

Dear  Friends,



I'm trying something new this month—and I think you're going to like it. Instead of sending you one big **REACH** guide each month, I'll now be popping onto my blog—and, if you're a [subscriber](#), into your inbox—once a week. Same great book selections. Same fun, family-friendly activities. Just delivered in smaller, more bite-sized pieces to help you connect and play all month long.

While I'll still feature one special picture book each month, I'll also recommend a few additional titles that go along with the theme. These extra books are great for extending reading time—without increasing the struggle. And the best thing? They all work well with the activities so you can read more *and* play more!

My hope? That this new weekly format helps you enjoy the book more deeply, try a few extra activities you might've skipped before, and feel even more supported as you share stories and learning at home. Prefer everything in one place? You'll still get a full, printable **REACH** guide at the end of each month to download and keep. The PDF will also be archived on the website [HERE](#) so you can revisit it anytime!

It's July, and in Florida where I live that means afternoon summer storms roll in like clockwork—lightning crackles, thunder booms, and the sky turns into a wild, noisy drumline. It's dramatic... and often more than a little scary. Of course, not all of you live where summer afternoons come with a built-in soundtrack, but wherever you are, a good thunderstorm tends to stir up some big nerves in kids (and sometimes grown-ups too). And with Independence Day nearly here, we're adding fireworks to the mix. Between Mother Nature and backyard celebrations, it's a month full of **BOOM**.

That's why I'm so excited to kick off this new format with our July REACH pick: [**Storm Trucks by Charlotte Glaze**](#). This sweet and powerful story was born from a mom's mission to help her storm-shy son—and it delivers a strong and helpful message wrapped in rumbling fun. Axel, the hero, loves trucks but not thunderstorms. Until one day, with the help of his imagination, he starts to see the storm in a whole new way.

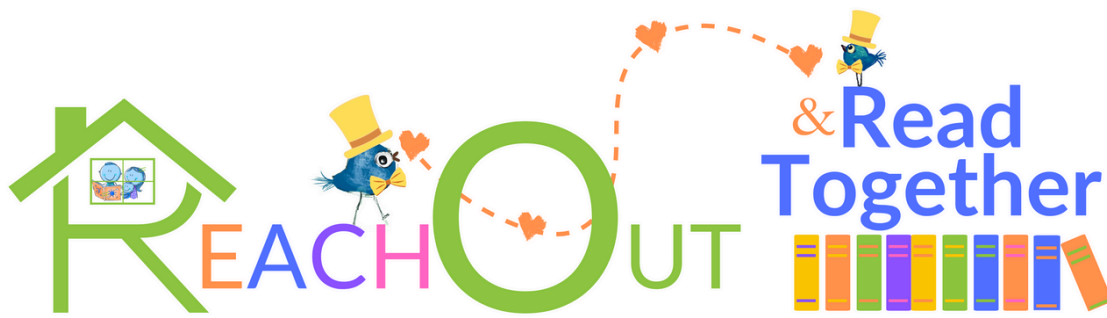
If you've got a little one who loves big machines, has big feelings, or just needs a brave story for a blustery, boomtastic day, *Storm Trucks* is the perfect read.

Warmly,

Donna Boock
REACH Editor &
Concierge of Children's Book Fun
www.DonnaBoock.com



**To receive REACH Guides
in your inbox monthly!**



Volume 2 / Issue 5/ July 2025

This Month's Featured Book:



Suggested for ages 3-7

*Axel loves loud trucks.
Digging. Pushing. Lifting. Building.
RUMBLE RUMBLE BEEP trucks.
Axel does not love loud and scary
RUMBLE RUMBLE BOOM storms.*

Journey with Axel and his sweet puppy through a big thunderstorm. Axel loves loud trucks—but when a storm booms and rumbles outside, Axel feels scared. But wait! Axel's imagination kicks in! He sees trucks in the sky, making noise as they build... something! With his puppy by his side, Axel faces his fear and helps his friend through the storm, finding a surprise at the end of their journey.



BUY NOW



Clicking this Bookshop affiliate link won't cost you extra, but it might help fund my book-buying habit (strictly for research purposes, of course!)

