Bridges to

Head Start

Tell your child to

Teach Teddy

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Introduction

Motivated adults have positive self-talk. They regularly say to themselves, for example, "I can do this," or, "I need to get to work on time." They also use self-talk to rehearse procedures, asking themselves, "What should I do first?" Each of the *Teaching Teddy* pages is designed to encourage children to verbalize their thought processes and develop positive procedural self-talk, which can enhance their motivational tendencies and chances for success now and as future motivated adults.

Each page also contains notes and "listen fors" for parents, serving as reminders about how children's thinking skills are developed and simple steps parents can take to enhance the process. Reminders reflect research on motivation and cognitive skill development, primarily that of Ruby Payne (*Research-Based Strategies: Narrowing the Achievement Gap for Under-Resourced Learners,* 2009), Reuven Feuerstein (*Changing Children's Minds,* by Howard Sharron and Martha Coulter, 1991), and Carol Dweck (*Mindset,* 2006).

One recommendation for Head Start home visitors and other parent advocates is to present the pages to parents one at a time and discuss with them the purpose and rationale for each *Teach Teddy* lesson individually. Parents can file the pages in a loose-leaf binder as they are completed. Once all 36 of the lessons have been taught, the child can start over with Page 1, this time teaching more detailed lessons.

If desired, pages can be reproduced a second time with the parental information removed so that children can color and add details.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about school rules and *why* he needs to follow the rules at school.

Note to Parents

Your child must learn and follow the rules of school in order to be successful. Some school rules are different from home rules, just as the rules of basketball are different from the rules of football.

Listen for your child to explain to Teddy:

- What some of the school rules are:
  - Speak in a soft (indoor) voice in the classroom.
  - Walk (don't run).
  - Complete your work on time.
- Why school rules are important.
- That some of the rules at school are different from rules at home, just like the rules for basketball are different from the rules for football.

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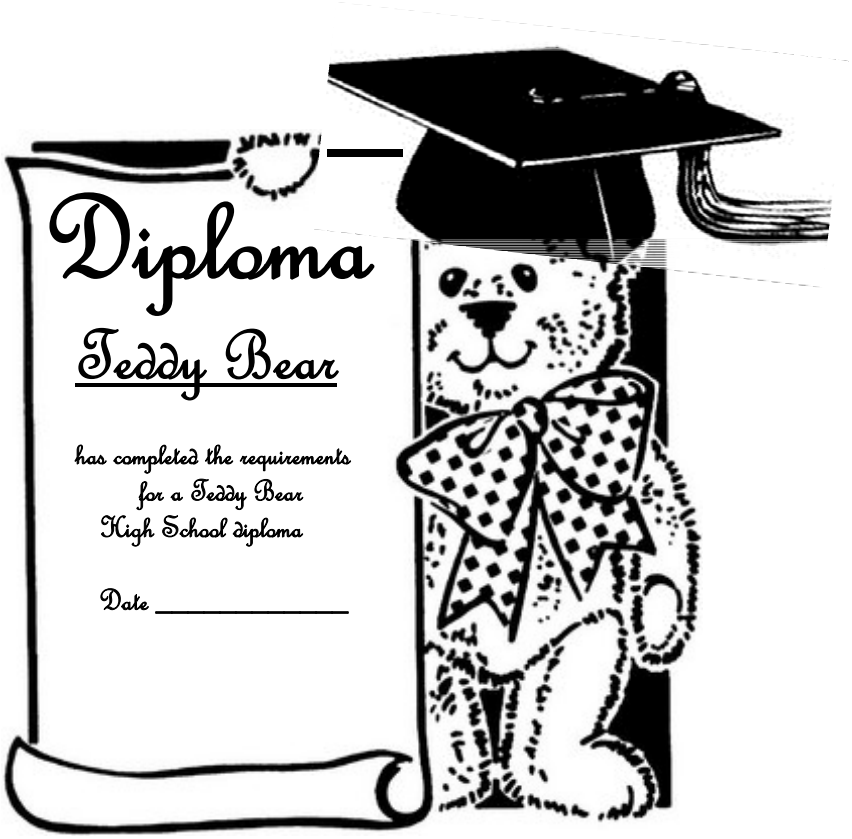
Tell your child to ***Teach Teddy*** why he should stay in school until he graduates. Then have your child teach him how graduating from school can help him win in life.



Note to Parents

When parents *expect* their children to complete high school (and perhaps college), the children will be more likely to stay in school. It is important to communicate these expectations to your children. Completing high school offers your children more choices and greater control of their lives. Your children will also win more often, and they will be respected for completing school. Parents who tell their children to stay in school are respected too!

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- People who finish school are proud of themselves.
- People who finish school have more choices of things they can do.
- Finishing school shows how strong you are.

