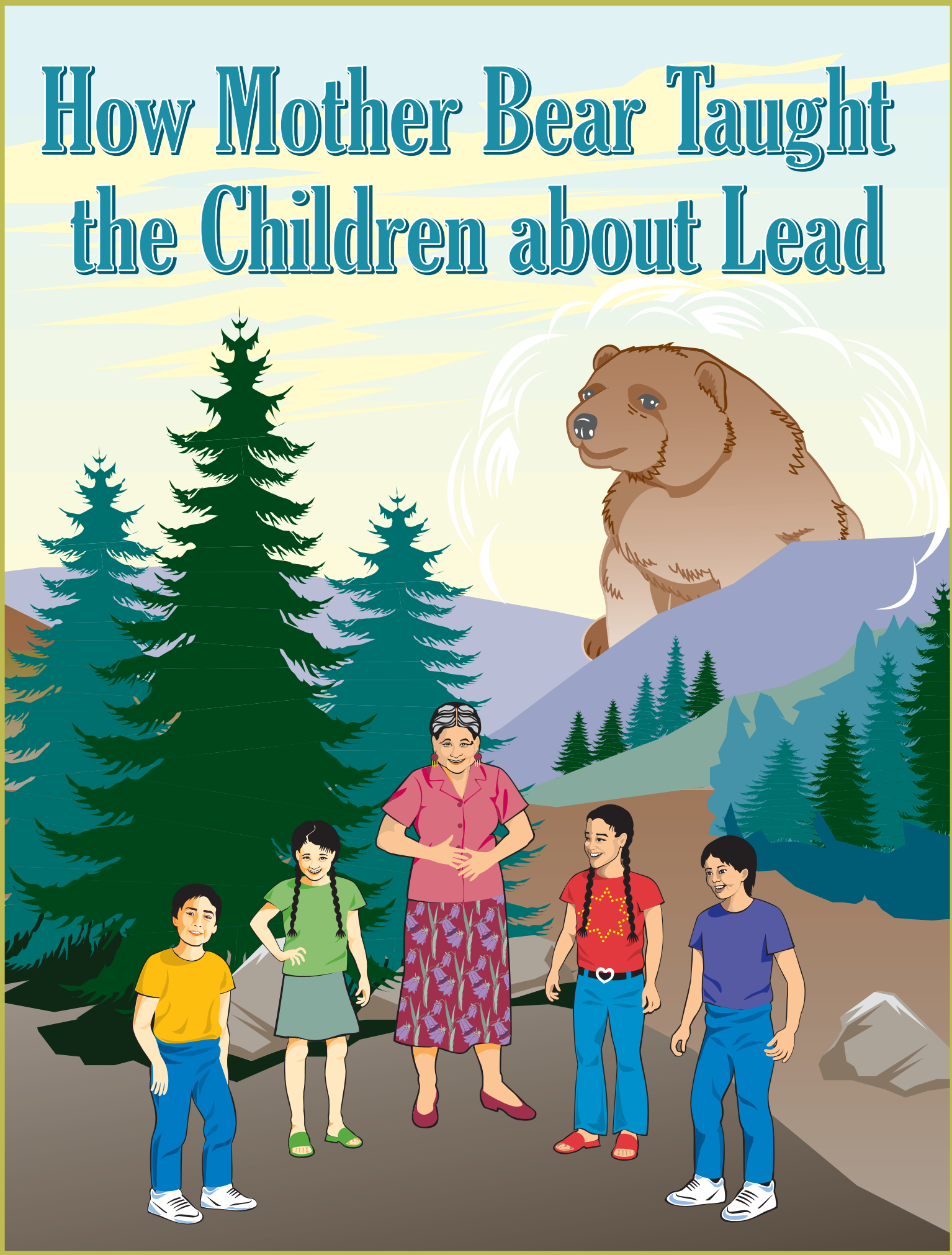
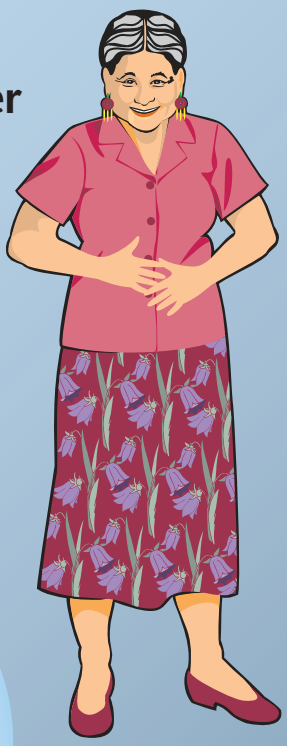
How Mother Bear Taught the Children about Lead





