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Organize Your Classroom Space

Get the most from your classroom space with these ideas!

Traffic Patterns

Take a look at your classroom to see how easily the children are able to move through daily routines. If there is a pileup in your doorway every morning and afternoon as the children enter and exit the room, it might be time for some changes. Consider moving half of your coat hooks or cubbies to the other side of the room to decrease traffic. Sometimes a few simple changes can really help foot traffic flow more easily in your classroom.

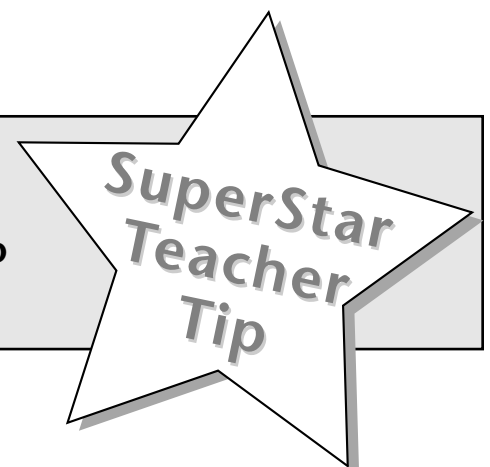
Designate Classroom Areas

Think about the specific classroom areas you need to fit to your teaching style. Name each space in your classroom as you create it, so children can easily find it. For example, once you find the ideal place in your classroom for your students to gather for reading aloud, start calling it the "read aloud area." This cues students to what is coming next in your schedule. If your students do a lot of messy projects that need to sit out to dry, find a spot in your room to designate as "the drying area." Once your students know the specific areas of the classroom, the children's movements become streamlined and unnecessary questions decrease.

Number Learning Centers

Hang above every learning center a double-sided sign labeled with a number. Show the students the numbers and then refer to the centers by number. When you number the centers, the children know exactly which one you are describing. Consider designating a spot on the counter for a stacking tray organizer system to use with centers. Use as many trays as you have centers. Number the trays to correspond with each center and store necessary materials for each center in the trays.

Draw and laminate a map of your classroom. Use dry-erase pens to indicate seating. Substitute teachers will appreciate having the classroom map and seating chart.



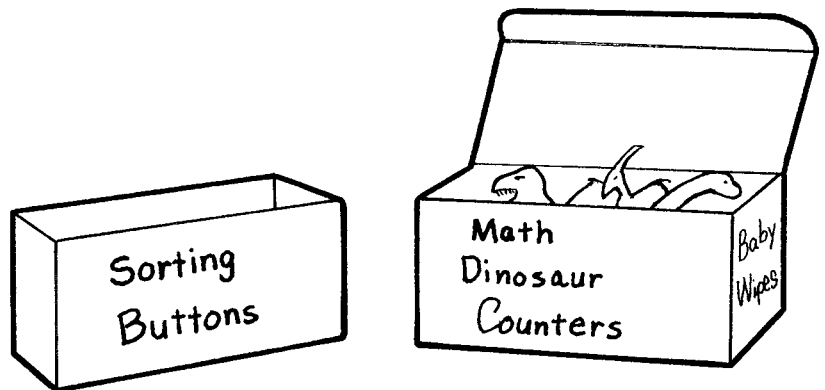
Organize Your Classroom Materials

★ Organize Classroom Materials

Keeping your classroom materials organized saves time. Here are some terrific ideas using free materials to help you get your classroom organized and keep it that way!

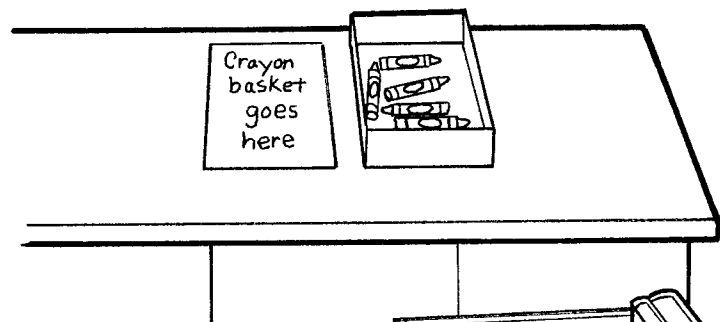
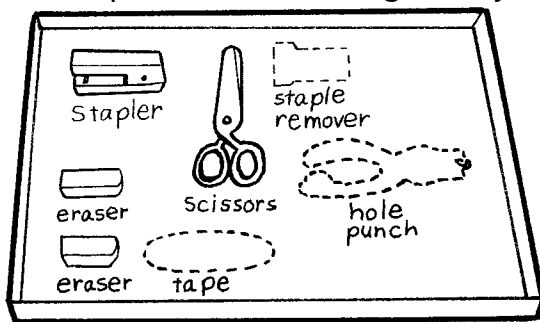
★ Free Containers

Plastic baby-wipe containers are perfect for storing arts and crafts supplies, game pieces, and math manipulatives. Label the containers with a permanent marker. Ask parents to save baby-wipe containers for you.