Storm Trucks

Discussion Questions for REACH Partners



1. Why was Axel afraid of the storm?
2. What helped him feel better?
3. How was Axel's puppy feeling when the power went out?
4. How did Axel help his puppy feel better?
5. What did Axel find after the storm? Have you ever seen a rainbow?
6. What kind of noises did Axel hear during the storm?

Prompts to Dig Deeper

1. Are you afraid of thunderstorms?
2. Let's talk about something you are afraid of.
3. What are some things you do to try to get through something scary?
4. Let me tell you about something I'm scared of...
5. Here are some things I do to get through scary things...

let's play

Storm Truck Charades Act It Out!



Print the Storm Truck Charade Cards and cut out individual cards. Take turns picking a flashcard with a storm-related or construction truck action. Act out what's on the card while the others guess what it is. The guessers also try to decide: Is it a Storm or a Truck?



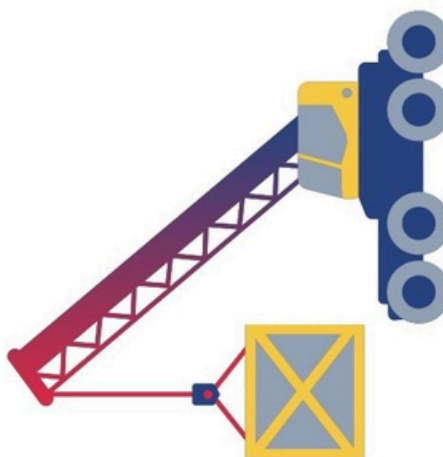
Push like a bulldozer



Spin like a cement mixer



Dump like a dump truck



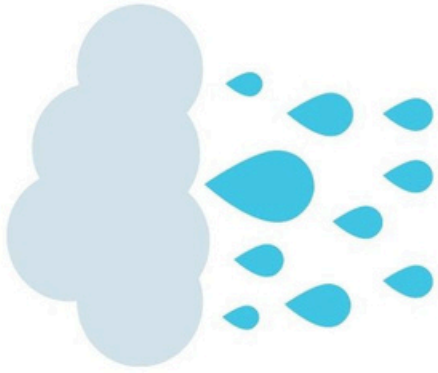
Lift like a crane



Scoop like an excavator



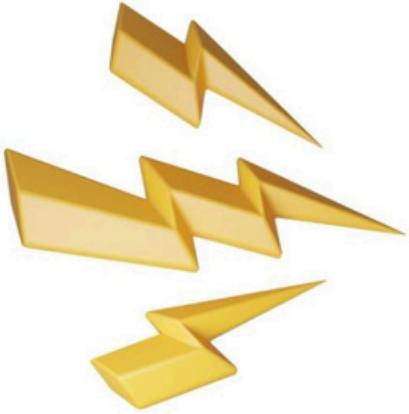
Roll like a steamroller



Fall like rain



Splash in a puddle



Flash like lightning



Float like a cloud



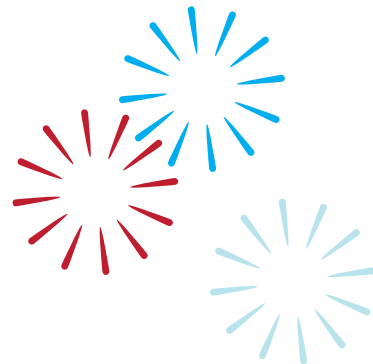
Boom like thunder



Blow like the wind

July

Bookish Ways to Celebrate July's Bookish Days



**Try any (or all!) of these fun, easy ways to
REACH out and read together all month long:**

July is Read an Almanac Month – Check the moon phase or weather forecast together, then draw a picture of what the sky might look like that night.