Mother Bear

Grandmother



Laughing Girl

Carla Laughing Girl



Small Deer

Molly Small Deer



Fire Walker

Kyle Fire Walker



Bright Sun

Jesse Bright Sun



Summer



One summer day, Jesse Bright Sun woke up early and looked out his window. In the east, he saw the first light. He saw the tall corn growing in the fields.



Jesse was happy. Today the Gathering of All the Tribes would begin. People from many places had come to his village to talk and sing and dance and eat.

Jesse's grandmother was cooking food for the feast that night. She said, "Jesse, you have an important job today. You must gather all the children from all the tribes. Bring them to the school."



Summer

Jesse Bright Sun  gathered the children from all the tribes.

He found Molly Small Deer  from the eastern coast.

He found Kyle Fire Walker  from the western coast.

He found Carla Laughing Girl  from the land of great lakes, and many others.

They all went to the school to see Grandmother.

Grandmother said, "Children, I have something important to tell you. Listen well. I am going to tell you about Mother Bear. I am going to tell you how Mother Bear helped children to be safe."

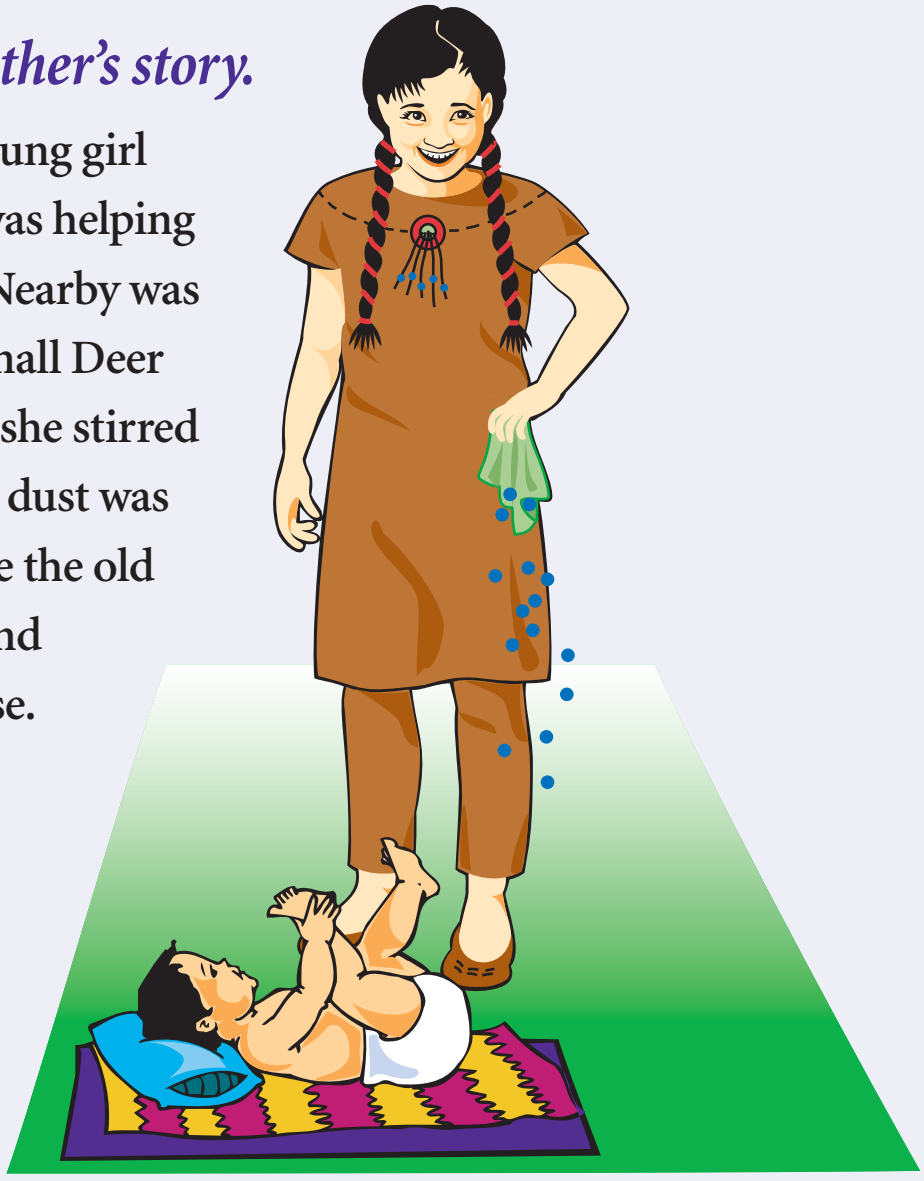




Grandmother said,
"Molly Small Deer,
this story is about your
family from long ago."

Here is Grandmother's story.

Many years ago, a young girl named Small Deer was helping to clean her house. Nearby was her baby brother. Small Deer was using a rag, and she stirred up a lot of dust. The dust was a pretty blue, just like the old paint on the doors and windows of her house.

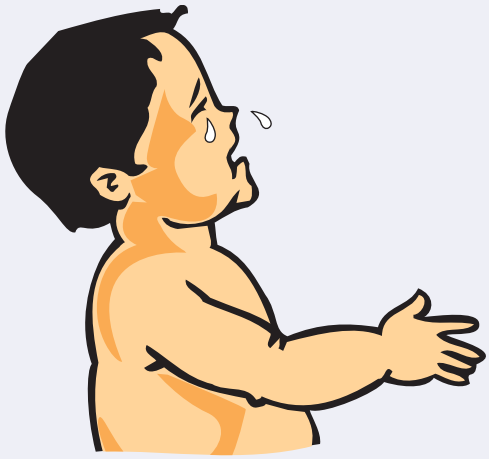




Suddenly, Small Deer heard soft growling. She looked up and saw a great bear.

