

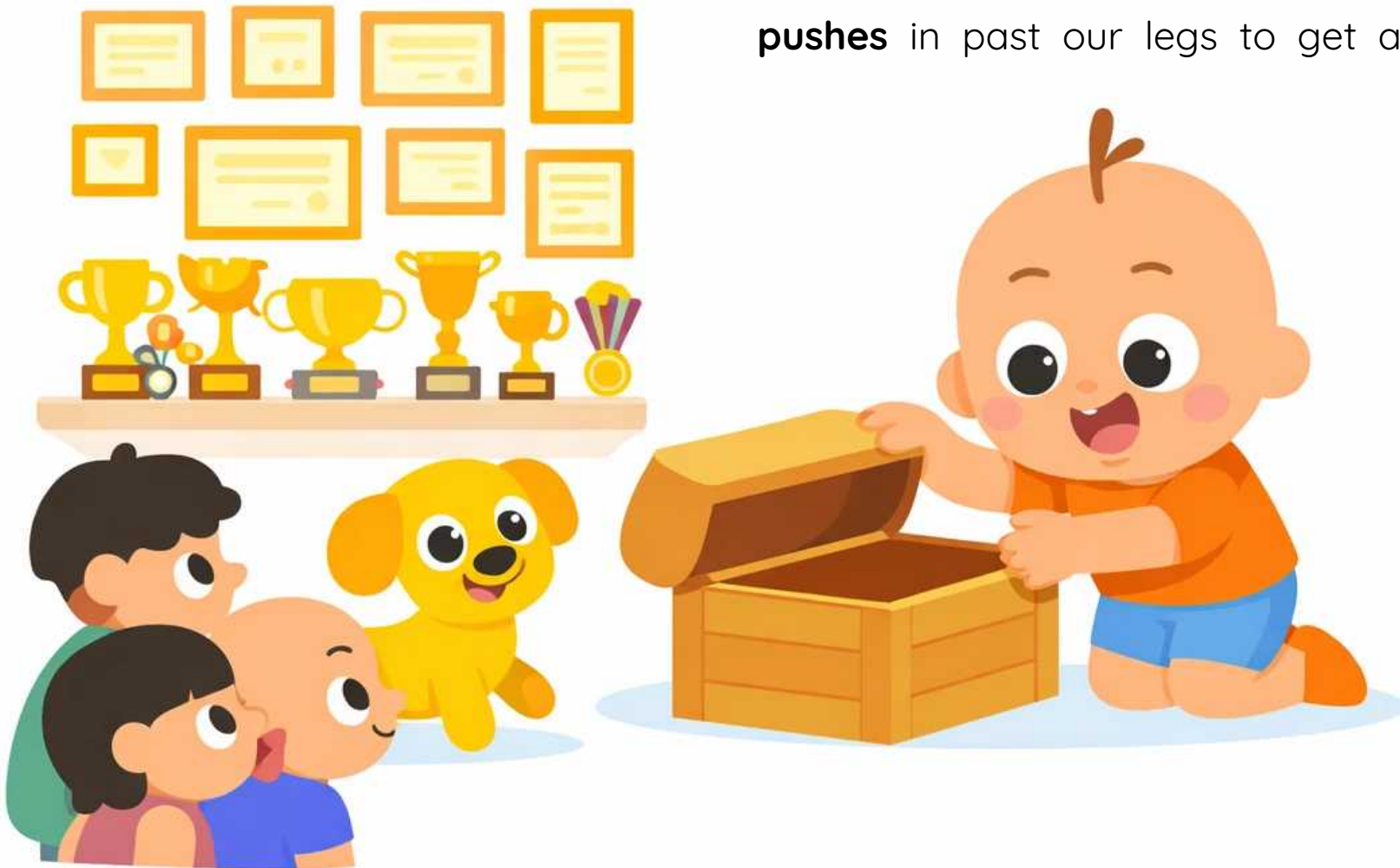
Dog Springs at the Ball!



Vic **stands** on his porch
with his **hands** on his
hips and a grin so big
his face can not hold it.
'I have the best thing to
show the class!' he **calls**
down. 'Come inside and
see!' We run up the
path. Dog **stays** in the
grass. Dog is in no rush.