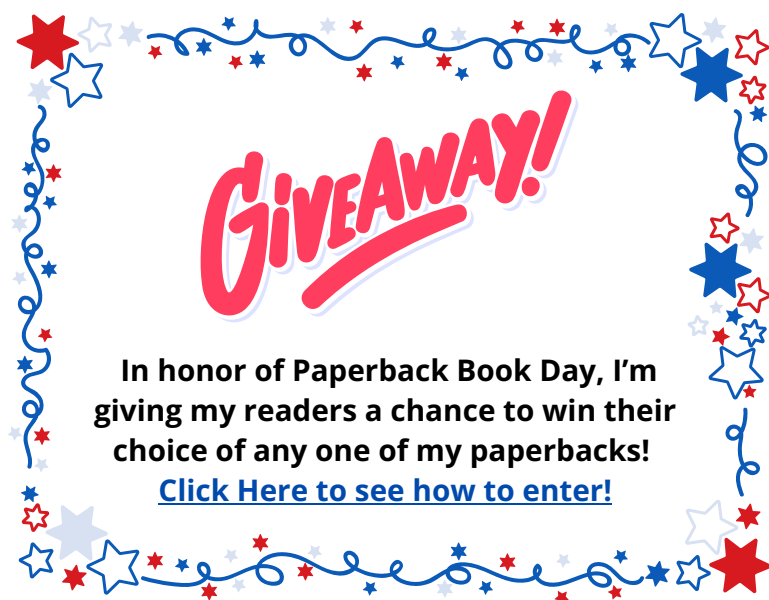
JULY 11 – E. B. White's Birthday – Read a favorite quote from Charlotte's Web, then go on a "word web" hunt to find kind words around your home.

JULY 21 – Ernest Hemingway's Birthday – Try writing a tiny six-word story—fun for even the youngest storytellers!

JULY 28 – Beatrix Potter's Birthday – Have a tea party with stuffed animals and read a Peter Rabbit tale (bonus: draw your own animal character!).

JULY 30 – Paperback Book Day / Neville Longbottom's Birthday – Visit a local library or bookshop and let everyone pick a paperback to enjoy.

JULY 31 – J.K. Rowling & Harry Potter's Birthday – Celebrate with a Harry Potter read-aloud, a house sorting, or by making a "spell" for courage, kindness, or calm.



Why Re-read Storm Trucks? And Why Just One Book a Month?

You may wonder why REACH focuses on just one featured book each month. It's intentional—and it's powerful. Young children thrive on repetition. Hearing the same story again and again isn't just something they enjoy—it's how they learn.

Re-reading builds vocabulary, reinforces story structure, and helps kids connect more deeply with characters and emotions. Each time through, they notice something new, ask different questions, and grow more confident in their understanding. Eventually, they become "story experts," eager to tell the tale back to you in their own words—a key step toward independent reading.

By spotlighting a single book all month long, we create space for that deeper connection. But that doesn't mean we stop with just one story.

To expand upon what we're doing, I also share thematically connected books to expand on the big ideas—whether it's handling emotions, exploring nature, or sparking imagination. These read-alikes keep the conversation going, build comprehension, and help your child see how stories can be linked by feeling, topic, or curiosity.

So this week, go ahead—curl up with Storm Trucks again. And when your child is ready for more, try one of the books in this curated list to keep the learning (and bonding) rolling.

1. **Come On, Rain!** by Karen Hesse

👉 Watch Read Aloud A lyrical, joyful celebration of a long-awaited summer rain. Great for pairing with your cloud-in-a-jar or rainmaker crafts—and perfect for talking about how nature brings relief and renewal.

2. **Storm is Coming!** by Heather Tekavec

👉 Watch Read Aloud A humorous story where barnyard animals misunderstand the warning about a storm. Sweet, silly, and a gentle way to talk about fear of the unknown.

3. **The Rabbit Listened** by Cori Doerrfeld

👉 Watch Video A beautiful book about sitting with big feelings—and how sometimes, just being there is what helps most. A touching companion to Axel's moment of quiet connection with his puppy.

4. **Flashlight** by Lizi Boyd

👉 Watch Read Aloud A wordless, imagination-rich exploration of shadows and light. A perfect pairing with your flashlight mindfulness activity and any nighttime play.

5. **A Rainbow of My Own** by Don Freeman

👉 Watch Read Aloud A child dreams of catching a rainbow—just like Axel reimagines the storm. Ideal for linking to your rainbow crafts or projector fun.

BONUS SNEAK PEEK! I'm thrilled to reveal the cover of my upcoming book, *How To Find a Four-Leaf Clover*, coming February 2026. Take a first look and get ready for a lucky advice about looking closely, believing big, and finding your own patch of hope inside of you.

