



**Playdatebox**

# PANCAKES

THE PURPOSE OF A PLAYDATEBOX IS TO CONNECT GENERATIONS THROUGH PLAY



## HOW TO BUILD A PLAYDATEBOX

## HOW IT WORKS

Develop relationships virtually or in-person

Choose 1 picture book



Choose 1 hands-on activity



Choose 1 question



Gather supplies in advance for instant fun with the grandkids

Play together in person or via videoconference

The **Pancakes Playdatebox** is a themed box of fun designed to get you and a child you love playing together.

The goal of this box is to help grandparents, parents, and grandchildren create connections in playful ways, regardless of distance.

Just choose one book, one activity, and one "connection question" that are age-appropriate for your child or grandchild, gather your supplies, and start playing!



## Pancake Art Playdate

Pancake Art is a favorite Playdate at my house on lazy weekend mornings when the grandkids visit. I consider this a craft project, not a meal plan.

Pancake Art is edible, but it takes time and some patience to create.

Just fill plastic squeeze bottles with different colors of pancake mix, then "design" on a cold pancake griddle.

We always start out by watching a couple of [YouTube pancake artists](#) creating more intricate designs. This helps children understand the process, including drawing outlines first, then adding successive layers of color.

### Supplies You'll Need For Pancake Art:

- A non-stick griddle, if possible, or a non-stick pan if you don't have a griddle
- Pancake mix (any brand should work well)
- Food coloring (gel coloring gives you the most vibrant color)
- Squeeze bottles for piping the pancake mix onto the griddle
- A large pancake spatula

### Mixing Your Pancake Mix:

- Mix a big bowl of pancake batter. You'll probably need to add a little more water than the package instructions recommend. Make sure you have beaten out all of the lumps. Use a hand mixer or a whisk.
- Your batter should flow quite freely from the bottle. Make it the consistency of "runny ketchup."
- Pour the plain batter into your squeeze bottles using a funnel, or pour from a measuring cup with a spout edge.
- Add the food coloring and let your grandchild shake the bottle (make sure the top is on tight). Watching the color appear is part of the fun!

### Pancake Art Tips:

- The pancake batter needs to be lump-free in order for it to flow freely from the squeeze bottles.
- Keep a toothpick nearby to help remove clogs if they happen.
- Start with a cold, greased electric griddle. This eliminates the risk of burned fingers.







## Making your Pancake Art...

- Most young children just want to create colorful designs with squeeze bottles. Visit our website for some simple designs. We've attached a page of sample designs for inspiration.
- Older kids: Try laying down an outline in a dark color first. This gives your design a "fenced boundary" and it works pretty well for more intricate art.
- Next, fill in your outlines "backward." The colors you draw with first will be on *top* in your flipped-over design. Write any letters backward too.

### Cooking Your Pancake Art:

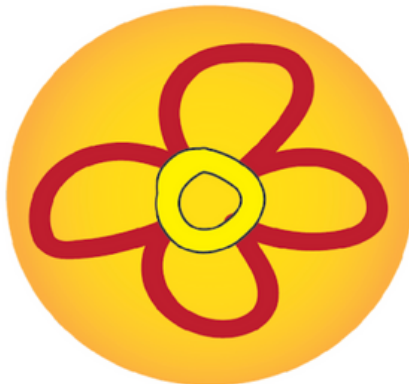
- After the artistic creation is on the griddle, heat the griddle up to 200 degrees and wait until bubbles form throughout your pancake.
- Resist the urge to turn the griddle higher to speed up the process. You'll brown the pancake and it will ruin the colors!
- Once it looks a bit dry around the edges. Loosen the edges with a spatula. Flip your pancake to see the MAGIC (and cook the other side).

Your first pancake is likely to be a failure. Don't give up!

- Let the griddle cool before making your next pancake. You can also lay a kitchen towel over the edge where kids are likely to touch the warm griddle.
- If you are worried about a young child too close to a hot griddle, try having her hold the squeeze bottle with an oven mitt or have her hold the bottle while you guide her hand and keep it well away from the hot surface.
- Keep it simple! Child-driven designs are easy and completely appropriate.

