

3

Physical Development

Standards:

- **Gross motor skills**
- **Fine motor skills**
- **Self-help skills**
- **Health and safety skills**





3
Three
year olds

Gross motor skills

Control body movements as they:

- Lift and carry
- Climb on low outdoor equipment
- Jump down
- Hop
- Go upstairs and downstairs
- Pedal a tricycle

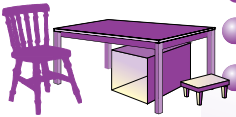
Demonstrate coordination and balance as they:

- Walk on a low balance beam
- Jump forward from a standing position
- Move around without bumping into things
- Kick
- Throw
- Catch
- Run

Express creativity through movement as they:

- Make creative body movements freely
- Dance

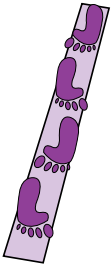
Activities and Strategies for Development



Up and Down, In and Out

- On a rainy day, set up some movement activities in an open space in your home.
- Start in the kitchen or dining area by pulling the chairs away from the table just far enough so your child can crawl around the chairs and under the table.
- Then place a low stool somewhere nearby to step up on and then jump down.
- Next, set up a large box, open at both ends, to crawl through.
- Finally, invite your child to climb up on a sofa, get back down and go back the other way.
- Use the objects to create an imaginary place such as a forest. For example, pretend the chairs are trees, the table is a bridge, the stool is a big stump, the box is a tunnel, and the sofa is a big rock.

Balancing Act



- Cut strips about six inches wide from cardboard boxes. Tape them together to make a “balance beam” about five feet long. Lay it on the floor.
- Help your child pretend to be an acrobat in the circus and walk with one foot in front of the other across the balance beam. Turn around and walk back the other way.
- Hold her hand if she needs help staying on the cardboard.
- For a challenge, let her try walking backward. Then try walking on tiptoes.
- Fold your “balance beam” up to use again and again!



Jumping Hula Hoops

- Place a hula hoop on the ground in a large open area indoors or outdoors. (Make a big circle from a long rope if you do not have a hula-hoop!)
- Play music as your child walks around the outside edge of the hula-hoop.
- When you stop the music, tell your child to jump inside the hula-hoop.
- When the music starts, your child can jump back out and walk around again.

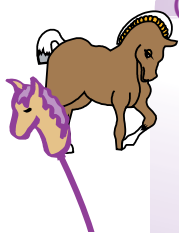
Special Needs Tips

Use a hand signal when you start and stop the music for a child who is hearing impaired.



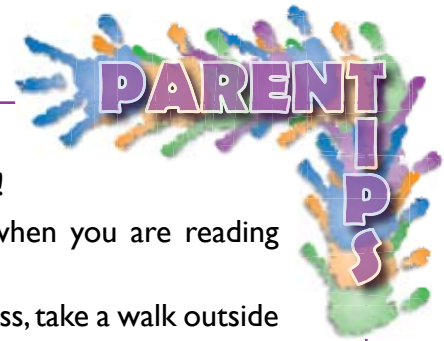
Sock Toss

- Place a laundry basket, large garbage can, or a box in an open and safe area.
- Make sock balls by rolling adult socks together and turning them inside out, or use bean bags, foam rubber, or foil balls.
- Show your child how to toss the balls into the basket, garbage can, or box.
- When your child needs more of a challenge, move the basket farther away.
- You and your child can also toss and catch the sock balls.
- Try this on a rainy day!



Galloping Horse

- Find pictures of animals in one of your child's books or magazines, including a horse.
- Ask your child to choose an animal and show you how it moves.
- Encourage him to make the animal's sounds, too!
- Make a riding horse by drawing a face on a small paper bag filled with paper and tying it onto a broom handle or yardstick so your child can gallop and "neigh" like a horse!
- Now see if he can think of another animal and imitate it for you to guess which one he is!



Remember that three year olds need to move actively!

Invite your child to act out some parts of a story when you are reading together.

If you are waiting in a restaurant and your child is restless, take a walk outside for a few minutes or bring a table activity for your child to do.

Do a quiet activity before nap or bedtime. You can listen to quiet music or read a book together.

After your child has been indoors or ridden in a car for a long period of time, go outside and move around for awhile.

Encourage your child to run and play outdoors, with supervision, of course.

Whenever possible, let your three year old use her natural inclination to move around in a positive and creative way! Turn on some music and watch her dance!

Find recorded children's music for dancing and movement such as music by The Laurie Berkner Band, Ella Jenkins, Greg and Steve, and Putamayo Kids. Check in the children's section of your public library.

If possible, allow a child in a wheelchair to get out and crawl or roll around on the floor or grass.



3
Three
year olds

Fine motor skills

Control hands and fingers as they:

- Use thumb and first two fingers to grasp crayon (“tripod grasp”)
- Begin to use scissors to snip
- Copy lines and circles
- Squeeze tools
- Turn pages

Show eye-hand coordination as they:

- Put together and pull apart small objects
- Thread laces
- Put puzzle pieces in place
- Stack and build

Activities and Strategies for Development

Shopping List



- Before a trip to the grocery store, ask your child to help you make a shopping list.
- Give him a piece of paper and a marker or crayon. Have paper and a marker for yourself.
- Talk about something you need to buy and write it on your paper. Model the “tripod grip” (holding the crayon with the thumb and first two fingers) as you write.
- Encourage your child to use a marker or crayon to draw pictures or make scribbles on his shopping list.

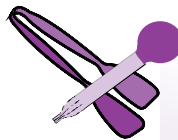
Snipping Coupons



- Save store coupons from newspapers or magazines.
- Give your child a pair of child safety scissors.
- Look together for coupons of some of your favorite foods.
- Hold the paper for her and help coordinate the scissors in your child’s hand as she tries to make a few snips.
- Ask your child to put the coupons into an envelope.
- Take these coupons with you on your next trip to the store.
- Compliment your child for being a family helper!

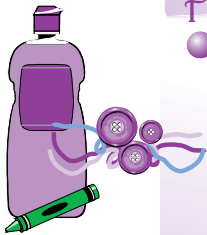
Developmental Tip

Using scissors is difficult for many three year olds. Let your child try to make a few snips and then tear the rest of the way!



Cook's Helper

- Find several kitchen tools that require you to squeeze them with fingers or hand.
- A turkey baster, tongs, and a sponge are a few examples.
- As you are working in the kitchen, fill the sink with water and soap bubbles.
- Place a sturdy stepstool in front of the sink or give your child a dishpan with some soapy water.
- Tie a plastic or cloth apron around your child to catch some of the water.
- Invite him to wash these tools and squeeze water through the turkey baster and sponge. Let him try to pick up the sponge with the tongs.
- Your child can use these same items in the bathtub.



Fantastic Fingers

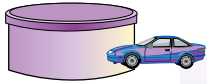
- Here are some activities that can help your child gain control of her hands and fingers:
 - Clean out small plastic bottles and caps such as the kind that come with lotion and shampoo. Let your child match the caps and bottles and screw the caps on and off.
 - Give your child a shoe lace and large beads, large buttons, and other things that can be strung onto it.
 - Give your child small pieces of chalk or broken crayons to help her learn to use a "tripod grip" when she scribbles and draws.



Mini Soccer

- Use a small ball of clay or a crushed piece of paper for a soccer ball.
- Provide a shoe box lid for the "soccer field."
- Show your child how to flick the ball with his thumb and pointer finger. Encourage him to flick the ball with each finger to score a goal by getting the paper to the other end of the lid!

Make it Snappy



- Make inexpensive snapping and stacking toys with plastic containers that have snap-on lids.
- Place an interesting object, such as a small car or block, inside.
- Encourage your child to remove the lid and find the toy inside.
- After finding it, have the child “hide” the toy again, and snap the top back on the container.

Special Needs Tip

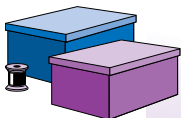
Lids that fit loosely are easier to manage for children who have difficulty using their fingers to open and close containers.

Lace It Up



- Practice lacing with these two ideas:
 - Remove a shoelace from one of your child’s shoes. (An adult shoe would be fine, too!) Show her how to put the lace back in and help her pull it through the holes. The idea is to strengthen her finger and hand muscles, so do not worry if she wants to skip holes or lace it her own way!
 - Punch lots of holes in a piece of cardboard. Let your child use a shoelace to weave in and out of the holes in any pattern or direction she chooses.

Never Enough Shoes



- Gather some shoe boxes with lids.
- Invite your child to lay the boxes end to end or stack them high.
- Encourage her to imagine she is making a long train or building a house.
- Add small accessories like empty film canisters or thread spools to make pretend furniture and people.



Stickers are appealing to many young children. Pulling them off and sticking them to paper is good for finger coordination.

As a three year old your child may begin to show more interest in “drawing and writing” with crayons and markers. These materials are good for developing small muscles and eye hand coordination.

Tracing and cutting on a line may be too difficult for your three year old. Encourage him to make marks and cut on blank paper before moving to cutting and drawing within lines. Try cutting or tearing pictures from old magazines.

If your child seems to be left-handed, buy a pair of child-sized “lefty” safety scissors.

When you read with your child, sit close or have her sit in your lap. This allows her to see the pictures and to turn each page one at a time. Turning magazine pages is another good way for your child to work on finger control.



3
Three
year olds

Self-help skills

Feed themselves as they:

- Eat without spilling
- Use a spoon and fork
- Pour from a small pitcher
- Spread with a spreader

Dress themselves as they:

- Unsnap clothes
- Button clothes with large buttons
- Undress and dress with minimal help
- Put on shoes and socks

Attend to personal hygiene as they:

- Take care of their own toileting needs
- Brush teeth
- Wash and dry hands

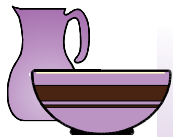
Attend to routine tasks as they:

- Clean up after snack
- Turn off simple appliances
- Put toys away
- Move to different activities



The Dish Ran Away With the Spoon

- At meal time, encourage your child to help set the table.
- Give him a fork or spoon to place on the table in front of each chair.
- Offer your child one food item that requires a spoon to eat such as soup or cereal. Offer another one that requires a fork, such as meat or vegetables.
- Let your child try the spoon and the fork for each food item and see which works best!



Snap, Crackle, Pop

- Fill your child's bowl with cereal.
- Fill a small pitcher or measuring cup with milk.
- Encourage your child to use the pitcher to pour milk into the bowl.
- This may mean an extra step on busy mornings, but it will build skills in control and self-confidence!