Flashlight Mindfulness: From Stormy Sky to Quiet Calm

A calming flashlight activity that helps kids imagine moving through a thunderstorm and into peaceful skies.

Supplies:

- A flashlight (one per child or to take turns)
- A darkened room or tent
- Optional: background storm sounds or soft music



Activity:

1. Start in the Storm. Say something like:

“The sky is dark and stormy. Let’s pretend your flashlight is a brave truck driving through the storm.”

Have them move their flashlight beam quickly—zigzags, circles, or bouncing motions like lightning and thunder.

2. Moving Through It:

Prompt:

“Now the storm is rumbling, but the trucks keep working. Move the light slower now, like it’s pushing through rain and wind.”

Add motions like “sweeping” the light back and forth or “digging through clouds.”

3. Quieting the Sky:

Say:

“The storm is slowing down... Can you make your light move as gently as the breeze after rain?”

Encourage very slow movements now—gliding the beam softly like a truck rolling away.

4. Deep Breathing & Calm:

End with:

“Now the trucks are resting. The sky is quiet. Let’s take deep breaths together while your light stays still.”

Inhale and exhale slowly 3–5 times together. Let the flashlight beam “fade” by turning it off or dimming it if possible.

What's going on up there in those stormy skies?

Let's find out—with a fun and simple weather experiment you can do at home using just a few everyday items! Kids will love watching the “cloud” fill up and finally burst into rain, just like a real storm. This hands-on activity pairs perfectly with this month's book, *Storm Trucks*, and helps children connect weather and water in a visual, memorable way.



Cloud in a Jar – A Simple Rain Experiment

You'll Need:

- A clear glass jar (or cup)
- Shaving cream
- Water
- Food coloring (blue works best)
- A spoon or dropper

Step-by-Step:

1. Fill the jar about $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water. This is the air.
2. Add shaving cream on top to make a fluffy “cloud.”
3. In a small bowl or cup, mix food coloring with a little water. This is your rain.
4. Use a spoon or dropper to slowly drip the colored water onto the shaving cream.
5. Watch closely! When the “cloud” gets full, the rain falls into the water below!

What's Happening?

This shows how real clouds work!

☁ Clouds are made of tiny water droplets.

💧 When clouds get too heavy, the droplets fall down as rain.

This experiment shows how rain happens when clouds can't hold any more water!

Idea inspired by [The Tasty Fork Blog](#)—thank you for the wonderful inspiration!

Looking for more fun ways to read, play, and connect?
Visit DonnaBoock.com for more free activities, games, and REACH guides!

COVER REVEAL!



BONUS SNEAK PEEK!

I'm thrilled to reveal the cover of my upcoming book, *How To Find a Four-Leaf Clover*, coming February 2026. Step into a world of imagination, positivity, and self-belief with *How To Find a Four-Leaf Clover*—Donna Boock's upcoming picture book featuring vibrant, playful artwork by the wildly talented John Joven, whose bold style makes every page POP!

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Song: "Boom, Rumble, Crash!"

(Tune: The Wheels on the Bus)

The thunder up above goes rumble, rumble, boom.
Rumble, rumble, boom—Rumble, rumble, boom!
The thunder up above goes rumble, rumble, boom.
Oh, what a stormy day!

The lightning in the sky goes flash, flash, crash.
Flash, flash, crash—Flash, flash crash!
The lightning in the sky goes flash, flash, crash.
Oh, what a stormy day!