Many people credit Nathan Shields with being the first true "Pancake Artist." He's a stay-at-home Dad and part-time illustrator who loved making pancakes for his kids. One day he shaped a unique pancake with a spoon, posted it on Facebook, and the rest is history. He now uses a squeeze bottle just like you. His children always get to create with him.

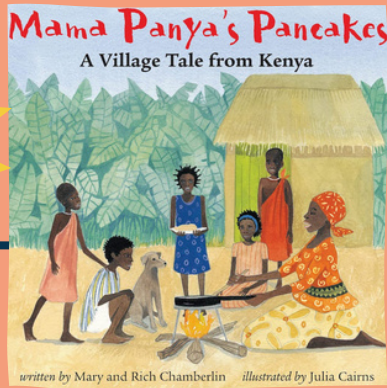
## Easy Pancake Art Designs For Beginners





# FAVORITE BOOKS ABOUT PANCAKES

Read it together virtually on [Readeo.com](https://www.reef.com)



## MAMA PANYA'S PANCAKES

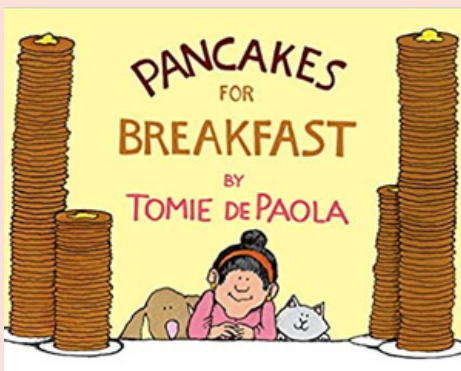
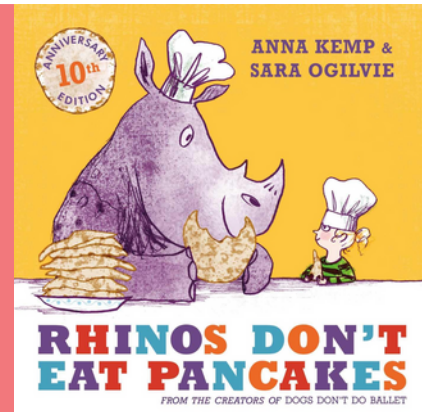
**Ages 3-7 years**

Adika wants to invite lots of friends for a pancake supper, but Mama's supplies are limited, and she's worried. A beautiful tale about sharing. You'll learn how powerful it is to have "a little bit, and a little bit more."

## RHINOS DON'T EAT PANCAKES

**Ages 2-6 years**

Daisy's parents "a million miles away." That is to say, they are a little bit distracted being adults, and Daisy can't get their attention long enough to warn them that there is a purple rhinoceros eating all of the pancakes in the kitchen.



## PANCAKES FOR BREAKFAST

**Ages 2-5 years**

A little old woman prepares to make pancakes only to discover she's missing ingredients. This book has no words, so your children can make up their own story as you read along together using DePaola's charming illustrations as a guide.

## ONCE UPON A PANCAKE

**Ages 2-5 years**

This fun fill-in-the-blank book is designed to help children develop their storytelling ability. The author has provided the beginning of a story, and you fill in all of the details together. Perfect for long-distance story creation.



Great for long-distance fun!

# EASY LONG-DISTANCE PLAYDATE

## Lion Pancakes

Read "Mama Panya's Pancakes" together while you enjoy eating your Lion Pancakes!

Lion pancakes are easy and fun to make. With a little bit of coordinating, you can make one "remotely" with a long-distance grandchild.

Gather supplies on both sides of your call:

- A completed pancake
- Strawberry, halved
- 3 mandarin oranges, peeled and sectioned
- Whipping cream in a can
- Chocolate chips or brown M&M's candies
- Something from the pantry you can turn into whiskers (we used fruit leather and Cheetos).





