Toward a Better World:
All Around the Neighborhood

Learning Value:

This activity promotes development and learning by encouraging children to observe, explore, and describe their environment to gain understanding of people, places, and things.

Materials Needed:

▶ Paper and a pencil

Participants:

This activity is intended for independent play, adult/child interaction, or 2 or more participants/players.

Directions:

Step 1: Go for a walk around the neighborhood.* Ask your child to pay close attention and remember as many details as they can.

Step 2: When you return home, write down what you noticed on a piece of paper. What sounds did you hear? What scents did you smell? Did you notice any unusual or beautiful plants? Who did you see?

Step 3: Make a neighborhood map with the information you gained. Try to record as much information as possible, such as the names of your neighbors, the sounds and scents you heard, local businesses, etc. For toddlers and younger preschoolers, simply draw a few pictures.

If going for a walk in your neighborhood isn't an option, try doing this activity from memory. Or, make a map of your backyard, carefully scrutinizing the small details you might ordinarily miss—an ant hill by the sandbox or the pile of rocks at the back of the yard.

Learn More:
Set up a pretend shop for your child with food boxes, common household items, etc. Make pretend money from strips of paper, small stones, or even pinecones. Anything will do! Take turns with your child pretending to be the shopper and the shopkeeper. Help your child count the money. Offer paper and a pencil and show your child how to make a shopping list.

Read books about neighborhoods and shops, such as:
Home in the Woods by Eliza Wheeler
Red House, Tree House, Little Bitty Brown Mouse by Jane Godwin and Blanca Gomez
On Market Street by Arnold and Anita Lobel
The Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Pena and Christian Robinson
The New Neighbors by Sarah McIntyre

Bright Horizons
World at Home