



# Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids

Spring 2023 Family Newsletter

## Let's Make Spring Faces!

Making spring faces is lots of fun!

What is a spring face? It's a face you make from things you find in nature.

- **First, take a trip**—to your yard, the park, or just outside your door. Don't forget to bring a bag or box with you.
- **Next, gather your supplies:** pebbles, leaves, grass, twigs, and any other little pieces of nature you can find.
- **Once you're back home,** spread all your treasures out on the table. Then place a sheet of paper, a paper plate, or an oval made from play dough in front of you. Use your bits of nature to make a face. Maybe your face has flower petal eyes, a pebble smile, moss hair, and twig ears. There's no right or wrong way to make your spring face. The only limit is your imagination!



Once you've made your spring face, take the time to look it over. What color are the eyes? What shape is the mouth? How many different items did you use to make your face?

Take the time to give your creation a name and make up a story about them. Where do they live? What do they do for fun? What do they like to eat? Your story would make a great addition to your SPARK journal! **If you email a photo of your spring face to your SPARK parent partner, we might even post it on our Facebook page!**

If you want to keep your spring face, you can glue the items onto your plate (or press them down into the play dough). If not, take the items off, and you'll be ready to make another face that's completely different.

## Letters to Practice Now

**Dd** (daffodil, daisy, dandelion)

**Mm** (March, May, mother)

**Pp** (puddle, petal, plant)



**Oh no! All the mice are late for the mouse party! Do you see any mice on this page?**



## What We're Reading Now

If you're in the three-year-old program, you might be reading *Old Black Fly*.

Sorting and patterning are lots of fun to do with your child. At the end of the day, simply ask your child to help clean up by placing toys in one basket, books in another, and games in a third. You can also keep any three-year-old busy by giving them paper and stickers. Ask your child to place all the green stickers at the top of the page and all the blue stickers on the bottom, or to group all the big stickers together and then group all the small stickers together.

Patterning is also easy to work into your day. Ask your child to place one spoon, one fork, and one napkin at each place setting. Then say the parts of the pattern together as you walk around the table.

## Go online to learn more!

- Hear the story set to music: [bit.ly/obg3345](https://bit.ly/obg3345)
- Sing *The Sorting Song* with Cookie Monster and Ernie: [bit.ly/3VrDv8y](https://bit.ly/3VrDv8y)
- Learn about patterns with this simple but engaging video: [bit.ly/3p2b9pi](https://bit.ly/3p2b9pi)
- Sort the dinosaurs with PBS kids: [bit.ly/3nnm902](https://bit.ly/3nnm902)



If you're in the four-year-old program, you might be reading *Mouse Paint*.

It's so important to know our colors before kindergarten starts—both the primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) and the secondary colors that we create when we mix those primary colors together (orange, green, and purple).

By teaching your child colors, you're teaching her brain to understand what her eyes see. That strengthens her vocabulary, her observation skills, and her creativity.

As with many concepts we learn in SPARK, color is around us all day long. That makes it easy to keep the learning going! Challenge your child to find the blue envelope in the mailbox or the yellow flower that popped up in the grass. Mealtime is filled with color, too: play *I Spy* at the dinner table or when looking in the pantry. If you happen to have food coloring on hand, it's fun to mix colors into a clear glass of water and stir to see how they change.

## Go online to learn more!

- Here's a fun retelling of the story with mouse puppets and paint cans: [bit.ly/3L6Abc](https://bit.ly/3L6Abc)
- Learn about the three primary colors in this captivating stop-motion video from Sesame Street and OK Go: [bit.ly/3njMkEH](https://bit.ly/3njMkEH)
- Play the Color Dance Game: [bit.ly/3niQw7P](https://bit.ly/3niQw7P)
- Sing the *Mix the Colors* song: [bit.ly/44mKQuc](https://bit.ly/44mKQuc)



How many mice can you find on this page?