## More Pancake Fun

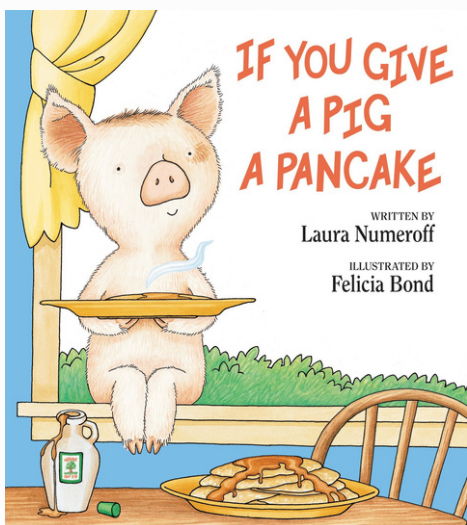
# Write a Pancake Stack Story

One fun skill children use often in their writing and creating is something known as *sequential thinking*.

This is an important skill they will apply to many other subjects. Sequential thinking refers to the ability to process information in a specific order, understanding that Monday comes before Tuesday, or that if you give a pig a pancake, you're going to need to get syrup out of the cupboard too. (See the book, *If You Give a Pig A Pancake* by Laura Numeroff).

Download a free copy of *Short Stack: A Pancake Story by Me* for your grandchild. Trim around the edges to make your book, then staple the edge together.

Next, work together to write a sequential story with your grandchildren about eating pancakes every day of the week!



*If you Give a Pig a Pancake is another fun example of sequential thinking.*



Download your free copy of **Short Stack:**  
<https://playdatebox.com/short-stack/>

## WEDNESDAY

I ate 3 pancakes, but this time, I added \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_



Draw your toppings on your stack of pancakes.

# Music and Movement

## Play the Pancake Flip Game

Turn on some tunes, grab a pancake spatula, and get ready for some simple and silly movement.

### To Create Your Pancake Flip Game:

Using heavy card stock paper, print Pages 9-14 double-sided so that the activity suggestions are on the back of the pancakes.

Cut out the pancakes. (You can cut around the pancake edges to make your playing pieces round, or cut along the dotted lines.)

Have fun! Make up your own activities and send us pictures of your PlayDate! Or tag us on social media @Playdate\_Box