Small Deer asked, "Mother Bear, why are you here?"

Mother Bear said, "Do not be afraid. I came to warn you about a danger in our world. I will teach you about this danger. Then you and your family can be safe."

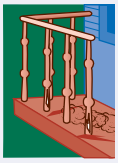
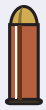
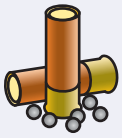


Mother Bear said, "This danger is lead. If lead gets inside your body, it can make you sick. If it gets inside your baby brother's body, it can make him very sick."

Small Deer asked, "Mother Bear, where is this danger? I do not see any lead."

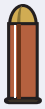
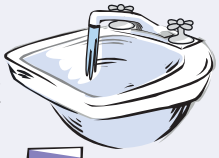
Mother Bear said, "Lead is as sneaky as a coyote. It hides in many places.



- Lead hides in dust  and flakes  from old paint. 
- Lead paint  may be on old windows  and doors. 
- Lead paint  may be on old stairs  and railings. 
- Lead paint  may be on old porches. 
- Lead paint dust  and flakes  may be in dirt around old houses.
- Lead hides in water from old pipes. 
- Lead hides in bullets  and shotgun pellets  and fishing sinkers." 

Small Deer asked, "Mother Bear, how can I be safe from these dangers?"

Mother Bear answered, "I will tell you how to keep lead out of your body:

- Never, never touch dust  from old paint.
- Never, never touch flakes  from old paint.
- Ask a grownup to wash away lead paint flakes and dust with a damp soapy rag. 
- Wash your hands before you eat and after you play.  Wash very carefully if you touch bullets  or fishing sinkers. 
- Leave your shoes  at the door and wear socks  or slippers  in your house.
- Let your water run from the faucet  until it is cold.
- Eat healthy foods, like lowfat milk  and yogurt,  fruits  and vegetables,  beans,  and lean meat." 