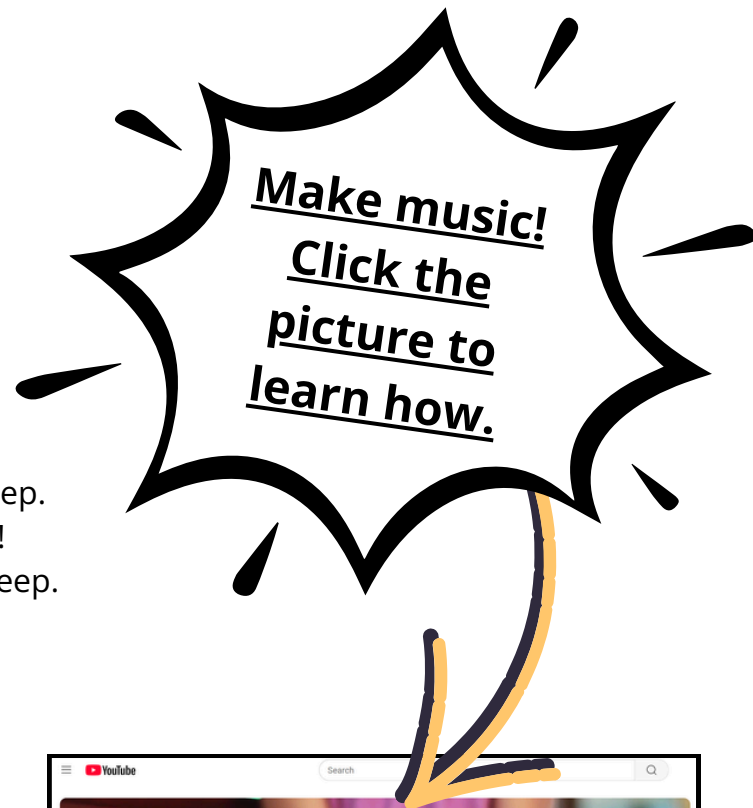
The rain in the cloud falls drip, drip, drop.
Drip, drip, drop—Drip, drip, drop!
The rain in the cloud falls drip, drip, drop.
Oh, what a stormy day.

The kids in the house play safe and sound.
Safe and sound—Safe and sound!
The kids in the house play safe and sound.
Oh, what a day to play!

The rollers in the clouds go rumble, rumble, beep.
Rumble, rumble, beep—Rumble, rumble, beep!
The rollers in the clouds go rumble, rumble, beep.
Oh, what a day to play!

The diggers in the sky go scoop, scoop, scoop.
Scoop, scoop, scoop—Scoop, scoop, scoop!
The diggers in the sky go scoop, scoop, scoop.
Oh, what a day to play!

The trucks in the sky built a rainbow bright,
Rainbow bright—Rainbow bright!
The trucks in the sky built a rainbow bright,
What a colorful sight!



[DIY Rainstick](#) | [Crafts for Kids](#) | [PBS KIDS for Parents](#)

DIY Egg Shakers

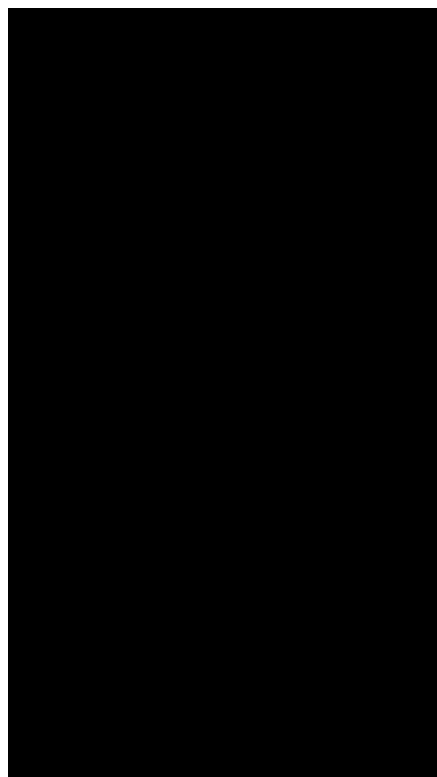
Make your own music with these easy egg shakers inspired by Clap for Classics on [YouTube](#)!

You'll Need:

- Plastic Easter eggs
- Tape (washi, duct, or masking tape)
- Fillers: rice, popcorn kernels, dried beans, etc.

How To:

1. Check for holes in the eggs. If there are any, tape over them on the inside to keep filler from leaking.
2. Add filler to one half of the egg (just a spoonful!).
3. Snap the egg shut and tape all the way around the seam to keep it secure.
4. Shake and play! Try different fillers to create different sounds.



Paper Bowl Drums



Inspired By Fantastic
Fun & Learning

You'll Need:

- 2 paper bowls
- Stapler or tape
- (Optional) A spoonful of rice or beans
- Markers, stickers, or tape to decorate

How To Make It:

1. Put two bowls together (rim to rim).
2. Staple or tape around the edge to seal them.
3. (Optional) Add rice or beans inside before sealing for shaker sound.
4. Decorate the outside however you like!