### Playing the Game:

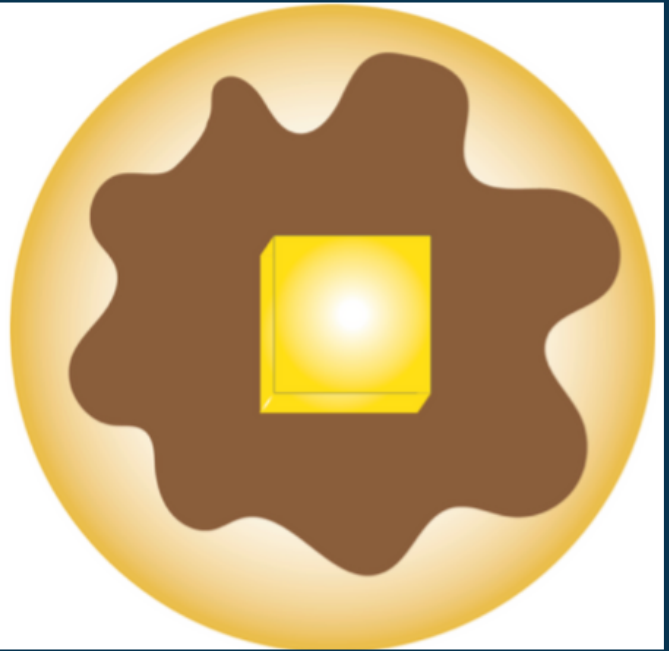
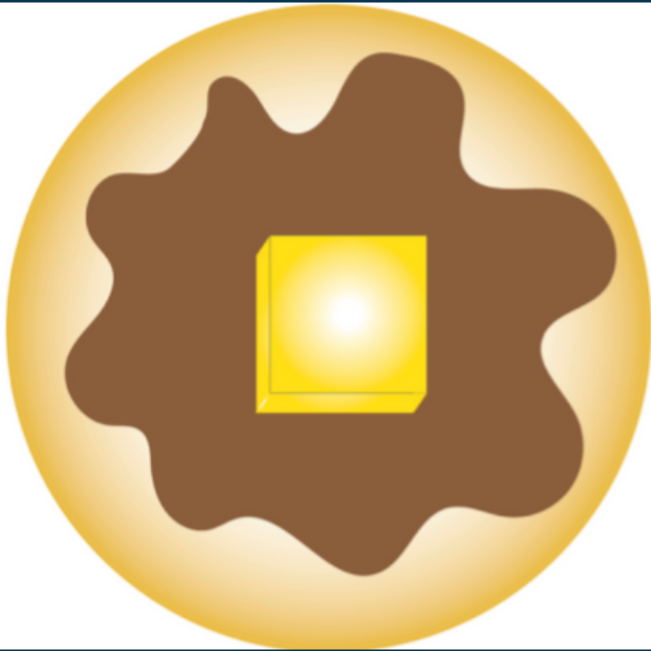
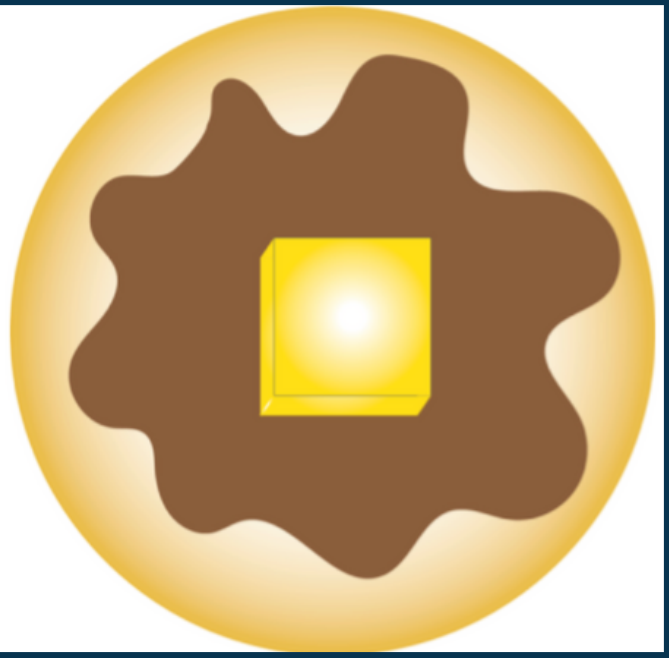
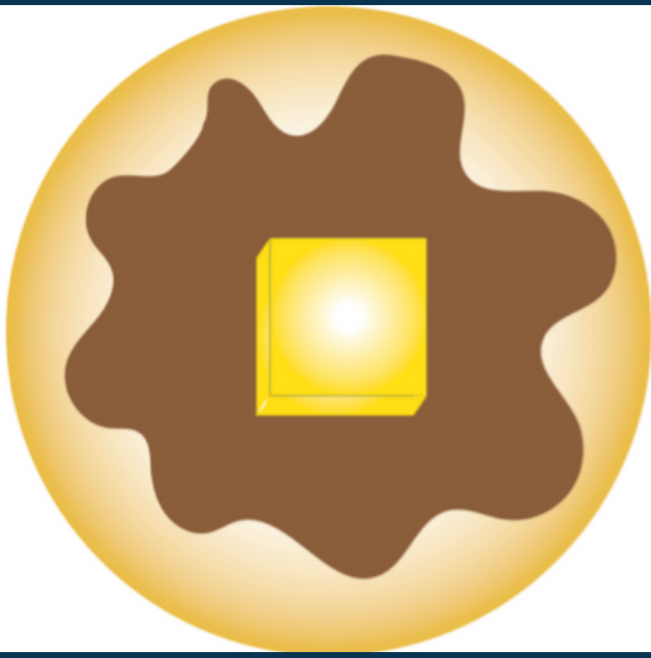
Spread all your pancakes (pancake side up) on the floor.

Player #1 uses the spatula to flip over a pancake. Carefully slide the spatula under the pancake and flip it over to reveal the suggested activity on the other side. Everyone participates in the activity.