Muffin Man

- Use your favorite recipe to make a batch of muffins or cupcakes.
- After the muffins have cooled, get out spreaders and soft spreads like butter, apple sauce, whipped cream cheese, icing, or pudding.
- Invite your child to spread a topping on the muffin or cupcake.
- For a special occasion, bring in cupcakes to school that your child has helped to decorate!



Pajama Party

- At bedtime, ask your child to put “jammies” (pajamas) on her favorite nighttime cuddly toy. An old baby gown or shirt can be used for the cuddly toy’s pajamas.
- Talk about how the clothes go over the head and through the arms.
- Help her snap, button, or zip the jammies, if needed.
- Then, encourage her to remove her own clothes to put on her jammies.
- Tuck your child and her pajama-buddy into bed. Sweet dreams!



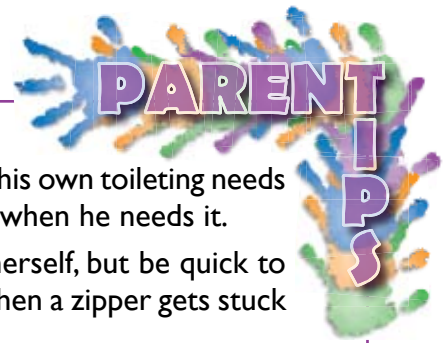
Mirror, Mirror

- Make the bathroom “user friendly” for a three year old with these ideas:
 - Put a hook low on the wall near the sink for your child’s washcloth or towel.
 - Place a sturdy stepstool next to the sink.
 - Make sure the toilet paper roll is easy to reach.
 - Have a small bucket for holding pump or bar soap, a drinking cup, a toothbrush, and toothpaste.
 - Lower the temperature on the hot water heater to avoid scalding!



Pearly Whites

- Use this simple recipe to make homemade toothpaste: *Mix a small amount of baking soda, water, and a few drops of peppermint or lemon extract*
- Help your child brush with the toothpaste, rinse, and spit.
- Invite your child to try toothpastes of different colors and flavors.
- Encourage her to choose a favorite toothpaste and brush regularly with your help.
- For safety, after brushing teeth, be sure to put toothpaste out of your child’s reach.



Encourage your child to dress and feed himself, and take care of his own toileting needs as much as is reasonable. Also, encourage him to ask for help when he needs it.

Set high expectations for your child's ability to do things for herself, but be quick to recognize when her frustration level is likely to build, such as when a zipper gets stuck or a small button is hard to fasten.

Invite your child to turn switches on and off when he is with you, such as the light switch or the vacuum. Point out switches that mean danger, such as the garbage disposal.

For a child in a wheelchair, hang a mirror low on the wall so she can see herself.



Health and safety skills

3
Three
year olds

Pay attention to safety instructions
 as they:

- Follow safety procedures

Attend to personal health needs
 as they:

- Lie down when tired
- Get or ask for a drink when thirsty
- Cover up or uncover when cold or hot

Identify healthy food choices as they:

- Choose pictures of healthy foods
- Choose healthy snacks

Relate identifying information about themselves as they:

- Say their first and last names
- Say how old they are

Activities and Strategies for Development



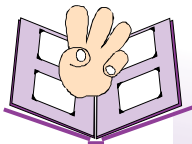
Fire Safety

- Read and discuss with your child a book about fire safety such as *Arthur's Fire Drill* by Marc Brown or *Clifford The Firehouse Dog* by Norman Bridwell.
- If you have access to the internet, you can visit "Sparky the Fire Dog" at www.sparky.org. This website is produced by the National Fire Protection Association and gives tips about fire safety for parents and children.



Good Night, Baby

- Play with your child with a doll or stuffed animal.
- Say that the doll looks tired and ask your child what to do.
- As you and your child put the doll to sleep ask your child if the baby is cold and needs to cover up with a blanket.
- Encourage your child to read the doll a book or sing a song to help it settle down and go to sleep.
- Most of all, have fun pretending!



Three Like Me

- Gather photos of your child at different ages.
- Show the pictures to your child and discuss how old he was in each one. Try to find pictures when he was a baby and now. Talk about things he can do now that he could not do before.
- Name some friends who are three years old.
- Show your child how to hold up three fingers and answer "three" when someone asks "How old are you?"

Snack Time

- Make some healthy snacks with your child.



Fruit Salad

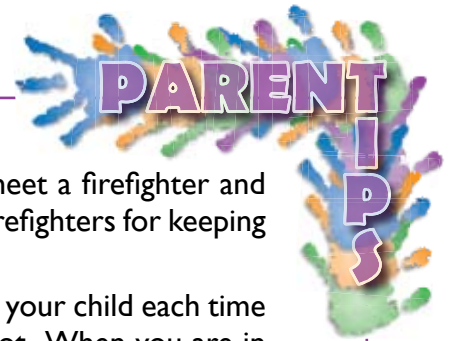
- With plastic knives, invite your child to help wash, peel, and cut up fruit such as bananas, strawberries, blueberries, and oranges
- Try something new—add a kiwi, a mango, or another fruit that is new to your child.
- Put the fruit in a large bowl and stir.
- Let your child serve some into a bowl.
- Enjoy!

Vegetable Soup

- Let your child choose some fresh vegetables from the grocery story or use leftovers.
- Let your child clean and help you break up the vegetables.
- Put all the vegetables in a crock pot or large pot for the stove.
- Add a large can of tomato juice and some chicken or vegetable broth or water.
- Put the crock pot in a safe place or place a large pot on the stove, and cook on medium-high until your soup is ready for lunch or snack.
- Enjoy how it smells as it cooks!

Whole Wheat Pancakes

- Let your child help measure and mix this recipe:
 - 1 cup and 2 tablespoons whole wheat flour
 - 1 tablespoon brown sugar
 - 2 tablespoons applesauce
 - 1 cup and 2 tablespoons water
 - 1 ½ teaspoons baking power
 - a pinch of salt
 - add some blueberries, if desired
- Sift the dry ingredients together. Add applesauce and stir until the ingredients are just wet. (You don't want the batter to be too thin.) Heat an electric frying pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Pour a small amount of the batter onto the hot pan to make several pancakes (**adults only**). When each pancake is brown on the bottom, turn and cook the other side. Serve with a small amount of syrup. Yum!



Call ahead and arrange to visit your local fire station to meet a firefighter and see the fire trucks. Bring homemade cookies to thank the firefighters for keeping your neighborhood safe.

Make a rule that “We hold hands in the street!” and remind your child each time you get out of the car or walk across a street or parking lot. When you are in a parking lot, tell your child to “keep both feet on the line” (the lines between parking spaces) until everyone is out of the car and can hold hands. Remember that three year olds love to run, so hold on tight!

Read a book such as *Home Safety* by Pati Myers Gross and discuss safety issues with your child. One example is “Do not touch electrical outlets.”

Make a cardboard **STOP** sign (eight sides). While your child is on a riding toy, tell her to stop when you hold up the sign. Look for stop signs as you ride in the car or walk in the neighborhood.

Develop a pleasurable routine before bedtime to make it easier for your child to settle down. For example, let your child choose a book and make this a special time for the two of you to read together.

Take a pitcher of water and cups when you go outside to play. Ask your child to let you know when he is thirsty and then let him help pour from the pitcher—it does not matter if it spills, it’s just water!

Teach your child about healthy foods and let her choose something healthy at the grocery store. Visit a farmer’s market and try something new!

3

Emotional and Social Development

Standards:

- **Personal relationships with adults**
- **Personal relationships with peers**
- **Self-awareness**
- **Self-control**
- **Self-expression**





3
Three
year olds

Personal relationships with adults

Build relationships with adults as they:

- Ask for permission
- Offer to help with simple tasks
- Talk about the day's events
- Show respect through body language
- Refer to adults by name
- Enjoy adults' companionship

Show feelings of security and trust as they:

- Calm down when comforted
- Display affection in greetings and goodbyes
- Play independently while adult is nearby

Use adults as a resource as they:

- Seek assistance with basic needs
- Request help to complete a task
- Ask for information or help in learning a new skill

Personal relationships
with adults

Activities and Strategies for Development



Aunt Angela

Family Get-Together

- Before family get-togethers, tell your child the name of the people she will see.
- Say for example, “We’re going to see Aunt Angela. She came on a bus to see us.”
- At the family visit, point out the people she does not know and tell her their names.
- If a family member is familiar to the child, ask the child to tell you their name.
- Take snapshots at the gathering and make a small photo album of pictures of family members.
- Your child can practice saying the family names to match the photos.



Team Time

- Pick a daily activity that you and your child can do together as a team such as feeding a pet, collecting items for recycling, or drying the baby after a bath.
- Give your child a specific task that helps get the job done. He can scoop the food into the pet’s bowl, carry newspapers to the recycling bin, or hold the towel to help dry the baby.
- Let your child know that you appreciate his help with each task.
- Compliment your child when he offers to help with other simple tasks.



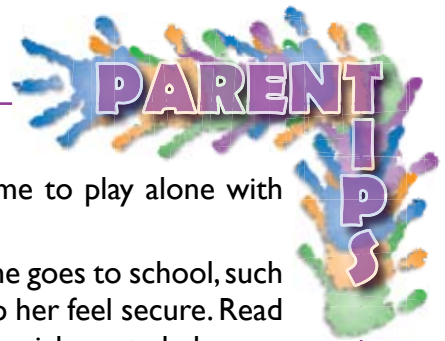
Soothing Salve

- Keep a plastic bottle of lotion that smells nice in the refrigerator.
- When your child is upset because of a skinned knee or a struggle with a sibling, invite her to sit on your lap while you apply some cool, soothing salve on her hands, arms, and legs.
- Speak to your child in a soothing, calm voice.
- After your child has calmed down, talk together about what she can do to feel better.



Now Try This

- Invite your child to pick an activity that is new to him, such as making pancakes.
- Let him know that he will get a chance to do the task with you as his helper.
- Follow a recipe card with simple directions.
- Your child can pour and stir.
- Let your child know that you will heat the pan and flip the pancakes.
- Encourage him to feel proud that he tried something new today.



Provide your child with time to play with you and time to play alone with you nearby.

Plan a special way to say goodbye to your child when she goes to school, such as a bear hug, hearts touching, or tummy tickles to help her feel secure. Read the book *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, to learn a special way to help your child feel secure when you are apart.

Encourage your child to tell you about his teachers and friends at school. Put a picture of his teachers in a family album.

Your child will learn how to relate to adults based on your family and cultural expectations. For example, you will help him learn to look adults directly in the eye when spoken to or lower his eyes to show respect, as taught in your culture.