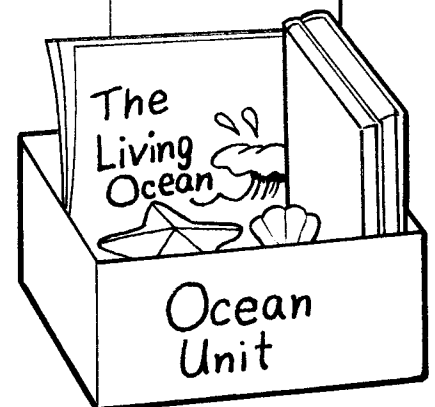
★ Place It and Trace It

Have you ever been in an incredibly organized garage where all of the tools hang on pegboards? You can instantly tell if a tool is missing because its outline is traced on the pegboard. Here's an easy way to bring the pegboard tool idea into your classroom! Gather the supplies you use most and trace their outlines on the inside of a box lid. Label each outline. Trace on pieces of tagboard large items that don't fit well inside box lids. Label the tagboard outlines and tape them to countertops and tables. At a glance, you'll be able to see which supplies are missing.



★ Instant Theme-Study Storage

Think about your favorite theme studies and units that you teach each year. Have you accumulated so many materials for each unit that it's impossible to store everything in your file cabinet? Save the covered boxes from reams of copy-machine paper. Label the box with the name of the theme and store all of your materials in the box.



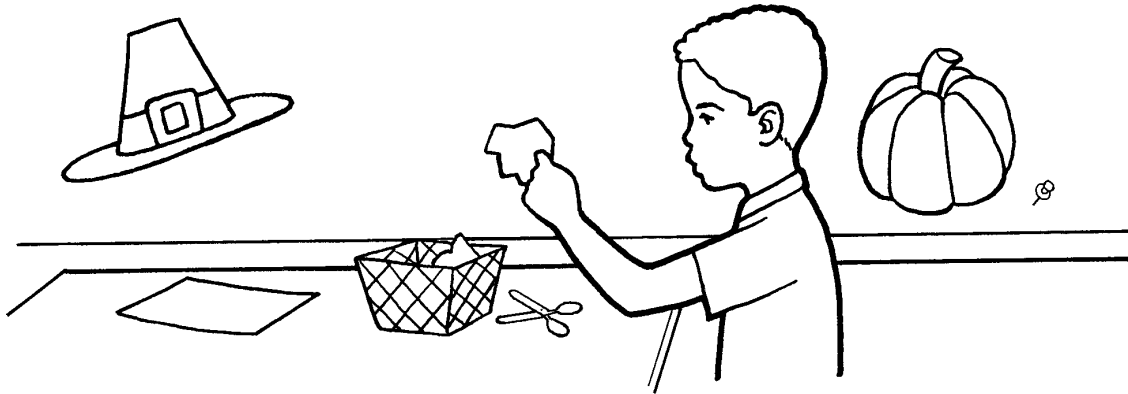
Help Students Get Organized

Help students get organized instantly! Don't lose valuable instructional time waiting for students to locate supplies and materials.



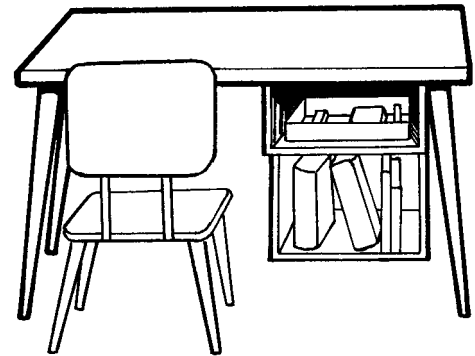
Task Baskets

Use these handy task baskets to help students keep track of small pieces of paper during cut-and-paste activities and art projects. Keep a stack of strawberry baskets available on a countertop for students to use. While working on projects, students can use the baskets to store small, easily lost pieces. Ask parents to save strawberry baskets for you.



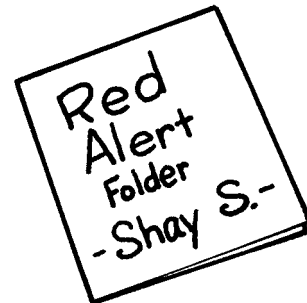
Cardboard Box Desk Drawers

Try these desk drawers if your students have the style of desk that has an open end facing the student. These desks can be a challenge to keep organized. Save the cardboard box flats soft drinks are packed in. The box slides into the desk opening just as a drawer would. Tell students to keep easily lost supplies such as pencils, rulers, scissors, crayons, and erasers in their desk "drawers."