Set the flipped pancake aside, and let Player #2 flip the next pancake. Continue play until all the pancakes have been flipped. Celebrate with a short stack of mini pancakes!







Sing Your Favorite  
Song

Bend over and grab  
your toes. Walk across  
the room.

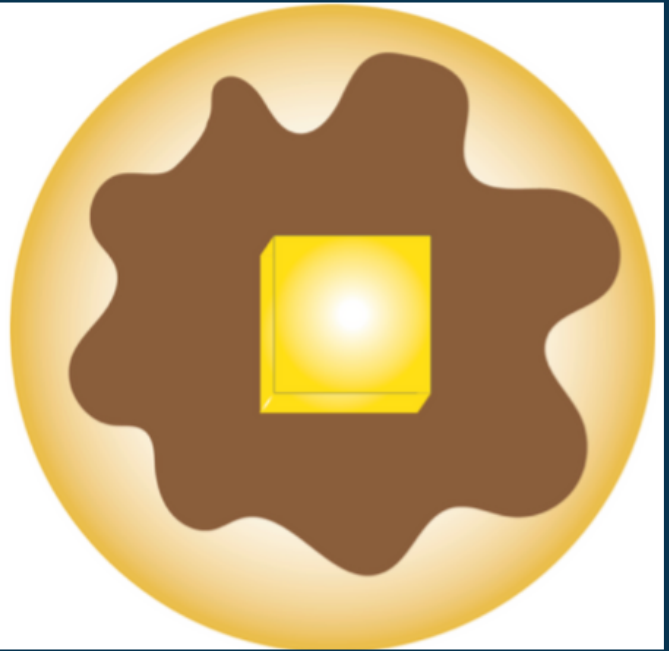
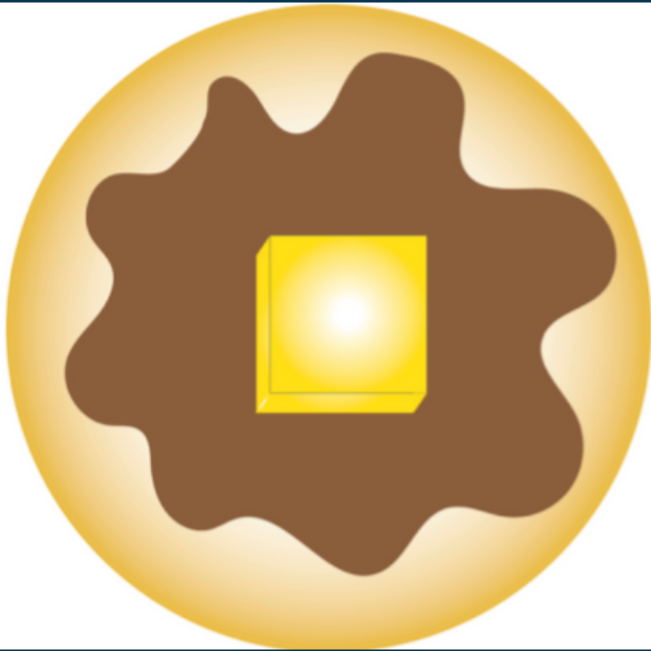
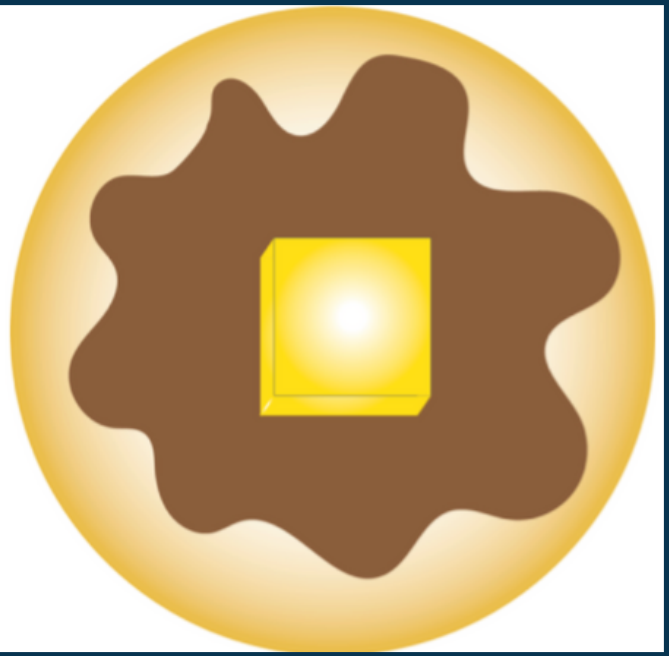
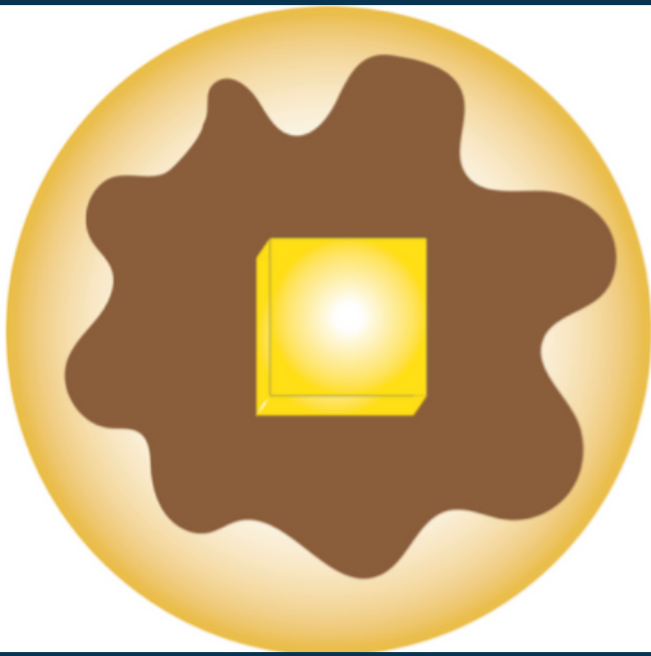
Say the alphabet  
forwards, then backwards.

