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Dear Teachers and Parents,

When working with the brains of young children, professionals talk of building **schema** or **background knowledge**. We need a “chunk” of information, connected concepts and ideas on which to “hook” new knowledge. This is called **neural scaffolding**. These terms and a few others appear in the glossary to help you use the poems and activities along with the embedded icons with more confidence. Here is your first “chunk” of **schema**.

Children love poetry. They are instinctively drawn to the musical sounds, the alliteration, the active nature of rhyming words.

Yet, few teachers or parents use poetry often or thoroughly. We collect marvelous children stories and books, but we neglect poetry. Perhaps we subconsciously associate poetry with unpleasant high school or college literature courses or with romantic ballads on greeting cards.

That is a mistake. Poetry is ideal for young children. Typically, poems are shorter than stories, which make them appropriate for a shorter attention span. Poetry is moving and active, just like young children. The sense of rhyme, which makes the words more fun and festive, attracts children to the *reasons* for the poem.

This book uses **rhymes to teach reasons**. From holidays to telling time, 12 early childhood themes are brought to life with a poem and matching enrichment activities. Each set features **brain-friendly icons** to help you target the learning to the emerging skill.

While you are reading the poems aloud, don't forget to enjoy them yourself. When was the last time you read a poem aloud just for the fun of it? Your enthusiasm and passion for words and ideas, and indeed all learning, are the most powerful incentive for any child.

With best wishes as you build healthy young brains,

*Linda*

Dr. Linda Karges-Bone  
Summerville, South Carolina  
March 2012



# Chapter Two

## Keeping Promises: Building New Ideas and Brain Cells in the New Year

### Keeping Promises

“I promise to clean my room every day.”

“I promise to keep my skates out of the way.”

“I promise to listen to everything you say.”

Promises, promises . . . which ones will stay?

“I fixed my bed, but forgot the floor.”

“Oops . . . there’s a roller blade left by the door.”

“Sorry, I won’t talk back anymore.”

Promises, promises . . . easy to ignore!

“I’ll clean up the mess when I get back home.”

“How did that ice skate end up by the phone?”

“I’ll try not to use that rude, bossy tone.”

Promises, promises . . . left all alone.

“I just didn’t see it, those clothes in a pile.”

“Sorry, I’ll park my bike in just one more mile.”

“Okay, mom, I can try to answer with a smile.”

Promises, promises . . . they’re just not my style!

“Did you say clean . . . C-L-E-A-N?”

“Who left my red wagon in the middle of the den?”

“Ugh, oh, I talked back to you again.”

Promises, promises . . . where will they end?

It is New Years and time for promises galore.

Promises to listen, to help out and more.

But who could tell what life has in store?

Do I have to keep promises? What for?

A promise is a promise, a trust that you earn.

Keep your promise close and take your turn

At trying to show grown-up concern.

With promises to help out, to listen, and learn.

## Brain-Building Activities

Read “Keeping Promises” on **page 11** to children and then invite each child to respond to the question: “What is a promise?” Using chart paper and a scented green marker (to stimulate thinking), record each child’s response. Be sure to read each response aloud back to the group after it is recorded.



Draw children’s attention to several words in “Keeping Promises” on **page 11** that may be unfamiliar, including *bossy*, *galore*, *concern*, *tone*, *style*, *trust*, and *earn*. Write each word on the board, and guide children in using context clues from the poem to figure out what the words mean.



Use Reproducible 1: Color by Number, Traced Verse, and Handwriting Practice on **page 14** to develop fine motor and visual discrimination. The children can trace the verse, and then, on the bottom line, copy the verse.



Sometimes children need to practice articulating the sounds B, D, and P. Use Reproducible 2: Listen and Learn on **page 15** to reinforce auditory and visual discrimination among the children.



Use “Keeping Promises” on **page 11** to introduce the concept of tone of voice. As the children sit in a circle around you, practice using several varied tones as you repeat a command such as, “Let’s go now.” Try to make your voice happy, angry, bossy, silly, light, deep, etc. Then invite the children to “Name That Tone.” Switch it around and have the children create their own voice inflections and associate them with words.

