

COUNTDOWN TO
Kindergarten

**A CALENDAR
OF FAMILY
ACTIVITIES**

THIS CALENDAR BELONGS TO:



United Way of Lincoln
and Lancaster County

WELCOME!

One of the most exciting days for you and your child is the first day of kindergarten. This Countdown to Kindergarten Calendar of activities is made available through United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County. It is adapted from similar calendars produced by Success by 6 United Way of Cumberland and Carlisle County (PA), the Arkansas Department of Human Services and United Way of Lancaster County (PA).

The Countdown to Kindergarten Calendar is filled with a year's worth of activities and ideas which -

- Focus on spending special time with your child
- Give your child a foundation for experiences he or she will have in kindergarten
- Activities you and your child can do together at home and in Lincoln
- Use materials found in your home or that cost little or no money
- Are based on the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3-5

How to Use the Countdown to Kindergarten Calendar

The Countdown to Kindergarten Calendar runs from September through August. Each month includes activities based around the eight domains of development and learning from the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3-5: Creative Arts, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Health and Physical Development, Language and Literacy Development, Mathematics, Science and Nature. Also included are activities based around creative play, music and movement.

This calendar is for 4 year olds preparing to enter kindergarten. Each month also includes additional ideas, a list of children's books and web sites you can visit. Add your own creative ideas to those presented in the calendar.

One of the first things you should do is go through and date the calendar! The dates were intentionally left off so that you and your child can do this activity together, and practice numbers at the same time!

Create a Keepsake Diary

A "Memories of Our Year" section follows the calendar pages. Use this space to make notes about special activities you and your child do together each month. Make this memories section of the calendar a keepsake to be shared with your child.

The "Books We Have Read" pages allow parents to fill in the titles of books read together with their child over the year.

Kindergarten Registration Information

General information needed to register your child for kindergarten can be found on the March page of the calendar. A directory of elementary schools in Lincoln and Lancaster County can be found towards the end of the calendar.

**"HAVE A WONDERFUL YEAR TOGETHER
AS YOU AND YOUR CHILD GET READY FOR THE BIG DAY
- GOING TO KINDERGARTEN!"**



Parenting Tips to Help Your Child Succeed

Being a good parent is one of the most difficult and rewarding jobs you will ever have.
Every parent wants their child to succeed in school and in life.

Act as a positive role model by demonstrating a positive and healthy lifestyle. Be sure your lifestyle choices do not put your child at risk for physical or emotional harm.

Provide nutritious food, appropriate clothing and a safe and healthy home. Use an age/size appropriate car safety seat. Provide supervision according to your child's age and needs. Be constantly aware of the activity and whereabouts of your child.

Make sure your child gets regular medical and dental care. Know basic first aid techniques and treatments.

Understand your child's ages and stages. Interact with your child in a developmentally appropriate manner. Your child should be able to wait to get your attention and help to pick up toys.

Show affection to your child by providing hugs and gentle touches. Comfort your child when he or she is upset. Interact with your child through conversation, eye contact and facial expressions. Use positive words and avoid "put downs." Children respond best to praise and positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors.

You are your child's first teacher – what you do impacts your child's love of reading. Help your child get the most benefit from their school experiences to assure they reach their full potential. Be aware of community resources if you are having difficulties dealing with your child in any way.

Prepare your child for school success by providing appropriate books and toys.

Read to your child every day. Take your child to your local library.

Interact with your child in a variety of play and reading activities.

"Get down" to your child's level during play activities.

Be understanding and sensitive to your child's wishes and needs.

Spend time talking with your child.

If you need assistance,
and don't know where to turn, call 2-1-1
or visit www.ne211.org



LEARN, AND USE, A VARIETY OF BEHAVIOR TECHNIQUES THAT ARE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR CHILD.

- Plan Ahead – Prevention and preparation are necessary to keep your child safe.
- Use Positive Reinforcement – Catch your child being good and offer praise.
- Distract your child from inappropriate behavior or activity by offering a diversion or substitute activity, or a change in the environment.
- Provide appropriate activities and choices for your child.
- Behave in a manner that sets a good model for your child.
- Set appropriate limits for your child and maintain them, establish house rules which include routines and framework for daily living.
- Discipline your child with care and appropriate actions. Use “Time Outs” or Counting Out and Counting Down (Counting Out - You have to the count of three to do...; Counting down – In ten minutes it will be time for your bath.)
- Set natural and logical consequences for misbehavior, such as taking away privileges.
- Be consistent with your child.

Take time for yourself and take care of yourself.

It is important for you to enjoy activities alone or with other appropriate adults.

JULY

Help your child know personal information.

Create with your child an “All About Me and My Family” book.

- Help your child make a book by stapling or tying it together with yarn using blank sheets of paper.
- Help your child create the cover of the book. Use a photo of your child or a picture he or she draws for the cover page.
- Let your child decide on the title of the book and write that on the cover.
- Add your child’s name to the cover as the author of the book. Write or have your child write his or her own name on the cover of the book. Include both the first and last name.

Involve your child in adding personal information to the book.

Begin writing a sentence and ask your child to complete it. Add to the sentence what your child says; helping as needed, with items such as height and weight. The information should be correct and complete. Here are some examples of what to include:

- My name is _____ (include child’s first and last name).
- Sometimes my family calls me _____ (nickname).
- I am a _____ (girl or boy).
- I was born on _____ and I am _____ years old.
- My eyes are _____ (color) and my hair is _____ (color).
- I am _____ inches tall and weigh _____ pounds.

Help your child add a family section to the book.

Add family photos and help your child decide what to write about each family member in the photo. Here are some examples:

- This is my mother. Her name is _____ (first and last name). She makes good spaghetti.
- This is my grandfather. He lives with us. His name is _____.

Include all of the family members living in your home as well as other family members your child would like to add. Ask your child to draw all of the members of his or her family on one page of the family section. Write their names under each figure as your child tells you who each one is.

Create with your child a section of the book about your family’s favorite things.

- Go through photos with your child of family events such as reunions, outings, and trips. Select some that are favorites. Add these to the book. With each photo write what your child has to say about the event.
- Make “Family Favorites” lists. Some examples to include: favorite songs, movies, TV shows, places to visit, restaurants, foods, sports.
- Let your child use washable markers or crayons to draw pictures of his or her favorite things. Write on the picture what your child tells you about the drawing.



Additional Ideas

Let your child share the “All About Me and My Family” book and the family tree with other family members and with neighbors. Suggest that he or she “read” what is written in the book and on the family tree. Your child may not be able to actually read all of the words. With your help he or she can recall what is written.