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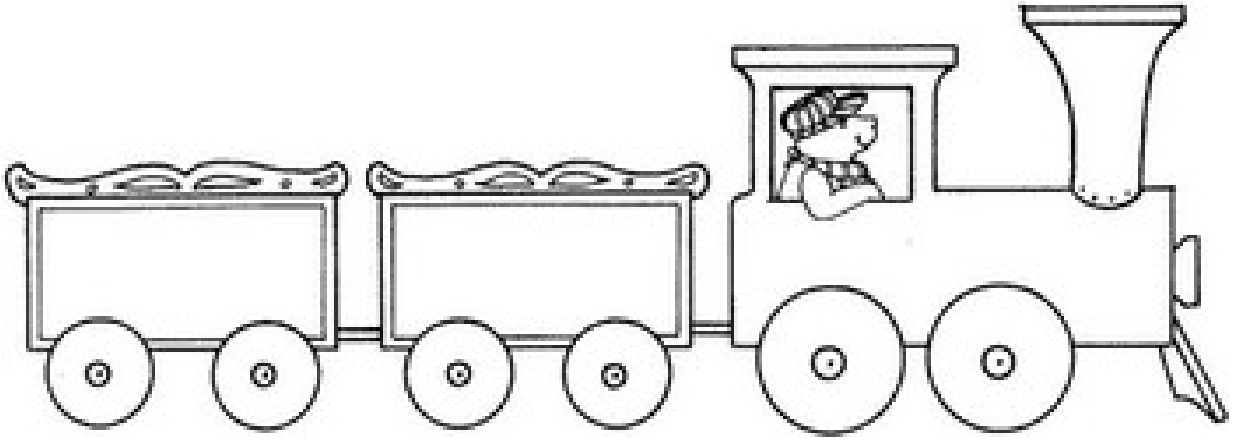
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* some things he can do or be when he grows up.



Note to Parents

Your boy or girl will be more motivated to do good work if she or he has a future story—an idea about what he or she might do or be in the future. A future story can be next month, next year, or many years from now. Your child's future story might change many times, which is okay. Encourage your child to develop a very colorful, detailed future story.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Choices for future jobs.
- Other choices for his or her future life, such as vacations or hobbies.
- Future stories are worth waiting and working for.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to celebrate and to be proud of himself for finishing a job.

Note to Parents

Children who follow a plan-work-celebrate, plan-work-celebrate schedule not only get their work done, they also enjoy working more than those who do not celebrate a job well done.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- After he plans his work and finishes it, then it is time to celebrate.
- Celebrations can be very simple. Examples are to run and play, play a game, take a nap, and many more.

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When your child gets into trouble, tell your child to *Teach Teddy* what he could have done instead to stay out of trouble.

Note to Parents

Children need to know what they should not do, but they also need to think about alternative behaviors—what they could do instead. Then they need a plan for which of those alternative behaviors they will choose next time.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Teddy has choices of behaviors.
- Several alternative behaviors that would have avoided trouble.
- What Teddy will do next time.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about some things that will change. Then have your child teach him that although changes can be scary, they can also be fun and have a happy ending.

Note to Parents

Change is inevitable and sometimes good. Children who learn to accept change and look forward to it will be happier and will be motivated to try new things.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Everything changes.
- Some things change over time, such as butterflies, trees, seasons, and people!
- Change can be scary, but it can also be exciting and fun.
- If we work hard, we can help our changes to be good ones.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about some things that he can be thankful for.

Note to Parents

By teaching Teddy to be grateful for everything, your children are learning to be grateful themselves. Grateful people are more positive and tend to enjoy life more than people who are ungrateful.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Many ordinary things he can be grateful for.
- Why he can be grateful for each thing your child talks about.
- To be grateful for something every day.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to say nice things to other teddy bears.

Note to Parents

Children who hear positive comments about themselves and others grow up to become positive adults. Positive adults enjoy life more than negative ones. They are also more motivated to try new things, and they feel in control of their lives.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Some specific nice comments that Teddy can make, such as, “Good job,” “It's great to see you,” or, “I like your smile.”
- Making nice comments to others is a great way to make friends.
- We can say nice things to people even when they are not nice to us.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to choose healthful teddy bear snacks. Then have your child teach Teddy why healthful snacks and meals are important.

Note to Parents

Healthful snacks will make your child strong. Good health is a tool that no one can take away from your child.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- About eating fruits and vegetables.
- Fruits and vegetables make people (and teddy bears) strong.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* to tell the truth in school and why it is important to tell the truth in school.

Note to Parents

At school children benefit from being honest. Telling the truth will help your child to be respected.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- At school he must tell the truth.
- People and teddy bears who tell the truth in school are respected.
- He should not exaggerate.
- People will believe him if he tells the truth.
- He can believe what his teacher tells him.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how school talk is different from playtime talk and why he should use school talk at school.

Excuse me, please.

I appreciate your help.

I'm wearing a formal outfit, and I'm talking using formal speech.

