



At Home Activities You Can Do With Your Four-Year-Old

When your four-year-old is at Growing Room we provide key experiences that focus on language development, physical development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and self-expression. It is important that this learning and development continues. We want to help you continue to nurture your child's development by providing you with activities that you can do at home with your child. These activities will help your child master concepts needed in order to grow and develop.

Routines provide a sense of certainty and security, which is particularly important in early childhood. Children thrive on having structure and regular routines throughout their day. They need predictability. Below is a very simple daily schedule that you can follow at home.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30am – Wake Up and Eat Breakfast
8:30am – Sing Songs and Storytime
8:45am – Music and Dancing
9:00am – Playtime
10:00am – Outdoor Play
11:00am – Activity Time (select from the activities below)
12:00pm – Lunch
12:30pm – Nap Time

LETTER DETECTIVE



Tell your child that he is going to pretend to be a detective and find the letter “Dd” in catalogs, newspapers, and/or magazines. Have him write the letter “Dd,” uppercase and lowercase, on a piece of paper. Once you've given him a target, arm him with a set of old magazines, catalogs, and newspapers to hunt through, and a magnifying glass if you've got one to add to the Sherlock Holmes experience. As he finds the letter “Dd,” he should highlight it. Once he is done highlighting the letter “Dd,” encourage him to count how many letters he found.

Want to add extra excitement? Use a timer and see how many versions of the letter he can find in two or three minutes. Have him tally the number when the timer goes off.

Once he has mastered finding the letter “Dd,” you can challenge him with some high frequency words, instead. Some possible words to start with include: “the”, “a”, “to”, “my”, “is”, “you”, and “and.”

THE ALPHABET CHANT

Say the alphabet chant to your child and encourage your child to follow along and pronounce the sounds of each letter.

I can say the alphabet from A to Z,
so, come on now and listen to me.

A says a-a-a, apple, at

B says b-b-b, baseball bat

C says c-c-c, cake and candy

D says d-d-d, dinosaurs are dandy!

E says e-e-e, Eskimo

F says f-f-f, fee, fi, foe

G says g-g-g, gorillas are grand

H says h-h-h, a helping hand

I says i-i-i, inches, ill

J says j-j-j, Jack and Jill

K says k-k-k, let's fly a kite

L says l-l-l, turn on the light

M says m-m-m, mittens, mice

N says n-n-n, nuts are nice

O says o-o-o, octopi

P says p-p-p, a piece of pie

Q says q-q-q, queens are quiet

R says r-r-r, running is a riot

S says s-s-s, a silly sock

T says t-t-t, tick, tock

U says u-u-u, under the umbrella

V says v-v-v, a valentine fella

W says w-w-w, wiggly my way

X says x-x-x, x-ray

Y says y-y-y, I like you

Z says z-z-z, let's go to the zoo!

The alphabet is really great!

From A to Z the letters rate!



SIMON SAYS

While the rules are simple, the options for movement are endless. Simon can have your child jumping like a kangaroo, standing as tall as a house, making funny faces, standing on one foot, or waving his hands high over his head. With this activity, your child will learn to follow directions, use gross motor skills, and be receptive to language.

RECYCLED BUILDING STEM ACTIVITY



One man's junk is another child's building supplies...I'm pretty sure that's how the saying goes. All you need are some recycled items that are appropriate for your child. Items such as: empty plastic bottles, toilet and/or paper towel rolls, empty boxes (cereal boxes, pasta boxes, etc.), egg cartons, milk jugs, etc. Recycled items like this invite so much creativity. You will be amazed as you watch your child tackle this activity. He may build a bridge, a road, a tunnel, or even some really tall towers. Through this activity your child will learn engineering and problem solving as he makes unique creations.

MAKE HOMEMADE PLAYDOUGH THEN MOLD LETTERS & NUMBERS USING THE PLAYDOUGH

Invite your child to help you measure out the ingredients needed to make homemade playdough. This is so simple to make – no cooking required! Just mix all the ingredients together and in 5 minutes you have perfect playdough!

