

For 1–4 children

Includes:

- 4 Rhyming objects (hat, box, tree, chair)
- 20 Picture cards
- 40 Activity cards (30 rebus; 10 multi-step & opposites)
- 1 Double-sided spinner (one side featuring positional words; reverse side featuring their opposites)

What do you get when you put the bear on the chair, the bee in the tree, and the locks behind the box? You get dynamic wordplay courtesy of Fox in the Box, where kids can learn on fanciful terms! And this isn't just jabberwocky—learning positional words, following directions, and practicing rhyming build important early reading and writing skills. So let their imaginations run wild!

Positional words are important because they help children:

- follow and give directions;
- expand, use, and understand new vocabulary;
- describe the exact location of an object;
- build recognition of sight words (many positional words are also sight words);
- enhance beginning reading and writing skills (word recognition and vocabulary building);
- develop spatial awareness (where an object or person is, relative to another object or person).

Introducing the pieces

Set out all the pieces for children to observe and explore. Point out the four larger, central objects (hat, box, tree, chair). Show children the picture cards. Explain that several cards rhyme with each of the larger objects, represented by a matching-color border for selfchecking. For example, the cat card rhymes with the *hat* object; both feature the color *purple*. Next, move on to the spinner, showing the positional words printed on the front, and their opposites on the back. The spinner determines where to place the picture card in relation to the object. Spin, and model a movement: for example, using the previous example of *cat* and *hat*, if you spin *behind*, you would then place the *cat* *behind* the hat. (Or, if you use the reverse side, you would place the *cat* *in front of* the hat.) Let children try spinning, and then moving the cards to the objects as directed.

Finally, like the picture cards, most of the activity cards are color-coded according to object. Cards indexed to *hat*, for example, have a purple border and feature *cat*, *bat*, *rat*, *mat*, and *flat*. The activity cards guide children where to place the picture cards in relation to the objects; in effect, they perform the same function as the spinner. Select the appropriate card type: rebus (image) cards for beginning learners, or multi-step and opposite cards with yellow borders for more advanced learners or budding readers. Each rebus card features two sides, ideal for self-checking and assessment: a simple sentence on the front combining words and images, and images only of the positional action on the reverse. (Note: reverse sides offer just one recommended solution for positional movements. Some cards will have more than one solution. Work with children to read and follow the directions on several cards, until they feel comfortable with the concept. For more advanced readers or older students, the yellow-bordered cards reinforce the more complex concepts of multiple-step directions and opposites.

Suggested Use

- Start by giving each child a rhyming object and picture card with a matching-color border. Have children take turns saying the rhyme (“bee...tree”), and then using the spinner to determine where to place the card in relation to the object.
- After spinning, model saying the rhyme and stressing the positional word or phrase in a complete sentence: “Put the bee *behind* the tree.” Let children try this, spinning and using many different positional words. Don't forget about the additional opposite words on the spinner's reverse side! To use, simply pop the arrow out of place, turn the spinner over, and then snap the arrow back into position.
- Spread out all the picture cards face up. This time, let children take turns choosing a card, finding the rhyming object, and spinning to determine the positional relationship of card

to object. Then, as above, have children say the rhyme and stress the positional word or phrase in a complete sentence: "Put the bear *on* the chair."

- Select activity cards appropriate for the children's ability level (see *Introducing the Pieces*), and place them in a pile. Have each child take a rhyming object, along with activity cards and picture cards that have matching-color borders. Each child takes turns following the directions on an activity card while reading it aloud. Encourage children to emphasize rhyming and positional words.

Additional suggestions for individualized instruction:

- For younger students, when possible, use tangible objects together with the pieces in this set. This hands-on connection helps young learners understand the more abstract positional terms.
- For auditory learners, give verbal directions ("Put the cat under the hat"), in addition to the pieces in this set.
- Encourage kinesthetic learners to use their whole bodies for card placement while following verbal directions: "Place the fox *ON* your head."
- To assess children's understanding, place the picture cards in proximity to an object. Can they name the card's position relative to the object?
- For additional assessment, have children name an opposite positional word or phrase, where applicable: *on/off*, *above/below*, *to the left of/to the right of*, and so on. Using the spinner, have children place the picture card in positional relationship to an object. Then ask, "What is the opposite positional word to the one shown on the spinner? Can you move the picture card to show the opposite?"