JULY

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				Find objects around the house that your child can sort by color.		If your child is riding a bike or scooter, make sure they are wearing a helmet.
	While grocery shopping, ask your child which fruits to buy.		Ask your child to think about their day and share their thoughts with you.		Name four things that rhyme with "cat".	
Have the child find things in their environment that are taller than them.		Pick a bunch of dandelions and put half in a cup with water.		Lie down on your back in the grass and watch the clouds move. What shapes do you see?		Listen to music and dance together. Have one person pause the music and everyone FREEZE!
	Let your child help you set the table.		While talking a walk... ask your child questions about what they see.		Read a book about summer.	
Organize a family race. See who is the fastest!		Go to Pioneers Park Nature Center and look at the different plants and animals.		Go outside after a rain – what does it smell like and where did the water go?		Attend a Municipal Band Concert and listen for how many different musical instruments you can hear.

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"Are You My Mother?" by P.D. Eastman
 "Happy Birthday Moon" by Frank Asch
 "Ask Mr. Bear" by Marjorie Flack

"The Relatives Came" by Cynthia Rylant
 "Families are Different" by Nina Pellegrini
 "Bigmama's" by Donald Crews



United Way of Lincoln
and Lancaster County

AUGUST

Make “going to kindergarten” plans with your child.

Support your child's independence.

Make an “I Did It Myself” poster for your refrigerator or for your child's room. Celebrate all of the things that your child has learned to do on his or her own by writing those things on the chart. Here are some examples:

- Put on my shoes
- Zip my backpack
- Brush my teeth
- Ride my tricycle
- Button my shirt

Practice going to kindergarten.

- Begin to gather school supplies for your child.
- Play school with your child. Take turns being the teacher. Ride in the bus or car, read stories, sing songs, draw pictures, play outdoors, eat lunch, and play a game.
- Eat a meal on trays with your child. Encourage your child to carry his or her own tray to the table and return the tray to the kitchen after the meal. Eat a meal from lunch boxes and bags. Show your child what can be thrown away after eating and what should be brought back home.
- Pretend to take your child to school. With your child, think of lots of ways to say good-bye. Decide how you will say good-bye to each other on the first day of kindergarten.

Visit your child's school and preview school activities.

Attend your school's family open house or “meet the teacher day.”

Here are some things to do when you visit:

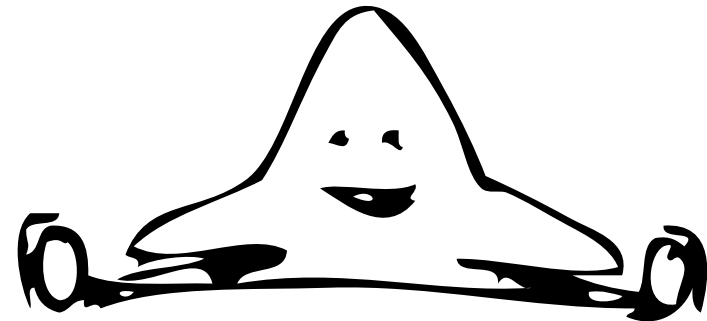
- Explore the classroom. Look at the books and materials, find out where the children store backpacks and hang coats.
- Find out about the daily schedule for your child's class. For example, when do they have story time, lunch, outdoor play and rest time?
- Locate the restrooms and water fountains.
- Look for the cafeteria, the playground, the principal's office, the nurse's office, media center and other special features of your school.

Maintain predictable family routines.

Establish a regular bedtime for your child. We are healthier when we go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day. Remind your child to brush his/her teeth before going to bed. Be prepared for your morning “before school” time. Getting everyone up and off to school can be hectic.

Planning can eliminate some of those morning hassles.

- Designate a place to collect things that need to go to school.
- Before bedtime, talk with your child about what clothes he or she will wear tomorrow.
- Be sure everything is clean and ready.
- Have pleasant conversations with your child on the way to school or as you wait for the bus.



Additional Ideas

Create a school prop box. Gather items that can be used to play school and put them in a special decorated box - such as a shoebox or clean laundry detergent box. Items for your school prop box might include paper, pencils, crayons, books, watercolor paints, glue, scissors, a ball, a lunch bag, or index cards with the names of family members and friends written on them. Use the school prop box when you and your child play school together.

AUGUST

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Find a container with low sides. Fill it with rice, coffee grounds, sand or water.		Pretend it is the first day of school. Practice ways to say goodbye.		Take your dress up materials outside and play.		Talk to your child about the proper way to care for books – keeping them dry and away from pets.
	Make sure that your child has a consistent sleep schedule. It is important for kindergarteners to be well-rested.		Collect bottles of different heights and put them in order from shortest to tallest.		Have your child help take care of plants at home.	
Talk about what happens to plants if they don't get enough water.		Put an ice cube on the cement and count how long it takes for the ice cube to melt.		Find out if your new kindergarten has a mascot and/or song.		Play school with your child. Take turns being the teacher.
	Read a book about going to kindergarten.		Talk about bugs your child is interested in. See if you can learn more at the library.		Sing Old Mac Donald Had A Farm.	
Have your child pick out their clothes for school		Make an after school snack of cheese and apples. Enjoy together.		Have your child help feed and water your pets.		Make breakfast in bed for a family member.

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn
"Franklin Goes to School" by Paulette Bourgeois
"Will I Have a Friend?" by Miriam Cohen

"Timothy Goes to School" by Rosemary Wells
"Off to School, Baby Duck" by Amy Hest



SEPTEMBER

GET A PUBLIC LIBRARY CARD FOR YOUR CHILD. READ WITH YOUR CHILD EACH DAY.

Create a special reading area for your child.

- Store your child's books in a special place that's easy to reach such as a basket, drawer or on a low shelf.
- Place a small rug or pillow in the area to create a cozy and comfortable place for reading.
- Join your child and read together in this special place.
- Talk to your child about how to care for books, including how to return books to their storage place.

Give your child a variety of books for reading.

- Visit your local library with your child.
- Let your child look at the picture books in the children's section of the library and select several books to take home.
- Look for other places to find books:
 - Garage or yard sales - Book clubs - Friends or relatives
 - Public library sales - Thrift shops

Set aside a special time each day to read with your child.

- Read with your child in a special place such as a comfortable chair away from distractions.
- Hold your child close to you when you read to help develop a positive attitude toward reading.
- Read your child's favorite books over and over.

Let your child participate in book reading.

- While reading a book with your child, talk about the illustrations and information on the cover of the book, for example: the title, author (person who wrote the story) and illustrator (person who drew the pictures).
- Ask your child to look at the illustrations on the cover of the book and predict what he or she thinks the book is about.
- Show your child how to start at the beginning of the book and how to turn the pages.
- Ask your child to retell the story in his or her own words.



