

PLAYING AT HOME

This section, which is filled with myriad opportunities to explore different art forms, supports family engagement. You'll find activities and creativity pages for the whole family that will help build and foster a lifelong love of the arts. Now, get ready to create a host of masterpieces!

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IT'S BACKWARDS DAY!

Materials Needed: Magic Backwards Day hats, music, a bell to signify the end of Backwards Day

Now it's time for you to be the student and let your students become the experts. Think of it as "Opposite Day." Ready for some fun shenanigans? Let's go!

Note: The structure of the activity below should have a feeling of chaos.

You know your students and their abilities best. Feel free to accommodate your students as needed.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How did this activity make you behave differently in our learning space?

What did you learn most from this activity?

What was your favorite part about Backwards Day?

5. Finally, ring a bell that signifies the end of Backwards Day. Have everyone join you in a circle to talk about what Backwards Day was like.
4. Then, have students teach you how to count to 20, but backwards, by telling them: "I want to learn how to count from 20! Can you teach me?"
3. Next, have your students teach you the alphabet, but they must teach it to you backwards. **Note:** *This can be done in written worksheet form, or you can choose to recite the alphabet backwards while attaching a word to each letter (i.e., Z = Zebra, Y = Yellow and so on).*
2. When Backwards Day begins, have special "Backwards Day" hats ready for every student. As they enter the learning space, they'll find that their supplies are facing the opposite way, centers are out of place, only some of the lights are on, dance music is playing, and you are dressed like a young kid! Tell the students: I am now the student and you are my teachers. I found these magical hats. They came with a note which reads,

"Whoever wears this hat carries the knowledge of all that came before them! You now have the power to teach, but just for one day—Backwards Day! Remember this: When the bell tolls, Backwards Day will be no more."

1. Prepare for this role switch by telling your students, for example -Next Monday, we're going to trade places. We're going to have our very own Backwards Day during which:
 - *You're going to wear your clothes inside out!*
 - *Write your name backwards all day!*
 - *Walk backwards whenever you move around the learning space!*
 - *"Hello" means "goodbye" and "goodbye" means "hello!"*

Note: *These are just examples. Feel free to create other directives that work best for you and your students!*

WHAT'S PANDA'S STORY?

Panda bears are fascinating creatures. Work with an adult to learn all about the life of a panda! What do pandas do when they wake up? How do they get ready for their day? What do they do all day? How do they sleep?

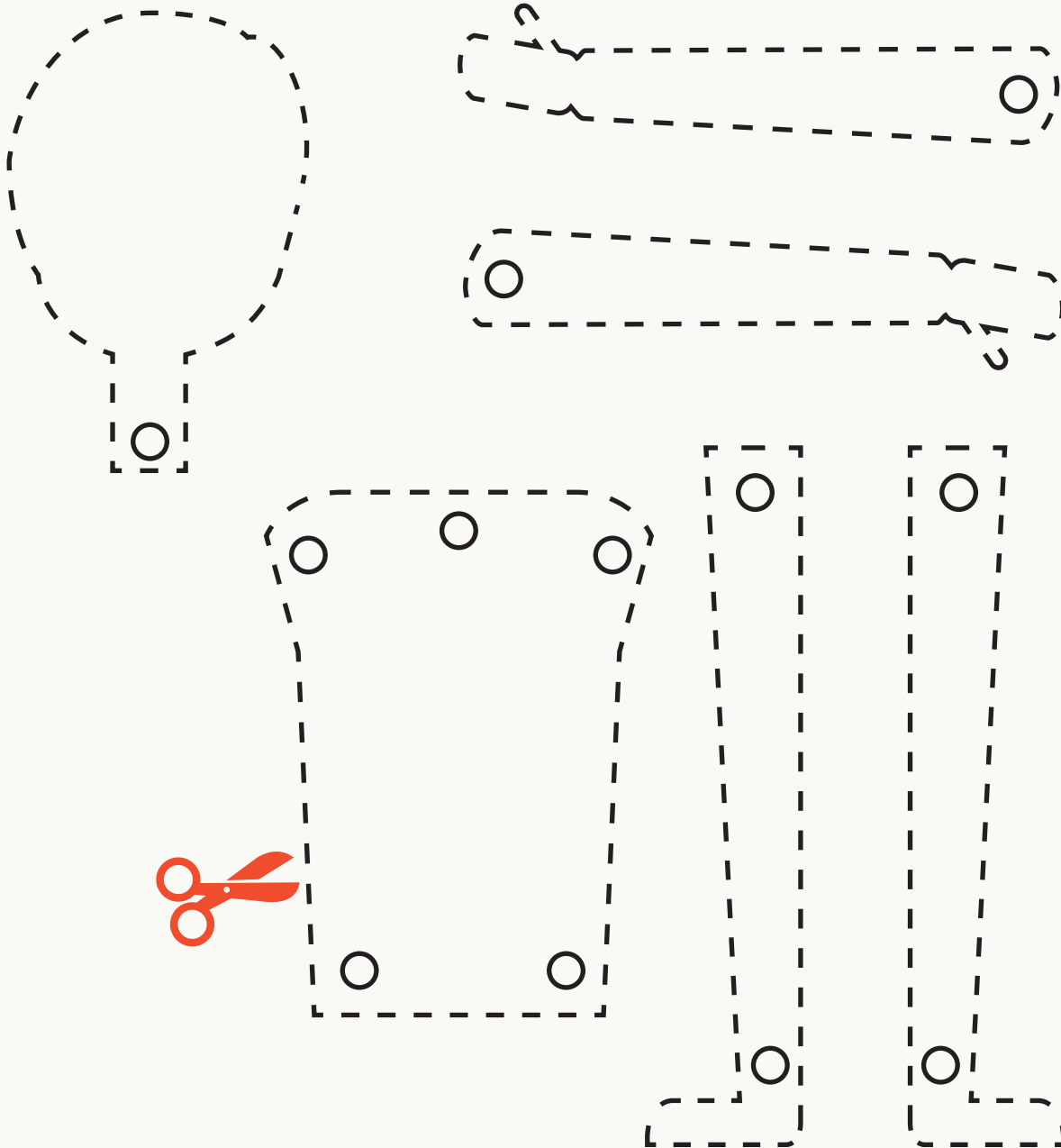
Use the boxes below to draw a panda's daily routine from start to finish!