3
Three
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Personal relationships with peers

Demonstrate social skills with other children as they:

- Play with other children
- Take turns, with some guidance from adults
- Share materials
- Let another child know when finished with an item so the next child can use it
- Work together

Show sensitivity to the feelings of other children as they:

- Describe another child's feelings to an adult
- Laugh together
- Comfort each other
- Show pleasure in another child's accomplishment
- Use words to describe feelings

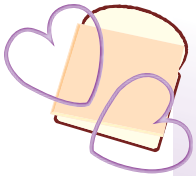
Develop friendships with other children as they:

- Identify "best friends"
- Play together after a disagreement
- Identify other children by name
- Invite other children to play

Personal relationships
with peers

Activities and Strategies for Development

My Turn!

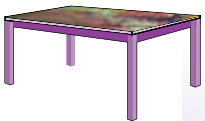


- This is an activity to do with your child and a friend or sibling to learn about taking turns.
- Have bread slices, cheese slices, and a cookie cutter to cut the bread and cheese into a fun shape.
- Show the children how to use the cookie cutter to cut the bread and cheese.
- Discuss what to do since there are not enough cookie cutters for each of them to have their own. They will need to share the cookie cutter and take turns cutting the bread and the cheese shapes. Then they can eat together!

Environmental Tip

Feed the bread scraps to the birds or squirrels outside.

We Did It Together



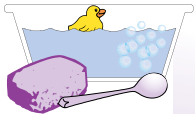
- This is an activity to do with your child and another child.
- Put some newspaper on a table to protect it.
- Invite the children to finger paint together on one piece of art paper. (*Have children wear paint shirts.*)
- Encourage them to overlap the colors and see what happens.
- Let them make two paintings so each can have one of their own.
- Write the names of both children on the finished products and let them dry. Each child can hang a masterpiece on the refrigerator!
- Now work together again with paper towels to clean up.

Facing Our Feelings



- Read a book such as *How are you Peeling?* by Joost Effers to begin a discussion about feelings.
- Draw a face on two paper plates—one with a big smile, and one with a frown and tears.
- Using a favorite stuffed animal, tell a few situations that have happened to it. Ask your child to choose a paper plate face to show how she thinks the stuffed animal feels. A few examples might be:
 - Teddy's Grandma came to visit and they made cookies together
 - Teddy's kitty ran outside and Teddy cannot find it
 - Teddy found the lost kitty
 - Teddy's sister broke Teddy's favorite toy car
 - Teddy's mommy came to school to read a story to the whole class
- Talk about a situation that happened to your child and ask her to pick a paper plate face that shows how she felt.

Water Wonders



- Invite a friend or sibling to play with your child.
- Make some soapy water in a large pan or tub and take it outside.
- Give the children items such as kitchen spoons, measuring cups, a funnel, and a sponge.
- Watch them splash and play together as they enjoy the water play.
- *For safety, never leave children unattended around water.*

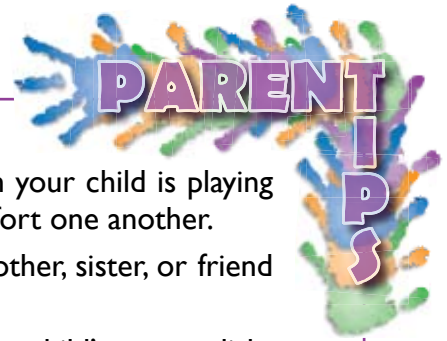
Developmental Tip

Water play often has a soothing effect on children. Try it when your child needs to calm down.

Working it Out with Words



- Find a place in your house where two children can sit facing each other.
- When your child and a friend or sibling disagree about something, have them sit face to face while you help each one use words to tell about the problem.
- Calmly guide them to find a solution. Usually, with three year olds, the “conversation” will be brief and the solution will be something simple such as “take turns” or “share.”
- Encourage the children to shake hands when they've come to an agreement.
- This is a way to begin teaching children to solve conflicts.



Look for opportunities to make positive comments when your child is playing and working well with other children and when they comfort one another.

Encourage your three year old to help you comfort a brother, sister, or friend who is upset.

Encourage your child to show excitement about another child's accomplishments.

Teach your child to "use words" to describe feelings—happy, sad, angry, or scared. Help him learn the words that match the feelings.

Look for books that show children from other cultures. Two examples are *Together* by George Ella Lyon, which features two friends of different races, and *Margaret and Margarita* by Lynn Reiser, featuring two friends who speak different languages at home. Both books reflect positive images of friends from different cultures.

Remember that you are a role model in teaching your child to play with others and resolve conflicts. She will imitate your actions, tone of voice, and the words you say to other children and adults.



3
Three
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Self-awareness

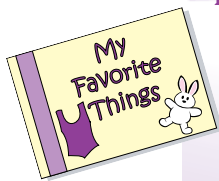
Show behaviors that reflect their self-concept as they:

- Identify their favorite things
- Show pride in their accomplishments
- Take on different roles as they play
- Describe themselves in positive ways
- Teach another child how to do something

Demonstrate confidence in their abilities as they:

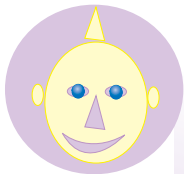
- Share their accomplishments with an adult
- Have an attitude of “I can do it!”
- Choose increasingly difficult tasks
- Show positive emotions such as smiling, laughing, or clapping in response to adult approval

Activities and Strategies for Development



Things I Like

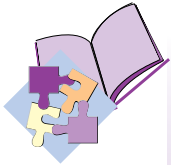
- Take a photograph of your child surrounded by her favorite things. Include items that represent things she likes to do, such as a bathing suit if she enjoys swimming.
- On the back of the photograph write “My Favorite Things” and the date.
- Hang the photograph on your child’s bedroom door for her to enjoy.
- Share the photograph with relatives and friends and then put it in a photo album or somewhere safe. You and your child will cherish these three-year-old memories in future years!



Egg On Your Face

- Look in a mirror with your child to notice the unique features of his face. What color are his eyes? What does his mouth look like? Comment that no one else in the world looks exactly like him.
- Make an omelet by beating together an egg and a small amount of milk and cooking it until done in a small, lightly greased frying pan.
- Remove the omelet from the pan and cut out two circles for eyes, a triangle for a nose, and a curved mouth.
- Have your child choose a food item to put into the omelet to match his “eyes.” For example, use raisins or chocolate chips for brown eyes, and blueberries or blueberry jelly for blue. Do the same to fill the nose and mouth. For fun, the egg circles can become ears and the triangle a hat.
- Enjoy eating the omelet!

Teaching Toddlers



- Encourage your child to “teach” something to a younger child.
- Your three year old can do such things as: look at a book with the younger child, play with the child in the sandbox, build with blocks, do a puzzle, or help with an art project.
- This builds positive feelings in the older child and gives the younger child some individual attention.
- Talk with your three year old in advance about being kind and gentle with the younger child. Supervise carefully.



My “I Can” Can

- Get a cardboard tube container with a plastic lid, such as the ones that tennis balls or potato chips come in.
- Cut a piece of construction paper large enough to go around the can and let your child decorate it. Tape or glue the decorated paper to the can.
- When your child accomplishes a new task, write it on a slip of paper and let her draw a picture to go with it. Write the date and put it in the “I Can” Can. For example, “Madeline can pedal a tricycle 9/12/07.”
- Occasionally, read the slips of paper with your child and talk about how proud she must feel about all she can do. Try this when she is feeling sad that she is not able to do the same things as her older brother or sister.
- Share your child’s “I Can” Can with close family members!



Find opportunities to encourage your child’s efforts and accomplishments.

Encourage your child to take pride in his efforts and accomplishments. Although children like to hear praise from adults, it is important that they learn to feel their own sense of pride, too.

When your child says, “I can’t do it,” encourage her to “try again” or break the task down into smaller steps so she can be successful one step at a time.

Encourage your child to “stretch” his abilities. When he has mastered a skill, encourage him to try something a little more difficult.

Share your child’s efforts and successes with close family members—talk about what your child is “learning to do” in addition to what she has already mastered.



3
Three
year olds

Self-control

Regulate own emotions and behavior most of the time as they:

- Ask adults to intervene
- Wait for some things
- Use strategies to calm down
- Use words to express emotions
- Take turns

Follow routines and social rules in a group setting most of the time as they:

- Repeat classroom rules
- Follow classroom rules
- Recognize different places have different rules
- Remember familiar routines
- Follow familiar routines

Activities and Strategies for Development



Hurry Up and Wait

- Practice the game of “I Spy” with your child while waiting in line at the store, the bank, or the doctor’s office.
- Locate an object you and your child can see easily. Say, “I spy something red.” Have your child guess. Give more clues, “It’s red and up high...it’s red, up high and above the door.”
- See if your child can find the exit sign from your clues.
- Let your child pick an item and give you clues to guess.



Take a Deep Breath

- Show your child how to take a deep relaxing breath, breathing in through your nose and out from your mouth. Have him count to three as he is breathing in and out.
- As he practices, hold up a tissue and show him how the tissue moves when he breathes out.
- Tell the child to blow out like he is blowing out candles.
- When your child has an upsetting experience, remind him that he can breathe and pretend to blow out candles to calm himself and feel better.
- Model this for him when you are tense and need to calm yourself!



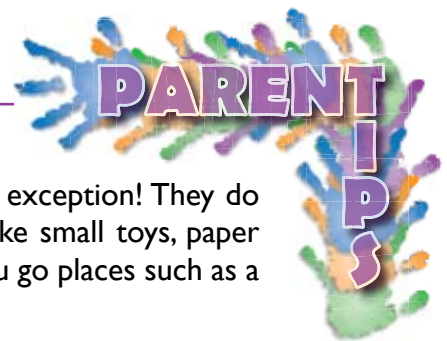
Feel Out Loud

- Read a book about strong feelings such as *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang.
- On each page, encourage your child to look at the pictures and say how Sophie feels.
- Point to the words that tell how she acts and feels, “She kicks. She screams.” “She roars a red, red roar.” “She cries.” “She feels better now.”
- Tell your child that when she uses words to tell how she feels it helps others understand. Talk about some things your child can do or say when she gets angry.

Grandma Rules!



- Talk about the different rules or routines your child will follow when he is in different settings.
- Ask him where he naps at school (cots), at home (bed) and at Grandma's or another relative's (sofa).
- Help your child fill in the rules for visiting different places. For example, have him answer into the tape recorder "When we go to Grandma's, how do we pet the kitty?" (gently)
- Talk with your child about the reasons for different rules. For example, libraries need quiet voices because people are reading. At the park you can use loud voices because people are playing.