Vic kneels by a big trunk and **runs** his **hands** over the top. The wall is full of **frames** and **prizes**. **Cups** stand in **rows**. 'Are all of those from big **games?**' one kid **asks**. Vic just **grins** and **reaches** deep into the trunk. Dog **pushes** in past our legs to get a look.



Vic **pulls** out a big white ball and **holds** it high above his head. 'This,' he **says**, 'is a ball for a new game. It was the best of all **games** when I was a kid. Now I will teach the class how to play!' All **eyes** go wide. All **hands** shoot up. All the **kids** want to grab that ball.





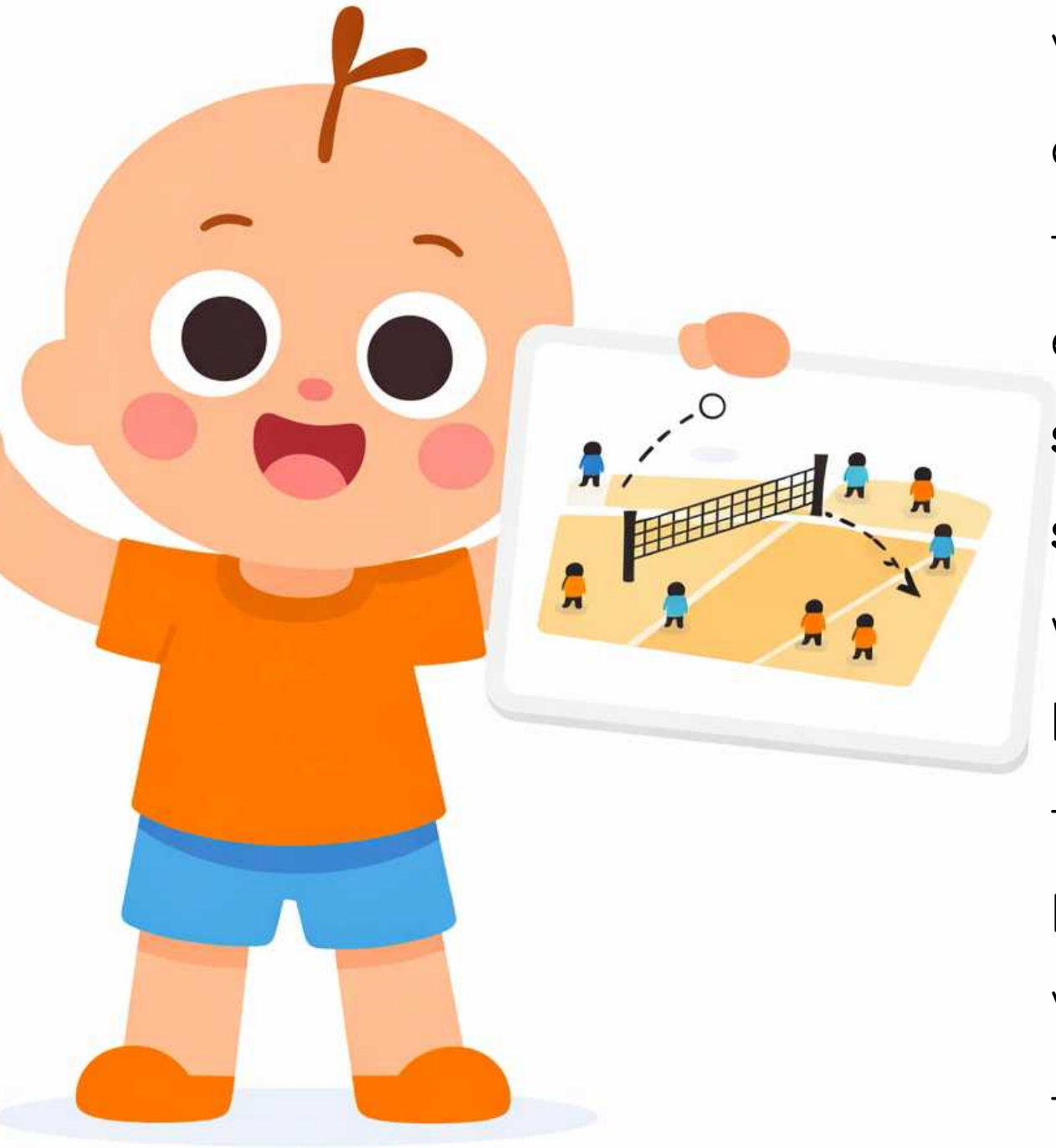
Vic **sets** a small court on the table. It has a tiny net, small **players**, and a tiny ball as small as a dot.