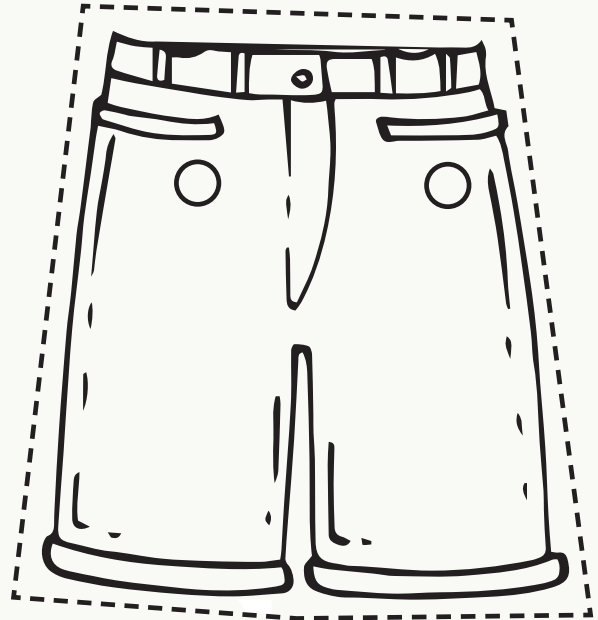
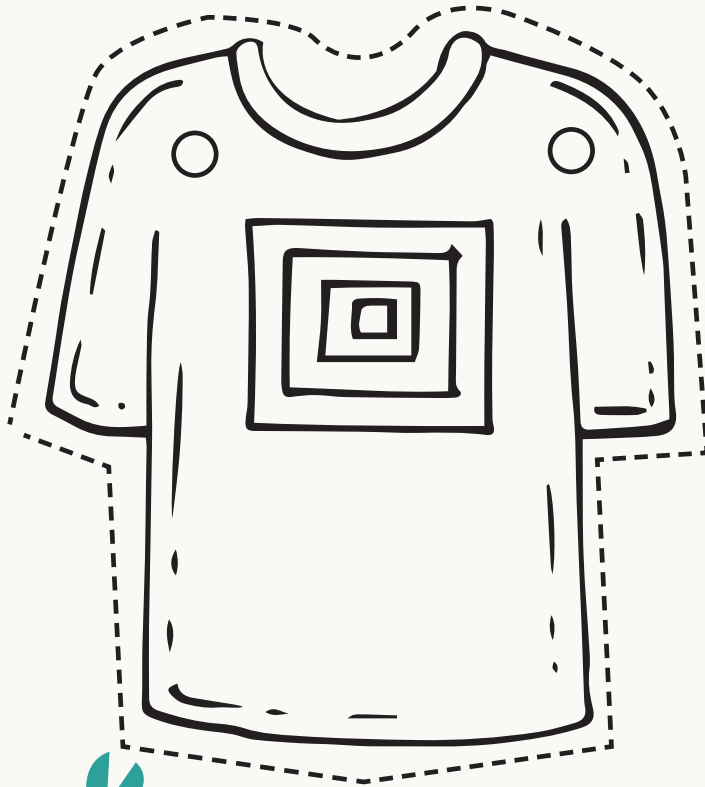
My panda's name is _____.