It is difficult for most of us to wait. Three year olds are no exception! They do show more patience than their younger peers, however. Take small toys, paper and markers, and a non-messy snack along with you when you go places such as a doctor's office or restaurant where you will have to wait.

Your child may still find comfort in a "lovey" object at rest time or when he is upset. Let him know that his feelings are okay and that words will help others understand too.

Keep rules simple and stated in a positive way such as "We take turns with our toys." Avoid rules that only tell your child what you "don't" want her to do.

Routines give children a sense of security and an opportunity to develop self-control as they plan and wait for what comes next.

Help children practice the routines of the day at home. "We brush our teeth and then get dressed for school. Next, we'll have breakfast. After breakfast, we'll drive to school. I'll pick you up to take you home after nap time and you can tell me all about your day."

Simple routines such as the ones for getting dressed, washing up, and brushing teeth must be taught and practiced frequently. Sometimes, "misbehaviors" may happen when your child needs more practice with a household rule or routine.



3
Three
year olds

Self-expression

Express themselves creatively through art and music as they:

- Create with playdough or clay
- Draw and paint just for fun
- Play musical instruments
- Sing

Demonstrate imagination through dramatic play as they:

- Engage in pretend play alone
- Engage in pretend play with other children
- Play with puppets
- Dress up and perform for others

Activities and Strategies for Development



Play Dough Creations

- Make play dough with your child using

2 cups flour	2 tablespoons cooking oil
1 cup salt	4 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 cup hot water	food coloring
- Let your child help mix the ingredients (you add the hot water!) and then knead until smooth. You can store the dough in a covered container.
- Invite your child to play freely with the dough and tell you about the creations.



Paint Projects

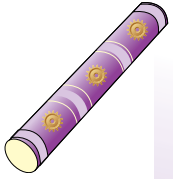
Here are a few different ways to add pizzazz to paint projects:

- Add sand or powdered detergent to tempera paint for texture.
- Add glitter to tempera paint to add sparkle.
- Remove the ball from an empty roll-on deodorant bottle and clean the bottle. Add thick tempera paint and replace the ball so your child can roll the paint onto art paper.
- Your child can make paint prints by dipping sponges in paint.
- Take a shoe box and cut a piece of construction paper to fit into the bottom. Put a small amount of paint and a few large marbles on the paper. Your child can gently tilt the box from side to side to create a marble painting.

Special Needs Tip

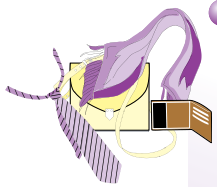
Children with limited dexterity might find the roll-on and marble painting particularly appealing.

Rain Sticks



- You will need an empty paper towel roll, strong paper or fabric, heavy masking tape or duct tape, bird seed or small pebbles, markers, and a small scoop.
- Cut out two paper or fabric circles larger than the ends of the towel roll. Cover one end of the tube and secure it with the tape.
- Let your child decorate the outside of the tube with markers.
- Have your child scoop out some bird seed and put it in the tube.
- Cover the other end of the tube and tape securely.
- Play music and sing along as your child shakes the Rain Stick.

Dress Up



- Get a large box to hold dress up clothes and items that encourage your child's imagination. Some things to put in the box might be:
 - older children's or adults' old clothes including shirts, hats, pants, scarves, shawls, jewelry, and shoes;
 - old purses, wallets, and briefcases;
 - small electronic equipment such as cell phones and remote controls that are no longer in use are also fun (remove any wires, batteries, or other pieces that might be dangerous); and
 - large pieces of "leftover" fabric of different colors and textures. Look for these on the clearance table at a fabric store.
- Put the box near your child's dolls and stuffed animals.
- Watch your child engage in free expression and make believe!
- This is also a great activity for your child to do with a friend—maybe they'll put on a show for you!



Encourage your child to express himself freely and creatively using art materials. Have a box with items such as crayons, markers, construction paper, fabric scraps, feathers, safety scissors, and glue sticks for your child to use creatively.

Give your child a large paint brush and a bucket of water to “paint” the sidewalk.

Children sometimes express their emotions through drawing and painting. Feelings of happiness, sadness or anger may be evident in a child’s artwork.

Pretend play gives children the opportunity to use their imaginations and express creativity. It also provides a safe way for them to express feelings that may be troubling them, such as feelings about a new baby or worries about night monsters.

Find opportunities for your child to learn about the way other cultures express themselves through song. Listen to a radio station that plays music from a culture different than you own.

3

Approaches to Learning

Standards:

- Acquire learning approaches that support development and school success





3
Three
year olds

Acquire learning approaches that support development and school success

Show curiosity in learning new things as they:

- Explore new objects in the environment
- Try out ideas while playing
- Participate in new sensory experiences
- Engage in unfamiliar activities
- Experiment with materials
- Seek out adults as partners to explore and discover

Begin to show persistence in a variety of tasks as they:

- Sustain attention in an independent activity
- Sustain attention in an adult-initiated activity
- Follow through on completing a task
- Stay engaged for an age-appropriate period of time
- Try difficult tasks
- Ignore distractions
- Focus attention on activities of high interest

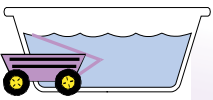
Find creative solutions to problems as they:

- Use their imagination to seek solutions
- Experiment with creative materials
- Take the initiative to find alternatives
- Show inventiveness and flexible thinking

Acquire learning approaches that support development and school success

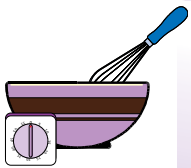
Activities and Strategies for Development

Rub-A-Dub-Dub, New Toys in the Tub



- At bath time, give your child a waterproof toy to play with in the tub.
- Invite your child to explore it.
- Say to your child, for example, “I wonder if it will float on the top or sink to the bottom? Let’s see what happens.” “I wonder if the toy will hold water?—Oh, look, the water is pouring through the holes!”
- *For safety, remind your child that she must not put anything in the tub without first asking an adult.*

Favorite Family Recipe

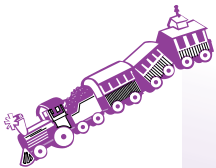


- Select a simple family recipe that your child can help make.
- Assemble all the ingredients, measuring cups, bowls, and spoons.
- Give your child one or more simple tasks throughout the cooking activity, such as kneading, stirring, pouring from the cup or spoon, or setting the timer.
- Encourage your child to smell and feel the various ingredients. Wash hands first!
- Enjoy the delicious flavor of the recipe when finished!



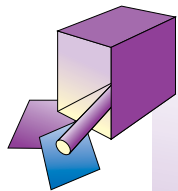
Family Helper

- Identify one simple job your child can do daily to help the family.
- Jobs may include helping take care of plants or pets, putting toys away, and setting or cleaning the table.
- Model the steps of each job. For example, to take care of the plants, get a watering can, fill it with water, carry it to the plant to water it, and carry it back to the sink.
- Observe whether or not your child was able to follow through with all the steps.
- Thank your child for helping! Give added support when your child needs a reminder to finish one of the steps to complete the job.



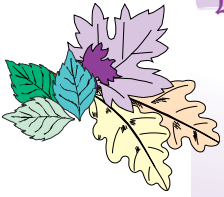
I Think I Can

- Read with your child the classic book about the little engine that tries and tries and finally completes a big job, *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper.
- As you observe your child in daily activities, think about what is difficult for him to do. It could be using fine motor skills to draw or cut, or using large muscle skills to throw a ball, or rock back and forth on a swing.
- Choose one of these challenging activities to help him practice. Encourage all his attempts. For example, praise him for making snips on paper with safety scissors, even if his cuts are awkward.
- Remind your child that he is trying a difficult task, just like the little engine that could!



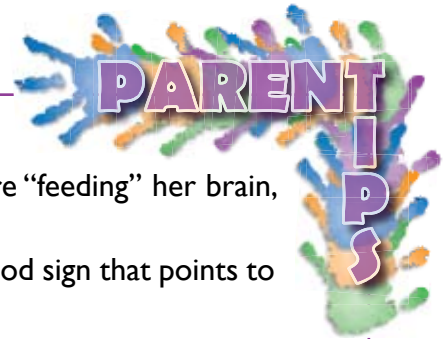
What Can We Make?

- Get a big appliance box and other interesting materials like carpet squares, an old sheet, and plastic tubing.
- Clear a large space and put the items in the middle.
- Invite your child (and her friends) to see what they can make with these things.
- Step back and watch the children use their imaginations to create a pretend place, such as a cave, tent, or fire station.



Lots of Leaves!

- On a fall day, take your child outside your home or to a nearby playground to see the leaves that have fallen from the trees.
- Ask your child, “What are some things we could do with so many leaves?”
- Follow your child’s lead and try out some of the ideas.
- Some ideas might be to make a big pile of leaves and jump in, stuff leaves into a scarecrow for the garden, make a nest for squirrels, paint the leaves, make a fall wreath, or fill small bags with leaves and make balls to toss.
- Variation: In winter, encourage your child to use his imagination and think of what to do with “so much snow!”



As you encourage your child to play, explore, and pretend, you are “feeding” her brain, which is most active during the first three years of life.

When your child seems to be “getting into everything,” this is a good sign that points to his natural curiosity which is the foundation for learning.

Because of your child’s curiosity and ability to move so quickly, you will want to continuously check your home and surroundings for potential hazards.

Model curiosity yourself by asking “what if” and “I wonder why” questions aloud to your child.

Children’s attention spans are still relatively short. Some days they will move from one activity to another in a short period of time. Other days they will focus for extended periods while looking at a favorite book or playing with a favorite toy.

To help your child learn to follow through with a task, plan activities that involve short periods over the entire day; for example, helping to bake a cake from a recipe, then waiting for it to cool before adding frosting and sprinkles.

Children will learn to be more creative in their expression if they have open-ended materials (clay, paper, and crayons) rather than closed materials (coloring books, dittoes).

Encourage your child to try new things such as games, songs, or swimming, but avoid forcing him to participate. If he is reluctant, let him know that it is okay to watch for a while before joining in.

Help your child feel comfortable with new experiences by planning some to do together. For example, take a trip on a bus to a place you have not been before.

Be sensitive to your child’s level of frustration. Encourage her to keep working at a challenging task or skill, but know when to step back as well.

Allow your child to try out ideas, even if you know they will not work. When your child tries but does not succeed, encourage her to think about what she will try next. Being successful is less important than learning to accept the experience of failure and going on to find other creative solutions to problems.