Note to Parents

One important lesson for children to learn is that casual speech is perfect for casual environments, such as playgrounds and sometimes at home, but formal speech is required for more formal environments, such as school during class time. Students can learn to switch from casual to formal speech depending on where they are.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- People (and teddy bears) use casual speech in casual environments and formal speech in formal environments like school classrooms.
- People (and teddy bears) switch between casual and formal speech depending on where they are.
- Some words and/or phrases that are casual and how to switch them to formal speech.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to read a book. Then have your child teach him why he needs to learn how to read and write.

Note to Parents

Knowing how to read and write makes people (and teddy bears) powerful. Reading is a tool that no one can take away from your child.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Reading helps people (and teddy bears) know more about the world.
- Reading and writing are tools that no one can take away.
- Reading skills improve with practice.

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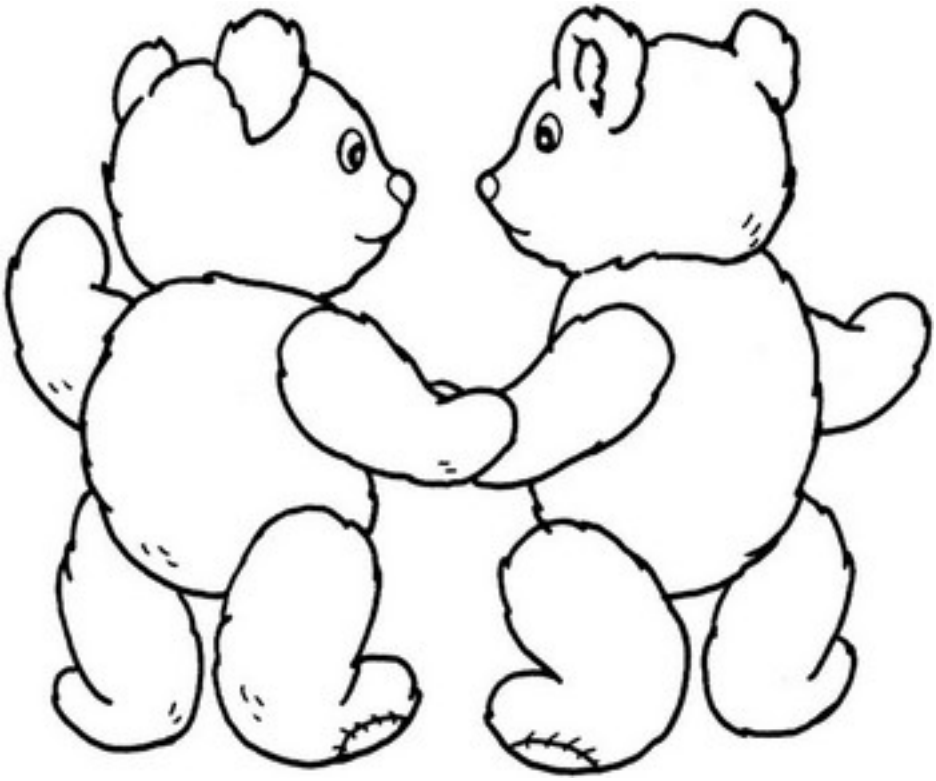
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to have a conversation with other people and teddy bears in school.



Note to Parents

Young children learn more from conversations than from most any other activity. When engaged in a conversation, children learn vocabulary, how to focus, impulsivity control, listening skills, and how to share with others.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy to:

- Sit still and look at the one who is talking.
- Smile often.
- Talk in a soft voice.
- Use polite words.
- Use new words learned in school.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* some words that describe how teddy bears feel sometimes.

Note to Parents

Children need to be very specific when they describe their feelings so they can communicate these feelings to others. When they have words for their feelings, they can deal with them more effectively.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Words for feelings, such as *angry, amazed, delighted, overjoyed, thankful, playful, calm, comfortable, surprised, fascinated, glad, cheerful, thrilled, relaxed, anxious, excited, brave, hopeful, irritated, annoyed, upset, disappointed, lonesome, terrible, hurt, unhappy, fearful, nervous, scared, frightened,* and *bored.*
- What the words mean, or an example of when one might feel that way.

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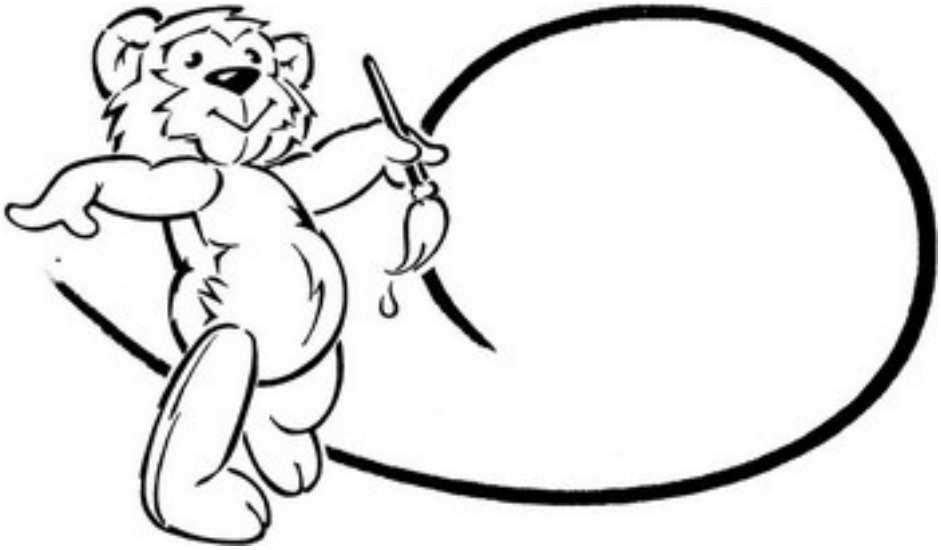
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* some words that describe how teddy bears move and play.



