



# Introduction

Got five minutes? How about ten or fifteen? File folders are a handy resource for making the most of small moments during the day. In addition to giving busy hands something to do, file folder games are great for exercising small motor skills; for developing sorting, matching, and other critical thinking skills; as well as for building color, numbers, letter, and shape recognition.

While every file folder game develops fine motor skills, here are a few other skills that children will strengthen while playing with these file folder games:

- Following step-by-step directions
- Phonological awareness
- Print awareness
- Early writing skills
- Alphabet knowledge
- Number recognition
- Geometry and spatial sense
- Patterning
- Scientific knowledge
- Give-and-take in social interactions
- Making independent choices
- Persisting in activities
- Increasing concentration
- Finding more than one solution

Along with a few simple supplies, *Early Learning Center Games* provides everything you need to create fun learning experiences for your children. Use the file folders to focus on a specific theme or to work on a particular skill, such as one-to-one correspondence or color recognition. The Skills Reference Table on page 3 will help you locate just the right file folder game.

## Basic Assembly Tips

While each file folder game is unique, here are some general assembly tips that will prove helpful as you create your own collection of file folder games:

**Copying** — Each set of game instructions describes how many copies of each pattern are needed. Be sure to use high-quality paper for all copies, and use heavy card stock for any item that will be handled by the children. The items will be easier to manipulate and will last longer, too. If the pattern you are using does not have specific coloring instructions, consider copying onto colorful or patterned papers to help cut down on your preparation time.

**Coloring** — Although it may seem daunting to color each little piece, take the time to make each file folder colorful and inviting. After all, if you prepare it correctly, you will be able to use each file folder game for a long time.

**Cutting** — Careful cutting will result in a more professional-looking product. When trimming lamination on card stock or the file folders themselves, leave a 1/8" margin around the outside edges. If you trim too closely, the lamination will be prone to separate and peel apart.

**Laminating** — Although it may seem that you go through miles and miles of lamination, it is absolutely necessary to protect your file folder games. Be sure to laminate all of the pieces before you offer them to busy little hands.