'Two **teams**,' Vic **says**, and **points**. 'Hit the ball back and forth over the net. Win the most **games**, and be the champ!' He **says**

'champ' like it is the best word in the world. We all lean in.

Vic **holds** up photographs of the game. In one, a player **jumps** high to hit the ball. In the next, a player **crouches** low to scoop it up. In the last one, a player **sends** it over the net while the other team just **looks**. 'If the ball **lands** in the right spot, that is a score,' Vic **says**. 'The hard part? No feet!' 'No feet?' we all say. 'No feet.'

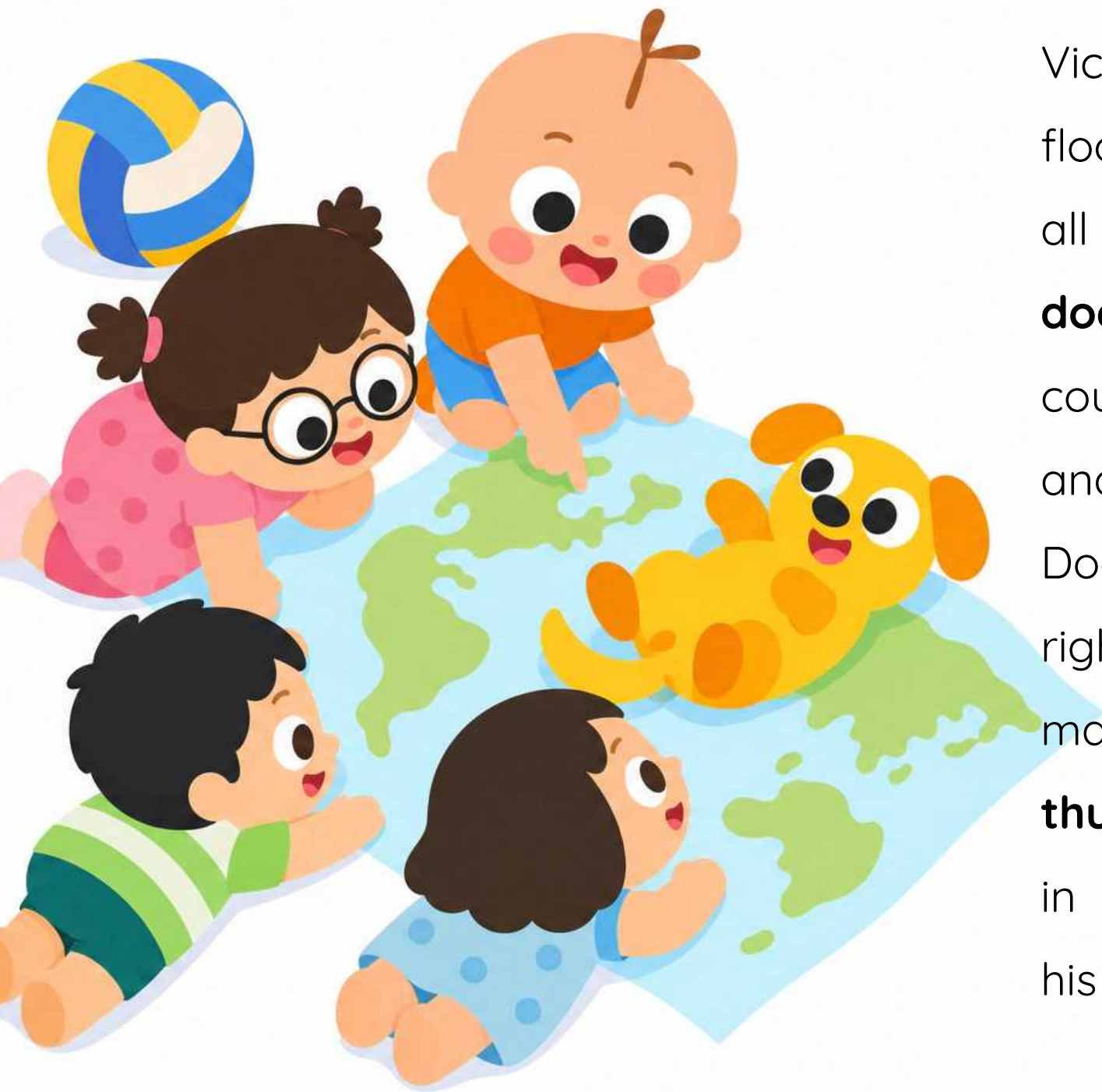




Vic **holds** up a chart of the court. A line of **dots shows** the ball on its way to an empty spot where no one **stands**. 'See that gap?' he **says**. 'Aim for it. Hit it where they are not. That is how a team **wins**.' He **sets** the chart down. It **sounds** like a hard task. But when Vic talks, **sports** feel like the best thing in the world.

Dog **finds** photographs on the floor and **looks** at them one by one. The top one **shows** a player on a beach. He **dives** in the sand to reach a ball. Dog's tail **wags** like mad. Sand! A ball up in the sky! A big dive to catch it! This is not just a people sport. This is a dog sport. Dog just **knows** it.





Vic **sets** a big map on the floor and **points** at **spots** all over the world. 'A team **does** not need a grand court,' he **says**. 'Just a net and a patch of flat grass!' Dog **rolls** on his back right in the middle of the map and **wiggles**. His tail **thumps** the floor. The kid in **glasses grins**. Dog has his patch of flat grass.

Tim **looks** up with a shy smile. 'What if I am no good?' he **asks**. Vic **bends** down and pats Tim on the head.

'Tim, no kid has to be the best. Just get out and try. That is what champs do.' Dog **presses** against Tim's side and nudges his hand with his nose. Tim **giggles**. 'I think Dog **wants** to try too.' 'Dog,' **says** Vic, '**does** not even have **hands**.'