## The TSS: Your Readiness Guide

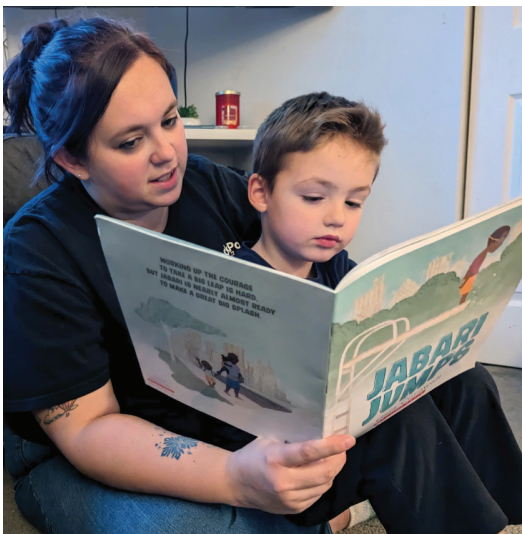
The Transition Skills Summary, or TSS, is a super-helpful form. The information on the TSS shows you, at a glance, how ready your child is for kindergarten. The TSS lists skills that are important for school readiness. For each area, your child's score will indicate whether they are beginning to develop the skill, are in the process of developing that skill, or are on track with that skill.

As kindergarten approaches, your SPARK parent partner will share with you the information from your child's TSS. Once you understand which TSS skill areas your child may need to focus on, you can visit [bit.ly/3VQNBDD](https://bit.ly/3VQNBDD) for videos showing easy activities that will strengthen those skills.

Your parent partner will also share this information with your child's kindergarten teacher before school begins. That way, the teacher will be able to plan the best ways to support your child's learning.



## Storytime for Cooper and Mom



In this picture, we see Cooper and his mom snuggle up to read *Jabari Jumps*. This story has become a fast favorite because of its wonderful, relatable storyline. While his mom reads, Cooper often comments, “Hey—I do that too!” or “I know how that feels.”

It's important for children to make connections to characters in stories by finding similarities between themselves and the characters. By doing this, they develop empathy. Empathy helps children learn to socialize and have positive relationships.

As Cooper demonstrates awareness of his emotions, he can begin to respond to others in caring ways. He can show concern for their needs.

**SPARK lessons focus on social skills because they are important for school success, and also because our world needs more carers, helpers, and empathizers.**





## Call and Response Songs

*They teach important listening skills.*

Call and response songs require communication between a leader and a follower. The leader sings or says a phrase or a question, and the follower repeats the phrase or answers the question.

Call and response songs strengthen children's memories and help them learn about rhythm and rhyme. They also help children learn to cooperate and follow directions, and they're a lot of fun! It's good to get children used to participating in call and response, because teachers often use it when trying to get children's attention in the classroom.

Here's one classic call and response song. You can watch it here: [bit.ly/3LM4F6V](https://bit.ly/3LM4F6V)

### We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Call: **We're going on a bear hunt** Response: *We're going on a bear hunt*

**I've got my binoculars** *I've got my binoculars*

**I'm not scared** *I'm not scared*

**Ooh, look at that tall, wavy grass** *It's so tall*

**We can't go over it** *We can't go over it*

**We can't go under it** *We can't go under it*

**We're just gonna have to go through it** *We're going to have to go through it*

Together: **Swish, swish, swish, swish**



Other call and response songs include *Down by the Bay* ([bit.ly/raffbay](https://bit.ly/raffbay)) and *Who Fed the Chickens?* ([bit.ly/3Ljcz4](https://bit.ly/3Ljcz4))

## Let's be Social!

Follow us for lots of fun activities and highly shareable content:

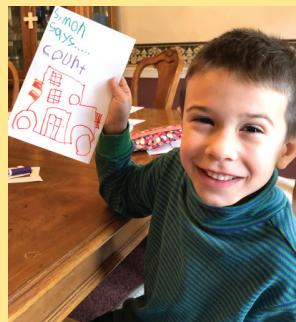
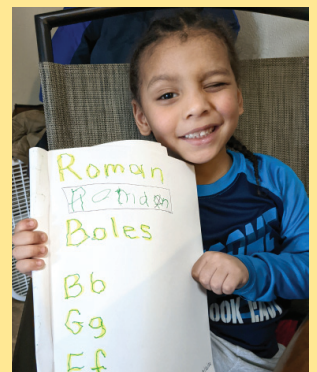
- Facebook:

@SPARKOhio

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- Instagram: SPARKOhio

- YouTube: SPARK Ohio



It's the end of the newsletter! How many total mice did you find? Text your name, your answer, and a picture to **330-949-9093** (or email to [dbunner@ecresourcecenter.org](mailto:dbunner@ecresourcecenter.org)), and you'll get a gift at your next SPARK lesson! 