Red-Alert Folders

Make every student a folder from bright red construction paper. Label the folders with students' names. Have the students use the Red-Alert Folders to store their top-priority work. Teach your students to grab their Red-Alert Folders each morning and to immediately start working. Take attendance, lunch count, etc., while students are busy working.



Help Students Get Organized



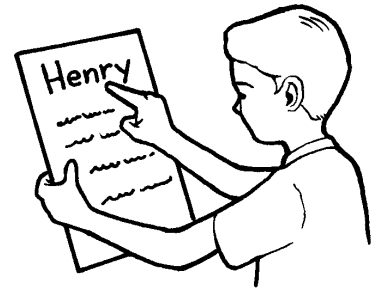
End the Mystery of “No Name” Papers

Here are some sure-fire ideas to encourage students to write their names on their papers. Students are more likely to write their names on papers if they need to do something special with their names each time. For example, tell students to

- circle the first or last letter in their name
- underline their favorite letter in their name
- draw a triangle or square above their name
- draw a small picture after their name (pumpkin, smiley face, star, heart)
- underline their name with their favorite color

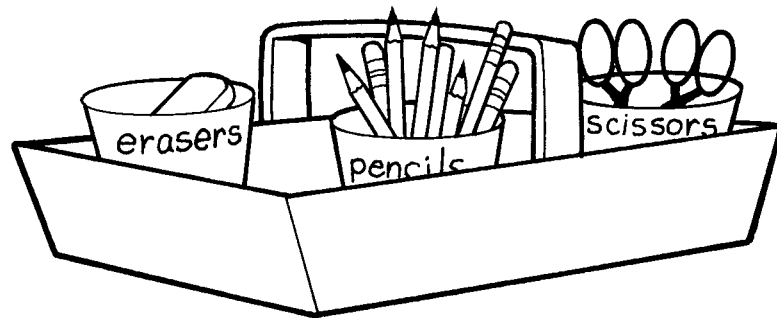


Just before students hand in papers, remind them to physically touch their name on their paper first. If their name isn't on the paper, they need to write it, touch it, and hand in the paper.



Supply Baskets

Rather than having the students store easily lost supplies in their desks, consider using supply baskets for each table or group of students. Plastic baskets with handles make great supply baskets. Fill the baskets with large, sturdy cups to hold pencils, scissors, rulers, erasers, and crayons.



SuperStar Teacher Tip

Do you sometimes have trouble quickly finding a pencil or pen? Flag several pens and pencils with pieces of masking tape. Tell students that only adults can use the flagged pens and pencils. Keep a few flagged pens and pencils in each supply basket, on the chalkledge, and in cups around the room.

Behavioral Skills Children Need

Children need to master a broad scope of skills beyond the traditional “basics.” They need important skills that will boost school success and serve them throughout life. These valuable skills include

- **Cooperative Skills**

Experiences in working with others, working as a team member, and being a leader help children learn to be cooperative.

- **Self-Management Skills**

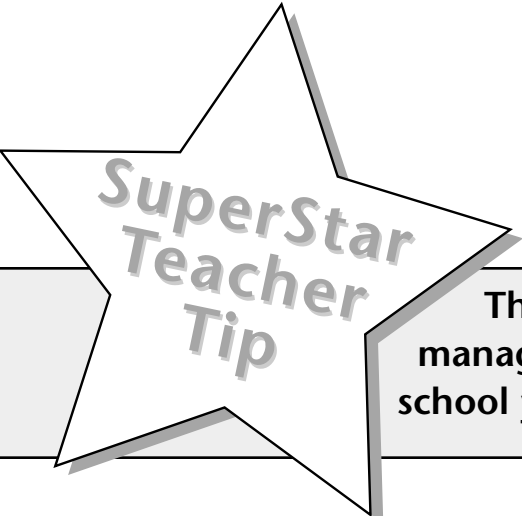
Children need to learn to assume responsibility for themselves and to exercise self-discipline. They need to learn they have behavioral choices.

- **Organizational Skills**

Keeping track of materials, managing time, setting priorities, following schedules, and meeting deadlines is important in school and life.

Children benefit from classrooms that are well-organized and free of disruptive behavior. When teachers provide clear standards in a supportive environment, children tend to cooperate and assume responsibility.

In *permissive* homes and classrooms, children can do virtually anything they want. In *authoritarian* settings, adults force children to conform. Most effective parents and teachers are *authoritative*. These authoritative parents and teachers provide clear standards in a structured, supportive environment. Children assume responsibility, are cooperative, and solve problems together. Authoritative teachers use positive strategies and have well-managed classrooms.