3s: Approaches to Learning

3

Language and Literacy Development

Standards:

- Understands spoken words (receptive language)
- Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures (expressive language)
- Foundations for reading
- Foundations for writing





3
Three
year olds

Understands spoken words (receptive language)

Respond to spoken words as they:

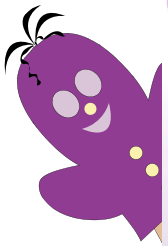
- Use actions to show understanding of words
- Look for an object when requested to do so
- Show understanding of some comparative words such as “same/different”
- Show understanding of position words such as “on top of, under, beside”

Follow directions and requests as they:

- Listen and respond
- Complete two-step directions independently, such as find their shoes and bring them to you
- Complete three-step directions with assistance

Understands spoken words
(receptive language)

Activities and Strategies for Development

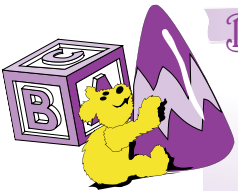


Puppet Positions

- Make a simple sock puppet using an old child-sized, white sock.
- Use a black marker to draw two eyes and a mouth on the tip of the sock.
- Tell your child that the puppet is going to learn to do some tricks!
- Have your child slip the sock puppet over her hand and show you the following actions: “Put the puppet *on top* of your head, *beside* your shoe, and *under* your chin.”
- If your child has not learned some of the position words, model for her as you say the words, “The puppet is *on* my shoulder.”

Special Needs Tip

Use signs, or gestures, to ask a child who is hearing impaired to show you the different positions with the puppet.



Blues Clues!

- Put several familiar items on a table or the carpet.
- Tell your child to try and guess which of the items you are thinking about.
- Give clues such as the color, shape, the sound it makes, and how it is used.
- Make the clues easier until your child identifies the correct item.
- Tell your child he guessed right by listening carefully to your clues!

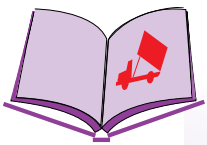
Developmental Tip

Some three year olds may still be working on naming colors. Be sure you give other clues to help them guess the item.



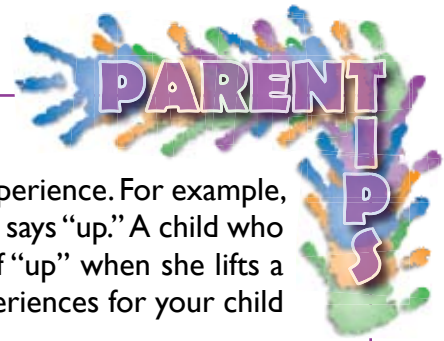
Hidden Treasure

- Hide a few stuffed animals in several different locations in your home.
- Tell your child that some of his toys are hiding and waiting to be found.
- Give your child two-step directions to find one of the hidden toys, such as “Walk to your bed and look behind the pillow,” or “Go to Papa’s chair and lift up the cushion.”
- Increase to three-step directions if your child locates items easily. For example, “Walk to your bookshelf, reach to the top shelf, and open the shoebox with the crayons.”



Read All About It!

- Select one of your child’s favorite books with lots of pictures. Sit close together so your child can see the pictures and words.
- Read the words on the page and ask your child to tell you what is happening in the picture.
- Focus on one word on the page. Check for your child’s understanding.
- For example, say to your child, “The big red truck is *dumping* dirt.”
- Use your voice to emphasize the word “dumping.”
- Say to your child, “Show me the truck *dumping*. Show me with your body how you would *dump* dirt.”
- Find other movement words from the book such as scooping, lifting, or loading.
- With each movement word, have your child point to the picture and show with body movements her understanding of the word.



Young children learn the meaning of words through experience. For example, a child learns “up” as she climbs the stairs and an adult says “up.” A child who is unable to walk or climb could learn the meaning of “up” when she lifts a ball and someone says “up.” Provide lots of active experiences for your child and talk, talk, talk!

Parents are building children’s vocabulary when they talk to their children throughout the day. Every routine teaches children new words and increases their understanding of the words they hear. For example, on laundry day say to your child, “We are going to the laundromat to wash and dry our clothes. Can you help me fold and stack the towels?”

As you ride in a car or bus, describe the things you see and hear. When stopped at a traffic light, ask your child to point to something on her side of the car. “Do you see the school bus, Naomi? Can you point to the school bus?”

Children understand a larger number of words than they use when speaking. Therefore, their receptive (listening) vocabulary is larger than their expressive (speaking) vocabulary.

Children learn the sounds and meaning of words in their home culture and language group. Children who speak Spanish, Vietnamese, or English will learn the words they hear in their home and community. It is very important to support the native language development of a young child, even while a second language is introduced.

It is generally thought that children can follow multi-step directions equal to their age! Keep directions simple and direct. Young children are easily distracted, so do not be surprised if they go to get their shoes but forget the socks!

Along with talking to your child throughout the day, reading books is another important way to help your child build a vocabulary of new words. Select books that have one or more of the following features: repeat the same words many times, explore concepts like same or different, and use words and pictures to label things in the child’s environment.



3
Three
year olds

Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures (expressive language)

Communicate without words, using motions and gestures, as they:

- Use physical signals and body language to send a message
- Use facial expressions to send a message

Demonstrate oral language skills using words as they:

- Answer questions
- Tell about experiences they have had
- Speak in increasingly longer sentences
- Tell what they want or need
- Use position words such as “inside,” “outside,” “under,” “over,” and “beside”
- Use their home language to communicate

Use oral language in social situations as they:

- Greet familiar adults and peers
- Participate in conversations with adults and peers
- Use polite language such as “please,” “thank you,” and “you’re welcome”
- Speak clearly enough for adults to understand

continued...

Use oral language for creative expression as they:

- Imitate voices of different characters as they play
- Use language in playful ways
- Make up simple stories

Ask questions as they:

- Wonder about “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “why”

Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures (expressive language)

Activities and Strategies for Development

Can You Guess?



- Act out simple actions, without talking, and see if your child can guess what you are doing.
- Some simple actions might be brushing teeth, going to sleep, getting dressed, crying, drinking, eating, swimming, and dancing.
- Next, let your child have a turn acting out something for you to guess.
- This would be fun for a few children and adults to do together.

Walk Talk



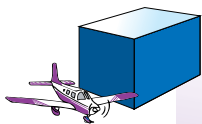
- While taking a walk, pick up a few things from the ground and put them in a paper bag. Add a few leaves, rocks, a flower that fell off its stem, twigs, or a pinecone.
- When you return home take the items from the bag and talk about your walk. Ask your child questions about where he found each item.
- Put the items back in the bag and let your child use them to tell someone else about your walk.

The Cat's Out of the Bag



- Fill a pillowcase with several stuffed animals such as a cat, dog, bear, elephant, and horse.
- Invite your child to close her eyes and choose an animal.
- With her eyes open, ask her to describe the animal. Help as needed. For example, "The cat has a **long** tail, **fluffy**, **soft** fur, **pointy** ears, and **shiny** eyes."
- If your child has seen a real animal like the one she chose, ask her to talk about it. For example, "Aunt Kathy has a cat. What is its name? What does Yoda like to do?" or "We saw an elephant at the zoo. What did it look like?"
- Continue with the other animals.

Inside, Outside, Upside, Down



- Get a box and put a few of your child's favorite small toys inside.
- Ask your child to take the items *out* of the box and put them *on* the table.
- Now, ask him to turn the box *upside down*.
- Ask him to put the items in different locations. A few examples are: Put the airplane *on top* of the box. Put the puppy *next to* the airplane. Make the airplane fly *over* the puppy and land *behind* the box.



Excuse Me

- Read a book about being polite such as *Polite Elephant* by Richard Scarry.
- Talk with your child about being polite and kind to others and using polite language. Here is a way to encourage polite behavior:
- Draw boxes on a sheet of paper to make a chart. Put your child's name on it. Get some stickers that would appeal to your child. When you hear her use polite words such as "please," "thank you," "excuse me," "you're welcome," or "I'm sorry" let her put a sticker in one of the boxes. "Analia, thank you for saying 'please' to Mario. Put a sticker on your chart for being so polite." When the chart is full, celebrate with a special privilege, such as a trip to a playground or reading a favorite book together.



Someone is Calling

- Use two toy telephones or real ones that are no longer in service.
- Make a sound to pretend that the phone is ringing. Tell your child that someone wants to talk to him on the phone.
- Change your voice as you start a conversation about an activity you and your child have recently done together. Be sure to say "hello" and "good bye" at the beginning and end of your talk.
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage your child to participate in the conversation. Open-ended questions and requests require more than one word for the answer. For example, begin your questions and requests with "What happened when ...?" or "Tell me about ..."
- Leave the telephones where your child can play with them at a later time.



Puppet Play

- Make two puppets with your child. You can use lunch-size paper bags and draw a face with markers or use an old pair of socks and make the face with buttons and felt.
- Invite your child to put one puppet on her hand while you put one on yours.
- Change your voice as your puppet talks to your child's puppet. Encourage your child to change her voice also.
- Use imagination as you and your child make up a story about something she enjoys. Describe a trip to the park where you see dinosaurs, for example, or talk about having a pretend party and see who she would invite and what she'd like to do.
- Let your child's puppet take the lead in making up the story.
- If your child enjoys puppets, let her use both of them and make up a story of her own.



Children learn language by hearing others speak and engaging in conversation. Take time to listen to your child and talk with him often.

Play “I Spy” in the grocery store with your child. For example, “I spy with my little eye *something red and round. We like to eat it in our salad.*” This is a fun language activity and helps with grocery store behavior too!

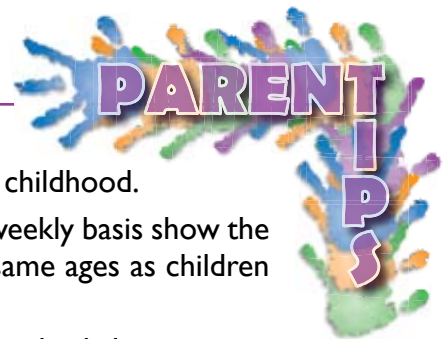
Listen. One of the best ways to encourage children to talk is to listen to what they talk about, then extend what they have said and ask questions. Take cues from your child about her interests and make that the focus of your conversations.

Avoid asking your child “why” he has done something—three year olds cannot analyze their own behavior. Ask him to tell you what happened instead.

Extend children’s descriptions when they describe something briefly. For example, if your child says “The hamster is running,” you might add “round and round on the wheel.”

Look at photographs of your child doing things with other people. Ask her to tell who is in the picture and describe what they are doing.

Be patient with your child’s questions. Children ask questions about things that interest them. Use books and other resources to find answers you do not know.



