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ABSTRACT

Standard guidelines are presented by the Oregon Department of Education for a prekindergarten public school program for 4-year-olds. The program emphasizes helping teachers work with parents at home and at school to form an effective team in building a child's self-concept, self-confidence and communicative skills. Each curriculum area is described in terms of goals and activities designed to help children master skills applicable in both school and home settings. Although the activities are designed especially for 4-year-olds, they can be adapted to the needs of younger children. Curriculum areas covered include: self-care, self-knowledge, home, school, neighborhood, community, speaking, listening, reading, writing, the arts, physical skills, thinking and reasoning, and social skills. Guidelines for program implementation deal with teacher qualifications, classroom setting and daily schedule. (Author/BF)

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**Prekindergarten Public School Program**

**For Four-Year-Olds**

The Oregon Department of Education  
942 Lancaster Drive NE  
Salem, OR 97310

Verne A. Duncan  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

1976

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## INTRODUCTION

The education of the very young is a cooperative venture. Parents are the child's first teachers. This publication is designed to help teachers work with parents to provide positive, lasting learning experiences, both at home and at school. Teachers and parents can form an effective team in building a child's self-concept, self-confidence and communicative skills.

Each curriculum area presents goals and activities which are designed to help children master skills applicable in both school and home settings. Although the activities are designed especially for four-year-olds, they can be adapted to the needs of younger children.

For further information contact Jean Spaulding, 378-3602.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

**Certification:** Every group of prekindergarten children in a public school program will need at least one teacher who holds a current, valid Oregon state certificate for teaching in the elementary grades (see ORS 342.135).

**Teacher Aide:** With groups of four-year-olds, it is recommended that an aide or volunteer be available. Criteria for selection include such factors as emotional stability, maturity, steadiness, gentleness, dependability, willingness to follow directions and the ability to learn.

### THE SETTING

**Indoor and Outdoor Spaces:** A good prekindergarten capitalizes on the fact that young children are active, vigorous and curious about their environment. In order to learn, children need adequate space to move about, to interact with peers and adults and with materials and equipment. Requirements for space and safety depend upon the type of program that the school selects. An open classroom program needs more space than a closely structured program. Regardless of the program, it is the trained teacher who turns the space into a learning center.

**Setting up the Classroom:** A classroom for children is usually set up by interest centers. A variety of activities may go on simultaneously. Factors which determine how space may be divided include the size and shape of the room, the number of children, the number of adults available as teachers or teacher helpers and the nature of the children's interests.

**Furniture:** Since the scope and content of children's interests vary as the year progresses, it is wise to select furniture and spaces that permit maximum flexibility. A large room and movable furniture help meet the rapidly changing needs of a group of active four-year-olds. Tables and chairs that are low, sturdy, light weight and washable are best for young children.

**Storage:** Low movable shelves provide storage space for blocks, books, art materials, drama accessories, puzzles and musical instruments. These shelves can also serve to section off the room into learning centers. Bulletin boards hung at a child's eye level are helpful. Open storage units (cubbies) provide a place for each child to store clothing, a blanket or a personal possession.

**Floor Space:** Block building requires adequate floor space, out of traffic patterns. A space for a cupboard, a plastic sink, a bed and doll buggies helps children play out "how grown ups are." Materials which children need to act out a variety of grown-up roles might include: dress-up clothes for men and women, a low sturdy clothes rack, a full-length, nonbreakable mirror, purses, and a variety of hats for postal workers, telephone installers, astronauts, fire fighters, storekeepers and nurses. Teachers who are concerned with health and sanitary conditions may prefer to keep construction paper, scissors, and tape handy so that paper hats can be made as needed and then discarded.

**Creative Experiences:** Easels, crayons, paints and paper should be provided for creative activities. Woodworking materials include a work bench, 24 inches to

30 inches high, two sturdy vises, hammers, soft pine wood cut into assorted sizes and shapes, wooden wheels, dowels, Elmer's glue and nails with flat heads. A record player, records and banners or scarfs are needed for responding to rhythm. Mimetics, or acting out a situation without words, helps children express feelings.

**Science:** Materials such as pulleys, ropes, magnets, a large magnifying glass, tubes, corks, bottles and funnels invite the young child to explore and experiment with the tools of science. Identifying the tool and learning ways to use the tools are more important to four-year-olds than a product.