SuperStar
Teacher
Tip

The most effective day to establish classroom management policies is the first day of the school year!

Classroom Organization

An organized classroom is an optimum place for everyone to work and learn. When children can find materials and know where things go, they can function independently. This eliminates questions and saves time for students and their teachers.



Children need

- Basic Supplies

Establish a place in the classroom where they will always find basic supplies. Label boxes and baskets so the children can put things back.

- Things to Take Home

Provide a place where the children can put items that are to be taken home.



Teachers need boxes or baskets for

- Things they need to take to the school office
- Things they want to take home
- Notes children bring to school
- Materials they plan to read later

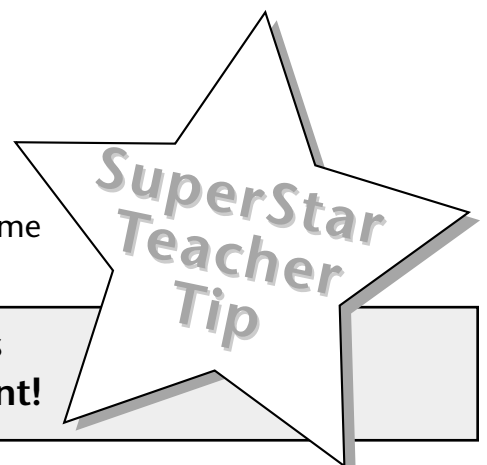


Teachers need a desktop box or basket containing file folders labeled

- Notes to write
- Phone calls to make
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Do next week
- Urgent

Instead of putting papers down and losing them, pop them in folders so you can get your hands on them quickly. This saves time and reduces frantic searches!

Variety stores sell all kinds of colorful plastic boxes and bins that will help you with paper management!



Helping Children Be Well-Organized



Folders Can Help Children Be Organized

- “Must Do” Folders

Each child has a folder on the desktop labeled “Must Do.” If they have work they need to finish, it is kept in this folder. When they have a few free minutes during the day, the material they need to work on is handy.

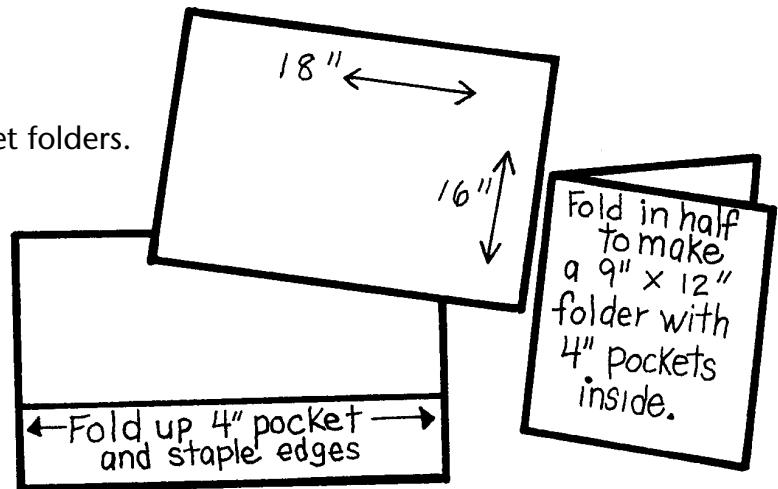
- Work Folders

Folders can help children keep track of papers and projects. Consider providing children with a reading, spelling, and/or math folder. For example, pass out the math folders at the beginning of the math period. The children put finished work in folders and place folders in the work box (right sides up with names at the top) at the end of the period. When you check over children’s work, you can remove finished papers that are ready to be recorded and taken home. Work that is unfinished can be returned in the folder to the child. Math folders are on desks when children come into the room after recess. The first thing they do is check inside the folders to see if there is anything they need to finish from the previous day. Try folders for just one subject to see if they work for you and your students.



How to Make Folders

Use bulletin board paper to make pocket folders. Make sets of folders in different colors.



**SuperStar
Teacher
Tip**

Making folders is a perfect at-home job for a parent volunteer. Make a sample for the helper to copy. At the end of the year, helpers can make folders to use for back-to-school.

Helping Children Be Well-Organized

★ Desk Pencils and Crayons

Have the children keep a pencil and a crayon on their desktops. If you want them to underline a word, they have a crayon handy.

★ School Spot

Tell the children they need to establish a place at home where they will put everything they need to take to school. It's a good idea to have a box or basket to hold papers, books, and backpacks. Then when they are rushing off in the morning, all the "school stuff" is in one place. Tell parents to help their children establish a "School Spot" at home.

★ Ongoing Activities

If your class is working on a theme study about ecology, give every child a folder in which to store papers and projects. Store those folders all together in a box or basket instead of having the children keep them in their desks. When it is time to work on the theme study, pass out the folders. Folders help children keep papers together. When the children are in the habit of placing work in folders, they are less likely to stuff them in desks. Also, if papers do not have names on them, they are at least inside folders with names.



