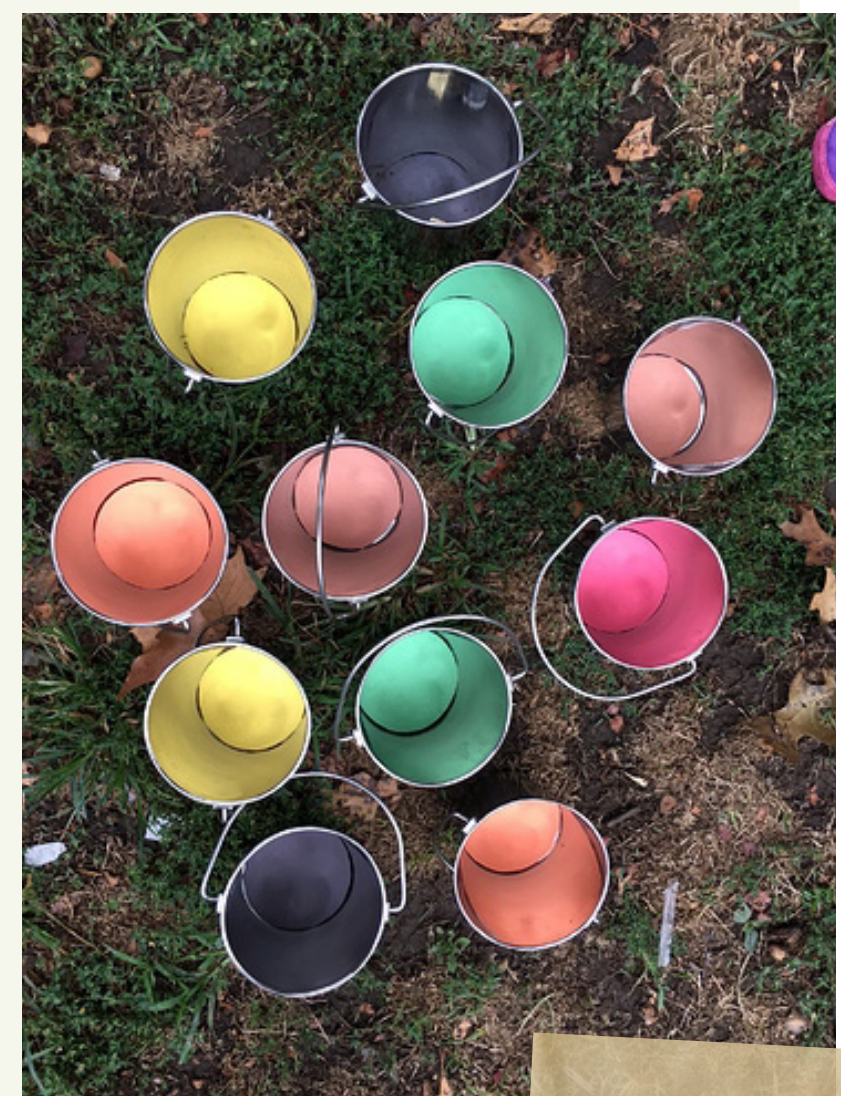
Toddlers explore the idea of ‘sameness’ when they line up their toys or arrange the food items on their plate. Their delight in creating a sense of order with objects is a terrific opening for more opportunities to sort. This activity kicks off with sorting by color.

Set up: Create color sorting ‘targets’: Gather pieces of colored paper, felt, cloth or use markers or crayons to cover a large part of a few pieces of paper. Place the targets on the ground, on the floor, or on the bottom of various bins or buckets.

Offer an invitation: Model placing a few objects onto their matching colors. Watch to see how children respond.

Support and extend play:

- Once children have spent some time on this activity, encourage them to find their own colorful items around the house to add to the collection. (They may just do it on their own!)
- Add variations to the sorting play by creating sorting ‘targets’ for shape or size.



Preschoolers: Stuff to Sort



When kids get to be 3 and 4 years old, sorting, categorizing and classifying really kicks into gear. This set of skills opens up a whole world of opportunities for play that are possible anywhere and with virtually anything you have on hand.

Set up: Collect a bunch of objects from inside and/or outside the house and put them in a large bin or box. (You or your kids can do the collecting, or you can do it together!)

Offer an invitation: Place the box of objects down and observe aloud, “I see lots of blue objects. There are a bunch of round objects. I wonder if there are any square objects?” Identifying and sorting will naturally emerge from there.

Support and extend play:

- After a couple of rounds (with different categories to sort by) you may find that kids are creating their own categories and sorting by them.
- If they’re not, you can wonder about that idea with them and see if they come up with any other categories themselves.



School-Age Kids: Design a Hunt

Want to authentically engage school-age kids in play and learning? Empower them with tools, let them focus on their interests and offer them the chance to set their own challenges! To help with all of the above, we have created a blank, printable ‘Make Your Own Hunt’ sheet. Once they create their own categories, they can take the hunt themselves, or with a sibling, or they can give it to others to take too!

Set up: Print the blank version of the ‘Make Your Own Hunt’ sheet for your kid(s). Have things to draw with nearby.

Offer an invitation: “Look at this blank scavenger hunt sheet! What categories could you fill it with? Could you make a hunt that stumps me?”

Support and extend play:

- If kids need help deciding on categories, you can ask questions like the following to support them in their process:
 - Where will you do your hunt?
 - What kinds of things can you see there? Touch there? Smell there? Hear there?
 - Are there special objects to find? What clue might help someone find it?



Literacy Connections

This week our featured read-aloud features *The Button Box* by Margarette S. Reid. Every time this little boy visits his grandma, his favorite thing to do is sort through her button box. He loves the feel of the buttons, the sound they make when they clack against each other, and the amazing shapes, colors and stories of each of them. [Click here to watch and listen!](#)

Share Your Experiences!

Join us LIVE on Tuesday, May 12th on the [Tinkergarten Facebook page](#). Share photos and stories of your experiences and time outside this week using #tinkergarten and #outdoorsall4. Share in our free [#OutdoorsAll4 Facebook](#) group, and we may just feature your photos in next week’s email!

About Tinkergarten

Tinkergarten® is your guide to purposeful outdoor play—the kind of play that helps kids become healthy, capable and confident learners.