MY PUPPET AND ME

It's time to become a puppet master! With an adult's help, cut out the figure below, grab some brass fasteners and create your very own puppet! Then, use the clothing items on the following page, or design your own, to dress your new puppet friend!



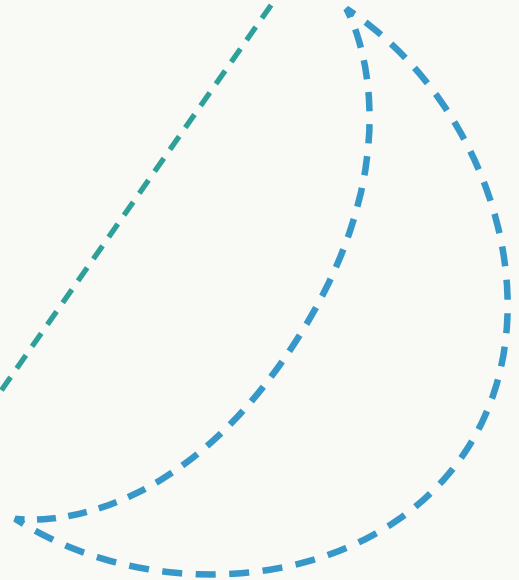
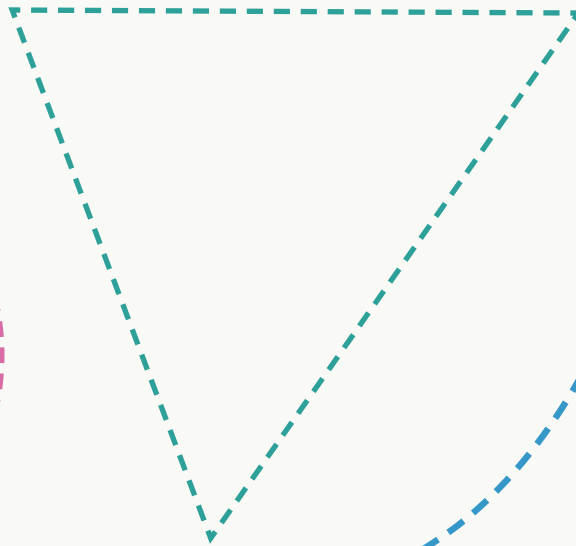
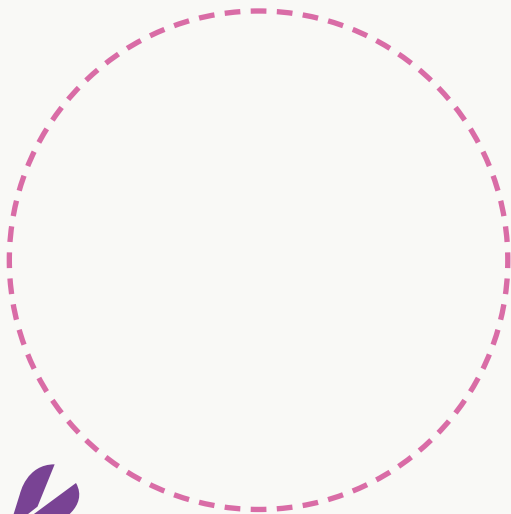
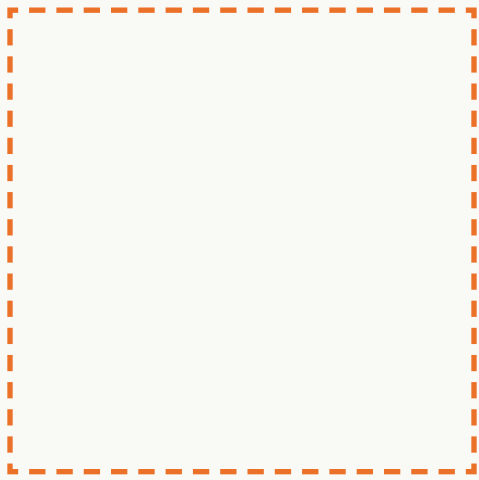




BE A MIXER-UPPER

Below, you'll see a host of shapes: square, circle, triangle, half moon and rectangle.
How many ways can you make a person, a place or an object out of these shapes?
Study the shapes, color them in, cut them out and begin to create.

Once you've made your final shape, tape it all together
and have your teacher display it in your home or learning space!



Unit Plan Brainstorms

MAKING LEMONADE (THEATER, SOCIAL STUDIES)

Team up to become clowning duos! Give each team a problem to solve and tell them that they must solve their problems in a funny way (i.e., Partner A hurt Partner B's feelings and must win Partner B's friendship back?!), but they must do this without using words! Then, have each pair showcase their hilarious, wordless problem-solving scene! Afterward, have a discussion about the importance of finding the "funny" in a negative situation. Ask students questions like: *How do we work together to help each other? What did we learn from each other?*

COLORS (COLOR, SCIENCE, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS)

Yellow, orange, red, green and purple are all colors of the rainbow. Go on a color scavenger hunt with your students to find examples of each color in your learning space! Then, when you've finished, brainstorm what other objects come in yellow, orange, red, green and purple!