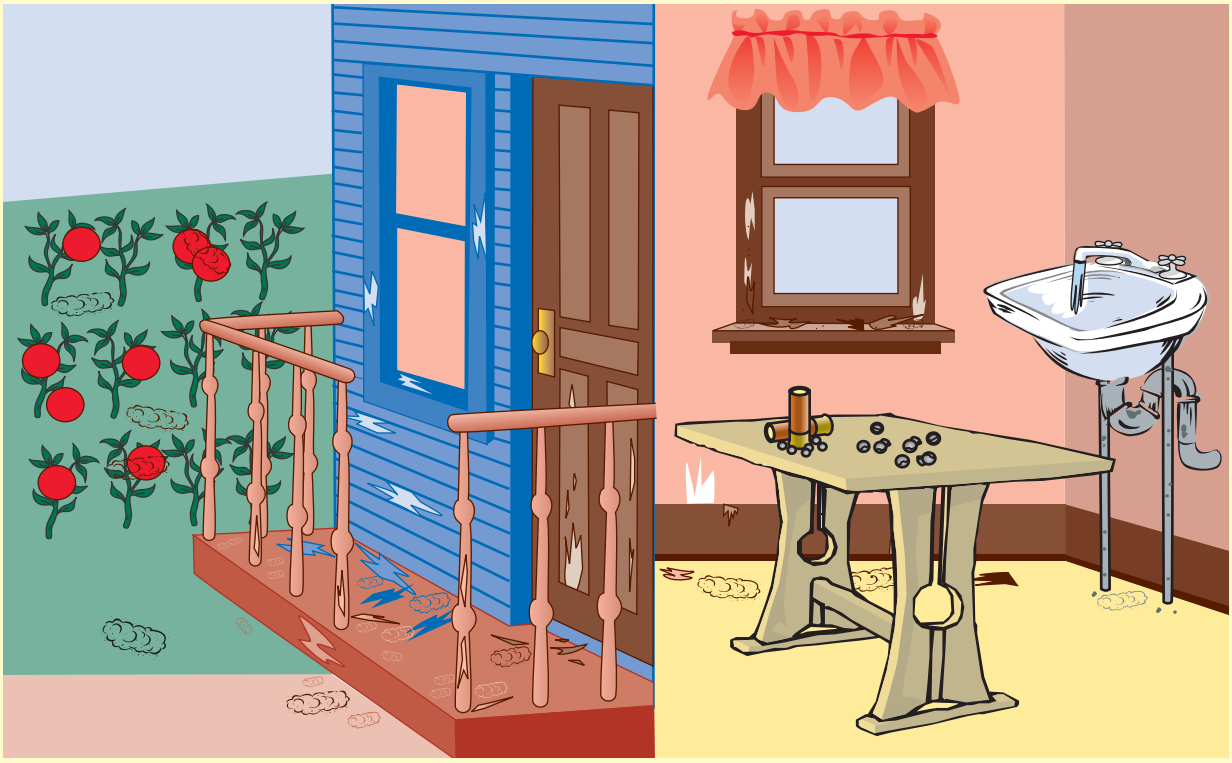
Small Deer said, "I will do as you say, Mother Bear. I want to be safe from lead dangers. I want to help my family to be safe."

Grandmother said to the children, "Here is a picture of a house. Can you find lead dangers in this picture?"

Things to look for:

- Paint flakes
- Paint dust
- Shotgun pellets
- Water from old pipes
- Fishing sinkers

How many lead dangers did you find? Write the number here: ____



Let's Talk about It

With your class, talk about where you would look for lead dangers around your home. Write your answers below.

_____

_____

_____

Fall



Grandmother said, "Fall is the time when many of our people prepare their homes for winter. I will tell you a story about fixing a house to keep it warm."

Grandmother said, "Jesse Bright Sun, this story is about your family from long ago."

Here is Grandmother's story.

Bright Sun liked to help his father around the house. One fall day, Bright Sun was helping his father to fix an old window. The window was covered with old green paint. Bright Sun's baby sister crawled around them while they worked.

Suddenly, Bright Sun heard soft growling. He looked up and saw a great bear.

Bright Sun asked, "Mother Bear, why are you here?"

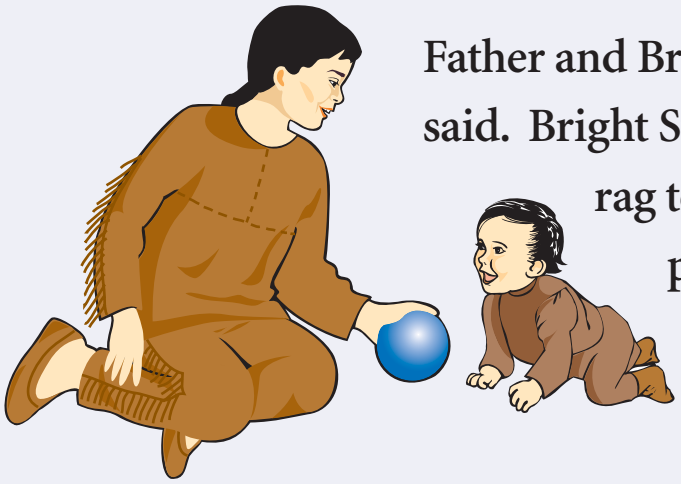
Mother Bear said, "Do not be afraid. I am here to warn you about a danger. The danger is lead."



