

Things Worth Knowing

12 practical activities | Four age bands | US Letter | October 2026

Useful little discoveries. Decisions that get easier with practice.
Things someone should have taught us.

HOW TO USE THIS COLLECTION

Print a learner page and keep its grown-up guide separate. Read together when helpful. Each activity takes about 10-30 minutes. A pencil is enough for the paper challenge; real-world missions are optional.

AGE AND EXPERIENCE ARE DIFFERENT

All sheets begin at beginner level. Choose a suitable visual and reading level, then adjust support. Older beginners should use mature pages. Children can point, talk, draw, or ask an adult to write.

FOUR WAYS TO LEARN

4-6 Explorers: Meet > Watch > Try > Celebrate.

7-9 Discoverers: Discover > Predict > Solve > Explain.

10-12 Strategists: Analyze > Choose > Test > Reflect.

13+ Thinkers: Investigate > Formulate > Challenge > Revise.

THE GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Each guide includes a small useful fact and a question about something you learned the hard way. The conversation is part of the activity.

PRACTICE WITH PERMISSION

Use pretend money and fictional messages. Kitchen and tool missions need adult supervision. No child should create an account, make a purchase, or attempt a risky repair for these activities.

Choose a useful starting point

Learner page followed by its answer and grown-up guide

01 The Five-Coin Choice

4-6 | Explorers / Money / learner p. 3

02 My First Kitchen Job

4-6 | Explorers / Kitchen / learner p. 5

03 The Little Arrow Secret

4-6 | Explorers / Everyday clues / learner p. 7

04 Same Thing. Different Deal.

7-9 | Discoverers / Money / learner p. 9

05 Find the Problem First

7-9 | Discoverers / Home / learner p. 11

06 Half a Recipe, Whole Snack

7-9 | Discoverers / Kitchen / learner p. 13

07 The Cheapest Thing Costs More

10-12 | Strategists / Money / learner p. 15

08 Measure Twice. Buy Once.

10-12 | Strategists / Home / learner p. 17

09 The Leftover Detective

10-12 | Strategists / Kitchen / learner p. 19

10 The Sneaky Subscription

13+ | Thinkers / Money / learner p. 21

11 Fix It, Leave It, or Get Help?

13+ | Thinkers / Home / learner p. 23

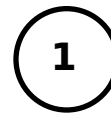
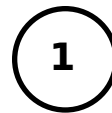
12 That Message Feels Wrong

13+ | Thinkers / Everyday judgment / learner p. 25

The Five-Coin Choice

15 minutes | Beginner | Pencil and five pretend coins

You have five pretend coins. You need a snack for this outing.



SNACK

Cost: 2 coins



STICKER

Cost: 1 coins



TOY

Cost: 4 coins



MEET > WATCH > TRY > CELEBRATE

Circle an affordable plan. Cross out any plan over five coins.

- ☐ Snack + sticker
- ☐ Snack + toy
- ☐ Snack only

Draw the coins left after your choice. Tell us why you chose it.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

The Five-Coin Choice

4-6 | Explorers | Money | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Comparing choices, explaining tradeoffs, and checking assumptions before spending.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

Snack leaves 3. Snack + sticker costs 3 and leaves 2. Snack + toy costs 6, so it does not fit. Snack only costs 2 and leaves 3. Either affordable plan is valid.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Let the child move counters instead of writing. Needs depend on the situation; wanting something is not bad. Avoid making this a test of family finances.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

At home, play shop with three objects and pretend prices. Ask your child to choose within five coins.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

A smaller purchase can leave room for something you will need later. Ask: What purchase did you learn to wait for?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

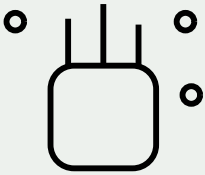
Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

My First Kitchen Job

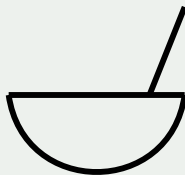
15 minutes | Beginner | Bowl, spoon, soft fruit; adult prepares ingredients

A grown-up prepares the fruit. You get to be the snack helper!

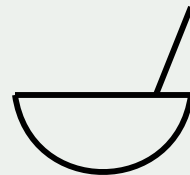
WASH



MIX



TIDY



Meet: scrub hands with soap for at least 20 seconds. Watch: hold the bowl gently while your grown-up shows you.

