

DENVER DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

3 TO 4 YEARS

3-4 years
Over for continuation

These activities are designed to help your child with the following basic skills:

Small muscle and problem-solving skills.

Activities to continue:

- Let your child play with harder puzzles and building toys, and encourage him or her to draw harder pictures and designs.
- Continue matching and sorting games with your child.

Cutting — Buy safety scissors and show your child how to use them. Give him or her large, simple pictures to practice cutting out.

Story Scrapbooks — Help your child make scrapbooks by drawing pictures or cutting pictures from magazines and catalogs. Show your child how to put them in an order to make a story. Then let your child glue the pictures onto sheets of paper, and write your child's story under the pictures.

Textured Collages — Help your child find different objects, like pieces of different kinds of cloth, wallpaper, and pictures from magazines. Let your child glue the things onto a piece of cardboard or heavy paper. Hang the picture in your child's room.

Sewing Cards — Cut a picture out of a magazine and glue it to a piece of cardboard. Punch holes around the outside of the things in the picture. Put tape around the ends of yarn to keep it from raveling. Then show your child how to "sew" around the things in the picture by putting yarn or a shoelace through the holes.

Drawing/Writing — Show your child how to make lines and circles into stick figures, houses, the sun or moon, letters, numbers, etc. Your child may want to learn to "write" the letters of his or her name when you are playing this game.

Numbers — Teach your child to know numbers from 1 through 10. Draw these numbers on flash cards. Show your child one card at a time, and ask him or her to find the same number in a book, magazine, or on signs.

Counting — Put beans or other small things into an empty egg carton's "nests." Show your child how to count out matching numbers of beans and put them in the "nests" below. Count the beans as you do this, since your child may not be able to count more than two or three without help at first. (Be sure your child doesn't put the beans in his/her mouth and choke.)

Finger Painting — Let your child fingerpaint on a large sheet of paper or on a plastic-topped table. Try to get your child to use both hands and make big, round circles and other shapes.

REMEMBER:

**Talk with your child — Play with your child —
Enjoy your child!**

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Marble Painting — Find a small tray with edges (about 5 inches by 10 inches is easy to handle). Line the bottom of the tray with paper. Dip a marble in finger-paint and put it on the tray. Have your child hold the tray and move it so that the marble rolls around, making a pattern. (Be careful that your child doesn't put the marble in his/her mouth and choke.)

Watercolors — Buy a simple set of watercolor paints. Give your child the paints and a piece of paper. Watch how the colors blend together as your child paints, and talk about what you see.

Combining Colors — Mix three food colors (red, blue, and yellow) with water. Give these to your child along with an eyedropper, and have him or her drop the colors onto a paper towel. Talk about how the colors mix to make other colors.

Shape Collage — Cut paper of different colors into triangles, squares, and circles. Talk about the differences in the shapes. Have your child make a design by gluing the shapes onto a piece of paper.

Large muscle strength and coordination.

Activities to continue:

- Encourage climbing, running, jumping, balancing, playing ball, and riding a tricycle.

Catching — Use a ball like a tennis ball to play catch with your child. Sometimes bounce the ball to your child, and sometimes throw it back and forth.

Tightrope Walk — Show your child how to "walk a tightrope" using a narrow board, line on the driveway, or some other long, straight line. Show your child how to use hands and arms to balance on the "tightrope."

Hopping — Show your child how to hop on one foot. When (s)he can hop in place, show him or her how to hop across the room, first on one foot and then the other.

Ring Toss, Etc. — Show your child how to play games like ring toss or dropping clothes pins into juice cans or milk bottles.

Animal Walk — Show your child how to walk like different animals (squatting like a duck, walking on all fours like a dog, etc.). One game to play is "going to the zoo," and acting out the animals.

Green Light, Red Light — Have your child stand across the room from you. When you say "greenlight," have your child tiptoe toward you until you say "red light." Keep saying "green light" and "red light" until your child reaches you. Then take turns by having your child say "green light/red light" while you tiptoe forward.

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These activities are designed to help your child with the following basic skills:

Speech and language.

Activities to continue:

- Read to your child each day and be sure your child sees you reading books.
- Sing songs and say nursery rhymes with your child often.
- Try to get your child to say his or her full name, identify moods, describe things to you, and understand time.
- Help select TV programs and limit watching to no more than one hour per day. Remember that many things shown on TV can frighten a small child (even news programs). Watch with your child and be ready to talk about what is real and what is not real.
- Provide some quiet time when the radio and TV are not on.

Descriptive Naming — Put objects your child knows into a shopping bag. Ask your child to take them out one at a time and tell you something about each one, what color it is, what you do with it, etc.

Talking With Your Child — Try to get your child to ask you questions. Keep your answers simple, but use more than one word to answer questions.

Stories — Try to get your child to tell a story about him- or herself, about a favorite thing, or about you. Or you can begin a story and ask your child to finish it.

Fill In the Blanks — When telling stories your child knows, leave out a word once in a while (such as “Little ___ Riding Hood” or “The Three ___ Pigs”). Ask your child to fill in the missing word.

My Picture Book — Glue photos of your child on a piece of paper or in a scrapbook. Ask your child to tell you what is happening in the pictures. Write what your child says under the pictures.

Concept of Time — Teach your child the meaning of “before,” “during,” and “later” by using these words as you talk with your child. (For example, “Breakfast comes *before* lunch, and supper comes *later*.”)

Definition/Composition — When you are talking to your child about everyday things, describe them fully. If you cut an apple for your child, talk about it being a round, red, fruit that is good to eat. Try to get your child to give more details about things (s)he describes to you.

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Opposites — Say a word and ask your child to say an opposite word. For example, if you say “up,” your child should say “down.” If you say “hot,” (s)he should say “cold.” Other examples are short/tall, fat/thin, open/closed, night/day, and so on.

Alphabet — Show your child the capital letters of the alphabet one at a time, either by cutting them out of a magazine and pasting them on a flash card or by drawing them on cards (one letter per card). Show your child the flash card for the letter “A” and teach your child its name. Have him or her find the letter “A” in magazines or books, or on signs. When your child learns “A,” go on to “B” and then to the other letters.

Comparisons — Help your child make comparisons such as shorter than, longer than, taller than, younger than, older than, and so on. Your child can compare the length of a piece of yarn with other objects. (“Is this toy longer or shorter than the yarn?”)

Love, self-care, and socialization.

Activities to continue:

- Hug and cuddle your child often.
- Soothe and calm your child by holding and talking to him or her when (s)he is upset.
- Encourage your child to discuss feelings.
- Include your child in family meals.
- Plan trips with your child to a park, zoo, library, etc.
- Play games with your child and have your child help with simple household chores.

Buttoning — When your child can button large buttons, try to get him or her to button small buttons on his or her clothes. Also teach your child to snap or zip clothing.

Eating — Try to get your child to eat properly with a knife, fork, and spoon.

Cooking — Let your child help with cooking by measuring, pouring, stirring, cutting out cookies, etc. Talk with your child about what the two of you are doing.

Washing — Show your child how to use soap, water, and a washcloth to wash his or her arms and legs. Later, try to get your child to bathe himself or herself.

Setting Limits — At this age, as part of growing up, children begin to test limits and rules. Help your child make decisions by setting limits and stating choices. (An example is, “You can choose a story or a game at bedtime. You can’t choose both.”)

Praise — Praise your child for positive behaviors, such as trying a new task, helping someone else, or being cooperative.