Easy disappearing tricks for kids (no sleight of hand)

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Seven disappearing magic tricks for kids, sorted honestly into the ones that work by themselves, the ones with one simple move, and the one real sleight that takes days.

The easiest disappearing tricks for kids need no sleight of hand at all: the thing vanishes because of where the audience is looking, or because of what light does in a glass of water. Three of the seven vanishes in the Peabody Magic Shop work like that and take five minutes or less. Three more need one move learned in about fifteen minutes. Only one is a real sleight, and it takes days.

I want to be straight about that last one, because "no sleight of hand" is what everybody searches for and not every vanish can honestly promise it. The Magic Shop puts a level on every trick, and the level is checked in the code against how long the trick takes to learn, so the sorting below is the shop's own, not my impression.

All seven

- Trick: The Forehead Coin · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes · Sleight of hand?: None
- Trick: The Water Vanish · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes · Sleight of hand?: None: it is science
- Trick: The Vanishing Pencil · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · Sleight of hand?: One simple move
- Trick: The Coin Fold · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 7 to 12 · Learn it in: 15 minutes · Sleight of hand?: One move, practised
- Trick: The Elbow Vanish · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 7 to 12 · Learn it in: 15 minutes · Sleight of hand?: One move, practised
- Trick: The Glass Vanish · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 7 to 12 · Learn it in: 15 minutes · Sleight of hand?: One move, practised
- Trick: The Vanishing Coin · Level: Wizard · Ages: 8 to 13 · Learn it in: 3 to 5 days · Sleight of hand?: Yes: a real sleight

The ages come from the grades each trick is written for: the youngest grade plus five, to the oldest grade plus six. The same list, kept up to date, is on the disappearing tricks page.

The three with no sleight of hand

The Water Vanish is the purest. A coin sits under an empty glass and everybody can see it through the side. You pour in water, put a saucer on top, and the coin has gone. Nobody touches it. Light from the coin bends so sharply leaving the water that it turns back inside the glass instead of reaching your eyes, which is called total internal reflection, and the page explains it in a child's words.

The Forehead Coin vanishes a coin from somebody's own forehead. You press it on and challenge them to wiggle it off without hands. They pull faces for ages. The coin has been gone for thirty seconds. It works on a feeling the skin keeps after the coin has left, not on your hands, which is why a five-year-old can do it.

The Vanishing Pencil is the funny one. You sit at a table, tap a pencil on it three times counting out loud, and on three it has gone. Then you turn round and everybody laughs, because there it is, behind your ear. There is one move in it, but it is a big, simple one, and the counting does the misdirection for you.

The three with one move

These are Conjurer tricks: fifteen minutes each, with a single moment that has to be smooth.

The Coin Fold wraps a coin in a square of paper, lets everyone feel it there, then tears the packet up. The fold is the secret, and the fifteen minutes go into making the moment the coin leaves look like nothing at all.

The Elbow Vanish is a comedy routine. You try to rub a coin into your elbow, drop it, try again, drop it again, and on the third go it genuinely vanishes. The two failures are the method, because they teach everybody where to look.

The Glass Vanish turns it round: the coin stays, and the glass disappears from under a napkin. It is done sitting at a table, and the props list allows a plastic cup, which I would use.

The one real sleight

The Vanishing Coin is the classic: a coin shown in one hand, dropped into the other, the hand closed, blown on and opened, and it is empty. Both hands are empty. The page names the move, the French drop, and calls it the first real sleight every magician learns.

It is a Wizard trick, three to five days. The move has to happen without looking, and the only way there is a few minutes in front of a mirror every evening. I would not start a child here, but I would not keep them from it either. A child who has performed the six easier vanishes knows exactly why this one is worth the days.

Making a vanish look like magic

The shop's own advice for every vanish is to go slowly. Show the thing clearly, say the magic word, wait one full second, then open your hand. A vanish done fast looks like a fumble; done slowly, it looks impossible.

And never look where it went. Every audience follows the magician's eyes.

Coins and little ones

Six of the seven use a coin, and each of those pages carries a choking note for brothers and sisters under 4. The note comes from the prop itself, so no coin trick can leave it out. The Vanishing Pencil is the one to do with a toddler in the room. None of the seven has a step that needs a grown-up.

If you want a different vanish, or a trick for whatever is on your table, Pick me a trick will choose one: Flick, the rabbit who runs the shop, asks four three-box questions and hands over one trick with the reason. The opposite of a vanish has a page of its own, including the Coin From Behind Your Ear.

Questions grown-ups ask

What is the easiest disappearing trick for a young child?

The Water Vanish. It takes two minutes, the science does all the work, and the child only has to pour water and put a saucer on top. The Forehead Coin is a close second.

Is there a disappearing trick with no coin in it?

One: the Vanishing Pencil. Even the Glass Vanish, where it is the glass that goes, has a coin sitting underneath. That makes the pencil the only one of the seven with nothing small in it at all.

How do I know when my child is ready for the Vanishing Coin?

The shop starts it at 3rd grade. A child who has performed a few Apprentice and Conjurer tricks for an audience, and wants something nobody at school can do, is usually the one who asks for it. Three to five days of a few minutes each evening is the honest price.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, the Magic Shop needs no sign-up. What a child learns stays on their own device; the only thing sent is an anonymous count when a trick is marked as shown to somebody. The library next door has stories about magicians to read when the show is over.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/disappearing-magic-tricks-for-kids