

ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN (Alphabet Activities)

Use these fun preschool alphabet activities with your child. Teaching your pre-schooler their alphabet; need not be a pencil and paper activity.

1. Print out a large letter of the alphabet and a picture that it represents i.e. A for apple. Introduce these sounds to your toddler one at a time and stick these up somewhere visible and go through them when you can. Start by first teaching them their own names letters which gives more relevance.
2. Sand tray: Fill a cookie sheet with flour, rice or cornmeal. Using your printouts lay out one letter and get your pre-schooler to copy the shape and say the sound.
3. Painting: Stick a large piece of paper to a wall or on an easel. Draw the large letters of the alphabet in pencil on the paper for your pre-schooler to trace with a paint brush.
4. Ketchup bottles: Fill old cleaned squeezable Ketchup bottles with thickish paint. Get them to squeeze out the paint over traced letters. This is tough for some children who have poor fine motor skills.
5. Chalk: Use sidewalk chalk on your outdoor paving or chalk board to make large letters of the alphabet.
6. Jumping sheet: Take an old sheet and use a permanent marker to write out the alphabet in large clear lower case letters. Put the vowel sounds in a different colour (a-e-i-o-u). Lay it flat on the ground and get your child to jump from letter to letter as you call out the sound.
7. Stair hop: Ask your pre-schooler to jump up or down a flight of stairs (if you have one in your home) reciting the alphabet. You can also do this on a small flight where you have placed your alphabet printouts. You can choose selected letters for this activity.



(Maths Activities)

Pre-school Math Activities is not only about recognising numbers and learning to count. There are so many other skills that your pre-schooler needs to create a firm foundation for later studies

1. Scales with different objects: Purchase a small see-saw plastic scale. Set out some plastic containers filled with a variety of dry goods. Ideas are rice, beans, sand, marbles (be careful with younger toddler who put things in their mouths!). Let your toddler find quantities to balance the scale with differing items.
2. Puzzles: Puzzles are important for pattern recognition, spatial relationships, and logical thinking which are all necessary skills to read, do math, and develop problem-solving strategies. A selection of puzzles for your toddler's preschool math activities is essential and often these make wonderful quiet time activities too. Ages 3+ can start with any in the 12 - 24 piece range or larger if they have done puzzles form young. 4+ can do from 24 - 48 and on. Giant floor puzzles are also huge amounts of fun and they encourage crossing the midline as well as gross motor skills.
3. Matching: Matching games come in a variety of forms. You can take a few pictures from a magazine and stick them on card. Cut them in half and mix them up. Your pre-schooler can then match the halves. Many puzzles come in sets of opposites to match as well as missing parts. These are all good investments.
4. Sorting: From socks, to knives, from shoes to colours, everything can be sorted. Involve your pre-schooler in your laundry work and you have a host of preschool math activities to do.
5. Tangrams: Tangrams are polygon plastic shapes which are bought in a set often with outline shapes that your pre-schooler can piece together. These are wonderful as a quiet time activity.
6. Sequencing: Sequencing skills are important for reading and math. These can first be taught in the concrete by using picture cards. You can also teach sequencing in the abstract by talking about your timing for going out. For instance, if you are about to go out grocery shopping you may say to your pre-schooler, "First we are going to get socks and shoes on." "Then we need to get our shopping bags and mom's purse." "We will drive in the car to (ASDA) and do our shopping." You can also ask your child to sequence things, for instance at breakfast time: "Today we are having waffles. What do we need to do first...[second, third etc]"

7. Numbers: The easy way to teach them to recognise numbers is to print out a large number in your text program and insert a corresponding amount clipart picture. Stick these numbers (1 - 5 and later 1 - 10) somewhere that they can see them - perhaps at the breakfast area.
8. Counting: Counting skills can be taught as you ask your pre-schooler to help lay the table. If there are just three of you eating then ask for 3 knives and count them as your child lays them out. Follow with the spoons, forks, plates and glasses. You can count parked cars, flowers in a flower bed, toys on the bed, shoes in the cupboard as well. Later you may want to introduce counting cubes and a number card. You would then show your pre-schooler a number card and how many cubes that represents. Pre-school math activities should always be in the concrete i.e. things that your toddler can feel and manipulate, never in the abstract.
9. Time: Once your child knows their numbers up to 12 you can start to teach them to read the time on both; analogue and digital clock.