TRY: NUMBER THE JOBS 1 TO 4

- ☐ Mix prepared fruit
- ☐ Wash hands
- ☐ Tidy tools
- ☐ Get clean bowl and spoon

Celebrate: draw your finished snack.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

My First Kitchen Job

4-6 | Explorers | Kitchen | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Following a clear process and using practical information to make safer choices.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

Order: wash hands; get clean bowl and spoon; mix prepared fruit; tidy tools. For the printed order, numbers are 3, 1, 4, 2.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Use fruit prepared in age-appropriate pieces. Supervise eating and preparation. No knives, heat, raw eggs, or raw meat. Check ingredient allergies before starting.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Help assemble one snack. Put perishable ingredients back in the refrigerator promptly.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Produce is rinsed with running water, without soap. Ask: Which kitchen job did you first learn?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

The Little Arrow Secret

10 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; optional parked-car visit with adult

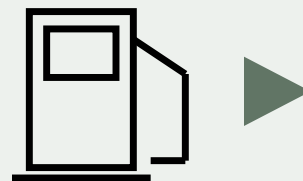
The arrow by the fuel-pump symbol can point to the fuel filler door side.

DASHBOARD A



Circle: LEFT / RIGHT

DASHBOARD B



Circle: LEFT / RIGHT

MEET > WATCH > TRY > CELEBRATE

Point to each arrow. Draw a big arrow toward its answer.

Find another useful symbol. Draw it and tell what it does.

Explore a real car only when safely parked with an adult. Some cars have no arrow; check the manual. No controls or fuel equipment.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

The Little Arrow Secret

4-6 | Explorers | Everyday clues | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Reading everyday clues, checking information, and explaining a useful next step.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

A: left. B: right. The marker identifies the fuel filler door side, not where the whole tank sits.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Say left/right from the vehicle perspective. On a real car, consult its manual. Explore only while safely parked, engine off, with an adult; do not operate controls or fuel equipment.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

With an adult, notice one useful symbol on a household object. Draw it and describe its job.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

The pump hose drawing is not a reliable substitute for the dedicated direction arrow. Ask: Did you already know this clue?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

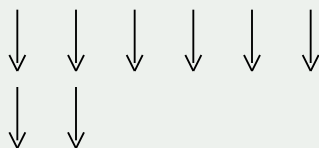
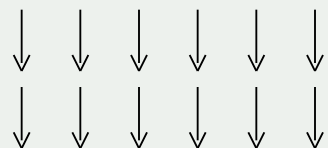
One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

Same Thing. Different Deal.

20 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; counters optional

Identical pencils. You need four today. Which deal works?

PACK A	PACK B	PACK C
4 pencils \$2 per pack	8 pencils \$6 per pack	12 pencils \$6 per pack
		
Each: \$_____	Each: \$_____	Each: \$_____

DISCOVER > PREDICT > SOLVE > EXPLAIN

Example: \$2 divided by 2 pencils = \$1 each. Predict the best unit price, then calculate the three labels.

Which packs tie for lowest unit price? Which costs least today?

You have \$3. Which can you buy? Why might buying more be unhelpful?

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

Same Thing. Different Deal.

7-9 | Discoverers | Money | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Comparing choices, explaining tradeoffs, and checking assumptions before spending.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

A = \$0.50, B = \$0.75, C = \$0.50 per pencil. A costs least today. A and C tie for unit price. With \$3, only A is affordable.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Work in cents if division by dollars is unfamiliar. Larger is not automatically cheaper. A lower unit price does not remove budget, storage, or waste limits.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Compare two packages of the same household item with an adult. Record sizes and prices; no purchase is needed.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Compare the same units and similar products. Ask: Have you ever bought too much to get a bargain?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

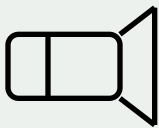
Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

Find the Problem First

20 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; optional intact flashlight with adult

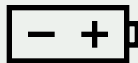
A fictional flashlight will not light. Nothing is damaged or leaking.

SWITCH



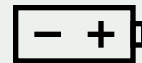
Order: _____

DIRECTION



Order: _____

POWER



Order: _____

DISCOVER > PREDICT > SOLVE > EXPLAIN

Predict a cause. Then number the checks: try switch; adult checks battery direction against instructions; adult tries known-good batteries.