Note to Parents

Words are powerful. Knowing many words for movement can help a child describe actions in detail.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Words for movements, such as *gallop, leap, hurry, race, run, rush, skip, soar, swing, crawl, creep, jump, fly, run, tumble, fall, turn,* and *zoom.*
- Words that describe movements, such as *slow, fast, graceful, quick, jerky, hurried, unhurried, hesitantly, speedy, pokey, carefully, cautiously, steadily,* and *swiftly.*

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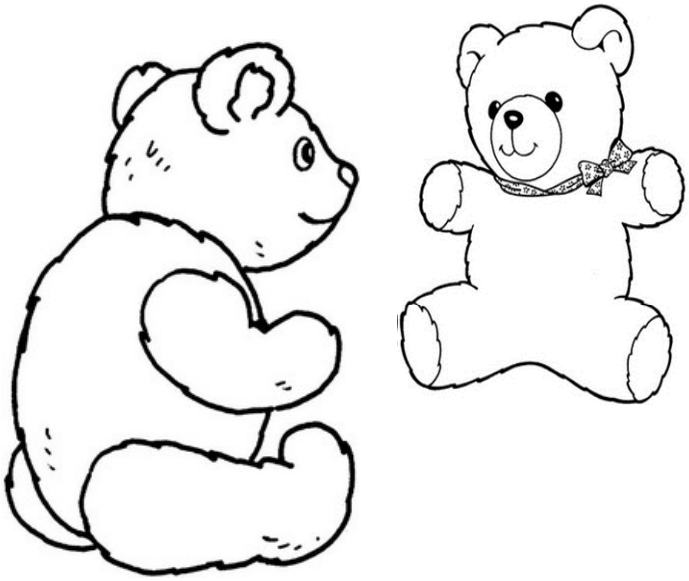
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* a story. Then help Teddy tell the story back to you.



Note to Parents

Children need to know how to tell the events of a story, in order, starting at the beginning. This skill will help them to communicate clearly.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- To start at the beginning when telling a story.
- To tell the story in the same order each time.
- To have fun when telling stories.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* a new word and to draw a picture showing what the word means.

Megaphone

Note to Parents

Drawing a picture of the meaning of a word can help your child remember the word and understand it better. The pictures can also enable adults to know if the child really understands the exact meaning of a word. Knowing many words can give your child power to communicate. Using the right words can help your child to be respected. When your child understands words that other people use, no one will be able to cheat him or her.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- A new word, then to draw of picture of what the word means.
- To keep the pictures and look at them again later.
- Words are fun to learn.
- Knowing words makes us strong.

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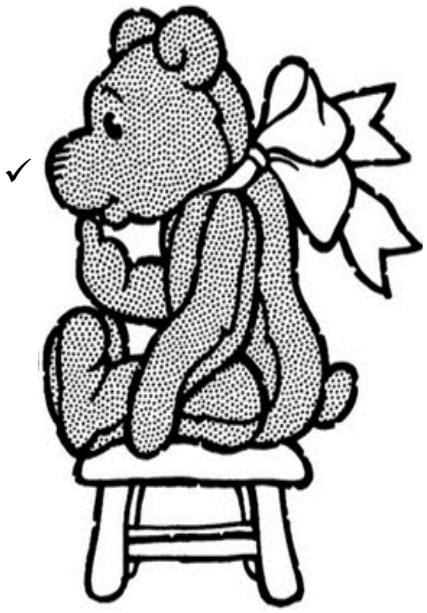
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to plan his day.

Steps	Amount of Time
✓ Think about your day	3 minutes
Put on coat	5 minutes
Go outside	3 minutes
Go for a walk with Mom	20 minutes



Note to Parents

When children are involved in planning activities, they learn planning skills that they can use throughout life. When they have a job to do, they will know how to break it down into steps and decide what to do first, second, etc. to get the job done—if they know how to plan!

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Planning is fun.
- He needs to know what steps to take to complete a job.
- He needs to know what to do first, second, etc.
- Many things they can plan together.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* something your child didn't know or know how to do when she or he was younger that your child knows or knows how to do now. Then explain to Teddy that his brain is growing and he is getting smarter.