Additional Ideas

Bring along a book bag containing some of your child's favorite books when you leave home. Your child can read in the car, on the bus, at the laundromat or at the doctor's office. You can read with your child as you wait together.



Website: www.lincolnlibraries.org



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SEPTEMBER

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Make a Pots and Pans Band with your child using kitchen cookware and utensils. Take turns being the conductor.		Talk about how you feel when someone smiles at you.		Play games that build on and extend children's curiosity, such as "I Spy"
	Point out words in your everyday world such as road signs, grocery store labels and cereal boxes.		Serve a fruit and vegetable at each meal.		Make a necklace with cereal, beads or noodles and create a pattern.	
Put toys in the bathtub with your child. Talk about which toys sink and which float.		Register for The Lincoln Safari – free activities to encourage children and their families to play outside – www.lincolnsafari.org .		Make up a song as you go for a walk. Take turns singing the next line like an add-on story.		Collect leaves from the ground and compare them.
	Model emotions with your voice and have your child guess your feelings from your voice.		Play games where your child must listen carefully and follow more than one direction, such as "Simon says, stand on one foot and touch your nose".		Listen to songs in the car, at bedtime or during play time.	
When dressing your child, talk about the patterns on their clothing.		Gather leaves from outside and press them into large books or rub them with crayons to make leaf pictures. Sort and compare the leaves.		Go outside in the evening and listen to the animals and insects singing.		Role model appropriate table conversation and involve your child.

BOOKS FOR
FOUR YEAR OLDS

"The Eentsy, Weentsy Spider" "Clifford's First School Day" "If you Take a Mouse to School" "Good Night Moon" "Corduroy" "Abiyoyo" "Nora's Room"



United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County

OCTOBER

Let your child use school tools such as pencils, markers, crayons and scissors.

Gather and organize materials for drawing, writing and cutting.

- Help your child select a storage container for drawing and writing materials. Help decorate and label it - for example, "Alyson's Drawing and Writing Box."
- Decide on some simple rules for your child for using the drawing and writing materials - for example, "Markers may be used at the kitchen table or outdoors" or "Scissors are for cutting paper."

Encourage your child to explore with drawing materials.

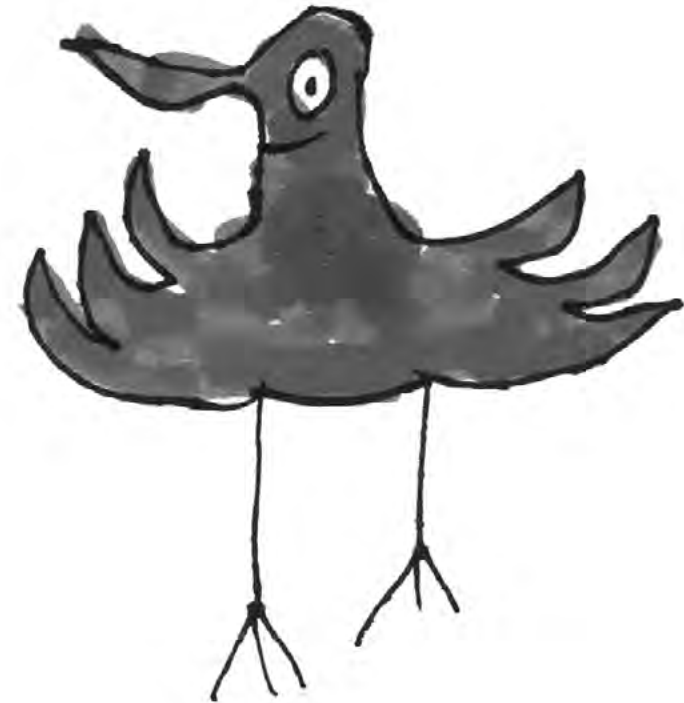
- Suggest that your child draw pictures in different places:
 - in the kitchen while you prepare dinner
 - in the park while you enjoy the bright fall days
- Draw pictures with your child about family events and experiences.
- Talk with your child about the pictures and decide on a place to display your favorites.
- Choose a picture to attach to the "Memories" page at the back of this calendar.

Let your child see that written words are a part of daily life.

- Make a grocery shopping list together.
- Clearly label your child's belongings with his or her name.

Support your child as he or she practices using scissors.

- Designate appropriate places for your child to use scissors and discuss safety rules.
- Be sure that your child knows how to hold the scissors, how to open and close the blades, and how to hold the paper.
- Encourage your child to snip play dough snakes and soda straws into little pieces.
- Provide strips of construction paper and cards from junk mail for your child to snip.



You can be an artist!

Additional Ideas

Allow your child to draw and write with chalk on the sidewalk. Draw in dirt or sand with a stick. Use small brushes to draw with water on the sidewalk.

Make large play dough pancakes. Encourage your child to write or draw on the pancakes with pencils or with craft sticks.

Website: <http://www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/>

OCTOBER

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				Make shakers out of recycled containers. Add macaroni noodles and rice for noise.		Give your child a specific compliment about what they are doing well.
	Go to the park and give your child an opportunity to interact with their peers.		Show your child how to write his or her name.		Count the number of steps to the car in the morning.	
Go on a walk and talk about the leaves changing colors.		Watch for and listen to the geese and other birds as they fly south for the winter.		Turn off the radio in your car and sing your own songs together.		Use clay or play dough to make people. Discuss ways people are different and yet the same.
	Give your child important tasks that involve following multiple directions.		Make sure that your child sees you enjoy reading books, magazines and newspapers.		Sort groceries before putting them away.	
While at the library, check out a book about the life cycle of animals (butterfly, frog) and read it with your child.		Observe growth under rocks, logs and beneath the ground. What lives under there?		Find a short stick and use it as a "sound detector." Tap on different things you see outside. How many sounds can you find?		Have your child practice buttoning and zipping their clothes.

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"A Letter to Amy" by Ezra Jack Keats
 "Animalia" by Graeme Base
 "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type" by Doreen Cronin

"My Name is Alice" by Jane Bayer
 "My Hands" by Alikei
 "Sound Box Series" by Jane Belk Moncure



United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County

NOVEMBER

Give your child daily opportunities to use large muscles.

Collect safe toys and equipment to help your child develop large muscles.

- Use empty plastic water bottles as bowling pins.
- Make bean bags by partially filling a sock with beans and tying a knot in the sock.
- Supply a tricycle to steer and pedal, balls for throwing, catching and bouncing (9 to 12 inch rubber balls).

Let your child spend time outdoors to have space and freedom to use large muscles.

