



Reading aloud, singing, doing fingerplays and engaging young children in conversation are all ways that parents and caregivers lay the foundation for young children to become successful readers and writers. The following activities were created to promote literacy with young children through hands-on, real-life experiences that will stimulate learning.

Have fun and “Grow a Reader!”

## IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT TOOL SAFETY!

- Talk to children about tool safety.
- Some tools are heavy or sharp and should only be handled by adults.
- Children should talk to adults before using tools.
- Adults should supervise the use of the tools.



## WHAT IS A TOOL?

### Talk about tools

- Do children know the names of some tools?
- Do they know what tools are for?
- Is a hammer a tool? Is a rubber band a tool?
- Do all tools have handles?

*The following definition may help as you talk with children about tools.*

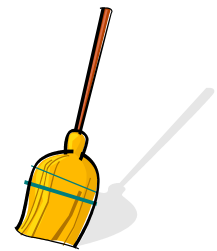
**Tool:** A handheld device that aids in accomplishing a task.

## TOOL HUNT

Take a walk inside and outside your home carrying an empty tool box. Ask children to hunt for safe tools that can be carried in the tool box.

**Ideas:** pencil, pen, safety pin, paper clip, key, pencil sharpener, yard stick, clipboard, tape measure, hammer, nail, screw, screwdriver, basket, trowel, wrench, pliers, flashlight, brushes of all kinds (hair and paint), hair clips, dust pan, hole punch, stapler, tape, string, funnel, ruler, level, garlic press, spatula, fork, spoon, chopsticks, nutcracker, tweezers, mug, thimble, toothbrush, cookie cutter, hair dryer, nail clippers, grocery bag.

**Bigger tools that can be found include:** watering can, broom, mop, bucket, shovel, rake, hoe, wheelbarrow.



## SORTING TOOLS

Using what you found on your tool hunt...

**Sort tools by size.** Large, medium and small.

**Sort tools by where they can be found:** Inside, outside or by rooms in the house (kitchen, bathroom, study, garage, etc.). Children will notice that some tools can be found in more than one place (a broom, for example).

**Sort tools into two groups.** Tools with handles and tools without handles.

**Collect** an assortment of tools (i.e. hammer, scissors, egg beater, shovel, fork, ruler) and non-tools (i.e. food, clothing, CD or DVD, magazine, stuffed animal, toy) and ask children to **sort them into two groups**.



## “TEN TRUSTY TOOLS” GAME

Collect ten different tools to put into the middle of a circle. Talk about the name and function of each tool before playing the game.

Give each child a pretend dollar bill and together with the children say the poem:

**Ten trusty tools at the hardware store.**

**Ten trusty tools, who are they for?**

**Along came \_\_\_\_\_ with some money to pay,**  
*(child's name)*

**He/she bought a \_\_\_\_\_ and went away.**  
*(tool)*

Give each child a turn to buy an item at the hardware store.  
Ask the child what he or she plans to do with the purchased tool!

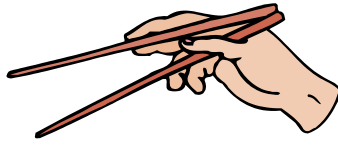
## OFFICE SPACES

**Create an office environment for dramatic play.**

Paper and envelopes of various sizes, colors and shapes can be displayed on a table or shelf. Have baskets with a variety of office “tools” available for play including markers, pens and pencils, hole punches, rubber stamps and inkpads, stickers, scissors, tape and staplers.

Props for office play may include dress-up clothes (suits and ties, necklaces, hats, clip-on earrings), old cell phones, pretend credit cards, clipboards, planners, calendars, briefcases, suitcases (for business trips!), tickets, maps, index cards, newspapers and a cash register.

Asking children what kind of office they would like to create will help with the choice of props. Children may want to use overturned boxes to make their own individual desks. Shoe boxes can be used for shelves.



## USING KITCHEN TOOLS TO MAKE SNACKS

Help children use **melon scoops** to make ball-shaped watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew snacks.

Teach children to safely use **carrot peelers**. Children will love peeling carrots for a healthy snack. Supervise this activity.

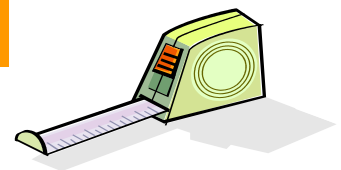
A **plastic knife** can be used by children to cut banana and strawberry slices to add to homemade fruit salad.

Cracking walnuts with a **nutcracker** is a fun challenge for young children.

**Rolling pins, spatulas, wooden spoons, measuring spoons and measuring cups** are all useful tools that can be used for cooking projects with children. Remind children that the **fork, spoon and chopsticks** they eat with are also tools!