Draw arrows between the checks in your chosen order.

Correcting direction makes it work. What does that support?

STOP for damage, heat, or leaking batteries. Adults handle batteries. Keep coin/button batteries away from children. Never open plugged-in devices.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

Find the Problem First

7-9 | Discoverers | Home | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Observing, measuring, and recognizing the limits of a safe independent task.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

For this exercise: try switch; adult checks direction; adult tries known-good batteries. Printed numbers: 1, 2, 3. Working after correcting direction supports that installation was the problem. Damage or leakage means stop and get adult help.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Use a fictional case if no suitable flashlight is available. Adults handle batteries. Keep button/coin batteries away from children. Never open plugged-in devices or touch leaking batteries.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Describe one harmless problem using: what happened, what I noticed, and what I tried. A fictional problem is fine.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Change one thing at a time so you can learn which change helped. Ask: What did you replace before checking the simple cause?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

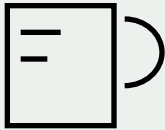
Half a Recipe, Whole Snack

20 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; measuring cups optional

The original fruit salad serves four. Make the recipe serve two.

APPLE

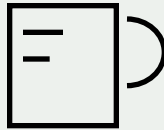
2 cups



Half: ____ cup(s)

PEAR

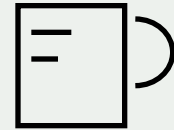
1 cup



Half: ____ cup(s)

BERRIES

1/2 cup



Half: ____ cup(s)

DISCOVER > PREDICT > SOLVE > EXPLAIN

Half of 4 spoonfuls is 2 spoonfuls. Predict: will you use more or less fruit?

Draw two cup shapes. Shade half the original apple amount.

Why should every ingredient be halved, rather than only one?

Use adult-prepared fruit; check allergies. This is a no-heat recipe. Oven temperature and cooking time do not automatically halve.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

Half a Recipe, Whole Snack

7-9 | Discoverers | Kitchen | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Following a clear process and using practical information to make safer choices.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

Apple: 1 cup. Pear: 1/2 cup. Berries: 1/4 cup. Halve every ingredient to keep proportions consistent. Cooking time and equipment do not always scale the same way.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Use prepared fruit with adult supervision, check allergies, and use age-appropriate pieces. This is a no-heat example; do not assume halving oven temperature or cooking time is correct.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Use measuring cups and water at a sink to compare 1 cup, 1/2 cup, and 1/4 cup. Dry the floor after spills.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

A recipe is a ratio as well as a list. Ask: Which recipe did you learn by watching someone?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

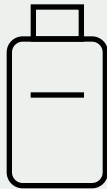
The Cheapest Thing Costs More

25 minutes | Beginner | Pencil and calculator

Four years of use. Invented prices and lifetimes. No repair costs.

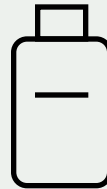
BOTTLE A

\$8 upfront
Lasts 1 year(s)



BOTTLE B

\$22 upfront
Lasts 4 year(s)



ANALYZE: MARK EACH PURCHASE ON THE TIMELINE

A

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

B

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Choose > Test: total A \$____; total B \$____; difference \$____.

You have \$10 today. What can you afford? What tradeoff remains?

Reflect: B is lost and replaced once. New total? New decision?

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

The Cheapest Thing Costs More

10-12 | Strategists | Money | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Comparing choices, explaining tradeoffs, and checking assumptions before spending.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

A: $4 \times \$8 = \32 . B: $1 \times \$22 = \22 . Difference \$10. With \$10 today, only A is affordable. One replacement B makes \$44, assuming that replacement lasts through year four.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

These are invented lifetimes and prices, not product claims. Distinguish affordability today from cost over time. A durability estimate can be wrong.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Compare two products without buying them. Record upfront cost, likely replacement needs, and one missing piece of evidence.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Lifetime cost rests on assumptions. Ask: What cheap purchase became expensive?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

Measure Twice. Buy Once.

25 minutes | Beginner | Pencil and ruler/tape; adult for measuring

Required spare space: 2 cm total in EACH dimension. No rotation.