- Have a safe outdoor place for your child to run and play.
- Let your child pedal a tricycle outdoors.
- Hang a basketball hoop low enough so your child can successfully “make a basket.”

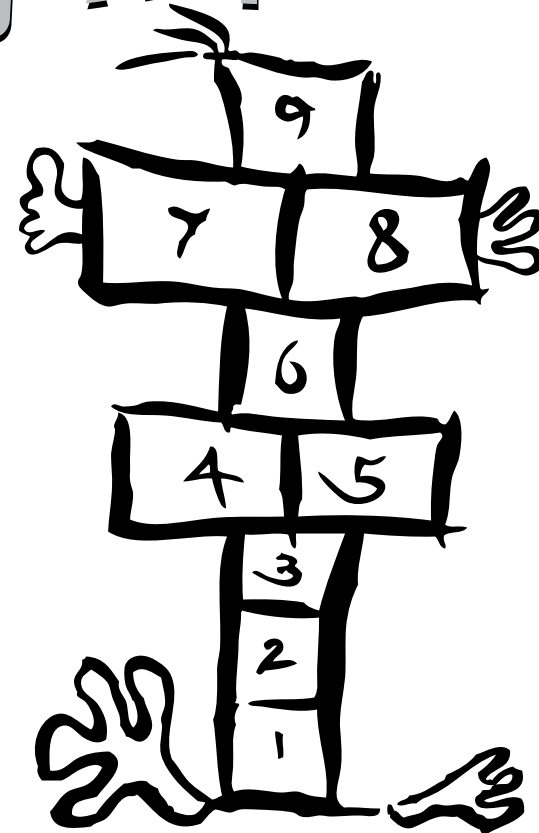
Join your child in active play.

- Play toss and catch with your child using 9 to 12 inch rubber balls.
- Set up an obstacle course and encourage your child to steer a tricycle through it.
- Draw a hopscotch pattern on your patio or driveway. Show your child how to hop the pattern. Let your child hop according to his or her ability.
- Recall singing games from your childhood such as the “Hokey Pokey” and involve your child and other family members in playing the game.

Give your child opportunities to use large muscles indoors.

- Invite your child to toss bean bags or bean socks into a basket, or a masking tape circle on the floor.
- Put rolled up socks or bean socks in a small basket. Let your child try balancing the basket on his or her head while walking.
- Create an obstacle course in a room with space for moving. Include a taped line to walk on, a table to crawl under, chairs to crawl through, a book to jump over and a large box to crawl through.
- Suggest that your child move like different animals: hop like a rabbit, slither like a snake, crawl like a bug and fly like a bird.

Play Hopscotch



Additional Ideas

Play a CD and invite your child to move to the music. Try different ones to find your child's favorite. Join your child in moving to the music. Check with a music store to see if they carry children's tapes or CDs that are intended to encourage children to move and use their large muscles.

Website: <http://pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/>

NOVEMBER

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Have your child decorate a coffee filter with washable markers. Put water in a spray bottle and spray the decorated filter.		Take a walk in the Haymarket and look at the storefronts.		Let your child pick their clothing between two options.		Talk to your child about words that rhyme.
	Talk about tall vs. short in relation to people important in the child's life.		Play "I Spy" with colors.		Take a clipboard, paper and pencil on a walk and count the tallest and shortest trees. Draw them on your paper.	
Play a game of follow the leader.		Draw a picture of your family and describe each family member.		Show enthusiasm when your child is curious about a topic.		Visit the library at the same time every week so that it becomes a habit.
	Go on a shape hunt throughout your house. Look for circles, squares and triangles.		Let your child use utensils at meal time.		Write out a schedule of what you do each day and night. You can even include the times you do certain things.	
Go for a walk on a sunny day and look for your shadow – how does the shadow change from morning to afternoon?		Visit a local music store and look at all the instruments for sale. Maybe you will hear someone playing!		Read some nursery rhymes together and practice keeping a steady beat.		

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"From Head to Toe" by Eric Carle
"Quick as a Cricket" by Audrey Wood
"Shake My Sillies Out" by Raffi

"Amazing Grace" by Mary Hoffman
"Hi, Clouds" by Carole Greene
"Down Comes the Rain" by Franklyn Branley



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DECEMBER

Help your child become aware of letters and words at home and in the community.

Help your child recognize his or her own first name in print.

- Make a name card for each member of your family. Use an upper case letter to write the first letter of the name and lower case letters for the remaining letters - for example “Matthew.”
- Help your child place the cards at the right spot at the table.
- Invite your child to watch you write his or her name as you label personal belongings such as coat, sweater and backpack.

Help your child recognize the letters in his or her first name.

- Place the alphabet letter magnets that are found in your child’s name on the refrigerator or a cookie sheet for your child to play with.
- Encourage your child to arrange the letters in the correct order using his or her name card as a guide.
- Place the alphabet letter magnets in a sack or bag. Encourage your child to pull out the letters one at a time and name them.

Encourage your child to “read” familiar signs.

- Give your child printed materials such as telephone books, magazines, grocery store ads and menus from favorite restaurants to play with.
- Invite your child to “read” road signs and business signs with you as you drive.

Give your child opportunities to recognize and name letters of the alphabet.

- Encourage your child to find letters in his or her own name in signs that you see.
- Read alphabet books with your child and allow him or her to name the letters he or she recognizes.
- Read a book and encourage your child to go back and look for a certain letter of the alphabet, such as the “b’s” found in the story.
- Place the alphabet letter magnets in order. Have your child touch each letter as you slowly sing the alphabet song.



Additional Ideas

Make a set of cards with the names of family members. Use upper and lower case letters as you did when writing your child’s name. Mix up the cards and encourage your child to find the name of each family member. These cards can also be used as place cards at the dining table.

Website: <http://www.parentingcounts.org>

DECEMBER

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Make an easel for your child using a pizza box. Turn the pizza box inside out and set it up on a table like a tent.		Listen to music of your child's choice. Sing along.		Clean out your closet and give old clothes to your child for dramatic play.
	Encourage your child to sing their ABC's twice each time they wash their hands.		Listen carefully when your child tells you a story.		While reading a book, ask your child what happens first, next and last.	
Invite your child to help you prepare a meal or snack.		Use dark fabric or paper to capture a snowflake.		Encourage your child to express their feelings in words, such as: "I don't like it when..."		Help your child write a letter to someone special and describe a special event that has occurred.
	Create word cards and pair them with pictures of everyday items or activities.		Look through old magazines/newspapers and cut out circles and squares. Create a shape collage.		Collect pine cones, rocks, twigs and stones and sort them by size, shape, patterns or color.	
Go out in the snow and mimic floating like a snowflake.		Decorate a water bottle and encourage your child to drink from it everyday.		Try ice skating indoors using paper plates as your skates! Add some music to make it even more fun!		Lay out some old newspaper or wrapping paper and encourage your child to color while on their hands and knees.