**SuperStar
Teacher
Tip**

Keep an eye out when shopping in school supply, office supply, and warehouse stores for free goodies to use in your classroom. Boxes used to display products are eventually discarded by stores and are perfect for storing folders and learning materials in the classroom. A cardboard floor rack containing Mother's Day cards can display paperback books in your classroom! These free, sturdy boxes sure come in handy!

Help Children Read, Think, and Learn



Making the Most of Materials

Teach children about new classroom materials, learning centers, and activities. Take time to explain, demonstrate, and model how you want children to use materials or learning centers. Have children role-play using materials and putting them away. If you have several new math games, introduce them one at a time on different days. Teaching children how to use materials answers questions and communicates your expectations. When you take time to demonstrate, model, and role-play, materials are used properly. If you have learning centers or materials that are not being used properly, put them away for a few weeks and then introduce them to the class as if they were “new.” With proper use of materials, instructional time is maximized and the classroom runs smoothly.



Successful Learners

Young learners need opportunities to work with the whole class, in small groups, with partners, and on their own. To be successful learners, children need skills of cooperation, organization, and self-management. These “beyond the basics” skills help children succeed inside and outside the classroom.



Cooperative Skills

- Learning to function cooperatively as group members and group leaders
- Learning to use kind words, to take turns, and to follow classroom routines and rules



Organizational Skills

- Accepting responsibility for keeping track of learning materials, keeping desks organized, following schedules, setting priorities, and meeting deadlines.



Self-Management Skills

Exercising self-discipline and making responsible choices about behaviors are imperative. When children are cooperative and responsible, learning time is maximized and the classroom is a positive place to work and learn.

Help your students be organized at home as well as at school. Encourage children to keep a box, basket, or plastic tub at home labeled “Take to School.” Everything they need to take to school goes in the box, from homework to permission slips. Each school-age child in the household needs a “Take to School” box of his or her own.

**SuperStar
Teacher
Tip**

Time to Share

Children love to share. There are many creative ways to give children opportunities to share with their classmates. Save valuable instructional time by having children share with partners or in groups.

Sharing Partners

Assign children to sharing partners. Change partners weekly! At sharing time, children sit with their partners and share. In less than ten minutes, every child will have shared with his or her partner.

Sharing Groups

Children participate in Sharing Groups of three or four children. At sharing time, all groups meet simultaneously. Children take turns sharing. Children can take turns as group leaders. Change sharing groups every three or four weeks.

Sharing Days

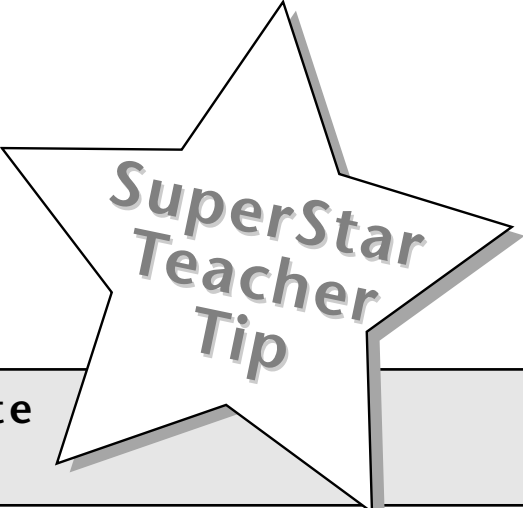
Divide the class into five sharing groups. Each group has a day when its members share with the class during sharing time. At the end of the week, everyone has had a turn.

Themes for Sharing

Occasionally, it adds interest to select a special focus for sharing time. During one week, children can share their favorite books; another week, they can tell about favorite characters; and at another time they can share nonfiction books they've enjoyed. The focus for sharing can also relate to social studies and science themes.

Sharing Toys

Designate one week at the beginning of the year as "Toy Sharing Week." With the exception of "Toy Sharing Week," toys may not be shared at school.



SuperStar
Teacher
Tip

It's fun when teachers participate in sharing!

Classroom Calendars All Through the Year

Lots of learning can go on around the monthly classroom calendar.

Supersize Classroom Calendar

Make an oversize calendar grid that is 3' x 4' so you have room to write in the date squares. Use white or light-color bulletin board paper. Every day, just after lunch or at the end of the day, elicit a sentence about an important event that occurred that school day. Write the sentence on the calendar. Then, read it aloud to the class. At the end of the month, the calendar will be a diary of classroom happenings throughout the month. Save the calendars. During the last week of school, post all the calendars around the room. Children love rereading calendars that tell about the school year that is about to end.