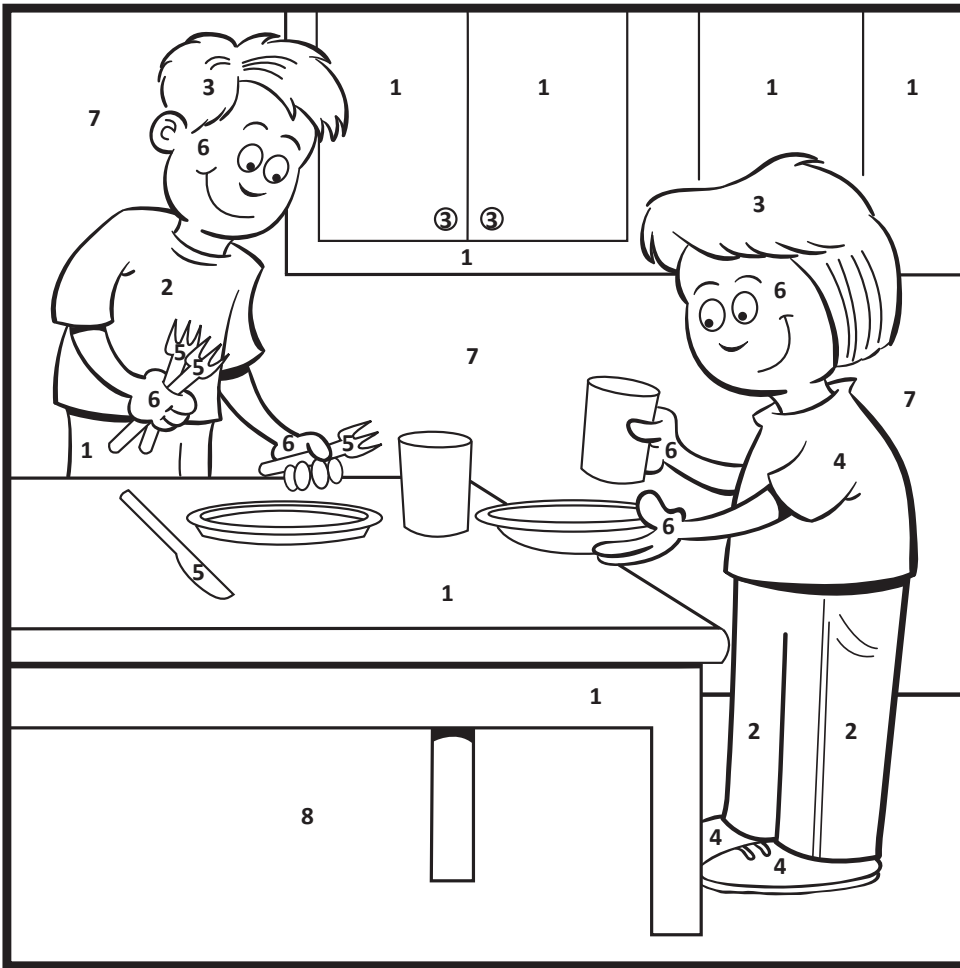


Continue with “Name That Tone” by printing tone words on a large index card. Include words such as: LOUD, SOFT, SWEET, GENTLE, BOSSY, GRUMPY, MEAN, ANGRY, HURRIED, WORRIED, LIGHT, DEEP, DARK, KIND, and SILLY. Put the word cards into a basket, and let the children take turns drawing them out and playing charades with them. The first child to “Name That Tone” gets to take the next card.





My name is: \_\_\_\_\_



### Color by Number

Directions: Color by number this picture.

- 1 – brown
- 2 – dark blue
- 3 – yellow
- 4 – red
- 5 – gray
- 6 – peach
- 7 – light blue
- 8 – purple

### Traced Verse

Directions: Trace the verse.

The new year is time for a  
promising rhyme.

### Handwriting Practice

Directions: Now copy the verse on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Nine

## Almost Late Again! The Concept of Time

### Almost Late Again!

Hurry, hurry, don't be late.  
The clock is ticking and will not wait.  
Hours and minutes slipping by,  
Quickly time begins to fly.

Get up now and wash your face.  
Time to start the daily race.  
Eat your pancakes, watch the clock.  
The minutes tick while you find your sock.

Look at the hands winking at you.  
Covering the numbers . . . 12, 1, 2,  
On to 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,  
Passing by 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Helping to plan or maybe to worry,  
The clock lets us rest or hurry.  
Counting out the dark and light,  
Twelve hours for day and twelve for night.

Run to the school yard or catch the bus,  
Time won't wait for any of us.  
Sixty minutes in each hour,  
That's the measure of its power.


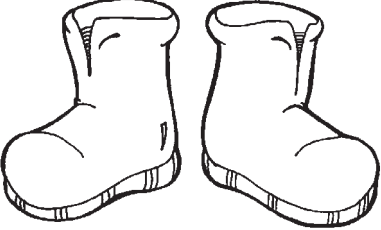



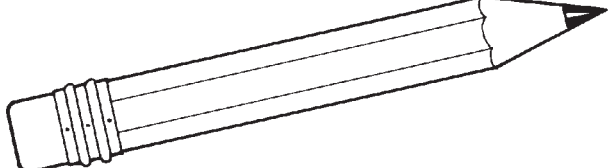
Twenty four hours in each day,  
You can choose to spend it your way.  
Busy or quiet, happy or sad,  
Make it the best you've ever had!

Reproducible 5: Cause and Effect



My name is: \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Directions:** In each row, there is a picture that shows what can happen when we are not thinking about time. Circle the picture with your crayon.

1		
2		
3		
4	