Flashlight Shadow Play: Truck Stick Puppets

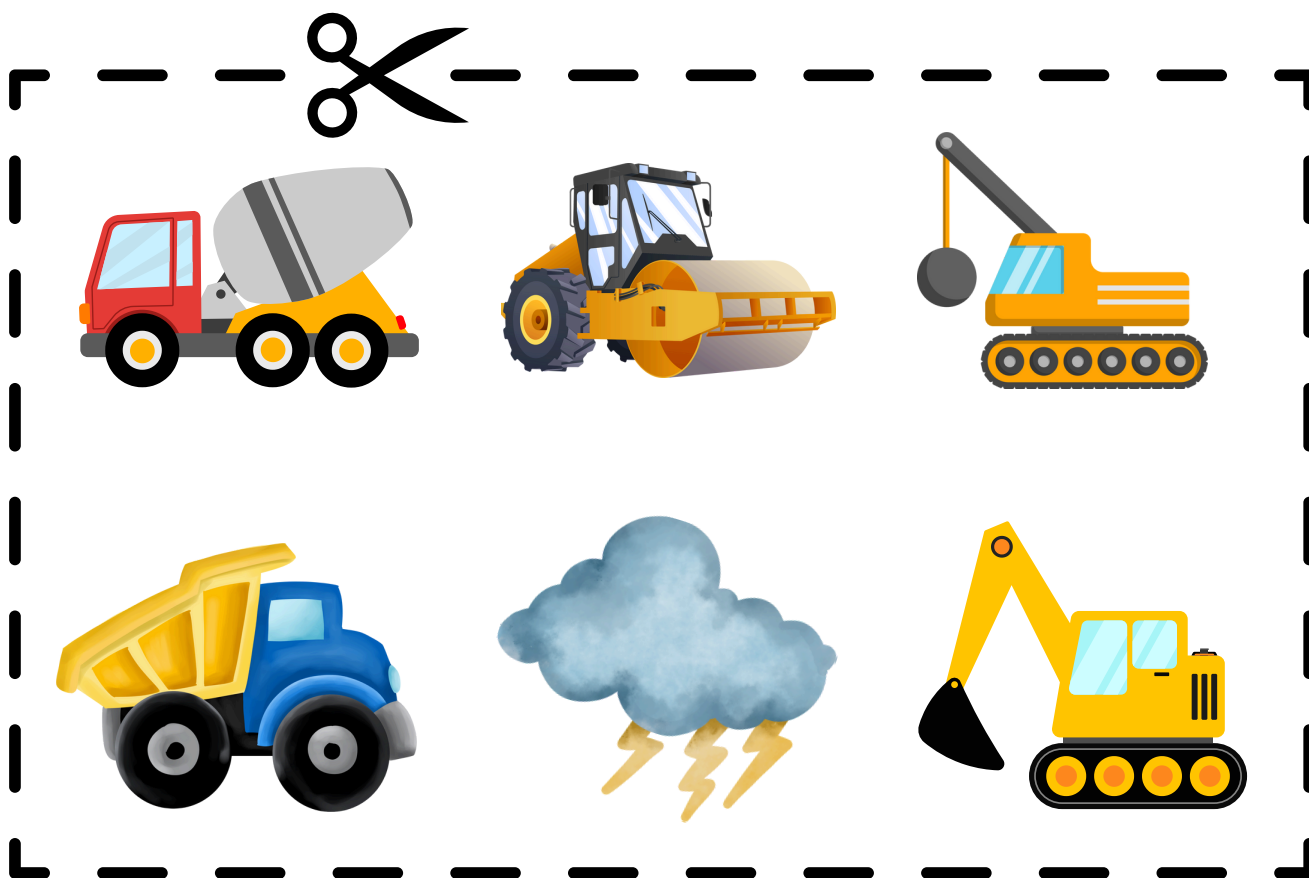
Supplies:

- Printable truck cutouts (below)
- Scissors
- Glue stick, glue dots, or tape
- Craft sticks, straws, or pencils
- Flashlight
- A dark room, tent, or blanket fort



Instructions:

1. Print & Cut— Print the truck silhouettes and cut out each one carefully.
2. Attach Handles—Use tape, glue dots, or a glue stick to attach each truck cutout to a craft stick, straw, or pencil.
3. Set the Scene—Go into a dark room or set up a cozy blanket fort.
4. Shine the Light—Turn on a flashlight and shine it toward a blank wall or ceiling.
5. Bring the Trucks to Life—Hold the puppets between the flashlight and the wall to cast big, bold shadows. Move them around to “drive,” “dig,” “dump,” and act out scenes from Storm Trucks or make up your own stormy adventure!