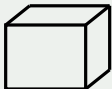
SHELF OPENING: 60 cm wide / 30 cm deep / 28 cm high



Maximum box: ____ W x ____ D x ____ H cm

BOX A

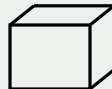
58 x 28 x 26 cm



FIT / NO

BOX B

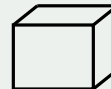
59 x 27 x 25 cm



FIT / NO

BOX C

56 x 31 x 24 cm



FIT / NO

ANALYZE > CHOOSE > TEST > REFLECT

Which dimension stops each rejected box from fitting?

What could a listing omit: handles, lid movement, or access?

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

Measure Twice. Buy Once.

10-12 | Strategists | Home | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Observing, measuring, and recognizing the limits of a safe independent task.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

Maximum 58 x 28 x 26 cm. A fits exactly under the stated clearance rule. B fails width. C fails depth. Handles, lid travel, and access can affect real fit.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

The 2 cm clearances are invented exercise requirements, not universal installation guidance. Actual objects may need manufacturer-specified clearances. Do not climb or move heavy furniture.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Measure a small safe tabletop object twice. Label width, depth, and height. Ask an adult to check your measurement.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

A product may have inside and outside dimensions. Fit usually depends on outside dimensions. Ask: What almost fit?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

The Leftover Detective

25 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; fictional scenarios

RULE CARD

Refrigerate within 2 hours; within 1 hour above 90 F.
Fridge: 40 F or below. Use shallow leftover containers.

A / Cooked rice

Out of refrigeration: 30 minutes at 72 F
Circle: timing meets rule / discard

B / Cooked chicken

Out of refrigeration: 3 hours at 72 F
Circle: timing meets rule / discard

C / Yogurt

Out of refrigeration: 90 minutes at 95 F
Circle: timing meets rule / discard

ANALYZE > CHOOSE > TEST > REFLECT

Why is smelling or tasting not a safety test?

Assume other handling was safe. Never taste suspect food. With an adult, label safe leftovers with food name and date.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

The Leftover Detective

10-12 | Strategists | Kitchen | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Following a clear process and using practical information to make safer choices.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

A meets the timing rule. B and C: discard. B exceeds 2 hours; C exceeds 1 hour above 90 F. Harmful germs may not change smell or taste. Never taste suspect food to test it.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Use paper cases, not questionable food. Timing compliance is only one part of safe handling. Consult FoodSafety.gov storage charts for food-specific storage duration.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

With an adult, label a safely stored leftover and locate the fridge thermometer. Adults handle uncertain foods.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Hot leftovers can be refrigerated in shallow containers; do not wait hours for them to cool on the counter. Ask: What storage habit surprised you?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

The Sneaky Subscription

30 minutes | Beginner | Pencil and calculator

Fictional offers. Investigate before you sign up.

MONTHLY

7-day free trial
Then \$9/month
Auto-renews until canceled
12 paid months: \$____

ANNUAL

\$80 upfront
No trial / no refund
One year of access
Difference: \$____

FORMULATE: YOU NEED ONLY TWO PAID MONTHS

Monthly: \$____ Annual: \$____ My choice: _____

CHALLENGE: WHAT IS MISSING FROM THE OFFER?

- ☐ Exact trial deadline
- ☐ Cancellation steps
- ☐ Renewal and access terms

Revise: write a cancellation plan and how you will save confirmation.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

The Sneaky Subscription

13+ | Thinkers | Money | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Comparing choices, explaining tradeoffs, and checking assumptions before spending.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

Monthly year: $12 \times \$9 = \108 . Annual: \$80. Difference \$28. Monthly first paid charge \$9; annual upfront \$80. Two paid months: \$18 versus \$80. Trial deadline is unspecified; do not invent an exact date.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

All terms and prices are fictional. No real account or payment information is needed. A low annual price can be poor value if use is short or uncertain.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Audit a fictional or voluntarily shared subscription with an adult. Record cost and cancellation route; do not change another person's account.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Canceling a payment method is not necessarily canceling a subscription. Check the provider's terms. Ask: What did you pay for after you stopped using it?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

Fix It, Leave It, or Get Help?

30 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; paper scenarios only

Paper cases only. Choose a safe FIRST response and explain it.

