In the folk story *Something From Nothing* by Phoebe Gilman, we read the story of Joseph, a young boy whose grandfather makes him a beautiful blue blanket when he is born. As the years go by and the blanket becomes worn, Grandfather recycles it. He makes the blanket into other things that the boy can use: a jacket, a vest, a tie and finally a cloth-covered button. We can learn a lesson from this lovely old tale. We can also make something from nothing with our children. It is fun to use things that we already have in the house and save money by doing so.

**Play music.** Turn on the radio and play along with homemade instruments. Of course pots and pans make great drums, but so do old coffee cans. Fill up containers with beans, lentils and anything else you can find that makes a noise. How do the filled containers sound similar? Which ones sound different? Please make sure that your containers are well sealed so your child cannot eat or possibly hurt himself with the contents.

Don’t forget to enjoy the easiest instruments of all – our voices as we sing along, our feet as we tap the rhythm, and our hands as we clap along.

**Make homemade playdough.** Take 2 cups of baking soda, 1½ cups of water and 1 cup of cornstarch. Mix them together with a fork until smooth. Boil over medium heat until the mixture gets thick. Spoon the mixture onto a plate or wax paper and let it cool. This is not an edible playdough – it won’t taste very good, but it will be fun to play with!

**Blow bubbles.** Straw bubbles are a fun and easy activity to play with children. Just mix up a bubble solution using a mild liquid dishwashing detergent: 1 ounce of detergent for each 2 cups of water is all you will need to get started. Put a bit of the solution on a plate and let your child blow into the mixture through a straw, making lots of bubbles. Make sure that no one sucks in through the straw; it will taste pretty horrible! Create bubble wands out of found objects (straws, pipe cleaners, strawberry baskets, cookie cutters and coat hangers) and have your own bubble festival.

Enjoying time together can be easy and inexpensive at the same time. So go ahead and make collages, go to the playground, and take nature walks. Play games such as Follow the Leader and Red Light, Green Light or just roll on the floor together. There are so many possibilities for fun with our kids.

**Similar folk stories**

*Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback

*It Could Always Be Worse: A Yiddish Folk Tale* by Margot Zemach

For more ideas, please go to [www.pbsparents.org](http://www.pbsparents.org).
24-Hour Children’s Programming on WETA Kids

The WETA Kids channel presents television programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The channel provides safe viewing choices created especially for children, featuring public television’s renowned educational series. In addition to around-the-clock programming on the WETA Kids channel, children’s programs can be found each morning on WETA TV 26.

WEEKDAYS ON THE WETA KIDS CHANNEL

6:00 a.m. Between the Lions
6:30 a.m. Clifford The Big Red Dog
7:00 a.m. Super WHY!
7:30 a.m. Arthur
8:00 a.m. Martha Speaks
8:30 a.m. Curious George
9:00 a.m. Sid the Science Kid
9:30 a.m. WordGirl
10:00 a.m. WordWorld
10:30 a.m. Dinosaur Train
11:00 a.m. Cyberchase
11:30 a.m. Electric Company
12:00 p.m. Dragon Tales
12:30 p.m. A Place of Our Own
1:00 p.m. Sesame Street
2:00 p.m. Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood
2:30 p.m. Raggs
3:00 p.m. Sid the Science Kid
3:30 p.m. Super WHY!
4:00 p.m. Arthur
4:30 p.m. WordGirl
5:00 p.m. Fetch! w/Ruff Ruffman (Fri: Electric Co.)
5:30 p.m. Cyberchase
6:00 p.m. Clifford the Big Red Dog (Fri: Animalia)
6:30 p.m. Martha Speaks (Fri: Mama Mirabelle)
7:00 p.m. Curious George
7:30 p.m. Zula Patrol
8:00 p.m. Electric Company
8:30 p.m. Wishbone
9:00 p.m. BIŻ KIDS
9:30 p.m. Zoboomafoo
10:00 p.m. Sesame Street
11:00 p.m. Bob the Builder
11:30 p.m. Raggs
12:00 a.m. Clifford The Big Red Dog
12:30 a.m. Maya and Miguel
1:00 a.m. Dinosaur Train
1:30 a.m. WordWorld
2:00 a.m. WordGirl
2:30 a.m. Martha Speaks
3:00 a.m. Fetch! with Ruff Ruffman
3:30 a.m. Cyberchase
4:00 a.m. Barney & Friends
4:30 a.m. Zoboomafoo
5:00 a.m. Dittydoodle Works
5:30 a.m. Miffy and Friends

Dinosaur Train promotes basic scientific thinking in children, while celebrating their fascination both with dinosaurs and trains. Children learn about life science, natural history and paleontology with Buddy, a tyrannosaurus rex, and his adoptive pteranodon family. In each episode, the pteranodon family boards the Dinosaur Train to embark on trips through prehistoric jungles, swamps, volcanoes and oceans. The Dinosaur Train has the ability to visit the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous worlds, while the train conductor, a knowledgeable troodon, provides passengers with cool facts about dinosaurs.

The episodes include two animated stories along with brief live-action segments hosted by paleontologist Dr. Scott Sampson. Together, children and Dr. Scott unearth basic concepts in life science, natural history and paleontology.

SciGirls spotlights girls across the country using science to make a difference as they answer real-life questions and make unexpected discoveries in the world around them. Whether they’re investigating the safety of drinking water in a rural community; engineering “green” products for friends and family; or helping migratory animals reach a destination safely, these girls use science to achieve goals, solve problems and help others. Though viewers meet new girls in each episode, the series is unified by a pair of recurring animated characters — Izzie and her best friend, Jake. Together, they embark on their own adventures and call on the SciGirls for help.