Option 2: Flashlight Tube Projector

You'll Need:

- Printable truck cutouts (included)
- Scissors
- Glue stick, glue dot, or tape
- Empty toilet paper tube
- Plastic wrap (like Saran Wrap)
- Rubber band
- Flashlight
- Dark room, tent, or blanket fort



Instructions:

1. Cut out a truck from the printable sheet.
2. Stretch plastic wrap tightly over one end of the toilet paper tube.
3. Secure it with a rubber band.
4. Stick the truck cutout onto the center of the plastic wrap.
5. Turn off the lights and shine the flashlight through the open end of the tube.
6. Watch the truck shadow appear on the wall or ceiling!

💡 Bonus Tip: Make several tubes with different construction vehicles to switch easily.

Bonus: Rainbow Tube Projector

Create a glowing rainbow that shines on the wall using light and color!

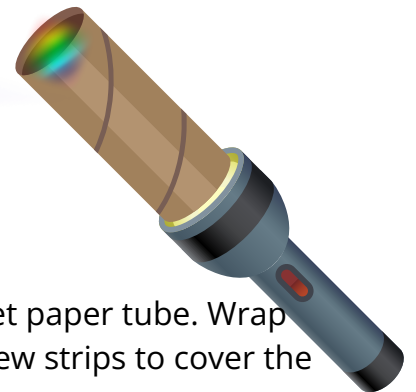
✨ This version uses permanent markers. Please have an adult help with the drawing step.

You'll Need:

- Empty toilet paper roll
- Clear packaging tape (wide works best)
- Permanent markers (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple)
- Scissors

Instructions:

1. Lay a piece of clear packaging tape across one end of the toilet paper tube. Wrap it around so it completely seals the opening. (You can layer a few strips to cover the full circle.)
2. With adult supervision, use permanent markers to draw a simple rainbow on the tape. Bright, bold stripes or arcs of color work best.
3. Wait a minute or two to let the marker ink dry. Avoid touching the tape while it's wet to prevent smudging.
4. Go into a dark room or crawl into a cozy blanket fort. Shine the flashlight through the open end of the tube. Watch your rainbow light up the wall or ceiling!



Pop-Up Rainbow Card

Supplies:

- Card stock or construction paper
- white paper
- Markers, watercolors or paints
- Scissors
- Glue Stick
- Blank envelope for gifting (optional)



Activity by Red Ted Art

Instructions:

1. Measure your rainbow width

Before decorating, place your white paper inside the folded card to see how wide your rainbow can be. Make a small mark—your rainbow shouldn't be wider than the card when folded shut.

2. Make your rainbow

Use markers, watercolors, or glue strips of colored paper in rainbow order. Fill the space between your marks with color! Let it dry completely if you used paint.

3. Cut out your rainbow

Trim away any extra white edges so you're left with just your colorful rainbow strip.

4. Fold it like an accordion

Start at one short end and fold the paper back and forth (like a fan), about ½ inch per fold. This makes your rainbow "pop" when the card opens.

5. Glue one end inside the card

Open your folded card. Glue one end of the accordion rainbow to one side of the card—across the card, not along the fold. Leave room for writing and clouds!

6. Glue the other end and close the card

Now add glue to the top of the other end of the rainbow. Gently close the card and press. Let it dry fully before opening and closing.

7. Decorate!

Add clouds, faces, or drawings around your rainbow. Then write a message inside—something like:

"After every storm comes a rainbow!"

REACH Connection:

This craft is a great way to talk about how we can help others feel better—just like Axel helps his puppy in Storm Trucks.

Looking for more fun ways to read, play, and connect?
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You did it!



Read for 20 minutes each day,
mark one space, and race to the finish to win!
Get more game boards at www.DonnaBook.com/for-kids.