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"My Name is Alice" by Jane Bayer
 "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" by Bill Martin, Jr.
 "Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book" by Mauriel Feelings

"I Read Signs" by Tana Hoban
 "Eating the Alphabet" by Lois Ehlert



JANUARY

Introduce your child to numbers and counting.

Collect a variety of materials your child may use for counting and for learning about numbers.

Items found around the house

- bottle caps from milk jugs
- catalogs and magazines with pictures

Purchased items

- pegs and peg boards
- colored counting cubes

Use number words and point out written numerals as you and your child do things together.

In the kitchen

- “On this package of rice it says to add 2 cups of water.”
- “I need you to put 3 forks and 3 plates on the table, please.”

Grocery shopping

- “That sign says bananas are 49¢ a pound.”
- “Please pick out 4 apples and put them in this bag.”

At play

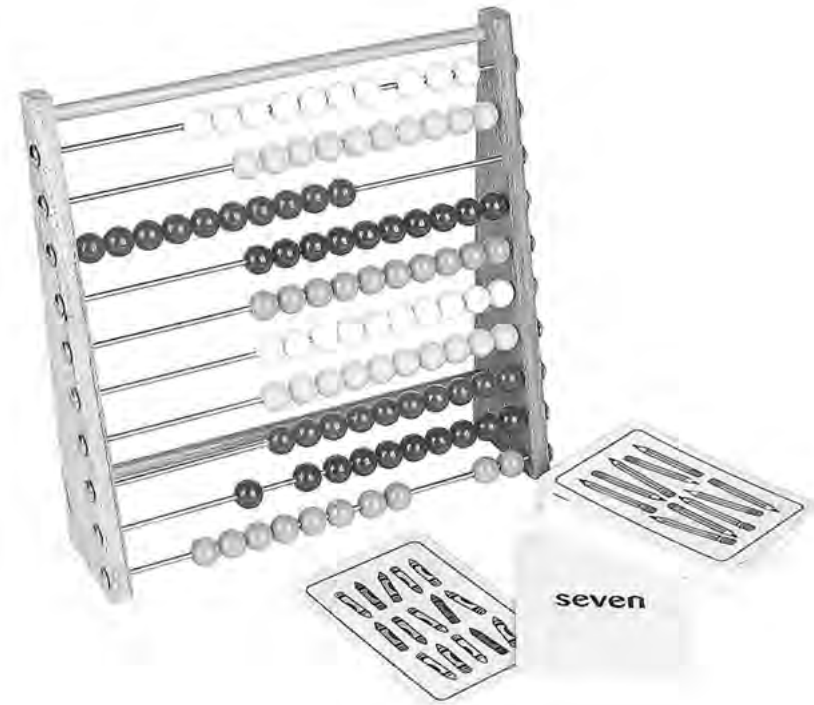
- “See how many scoops of sand it takes to fill that margarine tub.”
- “Can you put 4 counting bears in a row?”

Involve your child in number and counting activities.

- Play “Simon says.” Say to your child “Simon says clap your hands 5 times.” “Simon says take 3 steps forward.” Let your child have a turn being Simon.
- Make number cards. Write on index cards the numerals 1,2,3,4,5, one numeral per card. Ask your child to place the correct number of pennies on each card.

Read, tell stories, sing songs and say nursery rhymes about numbers and counting with your child.

- Read or tell stories to your child such as The Three Bears.
- Say nursery rhymes such as “One, Two, Buckle My Shoes” and “Baa Baa Black Sheep” with your child.
- Sing songs you remember such as “This Old Man.”



Additional Ideas

Ask your child to look for the numbers in your home. Your child may see numbers on the telephone, in the telephone directory, on a clock, on the mailbox or house, on the keyboard of your computer, and in sale newspapers.

Play “I Spy Numbers” as you and your child go places by car or take a walk in your neighborhood. Your child may see numbers on auto license plates, mailboxes, house numbers, and signs with gasoline prices.

Website: <http://www.uptoten.com/kids/uptoten-home.html>

JANUARY

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					Visit an art gallery together.	
Let your child select the lunch menu from two choices.		Look at pictures with your child. Ask them to describe what they see.		To work on your child's balance, put a piece of tape on the ground and have them walk on it.		Make sure your childcare provider has lots of books for your child. Use the words 'before' and 'after' today.
	Look for objects that are red this week.		Let your child dress themselves to head outside. Look for winter animal tracks!		Make an instrument or band using recycled food containers. Have a family concert!	
Decorate a t-shirt together using paint or markers.		Have your child hold a cup steady as you pour a glass of juice. Thank them for being a good helper.		It's okay to let your children make mistakes. Trial and error promotes problem solving skills.		Label things for your child as you go throughout the day.
	Have your child help you sort the laundry before it is washed.		Talk about what parts of plants you are eating at mealtime – roots, stems, leaves, flowers or seeds.		Too cold to go outside? Grab a paper and pencil and draw signs of nature that you see from your window.	

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"Toot and Puddle: Puddle's ABC" by Holly Hobbie
"This Old Man" by Pam Adams
"Fish Eyes – A Book You Can Count On" by Lois Ehler
"Little Bear Goes to Kindergarten" by Jutta Langreuter

"Mouse Count" by Ellen Stohl Walsh
"Count" by Denise Fleming
"Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!" by Nancy Carlson



FEBRUARY

Encourage your child to listen to and use language to express ideas.

Take time each day to listen to and talk with your child.

- While traveling together.
- Turn off the radio or CD player in your car as you and your child are going places together.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about where you are going and what might happen when you get there.
- Invite your child to tell you something he or she enjoyed doing that day.
- At home together.
- Turn off the TV and spend a few minutes talking with your child about things which interest him or her.
- Talk with your child about some things each of you did that day.

Involve your child in activities which require listening and following directions.

Give your child directions that involve two steps. Here are some examples:

- Take off your shoes and put them in the closet.
- Pick up your plate and put it in the sink.
- Hop to the door and open it.
- Give your child an object such as a small ball or a bean bag.

Ask your child to do certain things with the object. Here are some examples:

- Put the ball under your chin.
- Put the ball up in the air and then down on the floor.

Let your child tell you some things to do with the ball. Encourage him or her to use words such as under, over, behind, in front of, beside, on top of, etc.