Teddy

Note to Parents

When children know and believe they get smarter and smarter when they use their brains, they work harder. They are also more willing to accept new challenges, and they win more often.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- He can do things now that he could not do last week or last month.
- He is getting smarter and smarter.
- He gets smarter and smarter every time he uses his brain.

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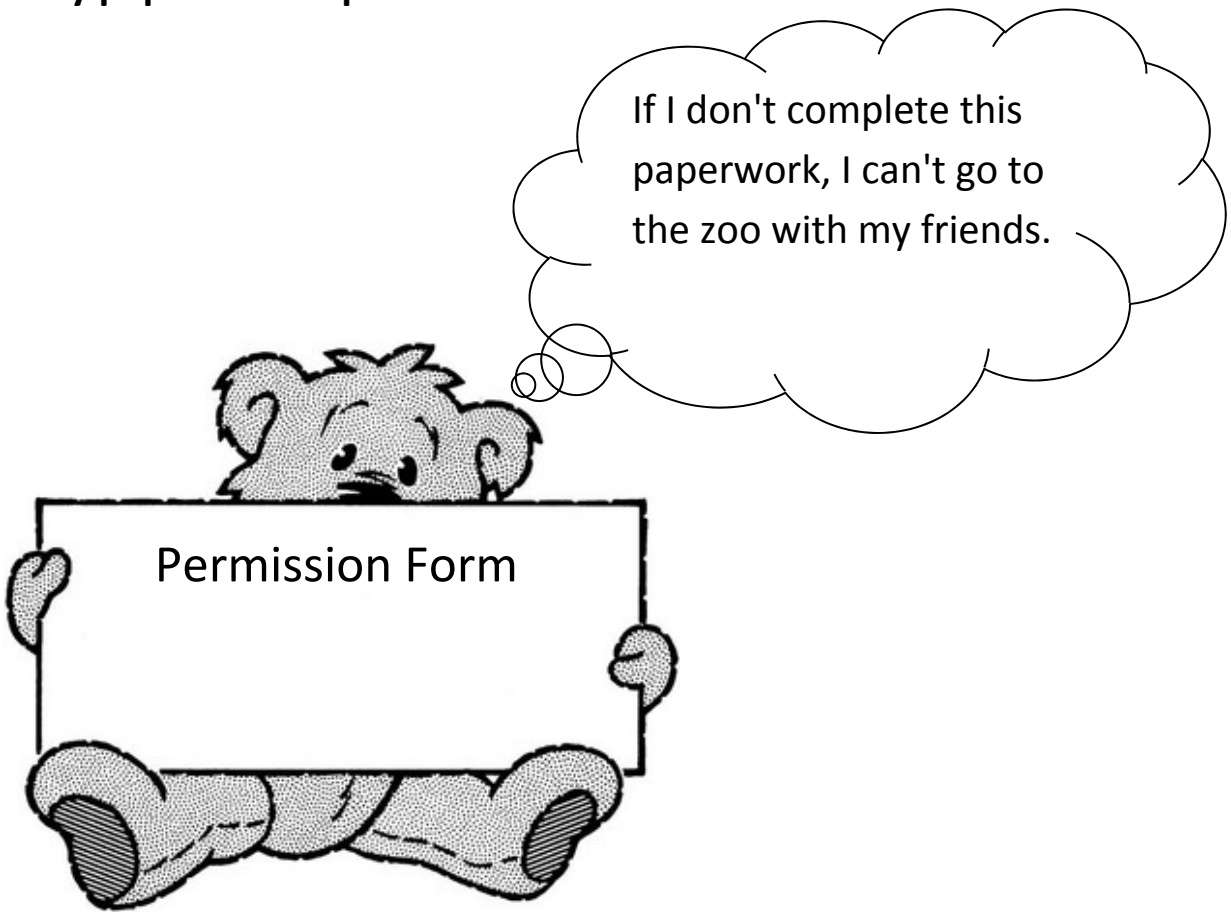
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about an important paper and why papers are important.



Note to Parents

Your child needs to understand the importance of paperwork and that papers represent real needs.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Some papers are important.
- What some papers stand for.
- Some papers represent things he needs.
- How to keep up with papers.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* something he can do to help people and other teddy bears.

Note to Parents

When people have the opportunity to help others, they feel better about themselves. They are happier and more motivated to get their work done and to do a good job. They also feel respected.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Some things he can do to help others.
- How good it feels to help others.
- When we help others, we do not expect anything in return.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to look very closely at an object. Then tell him why looking closely is important.

Note to Parents

Drawing a child's attention to an object and encouraging him or her to look closely at its details helps develop focusing skills.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- To look closely at an object (any household object, such as a toy or a safe tool).
  - Some of the details of the object, including the shape, the color, the uses, etc.
  - Some of the things the object can do (balls can bounce, balls can roll, etc.).