**Equipment:** Equipment suitable for the young child is simple, adaptable and designed to foster imaginative and creative play. A sturdy packing box, for example, can be a boat, a fire truck, a doll house or a lunar spaceship, depending upon a child's current interests.

**Supplementary Material:** Four-year-olds learn best through their senses: touching, tasting, smelling, seeing and hearing. They need opportunities to manipulate and experiment with materials to see how they work. In addition to learning from traditional classroom materials, children can discover, manipulate and experiment with old car parts, broken clocks and radios, leather samples, scrap paper and so forth.

### REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN

Registration usually takes place sometime before the children begin their school experience. Information obtained at this first interview is recorded. It constitutes a part of the school's record of the child's development. The child's general health survey and immunization history may also be recorded at this time.

### SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY

The school day should provide a proper balance between active, vigorous periods and quiet, restful times. A good program for four-year-olds has large flexible blocks of time. While young children need the security of knowing that one thing generally follows another in a fairly regular sequence, they also should be able to tarry occasionally beyond the general limit of time normally allotted to an activity. Children need a slow, even tempo in which transitions are made gradually and easily. A well-scheduled program for young children moves so smoothly and feels so much like home that a casual observer forgets a planned program exists. Programs for four-year-old children operate on a half-day session of two to two and a half hours, three, four, or five days a week.

The following sequence of activities may occur during a half-day program:

**Arrival:** The teacher greets each child by name and helps him or her remove outdoor clothing. An opportunity for a few moments for conversation between teacher and child is important for a good beginning to the day.

**Work, Play Program:** The heart of the day's program lies in the period when children learn in a play-like setting. Puzzles, table toys, records, filmstrips and other

independent activities provide suitable opportunities. Sometimes outdoor play periods are scheduled first. When climate, staffing and facilities permit, children may be allowed to move freely from indoors to outdoors as activities and peer groups interest them. Proper supervision should, of course, be provided.

**Clean Up and Pause for Snack:** Near the end of the scheduled work and playtime, the length of which may vary from group to group and day to day, the teacher may remind a few children at a time to stop work, replace their equipment and wash their hands for a snack. Children may take turns setting the table and generally serve themselves. It is suggested that a small nourishing snack without excessive amounts of sugar be available. Celery and peanut butter, dry cereal, popcorn, a small piece of fruit or a few peanuts are suggested.

**Music, Story and Rest Time:** As children finish their snack, they are free to select a book from the open shelves. The teacher allows sufficient time for children to leaf through and discuss a number of books with their friends. Sometimes an adult reads a picture storybook to one or more children.

Some young children need to rest for a short time on a mat on the floor. Other children, however, may find it difficult to rest in a group, and need freedom to engage in quiet activities while others rest.

Singing, moving creatively, experimenting with musical instruments or listening to a new record may follow or precede rest time.

**Outdoor Playtime:** The teacher or an aide may help a few children at a time with their clothing. Selected materials and equipment are set up out of doors. Sometimes the teacher takes a small group on a nature walk or a short trip while the teacher's aide or assistant supervises the play of the remaining group.

**Departure:** As children leave for home, either with their parents or on a school bus, they enjoy an opportunity for a final word with the teacher.

Early childhood educators have found that different achievement goals and a planned but informal environment in which children can learn by themselves are essential. The details of a good prekindergarten program will differ from classroom to classroom. Daily experiences should stimulate intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth. Children learn:

- through activity,
- through first hand sensory perception of feeling, listening, smelling, tasting and observing,
- through experimentation, manipulation, exploration and trial and error,
- as a result of encounters with a variety of media, problems, ideas and people,
- as active members of a congenial social group,
- as a result of identifying with the adults in their lives.

## CURRICULUM FOR PREPRIMARY AGE CHILDREN

### SELF-CARE

At the end of this unit the child should be able to:

- wash hands and other body parts,
- care for toileting and other health-related needs,
- select clothing and dress self,
- care for personal belongings,
- clean up after mealtime and activities,
- select food, serve and feed self.

By caring for self, the child:

- develops independence,
- learns responsibility and consideration for others,
- develops good health habits,
- gains in awareness of self and parts of the body,
- begins to make decisions and judge quantity,
- gains coordination.

