A Town for Two

The grown-up guide



When the tower falls, Mallow wants to build it again. Tavi wants someone to sit close. These pages help you ask what your child wants and give them time to answer.

Make room for a reply.

Choose one chapter. Watch its film, open a picture, and let your child decide where to start. The three activities in each chapter give you different ways into the same story.

Before you ask

Notice one thing the character is doing. Give your child a chance to point or move before offering a word.

While they color

Follow the color they choose. If they share an idea, reflect it in your own words and pause. A quiet page still counts.

Another day

Try the same invitation when a real situation comes up. Your child's answer might be different the second time.

Each chapter on the following pages lists the matching film and all three workbook pages.

Two good ideas

Notice what each friend hopes for.

Tavi and Mallow both say they want a town, but their pictures of it are different. Let your child look for each friend's idea before you name it.

TRY SAYING

What does Tavi want to build?

Follow their lead

If your child wants the tallest tower too, follow that part of the picture. You can wonder about the bridge later.

Point to the flag and wait. Later, point to the board and ask, ‘What does Mallow want to build?’

At the coloring table

p. 3 Name the cloth and blocks. Invite your child to point to the spot where the town will go.

p. 5 Point up when Tavi says ‘tickle a cloud.’ You can stretch up together.

p. 7 Trace the river first. Let your child choose where the bridge could go.

Bring it into your day

When you plan a game together, ask what each player is hoping to make.

The tumble

Tell someone what kind of help you want.

A quick repair feels helpful to Mallow. Tavi needs the rushing to stop. Leave room for either response when your child chooses a scene.

TRY SAYING

What would help you right now?

Follow their lead

If your child points to sitting together, say, 'I'll sit with you.' Then let a little quiet happen.

If your child wants choices, ask, ‘Want help with the blocks?’ Wait. Then offer, ‘I can sit with you, too.’ Accept another idea.

At the coloring table

p. 9 Trace the board to the bottom block. Show ‘wobble’ by rocking your hand side to side.

p. 11 Any color can stand for sadness. Let your child tell you what their color means if they want to.

p. 13 Follow a point toward the empty spot. You can sit beside your child while they draw.

Bring it into your day

When a puzzle slips apart, ask what would help before picking up the pieces.

Two sides of a river

Consider what the other friend saw.

The friends stood in different places. Tavi could see the tower. Mallow had a board in the way. Let your child try looking from each friend's spot.

TRY SAYING

What can Mallow see from here?

Follow their lead

If your child blames Mallow, acknowledge the fallen tower. Then invite them to look from Mallow's side.

If your child points to the empty space, trace the river. Take turns looking from Tavi's side and Mallow's side.

At the coloring table

p. 15 Cover the far side for a moment. Ask, 'What did Tavi see fall?'

p. 17 Hold a piece of paper in front of a block. Let your child move to one side and peek.

p. 19 Find the fallen flag and the cloth river. Ask, 'Where is Tavi now?' Follow the path your child draws.

Bring it into your day

When two people remember a spill differently, invite each to show where they were standing.

Try it together

Ask for a particular kind of support.

Being ready to build again can take time. Tavi chooses when to start and tells Mallow what would help.

TRY SAYING

Would you like help? If so, where should I hold the board?

Follow their lead

If your child chooses to work alone, let them place the next piece. Stay nearby if invited.

If your child wants to watch, say, ‘You can show me where it goes.’ Wait for a look, a point, or a word.

At the coloring table

p. 21 Follow the leaf with one finger. Let your child decide when to move on.

p. 23 Hold one end still to show ‘steady.’ Say, ‘Tell me when to let go.’

p. 25 Point to the two blocks under the bridge. Take your hands away together.

Bring it into your day

When getting dressed feels tricky, ask whether to hold the sleeve or wait.

A town for two

Share pride and notice another person's contribution.

Both ideas changed along the way. Let your child notice a contribution or choose a quiet way to celebrate.

TRY SAYING

What did Tavi and Mallow make together?

Follow their lead

If your child names only the tower, admire it together. Later, trace the bridge and ask who helped.

If your child points to one part, ask, ‘Can you show me how Mallow helped?’ A look or a smile can be enough.

At the coloring table

p. 27 Ask, ‘Where would you go first?’ Follow your child's finger.

p. 29 Say, ‘Proud is how you might feel when you do something you worked at.’ Invite a memory if your child wants to share.

p. 31 Ask, ‘What would you put here?’ Leave room for your child to draw a different ending.

Bring it into your day

At the end of a shared job, invite each person to name something someone else made possible.

When the next tower falls

Notice a moment outside the book. A block slips, a zipper catches, or a friend has a different plan. Start with what happened. Then make a little room for a reply.

Notice

“The pieces came apart.” Leave the feeling open for your child to describe or show.

Offer

“Would you like help? I can sit with you, too.” Give your child time to choose or change their mind.

Remember

Later, ask what helped. A gesture, one word, or moving on with the day can be enough.

Notes for curious grown-ups

The activities invite practice and conversation. For research on young children's emotion talk, see the Journal of Child Language study (2011), doi:10.1017/S0305000910000772. This set has not been tested as a developmental intervention.