October						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 =	2 =	3 =	4 =	5
6	7 =	8 =	9 =	10	11	12

**SuperStar
Teacher
Tip**

Making supersize calendar grids is a perfect at-home task for parent volunteers. Make a sample grid for the helper to copy. Make grids for the rest of the school year plus one for next fall.

Calendar Words

Write words on word cards to use in the pocket chart. You will need word cards for the seven days of the week, the 12 months of the year, numbers from one to 31, and cards that say "Yesterday was," "Today is," and "Tomorrow is." Do pocket chart activities with your class that focus on dates, days, months, and the concepts of today, tomorrow, and yesterday.



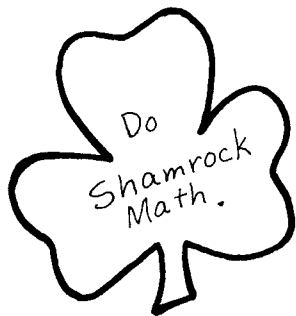
Classroom Calendars All Through the Year

The Calendar Club

Post your classroom calendar for the month. Around or near the calendar, post activities for the Calendar Club. Write activities on shapes cut from colorful construction paper or on pages from shape note pads. Calendar Club activities can be assigned to the students or used as enrichment tasks for children who finish early. Post new activities with each new calendar.



March						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

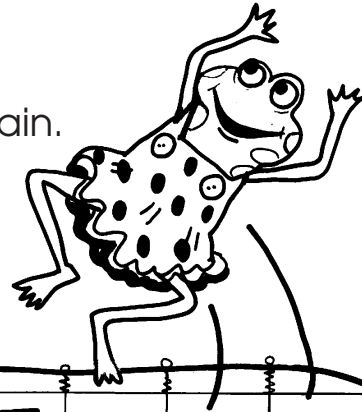
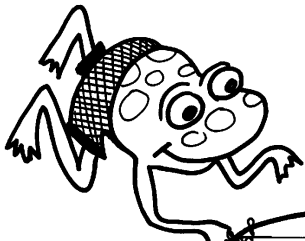


**SuperStar
Teacher
Tip**

Save the Calendar Club activities to reuse next year. This will save you valuable planning time!

Trampoline Trouble

Fran and Felix want to jump **100** times on the trampoline.
Write in the missing numbers so they can jump on each number.
Use your fingers to jump to each number.
Say the numbers as you jump.
If you make a mistake, climb on and try again.



1	2	3		5	6	7			10
11		13	14	15		17	18	19	
21	22		24	25		27		29	30
31		33	34		36		38		40
41			44	45		47		49	50
	52	53	54		56	57	58		
61		63		65	66		68	69	70
	72		74	75				79	
81	82	83		85	86	87		89	90
91	92		94			97	98		100

Color Fran and Felix.

Name _____

Look What You Can Do!

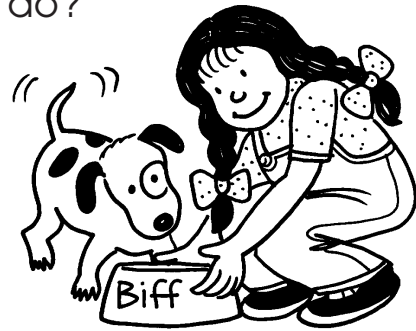


Jeff is really proud of the things his cat Tulip can do.

You can be proud of the many things you can do.

Have you ever thought about how much you can do?

Check (✓) the things that you can do.



- stand on my head
- play a piano
- kick a ball
- write a poem
- help someone
- carry a big box
- climb a tree
- take care of a baby

- make some toast
- tie my shoe
- clean my room
- make a phone call
- use a fire extinguisher
- wash a car
- throw a ball
- feed my pet
- write a letter
- read a book
- make pancakes
- ride a skateboard



Name _____

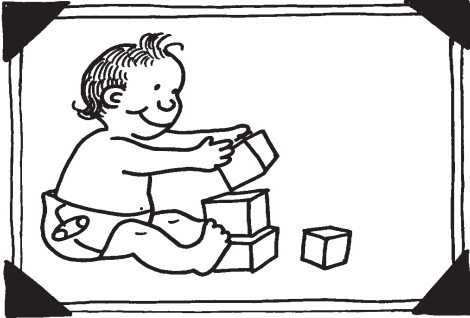
Once upon a Time

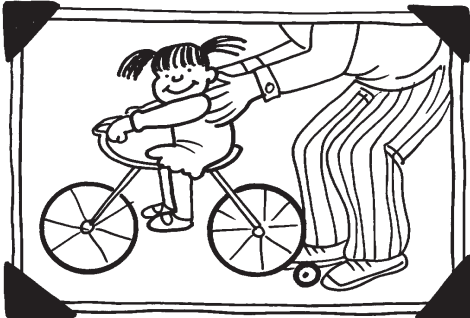
Everyone was a tiny baby once upon a time.