The following are activities which teachers or parents may consider:

1. For an interest center, fix a barber or beauty shop. Provide a mirror, wash basin and articles needed for this play area.
2. Allow time for children to brush their teeth. A special place to keep each child's labeled toothbrush helps develop good health habits.
3. Have the children decorate large ice-cream containers or boxes to store their belongings. Label with symbols that each child can identify.
4. Provide family style meals that allow children to serve themselves. This is a good opportunity for children to taste a variety of snacks and foods. Eye-hand coordination is developed as children learn to pour and serve liquids and foods.
5. Label the classroom door with a symbol/picture to help children find their room. Let the class decide on the symbol/picture.

The following are activities which parents may do at home:

1. Discuss the weather and the day's activities with the child. Relate these to choosing appropriate clothing.
2. Use a box for a shoe shine kit. Show the children how to clean and shine shoes. Label and talk about the activity.
3. Help the children learn how to comb and brush their hair. Teach them how to clean and brush the teeth. Use words such as up, down, back, forth, top and bottom.
4. Supply sponges and soap for children to learn to scrub themselves. Plastic squeeze bottles which can be filled with water and plastic trays which float are fun to experiment with.
5. Help the children learn to sort, match, fold and put clothes in designated places.

### SELF-KNOWLEDGE

At the end of this unit the child should be:

- gaining a positive self-concept,
- developing an awareness and pride in his/her culture,
- becoming aware that his/her actions will have an influence on what happens,
- recognizing creative power within himself or herself,
- learning to distinguish and label emotions which are felt,
- learning names, placement and primary function of body parts.

By becoming aware of self, the child:

- develops a feeling of importance,
- develops empathy for others,
- gains confidence in skills and abilities,
- becomes responsible for his/her own well-being,
- knows name and gender.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may also be done at home:

1. Make a face puzzle, using a photo or picture from a calendar or magazine. Paste the picture on a paper plate and cut into puzzle sections (pieces).
2. Play a mirror game to learn parts of the face. Have the children look into the mirror. Say, "Wiggle your nose. Wink one eye. Stick out your tongue."
3. Make a collage using many pictures of arms, legs, eyes and mouths. Show the children how to tear around the pictures or cut them out with scissors. Flour and water can be mixed to use as paste. A piece of shelf paper makes a good background for the collage.
4. Help the children feel good about the characteristics, customs and language of his/her race. Answer questions about differences between his/her ethnicity and that of others in a positive way.
5. Provide flannel board shapes for children to make creative faces, bodies and self-portraits.
6. Learn games, songs and fingerplays which involve touching and naming of the parts of the body.
7. Use rhythm instruments such as triangles, drums or bells, for sounding out syllables in each child's name.
8. Plan construction activities, using scrap materials. Display results attractively, labeling them with each child's name and comments.
9. Post a photograph of the children on each cubby door and/or bulletin board. Label photos with the children's names.

## THE HOME

At the end of this unit the child should be aware of:

- family members and their relationship to one another,
- roles of the family members,
- culture of the home,
- functions served by household areas and equipment,
- people and things in the home which can be relied on to provide health, happiness and security.

By becoming aware of the home and family, the child:

- develops a concept of self in relationship to family structure,
- develops respect for family members,
- enhances self-concept,
- becomes sensitive to the needs and feelings of others,
- becomes aware of necessary safety precautions,
- learns to understand and feel secure in the home environment,
- establishes a base from which to extend learning.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may also be done at home:

1. Visit places where family members of students work to extend the child's knowledge of jobs and the settings in which they take place.
2. Let the children help prepare foods. Talk about the foods. Help the children note changes that take place as foods are being prepared (e.g., making jello, cooking carrots, frying eggs).
3. Give the children small jobs to do around the room (e.g., take out the garbage, tidy a room, water the plants). This helps to give children a feeling of responsibility.
4. Use paper dolls to role-play activities that take place in school or at home. This gives children an opportunity to talk about their feelings. It is also a good time to develop language.
5. Prepare shape books for individual or group stories about safety, holidays, pets and the family. Cut out shapes such as traffic and street signs, Christmas ornaments and trees, dog bones and kennels.
6. Working with parents, plan a field trip to homes of classmates. Take a camera along for snapshots to display on the bulletin board.
7. For a group experience, make apple or cranberry sauce. Share the recipe with parents. Send a sample along, too, in a baby food jar.
8. Make plans with the children to set up a store. Engage them in making play money and collecting items for their store. Hollow blocks make good shelves and counters.
9. Role-play the family members. Use dress-up clothes from the home center.