Coach Vic **marches** out to the yard,
and we follow in a line like **troops**.
Dog **trots** along at the back. His **ears**
bounce with each step. Vic **shows** us
how to hit, how to pass, how to serve.
Then he **tosses** the ball up and
smashes it so hard it **sails** far across
the yard. 'Class,' he **says**, '**starts** now.'



We find **spots** by the net and get to work. One kid **tosses** the ball up. Another kid **reaches** high and **sends** it over the net. 'Yes! Like that!' Vic **shouts, hands** on his **hips**. Dog **crouches** low in the middle of the **kids, eyes** on the ball, ready to spring. No one **sees** him. No one but Vic. 'Dog,' Vic **calls. 'Paws** down.'





Too late. Dog **snatches** the ball as it **comes** down and **hugs** it tight with both **paws**. He **presses** his nose into it like it is the best prize ever. That ball is almost as big as Dog. He will not give it back. '**Paws** off the ball!' all the **kids** yell. Dog just **wags** his tail. No feet? Fine. Dog has four very good **paws**.



Dog Springs at the Ball!

Coach Vic pulls a mysterious ball from an old trunk and promises to teach the kids his favorite game ever. There's just one rule: no feet allowed! But Dog has other ideas about who really gets to play with that ball. Will Dog manage to keep his paws on the prize? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 99: -s/-es), this book practices words like 'paws', 'hands', 'grins', 'snatches', 'hugs'.

Phonics Focus: -s/-es

asks, bends, calls, comes, crouches, cups, dives, does, dots, ears, eyes, finds, frames, games, giggles, glasses, grins, hands, hips, holds, hugs, jumps, kids, knows, lands, looks, marches, paws, players, points, presses, prizes, pulls, pushes, reaches, rolls, rows, runs, sails, says, sees, sends, sets, shouts, shows, smashes, snatches, sounds, sports, spots, stands, starts, stays, teams, thumps, tosses, troops, trots, wags, wants, wiggles, wins

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