Walk 10 steps backwards,  
then turn around  
and come back.

Stretch your hands,  
feet, and head as  
high and as  
far as you can.

How many body parts  
can you wiggle?  
How many can you bend?





Hop on one foot,  
and then the other

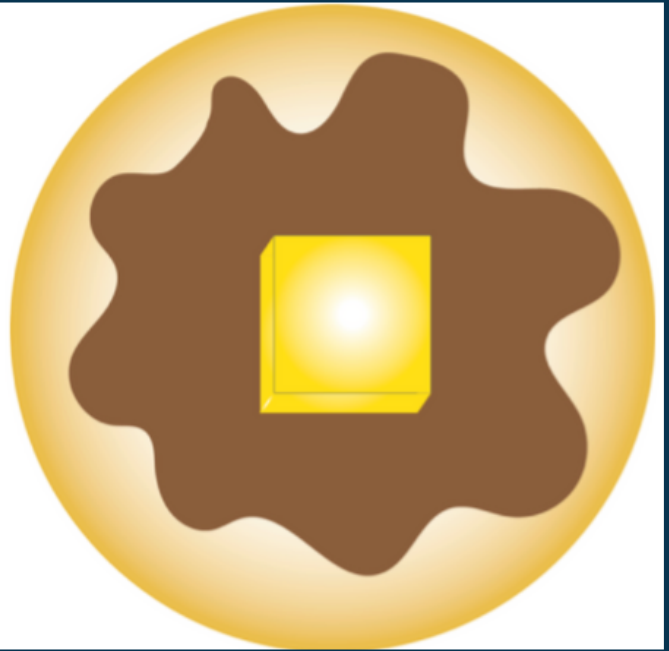
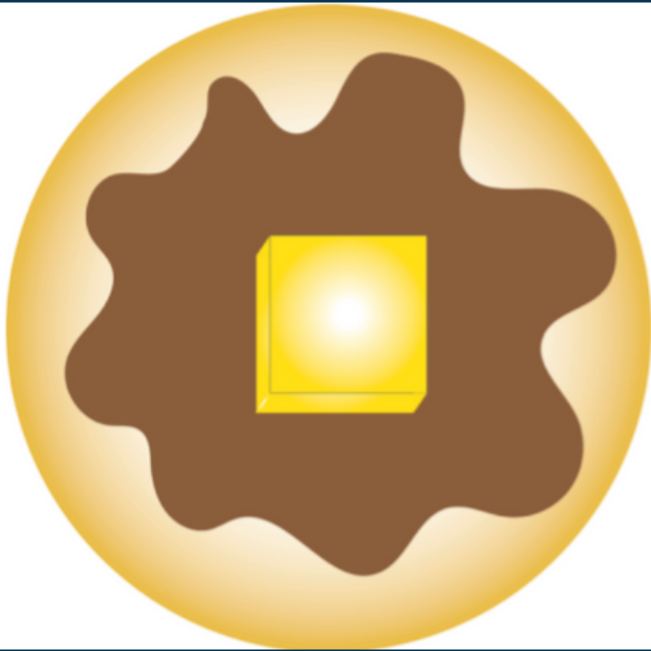
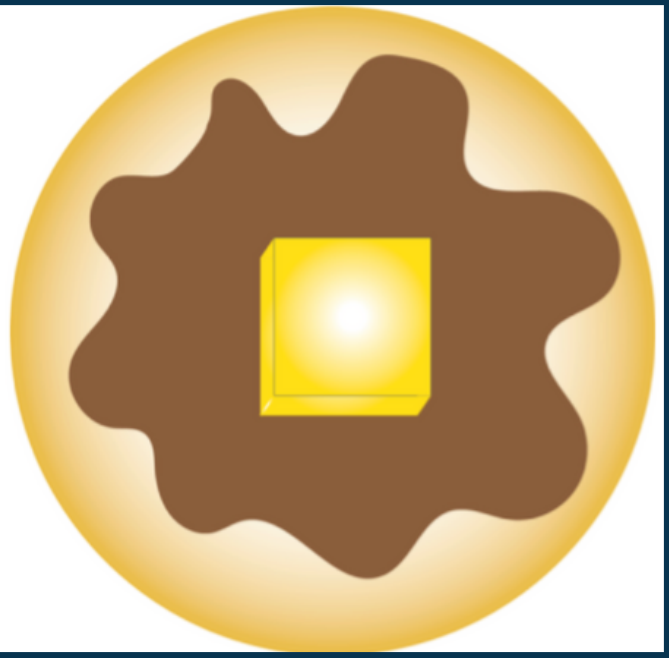
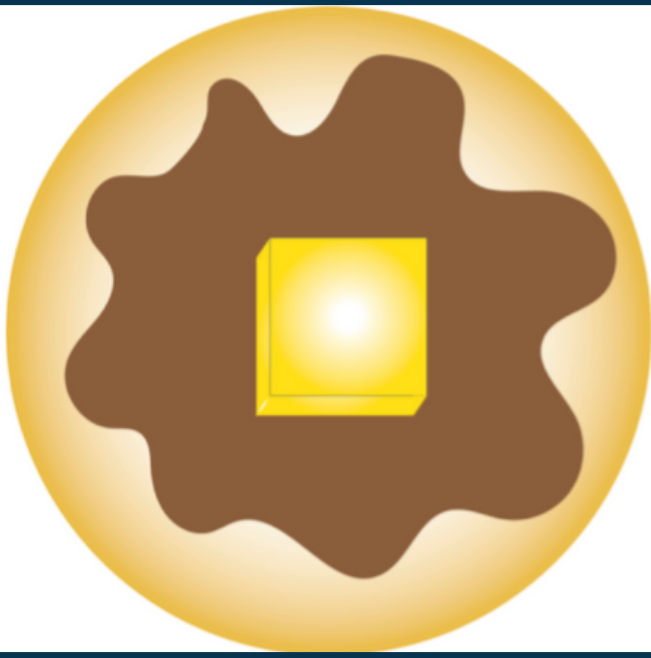
Spin in a circle  
until you get dizzy.