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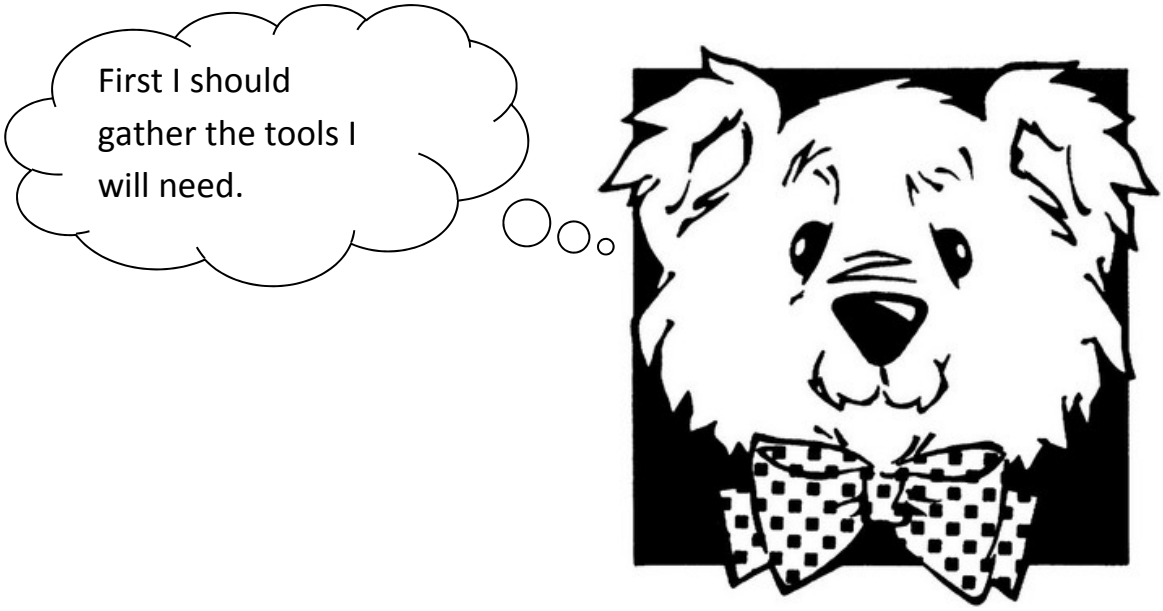
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to stop and think before starting a task and why stopping and thinking is important.



Note to Parents

Reminding your children to stop and think before beginning a task can help them to learn how to control impulsivity. Telling your children to put one toy away before getting another one, or to eat vegetables before getting desert, can also teach them to control impulsivity. Learning to control impulsivity can help children to control their lives and to stay out of trouble.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- How to finish one task before starting another one. (Put the first toy away before getting another one out, etc.)
- How to stop and think before beginning important tasks.
- How to gather the things they need for a new task before getting started.
- To start at the beginning when they start a new job.
- Why getting ready before starting a new job is a good use of time.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to wait his turn.

Note to Parents

Learning to wait your turn is another way to learn to control impulsivity.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Times that he should wait his turn.
- To listen carefully to what other people are saying while he waits his turn to speak.
- To wait until the other person finishes talking before speaking.
- To look at the person who is talking.
- How to wait in line at school.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to remember where he put things so he can find them later. Then have your child teach him why it is important to be organized.

Note to Parents

Helping children decide where things should be kept and insisting that they put their things away when they have finished with them can help them to become organized. Being organized can save your child's time and give him or her control and strength.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Everything should have a special place.
- He should put things in their special places when he has finished with them.
- He will know where to find things when they are in their special places.

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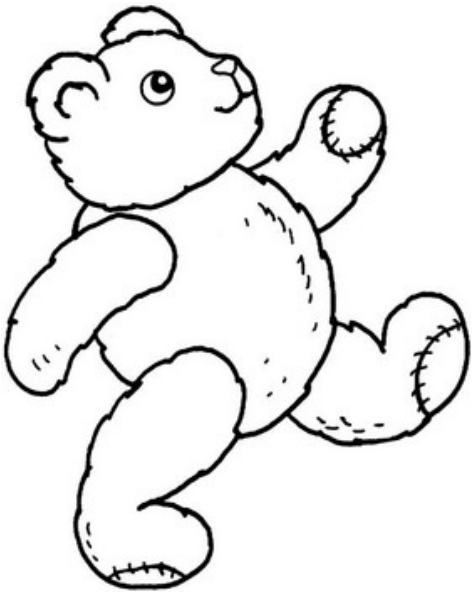
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to get to school on time every day. Then have your child teach him why getting to school on time is important.



Note to Parents

Being on time is important for children to be successful in school. It is important because if they are late, they will miss some of their work and will have to make it up later. Being on time is also important because people who are on time for school or meetings are respected. Sometimes your child will need to plan ahead in order to be on time.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- People who arrive on time for school or meetings are respected.
- People who are late for school miss some of their work and have to make it up later.
- How to plan ahead in order to be on time.