Mother Bear said, "There is lead in the old paint on this window. Your father will keep the dust and flakes far away from you and your little sister. He will use a wet soapy rag to clean up all the paint dust and all the paint flakes. Then you and your sister will be safe."



Mother Bear said, "Bright Sun, you can help. You can keep your sister out of the room while your father is working."



Father and Bright Sun did as Mother Bear said. Bright Sun's father used a damp, soapy rag to clean up all the paint dust and paint flakes. Bright Sun played with his sister outside until the room was very clean.

Let's Think about It

With your class, talk about what you can do if you see lead dangers around your home. Write your answers below.

_____

_____

_____

Winter



Grandmother said, "In winter, many of our people go hunting. I will tell you a story about hunting."

Grandmother said, "Kyle Fire Walker, this story is about your family from long ago."

Here is Grandmother's story.

One day in early winter, Fire Walker and his grandfather went hunting. At the lake, Grandfather shot a fat duck. Fire Walker and Grandfather brought the duck home for their family.

Grandfather was very happy. He said, "Fire Walker, now it's time to clean the duck."



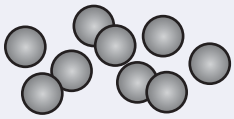


As Grandfather showed Fire Walker how to clean the duck, the boy heard soft growling. Fire Walker looked up and saw a great bear.

Fire Walker asked, "Mother Bear, why are you here?"

Mother Bear said, "Do not be afraid. I am here to warn you about a danger. The danger is lead."

Mother Bear said, "There is lead in the pellets that killed the duck. Watch how Grandfather takes the pellets out. Do not touch them with your hands. Let Grandfather throw them away."



Fire Walker did as Mother Bear said. Then he and Grandfather washed their hands carefully before they ate.

Let's Think about It

With your class, talk about what you can do if you see lead dangers around your home. Write your answers below.

_____

_____

_____

Now winter has come. Mother Bear is sleeping through the cold times. Before she took her long nap, Mother Bear made up a game. The game will help you remember how to stay safe from lead. You can play this game while Mother Bear sleeps away the winter.

To play, you need: 2 to 4 players 2 coins to flip
2 to 4 buttons for playing pieces

When it is your turn, toss the coins to see how many spaces you can move.



Move 1 space ■ if both coins are heads.



Move 2 spaces ■ ■ if both coins are tails.



Move 3 spaces ■ ■ ■ if one coin is a head and one coin is a tail.

If you land on one of Mother Bear's notes, follow the directions written there.

Now winter has come. Mother Bear is sleeping through the cold times. Before she took her long nap, Mother Bear made up a game. The game will help you remember how to stay safe from lead. You can play this game while Mother Bear sleeps away the winter.

Finish

To play, you need: 2 to 4 players 2 coins to flip
2 to 4 buttons for playing pieces

When it is your turn, toss the coins to see how many spaces you can move.



Move 1 space ■ if both coins are heads.



Move 2 spaces ■ ■ if both coins are tails.



Move 3 spaces ■ ■ ■ if one coin is a head and one coin is a tail.

If you land on one of Mother Bear's notes, follow the directions written there.

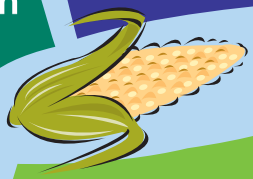


START HERE

You washed your hands before you ate. Move ahead 2 spaces.



You ate an ear of corn. Move ahead 2 spaces.



You for your Go b

R BEAR'S GAME

You touched fishing sinkers and didn't wash your hands. Lose 1 turn.

You washed the baby's hands before she ate. Take an extra turn.

You let the water run until it was cold. Move ahead 3 spaces.

You fed your beans to the dog. Go back 2 spaces.

You didn't wash your hands before you ate. Go back 2 spaces.

You told an elder about some paint flakes. Move ahead 2 spaces.

got to take off dusty shoes! ack 3 spaces.

Illustration by Calvin Francis.