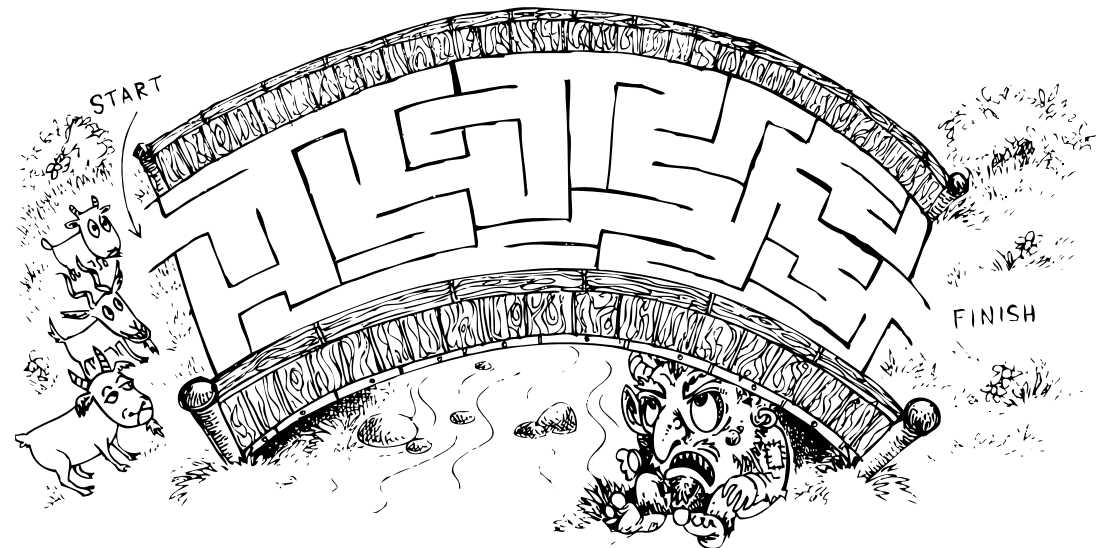
Read or tell stories which have characters of different sizes.

- Read or tell the story “*The Three Billy Goats Gruff*.”
- Have your child show you the pictures of the little Billy Goat, the middle Billy Goat and the big Billy Goat.
- Suggest that your child draw pictures of the three Billy Goats Gruff. Notice if he or she draws three sizes of goats.

Use pictures to encourage your child to express ideas.

Collect magazine pictures which show action: pictures of children playing together, a family in a car or a team playing a sport, for example. Let your child look at the pictures one at a time. Ask your child to tell you what he or she thinks is happening in each picture.

THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF



Can you get the Billy Goats across the bridge?
Don't get caught by the troll!

Additional Ideas

Find photos in your family album that show recent family events that you and your child attended together; events such as the county fair, a church picnic or a family trip. Encourage your child to talk about the people who were there and the things that happened at the event.

FEBRUARY

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Bundle three or more crayons together with a rubber band. Have fun drawing with your child.		Tell your child why you chose his/her name and why it fits them just right.		Find all of the objects in the house that start with the letter "B."	
While reading, ask your child to predict what might happen, or ask what is happening in the pictures.		Look for numbers on signs in your neighborhood and at the grocery store.		Set an open jar of water by a window and mark where the water line is. Have the child observe it over time.		After dinner, head outside to look at the stars. "Connect the star dots" to make shapes.
	Sing the Eensy Weensy Spider song and use hand motions.		Talk to your child about when they should wash their hands – after using the bathroom, eating, wiping nose, handling animals, etc.		Have fun mixing colors with your child using food coloring, eye droppers and wax paper.	
Talk about ways people can be nice to each other. How can we make other people feel better when they are sad?		Include children in the planning of their day and remind them of those plans.		Help your child use magnetic letters to form their name.		Collect items (coins, buttons, building blocks) and compare them. Talk about size and sort them.
	Have your child look at where the sun is in the morning, at noon and before bed.		Go for a walk outside and help your child to "see" their breath. Why does that happen?		Work together to create a short and simple bedtime song. Sing it to each other every night.	

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"The Three Billy Goats Gruff" by Paul Galdone
 "Peter's Chair" by Ezra Jack Keats
 "When You Go to Kindergarten" by James Howe

"Big Dog, Little Dog" by P.D. Eastman
 "Hello School: A Classroom of Poems" by Dee Lillegard



United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County

MARCH

Enjoy the sounds of language with your child.

Collect materials which focus on rhyming and beginning sounds.

- Collect objects or pictures of things that rhyme. Some examples are cat, hat; rock, sock; soap, rope; spoon and moon.
- Collect magazines and/or catalogs so your child can cut out pictures.

Read rhymes with your child.

- Read Mother Goose Rhymes with your child. Encourage your child to complete the rhymes with the correct rhyming word, such as “Hickory, Dickory, Dock, The mouse ran up the _____ (clock).”
- Invite your child to say with you his or her favorite rhymes over and over again. Your child will soon be able to say the rhyme himself.
- Read simple poems with your child. Encourage your child to complete the poem with the correct rhyming word.

Play with rhyming sounds.

- Use a collection of objects or pictures of objects such as sock, rock, hat, cat, soap, rope, spoon and moon. Invite your child to choose the two objects or pictures that rhyme and name them.
- Use objects found around the house - such as a sock, ball, and hat. Encourage your child to say a word that rhymes with the chosen object. Accept nonsense words that rhyme as well.

Help your child match letters to objects or pictures.

- Using alphabet letter magnets, select one of the objects or pictures you have collected: a banana, for example, and have your child say the name of the object so he or she can hear the beginning sound of the word.
- Ask your child to find the alphabet letter that matches the beginning sound of the word.
- Provide five alphabet letter magnets and let your child choose a picture from your collection and match it with the beginning letter sound of the word.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Contact your local elementary school to find out the dates for kindergarten pre-registration. You will need the following to register your child for school:

- Birth Certificate
- Report of Dental Examination Card
- Elementary Student Census Information Form
- Health History
- Immunization Requirements Form
- Physical Examination Requirements Form
- Report of Vision Evaluation Form

Additional Ideas

Create an alphabet book with your child. Write one letter in upper and lower case at the top of a piece of paper - for example, write Pp. Provide a magazine or catalog for your child to cut out one or more pictures that begin with that letter: example, a picture of pizza and a pig.

Begin with the letters that your child recognizes. When your child has glued and completed as many pages as he or she can, put the pages in alphabetical order. Staple or use yarn to keep the pages together. Name the pictures on each page for each letter.