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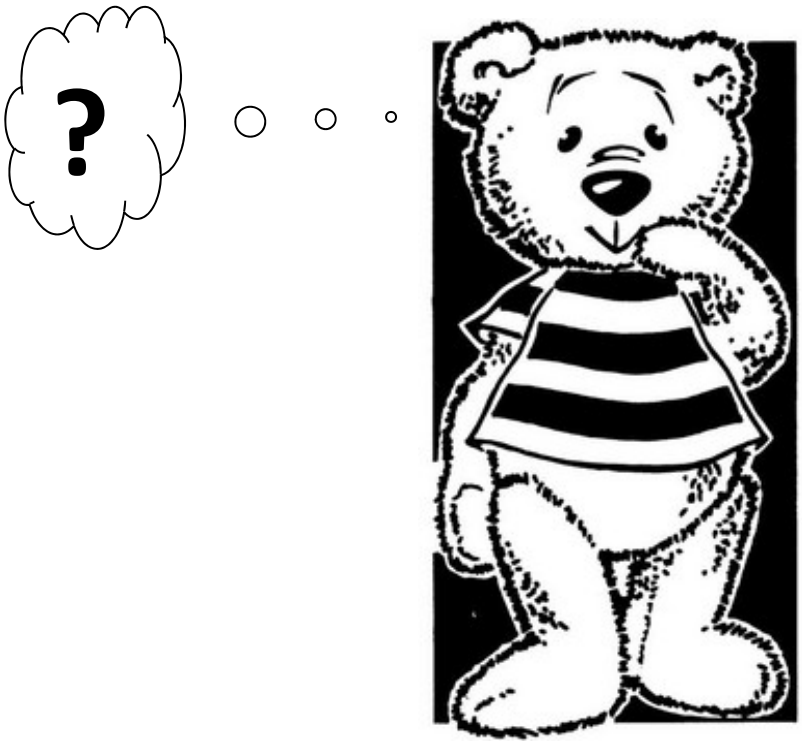
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to ask questions when he doesn't understand something.



Note to Parents

Knowing how to ask questions can help your child think more clearly. Encouraging children to ask questions can help them feel comfortable questioning something they don't understand. Children need to know how to ask questions respectfully. Most questions begin with the words *when, who, where, what, why,* or *how.*

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Most questions begin with the words *when, who, where, what, why,* or *how.*
- He can respectfully ask questions when he does not understand something.
- He can ask himself questions too!

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how he can learn from his mistakes.

Note to Parents

Children can learn from their mistakes; therefore, it is important for them not to fear making honest mistakes. A great idea is to say to a child, "We need to learn from our mistakes. What did you learn from that mistake?"

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Everyone makes mistakes.
- We can learn from our mistakes.
- Some things your child has learned from her or his mistakes.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about some things he can't do now but will be able to do when he is older.

Note to Parents

It is important for children to learn that skills and intelligence are developmental. They will be able to do things in the future that they cannot do now. Children who have ideas about their future are more motivated to work hard.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Some things that he cannot do now he will be able to do in the future.
- He gets smarter and smarter every time he uses his brain.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* a great new idea. Then teach him why that idea is great.

Note to Parents

It is important for children to realize that they are individuals. They are different from anyone else on Earth. They have their own ideas, their own lives, and their own futures.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- He is different from any other teddy bear on Earth.
- *How* he is different from other Teddy Bears.
- He has great ideas.
- He has ideas that no one else has had.
- It is normal for other teddy bears to disagree with him sometimes.

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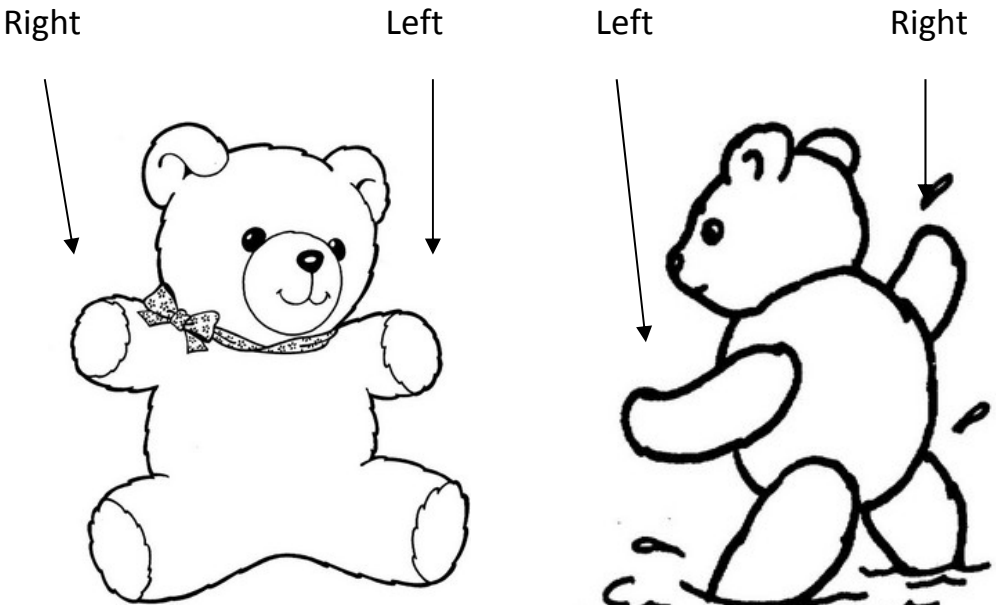
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* left and right.