Science Activities

Easy preschool science activities to do with your older toddler at home

- **Science activities with water.**

1. Free play with water: On a warm day set out different size containers and as far as possible different shapes. Fill up a kiddie's pool with water and place a table close to the pool with the containers within arms reach. Make sure you have a jug or two for your toddler. Let them pour and measure and have fun with this water experiment.

2. Directed play with water: Set out small quantities of these items in different containers:

- Vegetable oil
- Dishwashing liquid
- Milk
- Vinegar
- flour
- Bath salts

Place a large bowl of water nearby and allow your pre-schooler to mix different quantities with water. Change the water when it gets too mucky. Ask questions like:

"Do you think water and flour will mix well?"

"How about water and oil?"

Do not leave your child alone with this activity - you will end up with a huge mess and if they choose to try some of their concoction - a sore tummy!

3. Make ice lollies! This is a favourite with children, they love making ice lollies! Purchase lolly moulds next time you see some and with your pre-schooler mix a strong pure fruit juice/water mixture and freeze. If you do this early in the morning you should have a lolly to enjoy after lunch with them. Talk about the properties of water and how it can change from solid to liquid to gas.

4. Floating and sinking: Collect different house hold objects that sink and some that float. Let your child play with them at bath times.

- **Science activities with air.**

1. **Feeling air:** Air is all around us all the time but pre-schoolers and toddlers won't really think about this fact. But they will think about it when the wind blows and they can feel it!

Collect empty squeezable bottles. Rinse them well and let them dry out.

Let your pre-schooler squeeze them onto their arm and feel the air being forced out of the bottle.

You can ask questions like:

"Is there anything in the bottle?"

"What is it that you are feeling on your arm?"

2. **Floating:** You will need some feathers, inflated balloons and two sheets of paper - one crumpled into a ball and the other flat.

Clear a space in a room for your pre-schooler as this can become quite a busy activity. From a height let your toddler drop each item and watch them float one at a time.

Thereafter play a guessing game about which will get to the ground first. (The ball of paper will as it has the least amount of contact with air and therefore not the same surface area for the air to hold up).

3. **Pollution:** Clean air is vital to all life. One way to see if air has lots of oxygen in it is to look for signs of lichen growing on tree limbs. You can also keep an eye out for bird and insect life. Explain to your pre-schooler that cars, factories and the creating of electricity all put bad substances into the air which affects health and nature.

Together think of ways that you can save electricity and thus reduce your part in pollution. Some ideas:

- Do not leave lights burning when you leave a room
- Do not stand with the refrigerator door open
- Switch off appliances when not in use at the plug if they have a pilot light
- Have a shallower bath or shorter shower
- Bake when you plan to have your oven on for dinner instead of heating up the whole oven for one item.

Science Activities to investigate light and dark, shadows and reflection.

1. **Make a cave:** Using your dining room table chairs and a dark blanket, make a cave for you and your toddler to crawl into. Take a torch or two in with you and lie in the cave with the torch on and look at the lights. Make them dance together, try and make shadow animals in the glow and just enjoy this time together.
2. **Transparency:** Collect different articles from around the home - vase, ball, oven glove, serviette, paper, wooden ornament etc. Let your pre-schooler shine a torch on one side and then see if they can see the light through the object. Let them shine the torch through their hand and see if they can see the light on the other side.
Talk about how light cannot shine through all objects. Objects that let light through are transparent. Object that block light are called opaque. Objects that let only some light through are called translucent.
3. **Shadows:** On a sunny day go and look for your shadow outside. Remind your pre-schooler that their bodies don't let light through and we are therefore opaque.
One night just before lights out find a nice wall to make shadow creatures.
4. **Mirrors:** Using a hand held safety mirror and a torch experiment with how you can make light "bounce" off ceilings.
5. **Colour slides:** Cut out some squares of colour cellophane paper. Let your pre-schooler hold them one by one in front of their torch and shine it against a white wall. Then double up on the colours and see how the torches beam changes.