Can you sing the  
alphabet in a  
duck's voice?

Make your silliest  
face.

You choose an activity  
for everyone  
to follow.

Do a forward roll.





Count from one to ten  
and then back again.  
Can you do it in another  
language?

Find something  
in the room that is  
Red  
Green  
Blue  
Yellow  
Your favorite color.

Pat your head  
and rub your  
belly at the  
same time.

Do something  
that makes  
the other players  
laugh.

You choose an activity  
for everyone  
to follow.

Do a forward roll.

## Connection Question:

What is your favorite thing to eat for breakfast?

**Connection Questions** help create bridges of connection between you and your grandchild. Take turns answering any of these questions, and when possible, record or write down the answers!



Some additional questions:

- What is the first thing you ever cooked by yourself?
- Have you ever had a time when you had to take turns with someone to get an important job done?
- What is something really generous that someone else did for you? How do you feel about that person now?

If you are meeting remotely with your grandchild, hit "record" to record these conversations using the "Voice Memos" app or a similar recording app on your phone. Then use a transcribing application such as [otranscribe.com](https://otter.ai), [temi.com](https://temi.com) or [otter.ai](https://otter.ai) to preserve the answers to these questions. Save them in a binder or journal and add photos if you have them.



## Values to Pass on: Empathy and Turn-taking

*Did you know that child psychologists recommend the concept of "turn-taking" instead of "sharing" to help children learn empathy and generosity?*



Sharing and turn-taking sound like the same thing, but they aren't. Researchers tell us that for very young children (ages 2-4) the complicated give-and-take involved in collaborating around a common goal (sharing) isn't something toddlers' brains are developed enough to do.

And if you think about it, being forced to "share" something with someone else against your will isn't really a teaching moment at all. It's more like coercion. If you are a grandparent who often encouraged your own children to "share," it may be helpful to look at some of the most recent research on the benefits of teaching turn-taking instead. I have had to change my vocabulary *and* my approach as I've learned that there is a better way than the one I used as a parent.

I love the book, *Mama Panya's Pancakes* because it teaches the concept of sharing and generosity in such a simple, approachable way. Mama Panya is worried about running out of her meager supplies, but her son, Adika understands that when everyone collaborates around a common goal of a shared meal, magically, there's plenty for everyone! Turn-taking and generosity are great tools to add to your arsenal of values to pass on!



## Resources:

### Fun things for your Pancake Playdatebox

#### Pancake Art Squeeze Bottles:

You can purchase large (12 oz.) squeeze bottles in most department and craft stores. For the very fine-tipped versions, check cake and cookie decorating supply shops. I found mine on Amazon.com

#### Pancake Art T-shirt for Grandpa:

If you want Grandpa to get in on some of the fun, you can order a humorous T-shirt for him to wear on pancake-making days. Check Amazon for lots of fun versions.

#### Emoji Pancake Griddle

Emoji pancakes are a favorite tradition at my house and the grandkids ask for them at every visit. You can find pancake griddles and mini waffle irons in all kinds of fun shapes.

#### Pancake Pile-Up Relay Game

Flip an order card and race to the first pancake shown, use the spatula to place it on your plate, race back, and hand the plate and spatula to the next player, relay-race style. Created by Educational Insights.





# Playdatebox

If you are new at playing with grandchildren, and feel a little overwhelmed, don't worry. Choose one book, plus one activity, plus one question. Any combination of these is all you need for a Playdate!

Our vision is that you will use the contents of this newsletter to help you connect with a child you love, regardless of distance! Most Playdatebox activities are designed so that they can also be enjoyed "remotely" via videoconferencing software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Just assemble supplies on both sides of the call so that you can play "together." Visit our website, [Playdatebox.com](https://www.playdatebox.com) for lots of ideas on how to do this in creative ways.

If you enjoy these ideas, please let others know, and tag us on social media with a photo of you enjoying a Playdatebox activity.

We love to engage with our customers and often give away free Playdateboxes on our Instagram feed. Find us at @playdate\_box and follow us for your chance to win. We share all of our best ideas about creating family fun.



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