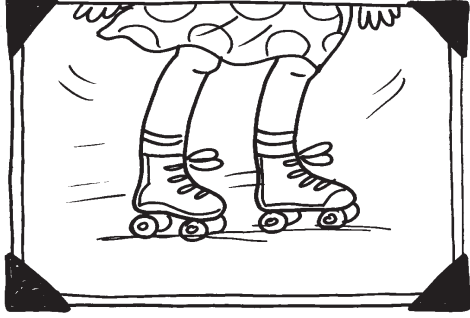
We don't stay babies for long because we always grow, learn, and change.


We need to look at pictures to remember how little we were!

Look at Layla's pictures, and see how she has changed.

1 

2 

3 

4 

Write the number of the picture or pictures that show:

1. Layla's dad helping her learn something ____
2. Layla teaching something to her little brother ____
3. Layla learning something as a baby ____
4. Layla learning something all by herself ____ and ____

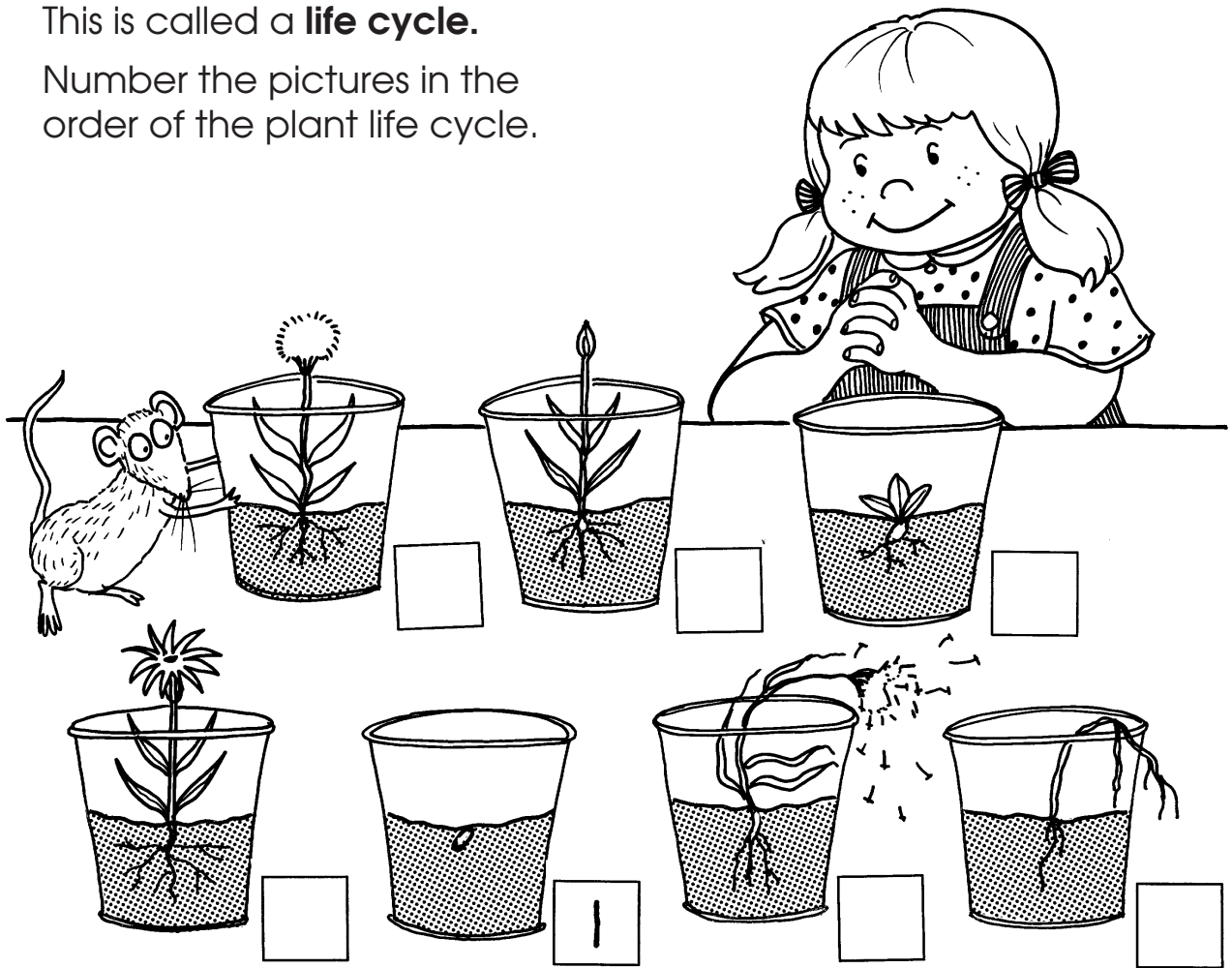
Name _____

May be used with page 15.

