



# **BlockTots**

## ***Meet the Cast***

**STANDARD EDITION**

**Spark & Anvil**

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This book collects 4 chapter books from the BlockTots cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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*For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.*

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# Introduction

The BlockTots cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 4 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

# Spindle

*mental rotation — turning a shape in your mind until it fits*



Spindle was a bright-eyed squirrel who loved shape holes. Give her a hole and a piece, and she'd turn that piece in her paws — this way, that way — until it dropped in with a happy *click*. Turning things to fit was her very favorite game.



One morning Spindle found a star-shaped hole and a star-shaped piece. But the piece was tipped the wrong way. "I can fix that," she said. She turned it a quarter-turn, then another, watching the points line up with the hole. *Click!* In it went.



A little chipmunk tried to *push* a square block into a square hole, but it was tilted like a diamond. Push, push — it wouldn't go. "Turn it, don't push it," Spindle said gently. The chipmunk turned it flat. *Click!* "Ohhh," he laughed. Turning was the trick, not shoving.





Spindle got faster and faster. Soon she could look at a piece and *see in her mind* which way to turn it before she even moved her paws. A little spin to stand the arrow up straight. A bigger spin to swing the moon's curve around. She pictured each turn first, then made it.



By the end of the day, every piece had found its hole. Spindle sat in the middle of her finished puzzle, tail curled, warm and satisfied.

Some pieces had looked all wrong at first. But she'd learned you don't give up on a piece — you just turn it, and turn it, until the click. And oh, that click felt good every single time.



# Fitz

*composing shapes — small shapes fit together to build a bigger one*



Fitz was a busy little bird who loved small shapes. Triangles, squares, half-circles — Fitz would gather them up and fit them together to build something brand new. "Little pieces," Fitz chirped, "can make a big whole."



Fitz laid two triangles side by side, long edges touching. Snap — together they made a square! "Two triangles make a square," Fitz sang. One shape, built from smaller shapes. It was like magic, only it was just fitting.



A young rabbit wanted to build a house shape but only had a square and a triangle. "Put the triangle on top of the square," Fitz said. The rabbit tried it — a square with a pointy roof. "A house!" she cheered. Two shapes, one house.





Fitz also loved going backward. A big shape could be *taken apart* into its little pieces. "This hexagon," Fitz said, "is really six triangles hiding together." Fitz nudged them apart, then fit them back. Wholes came from parts, and parts came from wholes.



By sunset Fitz had built a whole village out of little shapes — square houses, triangle roofs, half-circle hills. Fitz perched on top and looked out over all of it.

Every big thing down there had started as small, separate pieces. And Fitz had fit them together, one by one, into something whole. That, Fitz thought with a warm little flutter, was the best feeling of all.



# Cubby

*position words — over / under / inside / next-to describe where things are*



Cubby was a little gray mouse who loved to tuck himself into spots. Over things, under things, inside things, right next to things. And he had a word for every spot. "Words for *where*," Cubby said, "help everybody find each other."





"Watch — I'll go OVER the box," Cubby said, and hopped up on top. "Now UNDER," and he scooted beneath it. Over meant on top. Under meant below. Same box, different spot, different word.



His friend the beetle was looking for her acorn. "It's INSIDE the cup," Cubby said, pointing. She peeked in — there it was! "Inside" meant tucked within. If Cubby had said "next to," she'd have looked beside the cup instead. The right word led her right to it.



They played a game. "Put the pebble NEXT TO the leaf." Cubby set it beside. "Now put it UNDER the leaf." He slid it beneath. Each position word told him exactly where to go. Over, under, inside, next to — a whole map made of words.



At bedtime, Cubby curled up INSIDE his cozy nest, with his blanket OVER him and his favorite pebble right NEXT TO his paw. He said each word softly as he settled in.

Knowing the word for every spot made the whole world feel findable — and it made his own little nest feel exactly, snugly right.



# Timber

*copying a model — look at a build and stack to match it*



Timber was a young beaver who loved to build with blocks. But Timber's favorite challenge was *copying*: someone would show a little tower, and Timber would build one exactly the same. "Look close," Timber always said, "then match it, piece by piece."





An otter set down a tower — red block on the bottom, blue on top. Timber looked hard. Then he placed a red block down, and a blue block on top. Two towers, exactly the same. "You copied it!" said the otter. Timber beamed.



The next tower was trickier: blue, then red, then yellow, bottom to top. Timber didn't rush. He looked at the bottom first — blue. Placed blue. Then the middle — red. Then the top — yellow. Building in order, bottom to top, helped him match it just right.



Once Timber grabbed the wrong color and his tower didn't match. But that was okay. He looked back at the model, saw the mix-up, swapped the block, and tried again. "Check, fix, match," he hummed. Copying meant looking, and looking again.



By evening the riverbank was full of matching towers — Timber's copies standing right beside every model. He walked down the row, comparing each pair. They matched. They really matched.

Timber sat down, tired and glad. It felt good to look carefully at something and build it true — to make his own tower stand up exactly like the one in his mind.

# About Spark & Anvil

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. BlockTots is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

## More chapter books from Spark & Anvil

Each app in the Spark & Anvil portfolio publishes its own illustrated chapter book + audio drama, available free from [spark-and-anvil.com/books](https://spark-and-anvil.com/books). Highlights include:

- **GambitTales** — chess tactics through Sir Pinwell, Lady Skewer, Queen Vesper, and the Twin Knights of Fork Hill
- **ProofQuest** — formal proof techniques through Direct-Proof Dora and the Lemma Library
- **CuriosityQuest** — Texas geography exploration through Linger, Notice, and the Lantern in the Dark
- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

## Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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