Note to Parents

In order for children to understand the space around them, they need to learn directionality, including left and right.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Which is his right hand and which is his left hand.
- His left hand and right hand do not change when he faces in a different direction.
- How to play the hokey pokey.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about something that is important. Then teach him why some things are very important.

Note to Parents

Children need to learn good from bad and right from wrong. They also benefit from learning that some things are more important than others.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Some things are more important than others.
- Some things that are important to him and his teddy bear family.
- Some things that are important or good to say or do.
- Some things that are not important or not good to say or do.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about a problem he might have someday. Then teach Teddy how he can solve the problem.

Note to Parents

When children learn to solve problems, they can control their lives, and they will win more often.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- About some problems he might have someday.
- Several possible solutions to each problem.
- How to choose the best solution.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* how to talk to himself and say nice things to himself.

Teddy, you can do great work when you work hard.

Teddy, you are a valuable teddy bear.

Note to Parents

We all talk to ourselves. Self-talk is most helpful when it is positive. Children can learn to say, "I will keep trying," rather than, "I can't do this."

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- To say nice things to himself.
- To ask himself questions.
- To tell himself that he is getting smarter and smarter.
- To tell himself that he is an important teddy bear.
- It is important to work hard.
- He has many strengths.
- He is respected.
- He is strong.

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Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* about something that has changed lately. Then teach him how changes can be fun.

Note to Parents

Change can be frightening, but it can also be fun. And it is certain change will happen. All human beings face changes, but those who welcome change are often happier and more excited about life.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- Changes happen to everyone.
- Change can be exciting.
- About things in nature that change, such as seasons and butterflies.
- About changes that might take place in his life.

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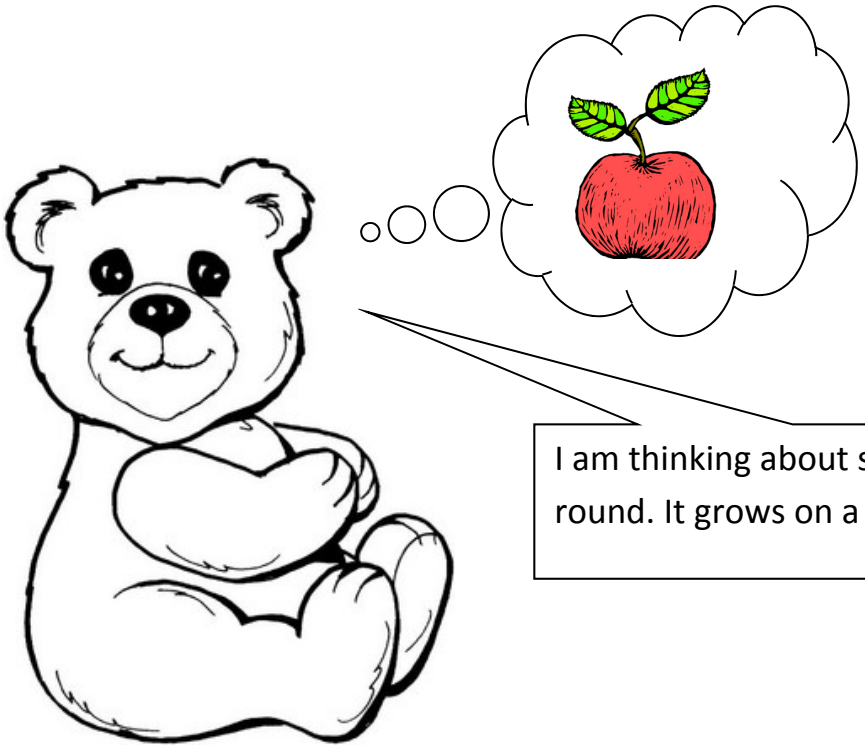
Tell your child to *Teach Teddy* to guess what your child is thinking of, and have your child give Teddy clues about what your child is thinking of.



Note to Parents

The purpose of this activity is for your child to learn to think about more than one thing at a time and to make decisions while considering more than one idea or opinion at a time. People who cannot consider more than one bit of information at a time sometimes jump to conclusions based on incomplete information.

Listen for your child to tell Teddy:

- To think about all of the clues at one time to guess what he or she is thinking of.
- To give precise clues. (I'm thinking of something red. It is also round.)

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