Which Happened First?

Look at all the seeds Meg has planted in little plastic cups!
These seeds will grow into plants with leaves and flowers.
The flowers will make new seeds.
Then the plants will shrink and die and drop the seeds.
The seeds will grow into new plants!
This is called a **life cycle**.

Number the pictures in the order of the plant life cycle.

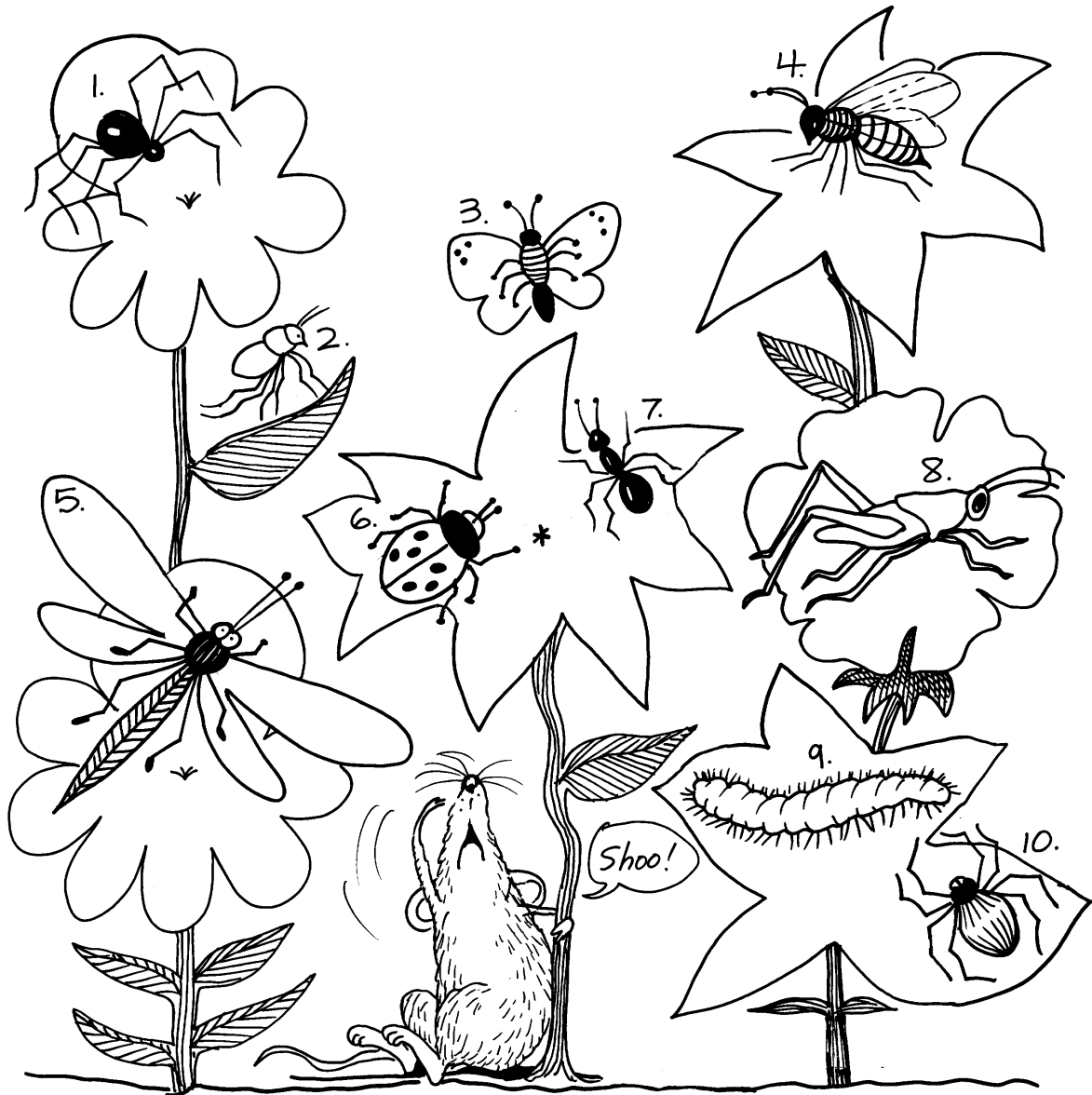


Name _____

Bugs in the Flower Bed

Rufus Rat thinks there are too many bugs in the garden. Some of these bugs are insects and some are other kinds of bugs. **Insects** have 6 legs and 2 feelers.

Color the bugs in the garden that are insects.



Name _____