SciGirls also integrates the companion website www.pbskids.org/scigirls into the TV series. At the beginning of each episode, television viewers follow Izzie onto the website as she picks a group of SciGirls whose project she thinks can help her conquer her own challenge. Izzie launches a video and follows the SciGirls’ live-action story, learning as she goes. (SciGirls airs Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. on the WETA Kids channel)
Rediscover Your Public Library

The public library is a great place to find enriching valuable information and entertainment. Following are nine great reasons to go for a visit:

1. **Free programs and activities.** From author visits to puppet shows to family films, libraries have kid appeal. Ask your librarian for the schedule of upcoming events.

2. **Story times.** There’s nothing like hearing a good story from someone who loves to read aloud. Library story times often include finger plays, games, songs and crafts that can be learned and enjoyed again at home.

3. **Workshops.** Many libraries offer workshops to help you learn and are fun too. At many libraries, it is possible to learn to knit, prepare your taxes, update your résumé, gain computer skills or improve your parenting skills.

4. **Books.** Librarians are happy to make book recommendations, and most public libraries have a special children’s section.

5. **Audiobooks.** Have you listened to a good book lately? Most libraries have a collection of popular adult and children’s titles available for checkout on tape or CD.

6. **Movies.** Your public library is a great source for free access to all kinds of movies and television programs.

7. **Music.** Do you want to introduce your children to Beethoven or the Beatles or new children’s songs? Check to see if your library has a collection of music on CD.

8. **Magazines and newspapers.** There are magazines designed just for children. With bold photographs, poems, and a joke or two, magazines are another reading choice for beginning readers. Or you can catch up on the news in your community and share a smile over the comics.

9. **Computers.** Most public libraries offer free Internet access, computers with educational games for kids, and valuable online resources for teenagers.

Your local library may have its own website with links to other resources within your community. If you’re looking for the online or street address of your local public library, www.lovlibraries.org/findyourlibrary offers several places to look.

For information about helping your child with reading, please check www.ColorinColorado.org, a bilingual website for English-language learners.

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**Explore Recommended Books**

**Something from Nothing: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!**

**Books to use with children from preschool through primary grades**

**For Preschool**

**The Earth Book**
by Todd Parr
Small efforts to reuse materials can make a big difference, as shown in this playful book. Boldly colored illustrations and a simple text encourage readers to do easy things like using both sides of the paper.

**Salad People and More Real Recipes: A New Cookbook for Preschoolers and Up**
by Mollie Katzen
Eating healthfully and with foods that are in season (and may even be grown in a backyard) can be a difficult concept for young children. Katzen’s child-friendly approach helps engage kids in making and eating tasty treats.

**For Primary**

**Growing Vegetable Soup**
by Lois Ehlert
No grocery store is needed when you grow your own vegetable soup in the backyard! Through bold shapes and vivid colors, the ingredients of a homegrown soup emerge along with a recipe just right for adults and children to make together.

**Jack’s Garden**
by Henry Cole
Backyard gardens, which provide a home for insects and small animals, are fun to watch. In this story, told in a familiar cadence with a rhythmic text complemented by blooming full-color illustrations, a garden grows more colorful and lush as a boy tends it.

**Recycle: A Handbook for Kids**
(revised edition)
by Gail Gibbons
Kids can help save the earth’s resources by recycling paper, plastic and cans. Why this is an important activity is explained in crisp, colorful illustrations and an informative text written to inspire action.

**Recycled Crafts Box**
by Laura C. Martin
Not only are neat craft ideas presented, there is a brief history of trash! Clearly illustrated, simple projects using readily found material (ranging from milk cartons to foil pans), these crafts are sure to help children and the adults in their lives rethink craft activities.

**Where Does the Garbage Go?**
by Paul Showers,
illustrated by Randy Chewning
Back in the olden days (some 20 years ago), people didn’t recycle; they put everything in the garbage pail. Now, as a teacher tells her class in this good-humored book, we know better and reduce what we use by recycling.
Use the Ready To Learn Learning Triangle

VIEW
Sesame Street
Wednesday, March 17 on the WETA Kids channel at 1:00 p.m., or on Thursday,
March 18 on WETA TV 26 at 5:00 a.m.
Episode: Squirmadega Car Race
Slimy is practicing for the Squirmadega Car Race. When Slimy loses the race to Shawna the worm, Elmo is very disappointed for Slimy. But Slimy is happy; he loves racing whether he wins or loses, and he loves to practice, too. Elmo learns all that really matters is that Slimy did his best.

READ
Amos and Boris by William Steig
George and Martha One Fine Day by James Marshall

DO
Make a Special Card for a Friend
Help your child show appreciation for a friend by making a special card.
Materials: Construction paper
Magic Markers or crayons

Directions
1. Talk to your child about someone in his life who has done something special or important such as learning to ride a tricycle or play a new sport. Explain that a card can show someone you care and are proud of what she has accomplished.
2. Have your child tell you why they think that person did something special and write it on a piece of construction paper.
3. Ask him to decorate the card or draw an illustration. Encourage him to think about the special things the person enjoys and draw a picture of these favorite things. Help him write the name of the person on the inside of the card.
4. Give the card to a friend and tell her how special she is!

Talk about it
Talk about how a friend can show support in different ways such as making a card or cheering for a friend, just like Elmo did for Slimy on Sesame Street. Ask your child what are some other ways he can show support for a friend.

Take it further
Help your child show support for someone in the community, such as a firefighter or librarian, by making the person a special card.


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If you would like more information about WETA Kids Ready To Learn or other WETA activities and programming, please go to www.weta.org or contact us at 703-998-2827 or eod@weta.com.