Mother Bear's Word Search

Mother Bear also made up a word search for you to play. See if you can find these words below:

DOOR	LEAD	SINKER	DUST	PAINT
WATER	FLAKE	PELLET	WINDOW	

Look carefully: The words might go across, down, slanted, or backward.

There is one other secret word in the word search. See if you can find it. Share your answers with your class.

D	C	R	D	O	O	R	S	M	W
E	S	A	F	U	G	W	I	B	A
Q	E	U	Y	P	S	M	N	K	T
L	T	P	A	I	N	T	K	X	E
N	V	O	P	E	L	L	E	T	R
H	A	R	A	E	B	K	R	E	I
F	L	A	K	E	N	S	P	B	N
E	A	W	I	N	D	O	W	U	O

Look on page 24 for an answer key.

Spring

Grandmother said, "Spring is a time when many people plant new gardens. I will tell you a story about a garden."

Grandmother said, "Carla Laughing Girl, this story is about your family from long ago."



Here is Grandmother's story.



Laughing Girl wanted to surprise her mother. She wanted to plant a new garden near their old barn. She picked up a shovel and some seeds. She walked past the barn and started to dig.

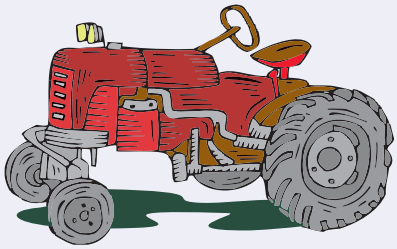
Suddenly, Laughing Girl heard soft growling. She looked up and saw a great bear.

Laughing Girl asked, "Mother Bear, why are you here?"

Mother Bear said, "Do not be afraid. I am here to warn you about a danger. The danger is lead."

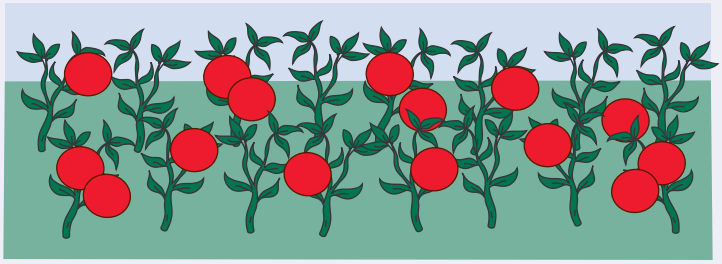


Mother Bear said, "There is lead in the dirt near the barn. Lead from old paint dust and flakes from the barn fell into the dirt. Lead from old gas in cars and tractors fell into the dirt.



This place is not safe for a garden. You can find another place."

Laughing Girl did as Mother Bear said. She said, "I know another place. It is far from old paint dust and flakes. It is far from old gas. I will make my mother's garden there."



Mother Bear's Healthy Food Quiz

Mother Bear said, "Some foods can help keep your body safe from lead. These healthy foods include fruits and vegetables, beans, lean meats, lowfat dairy foods, and bread, cereal, and rice. Other foods do not help keep your body safe from lead. These foods have a lot of sugar, fat, or salt. If you eat them, eat only small amounts, and eat them only once in a while."

Here is a quiz Mother Bear made for you.

Which foods on the list below can help keep your body safe from lead? Put a check mark ☑ next to the healthy foods. Draw a line through the foods that do not help keep your body safe from lead.

- ❒ Apple 
- ❒ Apple pie 
- ❒ Beans 
- ❒ Berries 
- ❒ Bread 
- ❒ Carrots 
- ❒ Cereal 

- ❒ Cheese 
- ❒ Clam (quahog) chowder 
- ❒ Corn 
- ❒ Chocolate candy bar 
- ❒ Cupcakes 
- ❒ Doughnuts 

- ❒ Fried potatoes 
- ❒ Hot dogs 
- ❒ Milk (lowfat) 

- ❒ Oatmeal 
- ❒ Oranges or orange juice 
- ❒ Peaches 
- ❒ Peanut butter 

- ❒ Popcorn (plain or with a little butter and salt) 
- ❒ Potato chips 

- ❒ Rice 
- ❒ Roasted chicken 
- ❒ Squash 
- ❒ Yogurt (lowfat) 

Now draw a circle around your favorite foods. Are they healthy foods? If not, what are some healthy foods you can eat instead? Write the healthy foods here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Answer Key