Websites: www.lps.org
http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/main/ed_cnty.htm
http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/main/ed_proch.htm

MARCH

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Schedule your child's dental, medical and vision examinations for kindergarten registration.		Make up a silly song together.		Tell jokes with your child and laugh out loud.	
Be flexible. If your child has a more interesting idea, follow along.		Help your child write out the alphabet, and display it at eye level somewhere at home.		Look for shapes in your house and neighborhood.		Go on a walk and look for signs of spring. Collect materials to make a spring collage.
	Can you find the seasons changing? Count all of the leaves, buds, flowers and seeds you find.		Dance to some fun instrumental music using scarves or small pieces of light fabric.		Build an indoor fort out of chairs and blankets.	
Look for objects that are purple this week.		Tell your child what an author and illustrator are.		Go to the park and push your child on a swing. While pushing, count backwards from 10 to 1.		Play in the sand with your child. Share what you are making with each other.
	Fly a kite or hang out laundry on the line to see the wind move.		Practice "listen and do" by playing a game of Simon Says.		Practice jumping, hopping on one foot and throwing and catching a ball.	

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"The Wheels on the Bus" by Maryanne Kovalski
"Barnyard Banter" by Denise Fleming
"My Very First Mother Goose" by Iona Opie

"Silly Sally" by Audrey Wood
"The Napping House" by Audrey Wood
"Jamerry" by Bruce Degen



APRIL

Make math a “hands on” learning experience for your child.

Add to the materials you began collecting in January - materials that can help your child learn more about math.

Items found at home

- plastic berry baskets that can become cages and caves
- small boxes that can become garages and barns

Purchased items

- small cars
- small animals

Use the materials you have collected to involve your child in addition and subtraction and “more” or “less” activities.

- Pretend you are a zoo keeper. Put 3 animals in one cage (berry basket) and 5 animals in another. Say to your child “Show me the cage that has more animals.”
- Add variety to the math games. Use berry baskets as caves for the counting bears and small boxes as garages for cars.
- Play domino dots with your child. Place dominoes face down. Each person turns over a domino and counts the dots. Decide which domino has more dots. Some dominoes will have the same number of dots. You may need to help your child count the dots on the dominoes. Continue this activity as long as your child remains interested.
- Let your child play with the materials on his or her own. You will see your child’s creativity and imagination at work.

Include addition and subtraction words as you talk with your child.

- “You have 5 crackers and I have 3. Do you have more crackers or less crackers than I do?”
- “You put 4 crayons in the box. Now add 2 more. How many crayons are in the box?”

Tell stories and read books that include math ideas, books in which characters are added or subtracted as the story progresses.

- Read a book such as Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed. As a monkey falls off the bed, ask your child to say how many monkeys are left in the bed.

I LOVE
Math!

Additional Ideas

Help your child prepare a “math-on-the-go” bag or shoebox for travel. Let your child choose which materials to put in the bag; for example, the berry baskets and animals one time and the small boxes and cars the next. Your child can play with the materials in the car, on the bus or as you wait in the dentist’s office.

Website: <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/math/math.pdf>

APRIL

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				Help your child tie ribbon and string onto a paper towel tube and twirl it to music.		Challenge your child to brush their teeth before bedtime without being told.
	If your child gives up on a task too easily, gently encourage them by saying, "Try one more time."		Tell your child a story about things you did when you were young.		Go on a walk and collect items. When you return home, count the items. Arrange them in size from small to large.	
Plant a seed and watch it grow.		Find an animal and run, jump or imitate that animal's movements.		Take some time to listen to the sounds of spring outside. What do you hear?		Go outside, blow some bubbles and have your child count how many they can catch.
	Is your child getting plenty of rest? A 4 year old should be getting between 10-12 hours of sleep.		Tell a story to your child and have them finish the story.		Give your child opportunities to observe and make predictions about natural events, such as predicting the weather.	
Book ownership is important. Ask for books as gifts for your child.		Have your child help you sort the laundry before it is folded.		Take a bucket of water and paintbrush outside and paint on the sidewalk. Talk about what happens to the water.		Put a leaf in water and watch it float. Why do leaves float in water?

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"The Doorbell Rang" by Pat Hutchins
"Roll Over! A Counting Song" by Merle Peek
"Mr. Grumpy's Outing" by John Burningham

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle
"Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed"
 by Eileen Cristelow



MAY

Play learning games with your child.

Collect materials for learning games.

Materials to make

- Cut out 2 circles, 2 squares, 2 rectangles and 2 triangles, all the same color and about the same size.
- Make matching pairs of cards with stickers or pictures of animals. For example; cut cardboard in 3" x 3" squares, place a sticker or picture on a card. Make a second card exactly like the first one.

Materials to purchase

- "Old Maid" and "Go Fish" Cards
- Memory/matching cards

Involve your child in matching activities

Matching Game

- Start with six pairs of matching cards. Use either the cards you have made or the cards you have purchased.
- Shuffle the cards and lay them face up on the table or on the floor.
- Invite your child to find the two cards that match.
- Add additional pairs of cards as your child becomes more skilled at finding the pairs.

Have fun as you play color games with your child.

Play "I Spy Colors" game indoors and outdoors.

- Play the game by spying different colored objects in your home or outdoors.
- Begin with one color such as red. Say "I spy something red. It's round and you can throw it..." (red ball)
- Add another color such as yellow. Say "I spy something yellow. You peel it and eat it. What is it?" (yellow banana)
- Continue playing the game by adding other colors of objects such as blue, green and orange.

Play "shapes" and "sizes" games with your child.

Find the Shapes

- Show your child the shapes you have cut out. Help your child name each shape: circle, square, rectangle and triangle.
- Hide one set of shapes somewhere in the room - each shape in a different place.
- Give your child one shape at a time and have him or her find the matching shape and name it.

Sorting Coins by Size

- Show your child a collection of coins: quarters, nickels, dimes and pennies.
- Invite your child to put together all the coins that are the same size.
- Tell your child the names of the coins.
- Ask your child to show you the coins that are the biggest, middle size and smallest.



Additional Ideas

Cut out a large circle, square, rectangle and triangle from paper grocery sacks. Help your child cut out smaller circles, squares, rectangles and triangles from construction paper. Have your child paste all the small circles on the larger circle, the small rectangles on the large rectangle, the small circles on the large circle, the small squares on the large square and the small triangles on the large triangle. Your child may want to add drawings to the creation.

MAY

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Make hats out of newspaper together.
	Talk to your child about what they do when they feel angry. Help them to develop ways to calm down.		Engage your children in coming up with multiple solutions to problems: "It's raining and we can't go outside. What could we do instead?"		Attend a preschool story time at one of the Lincoln City Libraries to get a feel for different types of storytelling.	
While at the library, check out a book about numbers and counting.		Go to the park and play in the sand.		Lie down under a tree and watch how the branches and leaves move. Can you spot any animals up there?		Jump rope while chanting a traditional jumping song.
	Practice jumping, hopping on one foot and throwing and catching a ball.		Build an indoor fort out of chairs and blankets.		While at the library, encourage your child to sit by an unfamiliar child and introduce himself to them.	
Let your child help you sort the laundry by color. Sing the "ABC" song while in the car.		Use the words on and off with your child today.		Have the child observe a flower and talk about what happens to it over time.		Pull up a dandelion and look for the roots. What does the root do for a plant?

BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"A Color of His Own" by Leo Lionni
 "Mouse Paint" by Ellen Stohl Walsh
 "Circles, Triangles and Squares" by Tana Hoban
 "Yo! Yes?" by Chris Raschka

"My Very First Book of Shapes" by Eric Carle
 "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?"
 by Bill Martin Jr.



JUNE

Invite your child to think and solve problems.

Collect materials which encourage thinking and problem-solving.

Cut out pictures of things that go together and paste each picture on separate card. Examples of pictures to collect include:

- shoe and sock
- cup and saucer
- flowers and vase
- hammer and nail

Collect real objects that go together. Examples of things to collect:

- baseball and bat
- comb and brush

Cut out pictures that your child can put in order and paste each picture on a separate card. Have sets of 3 picture cards. Here are examples:

- baby, boy and man
- planting flower seeds, flowers growing and picking flowers

Begin with real objects.

- Place the real objects you have collected on a table or on the floor.
- Make sure the objects that go together are separated from each other.
- Ask your child to find the two objects that go together.
- Invite your child to tell you why the two objects go together.

Use pictures next

- Lay the picture cards of things that go together face up on the table or floor. Make sure pictures that go together are separated from each other.
- Ask your child to find the two pictures that go together and tell you why they do.

Involve your child in discovering things that go together.

Play pattern games with your child.

Create a movement pattern and ask your child to repeat it. For example:

- step, step, jump – step, step, jump (take 2 steps forward, then jump)
- clap, clap, pat – clap, clap, pat (clap your hands twice, pat your knees once)

Start a pattern using objects and ask your child to “Make a pattern just like this one.”

- with eating utensils: fork, spoon, fork, spoon
- with colored counting bears: red, yellow, red, yellow

Involve your child in putting pictures in order.

- Give your child 3 photos of himself or herself at different ages: baby, toddler and now.
- Ask your child to put the pictures in order, starting with the picture when he or she was the youngest.
- Invite your child to put in order a set of the picture cards you have made; for example, a baby, boy and man.
- Continue this activity with photos or pictures. You might use 3 photos of other family members at different ages.



Can you match the items on the cards?
How do they relate to each other?

Additional Ideas

Make and purchase puzzles for your child to complete. Cut up greeting cards or the front of a cereal box in puzzle-like shapes. Give your child the cut-up pieces to fit back together.

Cut up a vinyl place mat in puzzle-like shapes. Use place mats with designs. Give your child a cut-up place mat to fit the pieces back together. Store the puzzle pieces in ziplock bags. Purchase puzzles at dollar and discount stores and at garage sales.

Website: www.parenting.org

JUNE

Don't forget to number your calendar pages!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Clap out the syllables of different family members' names.		Check out a book about a different culture.		Help your child write their name with sidewalk chalk.
	Go on a walk and use the words near and far to describe things you see.		Take a trip to the Sunken Gardens and look at the different flowers and plants.		Watch for lightening bugs in the evening. Catch them in your hand to see their light then release them.	
Take your home-recyclable instruments outside and march in a parade. Hurray, summer is here!		Is your child getting plenty of rest? A 4 year old should be getting between 10-12 hours of sleep.		Attend Jazz in June and move to the music!		Create a special place to read.
	Look for objects that are pink this week.		Ask your child if they need something at home, preschool or with a babysitter. Talk with your child how to ask for help appropriately.		Cook with your child. Let them measure with you.	
Make up a family theme song!		Encourage your child to serve and feed themselves during mealtime. Invite them to assist with cleanup.		Play a game of Hokey Pokey.		

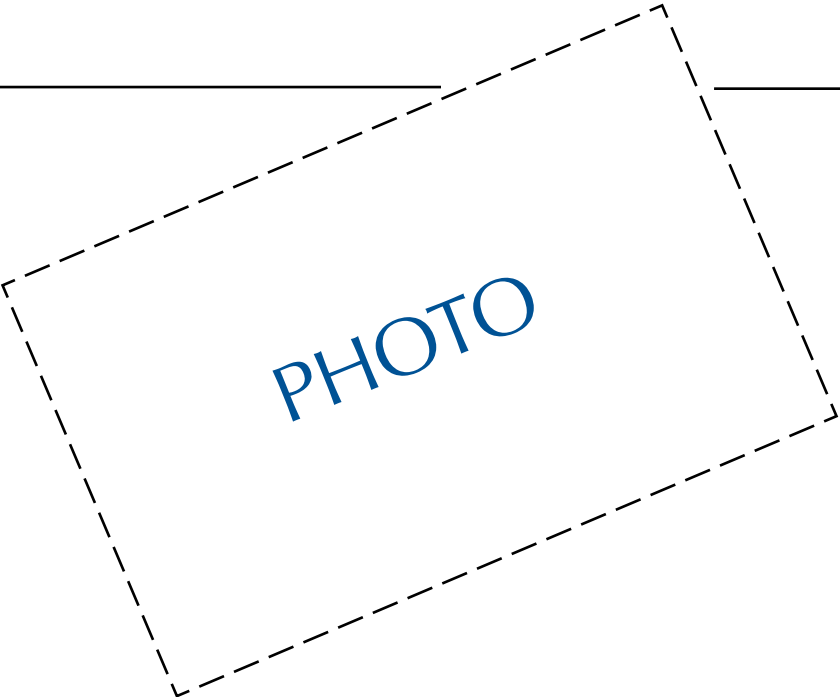
BOOKS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS

"If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" by Laura Numeroff
"If You Give a Moose a Muffin" by Laura Numeroff
"If You Give a Pig a Pancake" by Laura Numeroff
"The Carrot Seed" by Ruth Kraus

MEMORIES OF OUR YEAR



Two columns of horizontal lines for writing. The left column contains 8 lines, and the right column contains 8 lines.



A single column of horizontal lines for writing, containing 12 lines.

CALENDAR DEVELOPMENT

The Countdown to Kindergarten Calendar is made available through the Countdown to Kindergarten Project, United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Special Thanks

This Countdown to Kindergarten Calendar is based on the “Getting Ready for Kindergarten” calendar produced by Success By 6, the Early Childhood Initiative of the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County in Carlisle, PA and the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Education. We would also like to acknowledge the United Way of Lancaster, PA. Our special thanks for their willingness to share their work with us.

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