## THE SCHOOL

At the end of this unit the child should be able to:

- name the school and find it in relationship to the neighborhood,
- find the classroom and places which are essential to the child's well-being; (e.g., office, toilet, playground, etc.),
- name his/her teachers and be aware of their roles,
- use classroom areas and be aware of their functions,
- accept rules and learn why they are needed.

By becoming familiar with the school, the child:

- develops abilities to see things in relationship to one another,
- grows in self-confidence,
- acquires skills for surviving in society (e.g., safety, social),
- establishes a base from which to extend learning.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Exchange home and school visits. These visits will help parents and the school personnel become better acquainted with each other's needs and skills.
2. Suggest that parents make a special calendar to mark important dates such as school visits, doctor's visits, parent meetings and field trips with the class.
3. Talk with the children about things that both teacher and children enjoy. If there are some things that the children do not like, encourage them to talk about them.
4. Suggest that parents volunteer for school functions and money-raising ventures. Have them share a special talent.
5. Suggest that parents help the teacher plan an activity which will occur on visiting days.
6. Make a large map of the neighborhood. Label the school, homes of the children and places of importance.
7. Explore the school grounds and meet people who work there.
8. Set up interest centers attractively. Then invite children to explore and learn. Include pictures and items to which children of varied background can relate. Add new things often and put some things away from time to time.
9. Introduce children to games with rules. Play with them until they are able to conduct the games independently.
10. Encourage a parent to teach an activity that he/she enjoys doing (e.g., making tortillas, woodworking, tie-dyeing).

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD

At the end of this unit the child should be able to:

- identify, find his/her home and remember the address,
- identify places, buildings and homes of friends,
- be aware of safe and unsafe places in the neighborhood,
- be aware that buildings have different shapes, are made of varying materials, and serve different needs,
- respect people and property,
- develop safety habits (e.g., interpret traffic signals/signs, use pedestrian walks, cross streets safely),
- cope with emergency situations.

By becoming familiar with the neighborhood, the child:

- develops self-reliance,
- recognizes and utilizes visual clues,
- feels secure in knowing that some physical properties of one's surroundings are stable,
- develops knowledge and respect of various cultures,
- develops a positive attitude toward the total neighborhood.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Help the children become aware that places have names and numbers. Tell the children the name of their streets and house numbers often, so that they can remember the address.
2. Take a bag along when on walks with the children. Gather pretty rocks or look for items that are all of a certain color. Talk about them at home. Recall the things seen along the way.
3. Participate in neighborhood activities such as cookouts, baseball games and swimming.
4. Collect paper, cans and bottles around the neighborhood for recycling and/or cleanup.
5. Visit and help a neighbor in need. Do a small chore for him/her or run an errand.
6. Take walks through the neighborhood to visit places of interest. Observe different kinds of construction and buildings. Distinguish between safe and unsafe places to play.
7. Play games for developing safety habits. Discuss safety rules before going on field trips. Set up traffic signs outdoors as children use tricycles and other riding equipment.
8. Set aside a special day each week for the children to clean up the school area.
9. Invite neighborhood helpers, relatives and school personnel to visit on special days and tell about their jobs.
10. Take photographs of interesting things in the neighborhood. Post photographs on the bulletin board. Put them in a scrapbook for the home/library center.

## THE COMMUNITY

At the end of this unit the child should be:

- aware of the roles and interdependency of community members,
- aware of the surrounding community and what it can offer,
- aware of existing possibilities of transportation,
- involved in helping to keep the community clean.