- ☑ Apple
- ~~Apple pie~~
- ☑ Beans
- ☑ Berries
- ☑ Bread
- ☑ Carrots
- ☑ Cereal
- ☑ Cheese
- ☑ Clam (quahog) chowder
- ☑ Corn
- ~~Chocolate candy bar~~
- ~~Cupcakes~~
- ~~Doughnuts~~
- ~~Fried potatoes~~
- ~~Hot dogs~~
- ☑ Milk (lowfat)
- ☑ Oatmeal
- ☑ Oranges or orange juice
- ☑ Peaches
- ☑ Peanut butter
- ☑ Popcorn (plain or with a little butter and salt)
- ~~Potato chips~~
- ☑ Rice
- ☑ Roasted chicken
- ☑ Squash
- ☑ Yogurt (lowfat)



Grandmother's Advice

Grandmother said, "Children, I have told you what Mother Bear taught our children long ago so that they could be safe from lead dangers.
Do you have any questions?"



Jesse Bright Sun said, "Grandmother, I am worried. I know that some paint has lead. I am afraid to use my paint box and finger-paints."

Molly Small Deer said, "Grandmother, I am worried too. I have a pencil. I heard someone call it a 'lead pencil.' I am afraid to use my pencil."



Kyle Fire Walker and Carla Laughing Girl nodded. They too were worried.

Grandmother said, "Children, you do not have to worry. Your paint boxes are safe. They are marked 'nontoxic.' That means there is no lead in the paint."

NONTOXIC



Grandmother said, "Your finger-paints are safe too. They are marked 'nontoxic.' That means there is no lead in the finger-paints."

Grandmother said, "Your pencils are safe. A long time ago, pencils had lead in them. But today there is no lead in pencils."



Grandmother said, "Children, it is good that you ask these questions. Always ask a grownup if you are worried about lead."

Let's Write about It

Do you have any questions about lead? You can write them here.

_____

_____

_____

Who are some grownups you can ask about lead?

Maybe it's your mother or father.



Maybe it's your grandmother or grandfather.



Maybe it's your aunt or uncle.



Maybe it's your teacher or a tribal elder.



Illustrations by Calvin Francis.

You can write their names here.



_____

_____

Mother Bear's Pledge

Grandmother said, "Mother Bear wants all children to be safe from lead dangers. You can help Mother Bear by taking this pledge."



I promise to look out
for lead dangers.

I promise to tell a grownup if
I see any lead dangers.

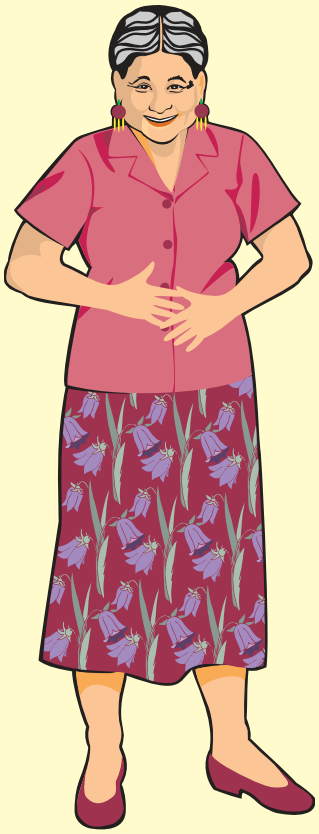
I promise to keep away from
lead paint dust and lead paint flakes.

I promise to wash my hands before I eat
and after I play.

I promise to leave my shoes at the door and wear
socks or slippers in my house.

I promise to eat healthy foods.

The children all stood and said Mother Bear's pledge. Can you do that now? You can make Mother Bear's pledge into a chant if you like.



Grandmother said, "Children, you have done good work today. You have learned about lead. You can stay safe from lead, and you can help your brothers and sisters stay safe. Mother Bear will be happy."



Illustration by Calvin Francis.



Grandmother said, "Children, now you can teach other people how to be safe. Mother Bear will be happy."

Below, write the names of other children or grownups you would like to tell about lead safety.

_____

_____

_____

_____



Illustration by Calvin Francis.

Make a Poster for Your Home

Make your own lead-safety poster in the space below. You can draw or write anything that will help other people learn how to be safe from lead. You can use crayons, markers, pencils, pens, or paint.



Secret word: BEAR

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This book was developed by Healthy Environments for Children Initiative for the Penobscot Indian Nation.

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