

Date:



## Example story for picturing

Here is an example of the kind of stories we are using right now:

*The brown rabbit hopped up to the garden. He pulled out a carrot. Then he ate it all up.*

We then ask your child questions about the picture he made. For example:

*What color did you picture the rabbit?*

*Where did you picture the carrot?*

*Why did the rabbit eat the carrot?*

*What is a good name for this story? What is it all about?*

As you can see, the story is really simple but it is a good starting place. The questions help your child recheck his picture and strengthen the image he makes. The last question about a title really prompts him to put all of the pieces together.

## Dear Parents:

We have now moved on to helping your child put pieces of information together. Our goal here is to help your child listen to a story or direction and understand it. That means that he has to learn to take the words and make them into one picture. It's called "construction of meaning" - like putting many parts together to construct a house—you have to make sure everything lines up and is attached to everything else.

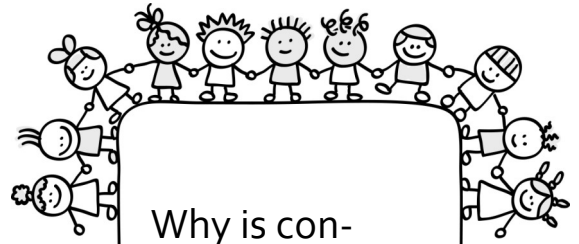
The approach we are using in these lessons is to encourage your child to draw a picture of the words he hears. We really stress that the picture doesn't have to be beautiful, it just has to help his brain. Some children have difficulties using pencils so we give them little play figures to move around to show what they hear.

We are starting out with really really simple stories (see the example to the right). They are only a few sentences long. The stories use words that are easy for your child to understand and he can easily make pictures of them. We won't use longer stories for a while until your child shows he has solid skills with these simpler ones.

To practice at home, a good place to start is following directions. Give your child an instruction that is two to three sentences long. Get him to draw a sketch of what he hears or act out the steps while he listens. Review his drawing or actions with him. Praise his efforts and prompt him to think again if he missed any parts.

## Using these strategies in other places

We want to help your child use his new skills in a variety of other times and places. Please help us think of times and places **at home**. When should your child put pieces of information together to make a whole picture? For example, if you tell your child about your plans for the day, he will need to make a picture in his brain to understand how the different parts go together. How about when he's out **in the community**. For



example, if he is given directions, he needs to put the steps together into a complete picture.

Once you have written in at least a few ideas in each column, please send it back to us so we can start working on these things.

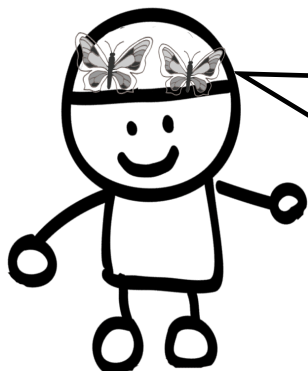
**How I want my child to put pieces of information together into a complete picture:** (carefully describe the situation and what you would like to see your child do)

At home	In the community

## Why is constructing meaning important?

When we have a conversation with someone, we have to take the pieces of information and make a complete picture. When we read, we have to tie the ideas together into a whole image. If we don't, we might miss the point or misunderstand.

Think about listening to a story or conversation and the volume keeps clicking in and out. You only hear some of the words. Would that let you understand what the person was trying to tell you? You would have pieces of information but that's not enough to understand the whole message. That's what it's like if you don't construct meaning. You just have pieces and not the whole picture.



*Beautiful butterflies ... together ... on some leaves.*

