

Activities for children 3 to 4 years old



Development and Behavior Toolkit for Children Birth to 5

Activities to Support Healthy Early Child Development

For more information, please contact the Cincinnati LEND program at LENDTraining@cchmc.org



Language Activities:

3-year-old skills

Language activities focus on what children say and how they listen. Developing language skills helps a child understand directions, get their needs met, and make friends.

Language Activities to Practice:

- Point to or name body parts.
- Follow two different instructions: "[1] **Get your shoes and** [2] **throw this away.**"
- Pointing to or naming common objects, like cat, dog or ball.
- Use action words to describe activities: "**The dog is barking.**"
- Have your child practice using their first and last name.
- Teach opposites like "big and small."
- Use sentences with 3-4 words.
 - Model by talking about things you see using describing words like "the ball is red."
- Teach direction words using small toys like "**on top,**" "**under,**" or "**next to.**"
- Use pronouns like his, hers, theirs, or mine: "That is **mine**" or "that is **his** ball" or "I did it!" or "I want ____."



Fine Motor Activities:

3-year-old skills

Activities that use the small muscle of the hand help children to be independent in their daily activities. These activities help to get them ready for writing in school.

Fine motor activities to practice:

- Take off and put on a jacket.
- String beads. Start with bigger beads and move to smaller.
- Color pictures and copy simple shapes. Simple shapes are a vertical line, horizontal line, circle, and square.
- Tear paper for collages.
- Complete zippers, buttons, and snaps.
- Hold a crayon/marker with 3 fingers (tripod grasp). If this is hard, practice drawing or coloring with broken crayons.
- Use scissors. You can use Play-doh scissors or cut/snip a strip of paper.
- Complete simple puzzles with 3 to 6 pieces.



Gross Motor Activities:

3-year-old skills

Activities that use the big muscles of the body allow kids to participate in recess, gym class and at the playground.

Gross motor activities to practice:

- Kick a ball.
- Catch a ball with two hands.
- Throw a ball overhand.
- Climb a ladder on the playground.
- Jump up/down and forward/backward with both feet.
- Balance on one leg.
- Walk upstairs, alternating feet.
- Jump over pool noodles or other objects.



Problem Solving Activities:

3- year-old skills

Problem Solving activities help a child think, learn, and become more independent.

Problem Solving Activities to Practice:

- Answer simple questions about what things do. Examples are "What do you hear with?," "Show me what you use to drink?"
- Practice copying. Examples are copying a design with blocks, drawing a circle and a plus sign.
- Complete simple puzzles, like shapes and animals.
- Sort objects or pictures. Examples are socks, spoons, or animal pictures.
- Practice sorting and naming colors and shapes.
- Practice answering, "What is your last name" or "Are you a boy or girl?"
- Draw simple pictures. For example, draw the head of a person and ask your child to add 2 body parts.
- Count numbers. Examples are things like "give me one block" or "hold up one finger."
- Practice imaginary play skills.