Tips about Bilingual Development

Children are capable of learning two or more languages in childhood.

Children who are exposed to two languages on a daily or weekly basis show the same milestones in language development at roughly the same ages as children who are exposed to one language.

Sometimes bilingual children know fewer words in one or both languages in comparison to children who learn one language. This is because their memory must store words in two languages rather than one.

Bilingual children learn words in each language from different people in different situations. For example, they may learn some words from parents at home and others from teachers at school. Therefore, they may know certain words in one language but not in the other.

Mixing languages in sentences is natural and normal for bilingual children. This is because they may know some words in one language but not the other. They may “borrow” words from one language to complete a sentence in the other. This tends to disappear by the time they enter elementary school.

Knowing the language of their parents and grandparents is important to their cultural identity.



3
Three
year olds

Foundations for reading

Acquire story sense as they:

- Guess what a story is about by looking at the pictures
- Tell a story while looking through a book
- Answer a few questions about what happened in a familiar story
- Listen to a complete short story they like
- Try to tell a simple story, but may lose their place and start over
- Put three story cards in order with your help

Show book awareness as they:

- Pretend to read books
- Ask for a book to be read over and over
- Choose to look at books as a desired activity
- Talk about books that have been read to them
- Treat books with care
- Identify the title of a familiar book when they see it
- Turn pages of a book using fingertips
- Turn pages of a book from front to back

continued...

Build print awareness as they:

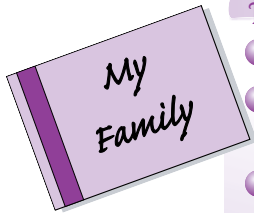
- Recognize their first name in print
- Identify the first letter in their first name
- Recognize that groups of letters make up words
- Identify familiar logos*

Distinguish different sounds of language as they:

- Repeat rhymes
- Tell the difference between words that sound similar such as “box” and “socks”
- Identify simple words that rhyme with each other
- Make up silly words that rhyme with each other
- Identify a few words that start with the same letter as their first name
- Clap out syllables when lead by an adult

*A logo is a symbol that represents a product or business.

Activities and Strategies for Development



Family Photos

- Collect photographs of family members.
- Cut pieces of construction paper in half and have your child glue one photo per page to make a book. You can also use a photo album.
- Ask your child to tell you who is in each photo and what they are doing. Write down what she says under the photo.
- Punch holes in the pages on the left hand side and attach them together with yarn or ribbon. The first page should have the title “My Family” and your child’s name.
- Invite your child to “read” her book to you and others in the family.



“My Name” Puzzle

- Write your child’s first name on a large card or piece of cardboard.
- Cut the card into three puzzle pieces. Make each cut a different shape so the pieces fit together only one way.
- Invite your child to take his name apart and put it back together.

Special Needs Tips

For a child with small muscle difficulties, glue an empty thread spool or small cork on each puzzle piece to hold onto.

For a child with vision problems, write his name with a thick, black marker on a white card.

It Rhymes With...



- Read a book by Dr. Seuss or another one with lots of rhyming words. Talk about the words that “sound like each other.”
- Collect a set of objects that rhyme with each other such as a toy *cat*, a *bat*, and a *hat*. Collect other items that do not rhyme with these items such as a truck, a ball, and a crayon.
- Hold onto one of the rhyming objects and give the rest to your child.
- For example, show the *hat* and ask your child what you are holding.
- Ask her to name each object and tell if it sounds like “hat.”
- Put the objects that rhyme in one pile and the ones that do not in another.
- Make up some silly words that rhyme with *cat*, *hat*, and *bat*.



What's Happening?

- Choose one of your child's books with large pictures that clearly reflect the content of the story.
- Go through the book looking at the pictures but not reading the words. Ask your child what he sees in the pictures. Ask, "What do you think the story is about?"
- Read the book, allowing your child to turn the pages. Read it immediately after looking at the pictures if your child is still interested, or wait and do it later when he is ready to listen again.
- After you have finished the story, close the book and ask a few questions about what happened. Accept all answers and expect your child to remember only a few things that happened.
- Put the book where your child can "read" it again. Be sure to show him how to treat books gently and with care.



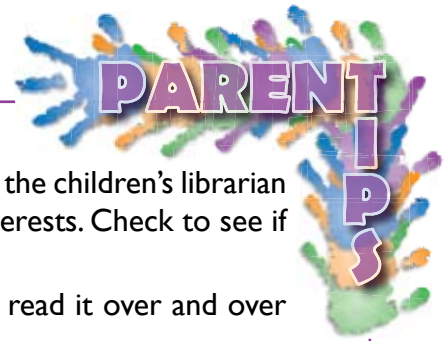
When Mommy and Coretta Took a Walk

- Go on a nature walk with your child and take a paper bag.
- Collect items along the way such as leaves, flowers, pebbles, and twigs.
- When you get home, take each item out of the bag and ask your child to make up a simple story about a little girl who went for a walk and the things she found. Use the items she found as cues to help her tell the story.
- Write down your child's thoughts about each item on a separate piece of paper or index card to make "pages" for a book.
- Ask your child to make up a title for her story and write it for her on a piece of paper or index card to make the "cover."
- Staple the pages or cards together to make a book to share with family members. Cover the staples with thick tape to protect little fingers!
- Let your child decorate the pages and the cover if she chooses. She might want to glue some of the items in the book.
- A variation is to write the story in a small notebook or pad.

“B” is for Blake

B

- Write the first letter of your child’s name in large print on an index card.
- Use this letter to help your child find “his letter” as he looks through his favorite books.
- Take the letter with you to the grocery store and see if your child can find labels with his letter in them.
- Look through colorful newspaper ads to find words that start with it too.
- Share your child’s excitement when he “reads” his letter to you.



Visit the public library and find the children’s book section. Ask the children’s librarian to help you find books appropriate for your child’s age and interests. Check to see if there is a “story time” you and your child can attend.

When you find a book that your child enjoys, be prepared to read it over and over again.

Read to your child every day. Sit where your child can see the pictures and ask her what she thinks the story is about by looking at the illustrations.

Let your child “read” with you by filling in familiar or predictable words. Make a “mistake” sometimes in a familiar story, such as calling a character by a silly name, and let your child correct you. Be prepared to read a portion of a new story at first and then try to read more the next time if your child’s interest grows.

Tell stories to your child instead of reading sometimes.

Encourage your child to use his imagination to make up stories.

Have lots of books available for your child to “read.” Choose sturdy books with large, colorful pictures and a story that is easy to follow. Choose topics that your child finds interesting. Look for books about people of different cultures and abilities.

Sing rhyming songs with your child.

Read books with rhyming verses and make up silly rhymes with your child.

Set an example by letting your child see you enjoy reading.

Use books as a resource to find answers to questions your child asks.

Make “reading together” an enjoyable experience for both you and your child. Use “reading together” as a reward.



3
Three
year olds

Foundations for writing

Scribble as they:

- Hold a crayon with thumb and fingers and make strokes on paper
- Draw lines and free form shapes
- Make marks to pretend they are writing for a purpose, for example making a shopping list
- Make marks that begin to look like letter shapes

Draw pictures as they:

- Use a crayon or marker to make a round shape, which they describe as some object
- Draw several forms on the paper to recall a familiar story or express an idea
- Draw a picture with details and tell about it

Dictate messages as they:

- Tell an adult what words to write to express an idea
- Scribble their own “message” and ask an adult to write or read what it says
- Describe a caption or title for a picture they drew

Express creativity using skills for writing as they:

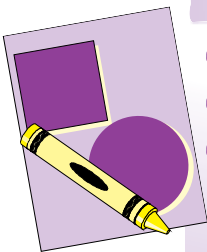
- Make writing movements in creative materials such as sand or paint
- Make a picture with a variety of designs such as dots, curvy lines, and zigzags
- Use creative materials to make a shape that represents an alphabet letter, such as a “c” made with play dough

Activities and Strategies for Development



Scribbles To Go!

- Create a portable writing center so your child can draw and write comfortably away from home.
- Take an empty shoe box and lid. Cut several rectangles of paper that fit snugly into the lid.
- Fill the bottom of the shoebox with washable markers, fat crayons and pencils, and stickers.
- Print the child's name on the lid of the box, for example, "Trey's Writing Box."
- Your child can open the box and draw on the paper in the lid, which provides a firm surface for drawing.
- The lid can be propped in the child's lap in a car seat, used on a floor, or anywhere a writing surface is not available.



Circles and Squares

- Cut out several cardboard circles and squares from construction paper.
- Place these shapes on a table along with paper and washable markers or crayons.
- Help your child trace around the shapes to get the "feel" of making them. Then encourage her to be a "copy cat" and draw a shape on paper that looks like the cardboard shape.
- Your child's copy of the shapes will not be exact. Encourage her when she tries to make curved lines like the circle and straight lines like the square.

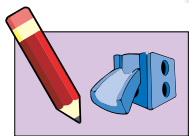
Special Needs Tip

Provide "grippers" for a child with fine motor difficulties. Wrap a piece of clay around a crayon or marker to make a "cushion." Mold it to fit your child's hand to make it easier to grip.



Refrigerator Gallery

- Pick out a favorite book that your child asks you to read repeatedly.
- Sit with your child at your side and turn each page pointing to what is going on in the picture while you are reading the words.
- Explain to your child that the person who draws the pictures in a book is called an “illustrator.”
- Point out the details used by the illustrator to help tell the story such as the size of the three beds in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.
- Invite your child to draw a picture that tells his favorite story, just like the book illustrator did.
- Encourage him to retell the story as he scribbles his ideas.
- Write the title of the book above your child’s drawing.
- Hang the picture on your refrigerator to talk about and enjoy.



Write This Down!

- Tell your child that you want to send a letter or an email message to a family member and you want her help.
- Ask her to tell about her favorite game, friend, toy, or some other news.
- As she speaks, write down her words so she can see them. For example, “La-quetta says, ‘I like to slide on the new slide in the park.’”
- Keep the sentence simple, using just a few words.
- Invite your child to draw a picture to go with the words she has dictated.
- Send the letter and when you get a reply, enjoy reading it aloud to your child!



Zippy Writing

- Fill zip-lock bags half-full with inexpensive hair or shaving gel.
- Put the gel in one bag, zip it, and put it upside down in another bag. Use masking tape to seal the tops of the bags so your child cannot easily open them and the material does not ooze out. For safety, supervise this carefully.
- Invite your child to use his index finger to make simple shapes and letters on the bag.
- Rub or jiggle the bag and the letter will disappear!
- If your child draws a letter that you can recognize, say to him, for example, “That’s the letter S in your name, Samuel!”