Ingredients Needed:

1 1/2 cups of flour

1/2 cup of salt

2 tbs of cream of tartar

1 tbs of oil

Food coloring

1 cup of boiling water (keep this out of the reach of your child)

Directions

Have your child mix all ingredients, except the boiling water, together into a large mixing bowl. Add the boiling water and mix well. *Note: the food coloring will mix in better if added to the boiling water.* Stir well until the mixture is combined.

Then have your child mold the playdough into letters and numbers. Encourage him to identify the letters and numbers. Even have him mold his name, age, and some sight words. If he doesn't know how to spell any sight words, then write them on a piece of paper for him to see.



MEASURE, COUNT, AND RECORD



Most children love stopwatches and watching the seconds tick by gives them opportunities to practice counting. Measure distances and heights. Count jumping jacks, push-ups, or consecutive kicks of a soccer ball. Ask questions to your child such as: How far can you throw a ball? Take a guess, then throw the ball as far as you can and measure the distance. How many jumping jacks can you do in a minute? Try it! How many times can you jump rope or bounce a ball without missing? Count and see.

OUTDOOR SCAVENGER HUNT

Enjoy a scavenger hunt, outside, with your child. Give your child a bag or a basket to put his items in. Encourage him to find the following:

- Small Flowers
- Big Flowers
- Plants with no Flowers
- Something that Smells Good
- Something in his Favorite Color
- A Big Leaf
- A Leaf that has a Cool Shape
- Sticks



Once the scavenger hunt is over, talk with him about the items he found and ask him open-ended questions. Encourage him to count how many items he found, compare the items, etc.

OUTSIDE OBSTACLE COURSE

Mastering gross-motor skills, like running, jumping, kicking, and throwing, is an essential part of a child's development, so this backyard obstacle course is just the ticket. Your child can do a set of challenges: kick a ball toward a fence, then jump on and off a step, hop one-footed along a garden path, and, finally, throw a ball into a bucket. The ideas are endless when planning an obstacle course, you can add in so many other skills of your choice.

ICE WORLD

Your child will love the chance to explore with ice and water in this sensory ice tub. Use a bin filled with ice, water, and some animals, cars, or any other prop of your choice. Allow your child to explore with the items in the sensory bin. Ask him open ended questions as he explores. Questions such as: Is the ice hot or cold? How does the ice feel? Is the ice wet or dry? Etc. The amazing thing about sensory play is that it opens the door to so many wonderful learning opportunities such as imaginative play, language exploration, fine motor development for pre-writing skills, coordination, social interactions, and so much more.

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP YOUR FOUR-YEAR-OLD'S LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Pay attention when your child talks to you.
- Praise your child when she tells you something. Show that you understand her words.
- Pause after speaking. This gives your child a chance to respond.
- Keep helping your child learn new words. Say a new word, and tell him what it means, or use it in a way that helps him understand. For example, you can use the word "vehicle" instead of "car." You can say, "I think I will drive the vehicle to the store. I am too tired to walk."
- Talk about where things are, using words like "first," "middle," and "last," or "right" and "left." Talk about opposites like "up" and "down" or "on" and "off."
- Have your child guess what you describe. Say, "We use it to sweep the floor," and have her find the broom. Say, "It is cold, sweet, and good for dessert. I like strawberry" so she can guess "ice cream."
- Work on groups of items, or categories. Find the thing that does not belong in a group. For example, "A shoe does not go with an apple and an orange because you can't eat it. It is not round. It is not a fruit."
- Read, Read, Read to your child!

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP YOUR FOUR-YEAR-OLD'S MATH SKILLS

- Sing songs and read books that have numbers in them that repeat, rhyme and have rhythm. This will help your child understand patterns.
- Help your child to arrange her favorite toys in order from shortest to tallest.
- Go for a nature walk and let your child gather a mix of leaves, sticks, pebbles and other natural items. Your child can sort them into groups based on size, color, shape or what they do. Have your child count the items, too.
- Play simple board games, card games and puzzles with shapes and numbers, like snap, matching pairs or dominoes.
- Play outside games like "I spy," Hopscotch, Skittles and "What's the time Mr. Wolf?"
- Involve your child in cooking. Your child can help stir, pour, fill and mix. This helps your child become familiar with concepts like counting, measuring, adding and estimating.