A / Loose shirt button



Response: _____

B / Sparking outlet

STOP & ASSESS

Response: _____

C / Dripping tap

CAUSE UNKNOWN

Response: _____

D / Loose storage-box screw



Response: _____

Choices: supervised practice / stop and alert adult / adult investigation before repair.

Formulate: how will you match the tool? When would you stop?

Challenge > Revise: write a useful help request for the dripping tap.

No live faults. No electrical, gas, structural, or appliance repair. Smoke/fire: leave and call emergency services from safety.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

Fix It, Leave It, or Get Help?

13+ | Thinkers | Home | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Observing, measuring, and recognizing the limits of a safe independent task.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

A: supervised sewing practice. B: stop, stay away, alert adult immediately; do not touch or attempt electrical repair. C: adult assessment before repair. D: supervised practice after checking instructions and tool fit. Stop for slipping, damage, resistance, or uncertainty.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Paper assessment only. Do not reproduce faults. Adults decide whether a qualified professional is needed. No mains electricity, gas, structural work, or opening appliances. For smoke/fire, leave and call emergency services from safety.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

With permission, practice matching a screwdriver to an intact screw on a harmless loose sample. No live repair is required.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

Correct tool type and size both matter. Ask: Which repair taught you to call someone?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

That Message Feels Wrong

30 minutes | Beginner | Pencil; invented messages only

Fictional messages. Mark the clues; never follow the links.

MESSAGE A / PARCEL ALERT

Your parcel is held. Pay \$1.20 now at [parcel-help.example](#) or it will be destroyed.

MESSAGE B / NEW NUMBER

Hi, it is your cousin. New number. Send me the code that just arrived.

INVESTIGATE: UNDERLINE PRESSURE, PAYMENT, IDENTITY, AND CODE REQUESTS

Formulate: how can you verify through a separate, known channel?

Challenge: would your real name or perfect spelling prove it is genuine?

Revise: what is your next step if you already clicked?

Do not share codes. Tell a trusted adult if unsure. .example is an illustration domain.

Explain it. Try it with permission. Teach someone else.

That Message Feels Wrong

13+ | Thinkers | Everyday judgment | Keep this page separate from the challenge

WHAT THIS BUILDS

Reading everyday clues, checking information, and explaining a useful next step.

ANSWERS AND REASONING

Both contain warning signs. A pressures you to pay through an unverified link. B requests a verification code and claims a changed number. Personal details and polished writing do not prove identity. Independently verify. If clicked, tell a trusted adult; next steps depend on whether information was entered, a file downloaded, or money sent.

SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

No live suspicious links are used. Do not forward real codes or publish personal messages. If credentials were entered, secure the affected account through its official site with adult help; use FTC guidance for the specific exposure.

REAL-WORLD MISSION

Build a private household rule for verifying unusual money or code requests. Do not put real passwords or codes on this sheet.

GROWN-UP DISCOVERY

A familiar sender name can be imitated. Ask: What makes you pause before acting on a message?

AFTER THE MISSION

One thing we noticed: _____

One thing we would try differently: _____

Child: I can explain it / I want another practice / I need help.

Checked facts. Original challenges.

Sources checked October 13, 2026 | Fictional prices and scenarios

MONEY LEARNING

CFPB Money as You Grow supports age-appropriate discussion of money choices and comparison shopping. The calculations and fictional offers in this collection are original exercises.

consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/money-as-you-grow/

FOOD HANDLING

FoodSafety.gov: 4 Steps to Food Safety. Source for handwashing, washing produce, prompt refrigeration, temperature limits, and shallow containers. This set does not supply food-specific shelf-life or cooking-temperature tables.

foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety

SUSPICIOUS MESSAGES

FTC: How To Recognize and Avoid Phishing Scams. Source for independently contacting a claimed sender and responding to possible exposure.

consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recognize-avoid-phishing-scams

FUEL FILLER CLUE

Ford owner manual, Fuel Gauge: the arrow beside the pump symbol identifies the fuel filler door side. Vehicle layouts vary; check the manual for the actual vehicle.

Ford owner manual (CG3784, December 2020)

PRODUCTION NOTE

Original Sage Dad activity content. Black-and-white line elements with restrained Sage green. Print at actual size on 8.5 x 11 inch paper. No full-bleed printing required. This collection is not an installation or website deployment package.