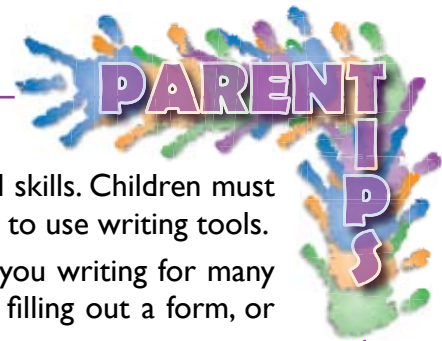
Pretzel Letters



- Invite your child to help you prepare this simple pretzel dough recipe. Mix together:

1½ cups warm water	4 cups of flour	1 egg
1 envelope of yeast	1 teaspoon of salt	seasonings

- After the dough has been mixed well, give your child enough to shape the first letter of her name.
- Work together to form the beginning letter for each family member's name.
- Carefully move the letters to a flat cookie sheet.
- Let your child help brush the dough letters with a beaten egg.
- Let her sprinkle the letters with coarse salt, cinnamon, or colored sugar.
- Bake in the oven at 425 degrees for 8-10 minutes.



Foundations for writing include both thinking and physical skills. Children must learn that words can be written down and have the ability to use writing tools.

You help your child become a writer when he observes you writing for many purposes, such as making a shopping list, writing a letter, filling out a form, or painting a sign.

At this age, children will have limited ability to use writing tools to form letters or shapes. Encourage your child to practice and experiment with “writing,” but do not expect her to write alphabet letters with the correct shape and direction.

Help your child move across paper from left to right. For example, he can arrange a row of stickers on paper from left to right. You can draw a little arrow at the top left side of the paper to remind him to start on the left.

Give your child small pieces of chalk or broken crayons to help learn the “tripod grip” for writing and drawing.

Give your child an inexpensive journal from a dollar store. Encourage her to scribble messages and ask if she would like you to write the words for her.

Due to individual differences, some children will enjoy working with writing tools and spend lots of time drawing and scribbling. Other children will prefer more active, large motor activities. Follow your child's lead and do not force him to write before he is ready.

Say to your child, “Tell me about your picture,” when she shows you marks, scribbles, or simple drawings. This invites your child to tell what the drawings mean to her. Asking the question, “What is it?” typically gets a one-word or limited response. When your child describes her drawing, ask if she would like you to write her words on the paper.

Three year olds begin to show a preference for using their right or left hand.



3

Cognitive Development

Standards:

- Foundations for math
- Foundations for science
- Foundations for social studies





3
Three
year olds

Foundations for math

Identify basic shapes as they:

- Point to shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles
- Say the names of shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles
- Use shape pieces to create an object

Sort and match objects as they:

- Group similar objects together
- Match a real object with a picture of the object
- Match pairs of identical pictures
- Match items that go together

Build beginning number concepts as they:

- Say number words from one to ten
- Use words to describe size
- Attempt to count objects while pointing to them
- Practice one-to-one correspondence by matching objects that go together such as one napkin for each child or one spoon for each bowl
- Determine whether one set of objects has “as many as” another
- Place the same small number of objects in a few containers

continued...

Build measurement concepts as they:

- Compare objects and people based on size
- Fill and pour with measuring cups and spoons
- Use words to describe time concepts such as now, later, before, after

Solve simple problems as they:

- Complete a simple puzzle
- Find a simple solution to a problem relating to whether there is “enough” of something
- Participate in simple graphing activities

Arrange objects in simple patterns as they:

- Copy a simple pattern made by an adult
- Finish a simple pattern begun by an adult

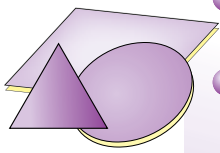
Think creatively using logic and mathematical thinking as they:

- Create objects using different shapes
- Use one object to represent another

Identify basic colors as they:

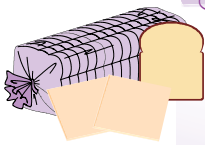
- Select an object of a particular color
- Identify an object by color

The Shape of Things



- Draw a large circle, square, and triangle on separate sheets of paper and cut them out. Name each shape as you show it to your child.
- Choosing one shape at a time, walk around the house with your child and look for items the same shape.
- When you are looking for circles, your child might find a dinner plate and a clock on the wall. Maybe the kitchen floor is made of square tiles and the windows look like squares, too! A napkin might look like a square and if you fold it on the diagonal, you can make a triangle! Do you have a puzzle with a triangle piece? What shape is a whole pizza? How about one slice?
- See if you can find shapes when you go outside, too!

Shapely Snacks



- You will need cookie cutters in the shape of a circle, a square, and a triangle, wheat bread, and slices of cheese for this activity.
- Help your child cut two of each shape from slices of wheat bread as you discuss the shapes with him.
- Then have him cut one of each shape from slices of cheese.
- Match a piece of cheese with the bread shapes to make shape sandwiches and enjoy the snack!
- This would be a fun and yummy activity for your child to do with a friend.
- Variation: Use wheat tortillas instead of wheat bread to make quesadillas. Heat them briefly in the oven or microwave to melt the cheese.



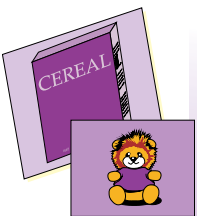
All Sorts of Things

- Gather items that go together such as plastic cups and saucers. Make sure you have the same number of each item.
- Have your child sort the objects into separate piles. Put all the cups in one place and all the saucers in another.
- Have your child match the items together by putting one cup on each saucer.
- Use language like “Do we have *as many* cups as saucers?”
- Repeat the activity with other sets of items such as combs and brushes or shoes and socks.



This is the Way We Sort the Clothes

- Laundry time is a great time to practice sorting.
- First, assist your child in separating her clean, dry clothes from the rest.
- Second, help her make separate piles for her shirts, pants, and socks.
- Sing “This is the way we sort the clothes, sort the clothes, sort the clothes. This is the way we sort the clothes, now that they are clean.”

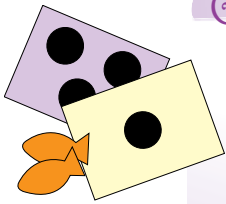


Does It Match?

- Collect colorful newspaper ads, coupons, and junk mail, then cut out pictures of things you have in the house. For example, cut out pictures of a box of cereal your child enjoys, a cell phone like yours, a ball like one your child has, and a stuffed animal like one of his.
- See if your child can find the real objects that match the pictures.



Going Fishing



- Using five index cards, trace around a quarter to make circles corresponding to the numbers one to five.
- On the first card, trace one circle, on the second, trace two, and so on.
- After placing the cards in a row, give your child a cup with 15 fish-shaped crackers and have her place one fish on each circle on every card.
- Show her how to point to each fish and count how many are on each card. She can eat the fish after counting them!
- This is a good introduction to one-to-one correspondence and counting.
- Use any type snack cracker or cereal for this activity—just be sure the circles you draw on the cards are larger than the snack piece!

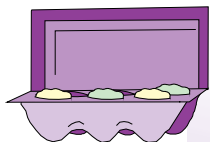
Developmental Tip

Most three year olds will be able to match the circles and fish, but will need help pointing and counting.

Special Needs Tip

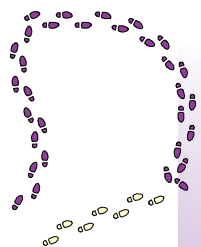
For a child with visual problems, use large black paper and larger crackers or make white cardboard “chips” for matching.

Break an Egg



- Break an egg carton in half to make a container with six sections.
- Give your child six cotton balls or pompoms and ask him to put one in each section.
- Ask him if there are “as many” cotton balls as spaces in the carton.
- Do the same with other small objects that will fit in the sections of the egg carton such as small plastic figures of people or animals, plastic cubes, and large buttons.
- This activity is a good introduction to the concept of “as many as.”

Long and Short



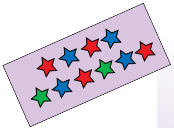
- Outside, find a long trail and a short trail to the same place.
- For example, for a family who lives in a downstairs apartment, one trail might go from the front door all around the parking lot to the mail boxes. The other would go directly from the front door to the mail boxes.
- Walk with your child along both trails and discuss which one is long and which is short.

Enough is Enough



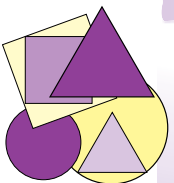
- Suggest that your child bring some of her stuffed animals to the table to have a party.
- First, have her put one in each chair to see if there are “enough” chairs for the animals.
- Next, give her enough paper or plastic plates for each one. Ask her if she has “enough.”
- Do the same with napkins and cups.
- Give her some grapes (cut in half), banana slices, or other healthy snack food to share with her animal friends! Check to see if there is “enough” for everyone.

Plenty of Patterns

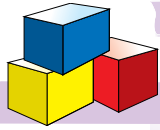


- Get stickers in two different colors or cut out circles or squares from two different colors of construction paper.
- Make a row of stickers on a piece of paper by alternating the colors—for example, red, blue, red, blue, red, blue, and so on.
- Have your child copy your pattern and make one just like it under yours.
- If your child does this with ease, add a third color and make a row of green, blue, red, green, blue, red, for him to copy.

Shape Creations

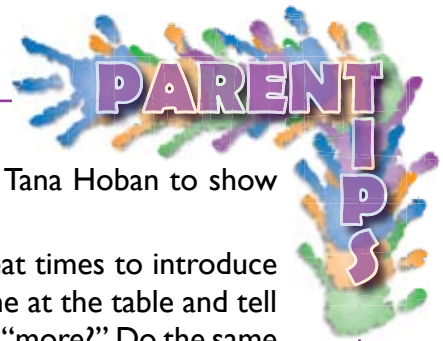


- Cut out squares, circles, triangles, and rectangles in different sizes and colors from construction paper.
- Invite your child to see what she can create by gluing shapes onto a large piece of paper.
- Ask your child to describe her creation. Write what she says on the paper. Ask her to tell you the name of each shape she used.



Red, Blue, and Yellow, Too!

- Get three shoeboxes and cover each with either red, blue or yellow construction paper.
- Collect some small items around your house that are red, blue, or yellow. Examples might be crayons, markers, an apple, a banana, wash cloths, socks, small toy cars or figures, drinking cups, or plastic silverware. Invite your child to put the objects in the box of the same color.
- Find other things around the house that are red, blue, and yellow, too!



Look at pictures in a book such as *Shapes, Shapes, Shapes* by Tana Hoban to show the children different objects with different shapes.

