

Magnets help us

Lesson at a glance

Open by sticking a picture to a metal tray with a chunky fridge magnet and asking what is holding it. Name the idea of a magnet job, then rotate groups through four short stations — fridge magnets holding pictures, a magnetic bag or box catch, magnetic letters on a board, and teacher-anchored paperclip fishing. On the carpet, children name one job they noticed (holding, closing or catching), then partner-talk one way a magnet helps us.

Learning objectives

- Explore everyday jobs magnets do (fridge magnets, catches, games)
- Say one way a magnet helps us

Before the bell – prep

Day before: gather four station kits — metal baking tray/biscuit-tin lid with chunky fridge magnets and small pictures; a bag, pencil case or tin with a magnetic catch; magnetic board (or tray) with chunky magnetic letters; shallow tray of paperclips plus magnet wands or magnets on string. Clear floor space for four short stations; check every magnet is chunky and mouth-safe.

**Materials**

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
chunky fridge magnets	8	class	classroom	strong fridge magnets from a euro shop
metal baking tray or biscuit-tin lid	2	class	classroom	metal lunch tin lid
small pictures or name cards for sticking	10	class	classroom	scrap paper squares with a simple drawing
magnetic catch or bag with magnetic clasp	2	class	hardware shop	pencil case or school bag that already has a magnetic clasp
magnetic letter board with chunky magnetic letters	1	class	school kit	baking tray plus chunky fridge-magnet letters
paperclips for magnet fishing	30	class	classroom	metal bottle tops or washers
magnet wands or chunky magnets on string	4	class	school kit	chunky fridge magnet held in the hand
shallow tray for paperclip fishing	1	class	classroom	cardboard box lid

Safety watch-point

Chunky magnets only; keep them away from mouths and devices. No running between stations. Wipe paperclip spills at the fishing tray so nobody slips.

Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Hold a chunky fridge magnet so a small picture sticks to a metal tray and wave it gently. Ask what is holding the picture; take two or three guesses only. Keep the bag catch, letters and fishing kit covered so the stations still have something to discover.
- **Magnets that help us:** Point at the demo magnet and picture. Model the look-aloud lines one at a time: I wonder... I think it is holding... I try lift and stick again... I noticed it holds the picture. Keep language to holding, closing and catching — no clasp or designer talk.
- **Magnet jobs stations:** Split into about four groups of 5–7; rotate every three minutes on a clap. Say the job name as each group arrives: holding, closing/keeping shut, holding letters, catching. Stay at Station D (fishing) the whole time; call across to other stations between turns. If a group finishes early, have them show a friend how the catch opens and shuts.
- **What job did you notice?:** Carpet share. Invite several children to name one station and the job word. Revoice in a full sentence: You noticed the fridge magnet's job is holding. Accept a point and supply the word. Keep words to holding, closing, catching only — not fishing.
- **How magnets help us:** Think-pair-share for about one minute, then take three or four ideas. Keep answers concrete: holds a picture, shuts a bag, catches metal in a game. Celebrate any home link to a fridge, school bag or magnetic game.

What it should show

Most children will name holding at the fridge and letter stations, closing/keeping shut at the bag or box, and catching at the fishing tray. Some may only point — affirm the gesture and supply the job word. If a child says the fishing job is 'fishing', revoice: the game is fishing; the magnet's job is catching metal.

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Magnets are only toys / only stick for fun.** — Gently revoice: magnets can be fun and they help us do jobs. Point back at the fridge picture or the bag catch and ask what useful job that magnet is doing.
- **At the fishing station, children name the job as 'fishing' instead of catching.** — Accept the game name, then revoice: the game is fishing; the magnet's job word is catching — picking up the metal paperclip fish.

**Differentiation**

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Stay beside the child and offer a choice of two job words to point to (holding or closing). • Accept a point at the station and supply the job word for the class to hear.	• Ask what job the magnet is doing here, and prompt a link to a real place (fridge, bag, game). • If finished early, show a friend how the magnetic catch opens and shuts again.	• Ask which station's job is most like the fridge at home. • Invite them to name one magnet that helps at home and say its job in a full sentence.

Cross-curricular hook

Oral language: partner talk and full-sentence revoicing of holding, closing and catching link straight to Aistear/English speaking and listening.