## MEASUREMENT ACTIVITIES

(Use tape measures, yard stick, rulers and clipboard)



**Measure children's heights** against a wall or doorway. Mark heights with tape labeled with the children's names. Use words like tall, short, taller and shorter to compare heights.

**Measure blocks of various sizes.** Compare the different blocks shapes and sizes while measuring.

**What else can be measured?** A clipboard and pencil can be used for making notes about measurements.

## TOOL SOUNDS AND SONGS

- Invite a handyman to share the contents of his or her tool box with children.
- Visit a local bike shop and have a repairman demonstrate how tools are used to fix bicycles.
- After seeing (and listening to!) real tools being used, ask children to help you make up a song about tool sounds using “Wheels on the Bus” as the tune.

Some suggested tool sounds:

**The hammer in the shop goes “bang, bang, bang.”**

**The socket wrench goes “click, click, click.”**

**The drill in the shop goes “brrrr, brrrr, brrrr.”**

### *Literacy Connection*

After children have created their own tool sounds, have fun reading the book Old MacDonald Had a Woodshop to compare the tools and sounds from that book with their own.

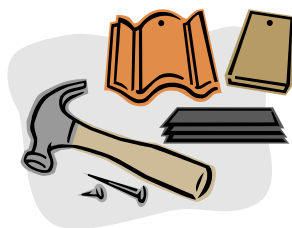
## JENNY WORKS WITH ONE HAMMER

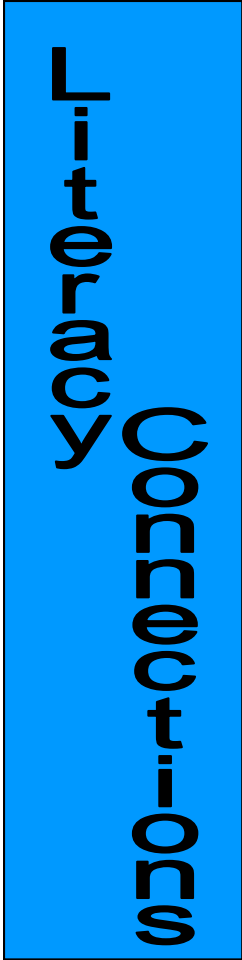
(an action rhyme)

**Jenny works with one hammer, one hammer, one hammer,  
Jenny works with one hammer, now she works with two. (Repeat until 5)**

*Movement:* Verse 1: pretend to hammer with one hand  
Verse 2: pretend to hammer with two hands  
Verse 3: above plus hammer one foot  
Verse 4: above plus hammer both feet  
Verse 5: do all of above and nod head as fifth hammer!  
End with “now she goes to sleep!”

Variation: Substitute the children’s names instead of “Jenny”.





Bring books to life with these simple ideas that highlight early literacy skills.

### **Toolbox Twins** by Lola Schaefer

**Presentation Notes:** A boy and his dad use a variety of tools to fix things around the house. Point out the tool vocabulary words in colored text. Have examples of some tools to show the children and ask them to imagine and talk about what kind of jobs each tool may be used for.

**Skills Featured:** Vocabulary, Narrative

### **Albert the Fix-it-Man** by Janet Lord

**Presentation Notes:** When something is broken in the neighborhood, Albert is there to fix it, but when he catches a cold his friends come to fix him. Talk about the different tools Albert uses to do his jobs. Ask children to predict what will happen once the fix-it-man gets sick. Ask them for suggestions to help Albert feel better.

**Skill Featured:** Narrative

### **Old MacDonald had a Woodshop** by Lisa Shulman

**Presentation Notes:** A familiar song is given a new twist as Ms. MacDonald works in her woodshop. Encourage children to make sounds with you and even think up movements as you sing this book. Ask children what they think the old sheep and her friends are making.

**Skills Featured:** Print Motivation, Phonological Awareness

### **Tools** by Ann Morris

**Presentation Notes:** From Peru to Portugal, people use tools to make their lives easier. Full of photographs from around the world; share this book as an introduction to a discussion about tools. Use the action words to spark conversation. For example, what other tools help us cut, dig or fix things?

**Skills Featured:** Narrative, Vocabulary

**Hammer Soup** by Ingrid and Dieter Schubert

**Presentation Notes:** Kate and Bruce are unlikely friends with opposite personalities, but in the end they discover that they have much to learn from each other. Compare this story with the classic folktale **Stone Soup**. Read this story through with minimal interruptions so that children can hear the entire sequence of events. Use a large pot and hammer to pretend you are making your own version of hammer soup. Ask children to suggest ingredients.

**Skills Featured:** Narrative, Print Motivation

**MORE GREAT BOOKS!**

**I Love Tools** by Philemon Sturges

**Let's Build a Clubhouse** by Marilyn Singer

**Tools** by Taro Miura

**Workshop** by Andrew Clements

**Tool Book** by Gail Gibbons

**Stone Soup** by Ann McGovern