Similar to the **Enough is Enough** activity, mealtimes are great times to introduce early math concepts. Have your child give a napkin to everyone at the table and tell you whether there are “enough” for everyone or does he need “more?” Do the same with silverware and food items.

Let your child help load the dishwasher by sorting the silverware. Put all the forks together in one section, the small spoons in another, and the cooking spoons in another.

Introduce concepts about time by describing when things will happen. For example,

- “Grandpa is coming over **after** you take a nap.”
- “We will have lunch **after** we come in from playing outside.”
- “Remember to wash your hands **before** you sit down for lunch.”
- “Let’s read a story **before** you go to bed.”
- “The timer on the oven just rang to tell us it is time to take the cookies out of the oven **now**.”

Introduce measurement concepts by letting your child play with measuring cups and spoons in water and sand. Also, let your child help you cook as you follow a recipe.

Introduce counting throughout the day as you count the number of chairs at the kitchen table, tires on the car, red cars in the parking lot, and children in line for the slide at the park.

Give your child opportunities to experiment and create with different shaped objects such as blocks, construction paper, and cookie cutters.

Ask your child to help solve simple problems such as: “We only have one piece of paper and you and your sister both want to draw a picture. What can we do?”

Find books about shapes and counting such as *Circles and Squares Everywhere* by Max Grover, *Anno’s Counting Book* by Mitsumasa Anno, and *Ten Black Dots* by Donald Crews.



3
Three
year olds

Foundations for science

Actively explore the environment
as they:

- Use their senses to discover and examine specific characteristics of objects
- Experiment with different objects to see how they relate to one another
- Observe cause and effect
- Observe events in nature
- Begin to take care of the environment

Use language to describe things as they:

- Identify specific characteristics of objects
- Describe how different objects relate to one another
- Describe cause and effect relationships
- Describe events in nature
- Describe ways to take care of the environment

Use tools to experiment as they:

- Play with simple tools

Ask questions about the environment
as they:

- Wonder “why, where, and how” things happen
- Wonder about unfamiliar objects and events



What's That Smell?

- In three separate containers, put a small amount of three foods with strong, familiar smells such as tuna fish, an orange slice, and peanut butter.
- Invite your child to close his eyes and smell each one and see if he can tell what it is.
- Now have your child close his eyes again and taste each one. See if he can name each one again!



Wave in the Wind

- Cut the center out of a large plastic lid so that only the rim is left.
- Make streamers out of crepe paper, tissue paper, ribbon, or cloth and tie them to the rim.
- Invite your child to take it outside and watch the streamers flutter through the air as she holds the rim and runs around. Talk about how the air moves and makes the streamers wave in the wind.
- When you come back inside, ask her to describe what happened.



Sparkly Stars

- You will need a medium-sized plastic bottle, blue-colored dish soap, glitter, sequins, beads, and a funnel.
- Help your child use the funnel to pour the dish soap and a little bit of water into the bottle about two-thirds full. This is messy; do it near a sink and have paper towels ready.
- Add glitter, sequins, and beads and screw the cap on tightly. Use hot glue or masking tape to be sure the cap is secure.
- Enjoy the “stars” as they float through the bottle.
- Ask your child to describe what he sees and use words such as float, gentle, slow, smooth, and sparkly.



Crawling Creatures

- Go to a grassy area with your child and put a small piece of bread on the ground.
- Squat down and look for ants and other crawling creatures. Use a magnifying glass to see details.
- Ask your child to describe what she sees.

Special Needs Tip

Put grass and soil in a box and place it in a child's lap who is in a wheelchair. Give her a magnifying glass to hold or hold it for her to see the crawling creatures. If possible, let her get out of the wheelchair and sit on the grass.



Growing Things

- Read a book such as *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert or *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss that tells about how plants grow.
- Place a few lima beans on a wet paper towel and put them in a clear plastic jar with the lid closed. When the seeds sprout, plant them in soil in paper cups and put them near a window.
- Remind your child to check the plants each day and water them when they are dry.
- As the plants begin to grow, ask your child to describe what is happening.
- If you have space outside for a small garden, in the ground or a container, let your child help plant some vegetables, fruits, or flowers and help take care of them as they grow.

Baking Banana Bread



- Cooking activities offer children opportunities to learn about simple tools. Here is a tasty recipe that includes three simple machines—an egg beater, a potato masher, and a flour sifter. Ask your child to describe what he is doing as he uses the tools. Also discuss how the banana bread smells and tastes and notice how the batter changes in color and texture as it turns into bread.

“Go Bananas” Banana Bread

- 3 bananas
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups flour (1 cup can be whole wheat)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

Invite your child to mash the bananas in a mixing bowl using a potato masher. Use a crank style egg beater to beat the eggs in another bowl. (Or use an electric beater as your child watches.) Add the sugar, eggs, and oil to the bananas and mix together. Invite him to use the sifter to sift the flour, baking soda, and salt together and add it to the banana mixture. Pour the batter into a greased 5 x 9 inch loaf pan and bake 55–60 minutes in a preheated 350 degree oven.



Throughout the day, frequently ask your child to describe what she sees and hears.

Practice identifying different smells during mealtimes.

Give your child opportunities to explore concepts like sinking and floating by letting him experiment with different objects in the bathtub. Add turkey basters, funnels, and different size cups as well.

When your child comes across something too heavy to carry, help him put it in a wagon or other toy with wheels as an example of a “simple machine.”

Recycle paper and other products. Model ways to re-use items to avoid being wasteful. Talk with your child about keeping the earth clean and healthy.

Children are curious about living creatures. They enjoy watching “bugs,” snails, spiders, caterpillars, worms, butterflies, birds, and squirrels. Encourage questions and help find the answers.

If you have a pet, let your child help take care of it.

If you have houseplants, let your child help take care of them. *Be sure the plants are not harmful if eaten and do not cause rashes if touched.*



3
Three
year olds

Foundations for social studies

Recognize family roles and personal relationships as they:

- Extend relationships to include teachers or caregivers
- Talk about their own family members
- Communicate that family members have special jobs to help one another
- Use the titles of people in their family such as brother, mother, and stepdad

Recognize community relationships as they:

- Assist with classroom jobs
- Identify community workers by their uniforms, tools, and vehicles
- Discuss the jobs performed by particular community workers

Recognize individual preferences and differences as they:

- State personal preferences such as play activities, food choices, and favorite clothing
- Observe differences in the physical characteristics of people
- Notice cultural differences

Explore concepts of place and location as they:

- Become aware of spatial boundaries
- Explore characteristics of local land surfaces
- Identify familiar neighborhood sites
- Develop an understanding of near and far
- Follow a familiar route



I Call Ming Abuela

- Read a book about grandparents such as *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros.
- Remind your child of the name your family uses for grandmother. (Nana, Grammie, Grandma, Ma Dear, Mommom)
- Talk with your child about the special relationship between a grandmother and grandchild.
- Ask your child about the favorite things she does with a grandparent. (Substitute another relative, if more appropriate.)
- Make up a story with your child's name and a grandparent's name. Include in the story the favorite activities described by your child.
- Invite your child to create a picture to go along with the story to give to her grandparent.
- A variation of this activity is to read a favorite story book using the names of family members in place of the characters' names.

Language Tip

Abuela is available in both English and Spanish versions.



Emergency!

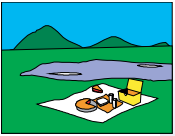
- When you and your child are riding in a car, point out the vehicles that help people when there is an emergency.
- Name each special vehicle such as an ambulance, a fire truck, a police car, or a tow truck.
- Tell your child, for example, "Here comes the ambulance to take the sick person to the hospital." "That tow truck will pick up the broken car." "The fire truck is carrying hoses and ladders to put out a fire." "That police car is making sure people drive safely."
- Encourage your child to use the names of the emergency vehicles as he plays with blocks and small cars and makes the sounds of sirens.
- Call ahead and make an appointment to visit a fire station with your child.



Friends of Every Color

- Collect magazine photos or book illustrations of children with different skin color, hair color, and physical (dis)abilities.
- Ask your child to tell you about the boys and girls in each picture.
- Show your child that you accept differences among people. Point out what is the same and what is different about your child and the pictures.
- Say, for example, “She likes ribbons in her hair like you do. Her skin is the color of peanut butter and yours is the color of vanilla pudding.” “That boy is playing basketball in his wheelchair. You like to play basketball too.”

A Walk in the Park

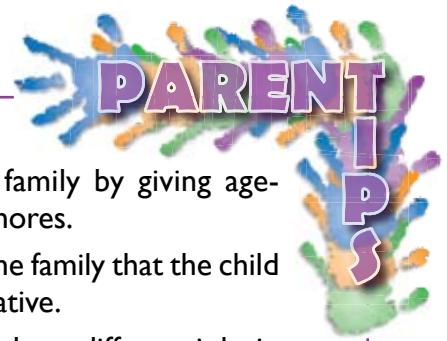


- At the park or playground, take some time with your child to explore the different types of land surfaces.
- Look for surfaces that have small rocks underfoot, perhaps in the parking lot.
- Find grassy spots that are easy to walk on and soft to sit in.
- Jump on the spongy pine bark under the climbing equipment.
- Walk up and down small hills.
- Talk with your child about the smooth, bumpy, and rocky places.
- Ask which place is good for running, for bike riding, or for having a picnic.

Are We There Yet?



- To help your child develop a sense of where things are in the neighborhood, play this game as you drive in your car to school each day.
- Each time you pass a store, gas station, restaurant, or some other places that your child knows, have him shout out the name, like a train conductor or bus driver, “Next stop is Quick Trip!”
- Invite your child to tell her teacher the way she comes to school: “We go by the Publix and the fire station on the way to school.”



Help your young child feel like a special member of the family by giving age-appropriate tasks to complete, such as helping with simple chores.

Provide your child's teacher with current information about the family that the child may talk about at school, such as a new baby or a visiting relative.

Think of everyday outings as field trips for your child to learn about different jobs in the community. Tell him about doctors and dentists, cooks and servers, construction workers, librarians, and many more.

As you travel throughout your community, point out types of transportation people use to go from place to place. Look for buses, cars, trains, planes, motorcycles, and boats.

Children begin early to develop a sense of their own identity, preferences, and things they are good at doing. Avoid comparing your child to brothers and sisters or friends. Encourage your child to see himself as a special person!

Parents can help their child be accepting of differences and reduce prejudices that can develop from fear and intolerance. Read books to your child including main characters from different racial and cultural groups and that present disabilities realistically. Your level of comfort with diversity will be communicated to your child directly.