18 · A message that gets there

Say this, or use your own words

Who is our message for, and how shall it arrive?

Ready in a moment

An imagined recipient or a willing familiar adult. A page is optional; keep names and addresses fictional.

Try a little play

1. Choose a pretend message and recipient, or a private reminder. The child can choose not to send.

2. Pick a delivery way: tell, sign, show a mark, or direct an adult. Ask permission before sharing their creation.

3. If a willing real adult receives it, ask what they actually understood. If the recipient is invented, keep the reply labelled fiction.

4. Repeat, change the delivery or finish. No child contact information, photograph or online sending is needed.

Choose a useful route

• Communication: Deliver one agreed message in the child's familiar mode, with a competent adult supporting where wanted. Ask the willing recipient to check the meaning. A different mode is optional, not a route to force speech.

• Making or paper: Put one message and its intended meaning on the empty aid, or use a plain page. The child can direct an adult to show it to a willing partner. Keep the adult's writing and delivery help separate.

• Observe or imagine: Describe a pretend post room carrying a message to a cloud visitor. Let the child choose the imagined destination or keep watching. Do not invent a real recipient's reply to fill an observation.

Two fictional ideas to borrow

• Home fiction: A make-believe doorway message says please ask before entering. A willing familiar adult repeats its meaning during play. That actual exchange is different from proof that every visitor understands it.

• Space fiction: A message goes to a made-up moon workshop by an imaginary shuttle. The child chooses a private story and no sharing. No actual sending, address or space-flight fact is supplied.

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Notice, then choose the next move

Notice an intended recipient, a chosen delivery way and any actual response. Next time simplify the message or offer an agreed second way if it would help.

Later fresh start: Choose a fresh recipient or private reminder with one message. Earlier messages need not be kept or recalled.

Optional extra: Have a willing partner offer a message back, using their own preferred communication. The child may decline the exchange or ask an adult to help interpret.

Adult intention: Choose a recipient and a useful way to deliver a message.

Optional original SVG aid · complete no-image description

All materials — readable HTML · Full parent guide — readable HTML · Full card — readable HTML

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