ANIMALS (MOVEMENT, SCIENCE)

Use some at-home time as an opportunity to explore the animal kingdom! *What are your students' favorite animals? Write a list with defining characteristics (i.e. color, origin, sounds, etc.). What do these animals have in common and what makes them different? Get on your feet and explore each animal's stature and styles of movement. Discover the sounds they make and how they interact with each other and the world around them!*

RECYCLE ART (SCIENCE, VISUAL ART)

Ask your students to place reusable items (such as bottle caps, soda can tabs, candy wrappers, yogurt tops, etc.) in the Recycling Jar. When the jar is full, use those items to create a collage as a group! Have a discussion about recycling and how this practice could benefit your home, neighborhood and the world!

MAKING SENSE (THEATER, SCIENCE)

An inquisitive mind and the five senses work together when exploring the unknown. To encourage exploration, transform your learning space into a texture playground. First, create different texture centers around the room. Then, have students use their five senses to determine what's in each center. Encourage students to focus on one sense at a time, evaluating how engaging each sense makes them feel by asking questions like: *What does it feel like? What words would you use to describe the texture? What does the texture look like to you? Remind you of? What does this scent remind you of? How many senses are you using in this center?* Then, have a discussion about the experience of exploring different scents and textures.

Unit Plan Brainstorms

HEAR THAT? NATURE CALLS! (THEATER, SCIENCE)

In a concrete jungle of nearly 8.5 million people, nature walks are often a rarity. But they're an excellent way to get kids into the great outdoors, whether it be on school grounds or at a local park! Nature walks give kids opportunities to learn more about science, geography and art; they are a fantastic way to observe plants and animals as well. Take your students on an outdoor expedition through a nearby green space. Put on your park ranger hat and guide your little voyagers in a nature observation by asking questions like: *What do you see down low on the ground? What do you see up high towards the sky? What colors do you see and what sounds do you hear? How do these observations make you feel?* After you've finished your outdoor exploration, head back into the learning space and have a group discussion about what the kids experienced. As they're describing their outdoor adventures, scribe words you hear, especially words or phrases that describe exactly what they saw (i.e., green leaves, tall trees, fluffy clouds). Using your students' experience and the list of scribed words, play alongside your students to create a "Celebration of Nature" dance in which everyone embodies different things found in nature and tells the story of their great, fun, playful outdoor expedition!

THE PLAYFUL BATTLE OF FORT COZY (VISUAL ART)

Recreate the great outdoors, indoors! How? Build a fort meant for your students' cozy escape! In the rush of hectic city life, kids will appreciate the rare opportunity to create a space all their own. To start, gather materials like large cardboard boxes to create your fort, giving students the opportunity to use other open-ended materials to create doors, windows and other decorations they'd like to make their cozy structure their own. Alternatively, you could drape sheets or blankets over a series of chairs or pile them on the floor, stack pillows atop one another and include puppets or stuffed animals for companions inside the fort. The object here is to give students agency to use their imagination to design this space. After all, this fort is a place where, in their home away from home, they can feel at ease. Next, recreate the feeling of being outdoors by making cutouts of trees, leaves or even hanging handmade clouds from the ceiling above their fort. To add an extra layer to this re-creation, find playful, realistic outdoor sound effect playlists on streaming services like Spotify or YouTube to help feed their imagination while they're building and relaxing in their fort. Oh, and don't forget the most important part of an indoor fort—picture books about exploring the great outdoors!

ACK! IT'S GAK! (SCIENCE)

Take your students on a journey of wonder through discovery, object play and icky sticky goo! Turn your space into a science lab, gather your gooeey ingredients together and work with your students to create slippery, slimey (and perhaps sweet-smelling) goo! Supply small jars for your students so that they can fill them up and take home their very own ooey goo! When you've got your supplies ready to go, use the link below to guide you through the goo-making process! Use this helpful link as a guide! <http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/gak-attack/>

Unit Plan Brainstorms

THE RAINBOW CONNECTION (SCIENCE, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS)

Incorporate this spirit of exploration into your learning space with a rainbow week! Study the rainbow together as a group and explore a color a day for each day of the week. As you collect examples of the different colors, write them down on a rainbow board or create a colorful collage! Have students find colorful objects at home for a show-and-tell and wear clothing reflecting the day's color theme. Recount an adventure where they found a particular color or make colorful snacks; the week can culminate in a rainbow celebration featuring food of each color explored. For a final project, make a rainbow oobleck out of water, cornstarch and food coloring.