By becoming familiar with the community and its members, the child:

- develops pride in personal achievements,
- realizes that there are many options available concerning lifestyle and vocation,
- learns that cooperation can help those involved,
- broadens his/her direct experiences in the community.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Take the children to special places of interest such as a park, museum, zoo, post office and library.
2. Shopping trips for groceries, clothing and houseware items are opportunities for the children to become aware of items, labels and prices. This helps to develop a readiness for reading.
3. Help the children become aware of safety precautions with strangers.
4. Take a bus ride through the community to acquaint the children with new places.
5. Teach the children how to keep picnic areas clean and where to deposit trash. When on outings, help them understand why fires must be properly extinguished. Children learn as they watch adults.
6. Make a map of the community area. Mark the places where field trips will be taken.
7. Set up a center as a doctor's office. A stethoscope for the doctor, a cap for the nurse and a small desk, pencil, paper and a telephone for the receptionist help to make it interesting.
8. Convert the home center into a restaurant. Use boxes for small tables. Plan a picture menu with the children and post it. Let waitresses and waiters take orders. Provide note pads, pencils and aprons for this fun activity.
9. Cut a large square of cardboard or thin plywood as a base for the construction of a town. Ask children to bring beautiful "junk" such as pop bottle lids and scrap materials to construct a giant group project. Things may be added to it daily.
10. Construct a town or community in the sand area. Use materials from the blocks and construction center (e.g., trucks, cars, people, animals, traffic signs).

## SPEAKING SKILLS

At the end of this unit the child should:

- feel comfortable using the language spoken at home,
- increase his/her vocabulary and use of English/other languages,
- label or seek labels for objects and ideas in the immediate area and begin to internalize their meaning and function.
- ask questions after considering previous knowledge,
- formulate and communicate ideas, personal needs and feelings,
- dictate a phrase or story.

By developing communication skills, the child:

- develops social competence (e.g., appropriate comment, "I like your dress."),
- opens avenues for interaction,
- assimilates information,
- develops tools to satisfy curiosity and promote survival (e.g., asking questions, asking for help),
- becomes confident in his/her ability to invoke responses (e.g., telling jokes, asking permission to do something).

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Motivate the children to make up a story about pictures, using paintings, magazines and photographs. Write down some of their stories.
2. Teach fingerplays, nursery rhymes and songs. Have the children take them home.
3. Set aside a special time for sharing and talking with each child. Listening to children helps give them a feeling of importance.
4. Plan ways to involve the children in using the five senses: seeing, listening, smelling, tasting and touching.
5. Teachers may exchange ideas with parents for developing skills in children. Use items found in the home (e.g., collect useful household items for the child to label, classify and talk about).
6. Staple sheets of newsprint together for a book. "All About Me, \_\_\_\_\_" Add the child's name to the cover, with his/her snapshot. Encourage the child to make pictures and tell something about them. Record the story.
7. For a small group activity, hold up pictures for the children to identify. Ask open-ended questions about them. Have a bag of unshelled peanuts to give for every response.
8. Use paper plates, yarn, buttons and scrap material to make puppet faces. Make a puppet stage out of a box or turn a card table over on its side for children to hide behind as they use their puppets.
9. Set up a telephone booth in a large box. Make a telephone directory. Give each child a phone number.
10. Plan with a group of children to set up a television station. An announcer can tell about the weather or

daily news. Children may dramatize their favorite quiz shows, soap operas or entertainers.

## LISTENING SKILLS

At the end of this unit they child should:

- enjoy fingerplays, music, songs, dances and literature from a variety of cultures,
- respond to the communication of others (e.g., be able to follow verbal instructions, talk with peers and adults),
- identify sounds in the environment.

By developing listening skills, the child:

- gains skills for survival,
- assimilates information,
- derives enjoyment,
- acquires self-discipline.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. If possible, provide a record player for the children to listen to stories and music. Inexpensive records may be found in variety stores. Public libraries have records available for check-out. The children can learn to work the record player.
2. Fill glasses or bottles with graduated amounts of water. Tap them with a fork and listen for high, medium and low sounds. Make up tunes and songs.
3. Play a listening game to identify sounds around the house (e.g., vacuum cleaner, washing machine, voices of family members).
4. Play "Do As You Hear" game. Give the children one direction to follow. Then add others to increase the child's ability to retain directions. (Example: "Close the door. Turn the lights off. Sit by me.")
5. Sit outdoors together. Ask the children to close their eyes and listen for sounds. This helps to develop good listening skills.
6. Invite parents to tell or read favorite stories to small groups of children in English or other languages.
7. Cut four squares of paper which are different colors. Fill four pairs of covered containers with equal amounts of buttons, pebbles, sand and beans. Place them where the children can discover and match the same sounds. Have the children place the matching sounds on the same square of colored paper.
8. Encourage children to look for things in the room that can be used to create rhythmic sounds (e.g., rhythm instruments, rubber bands, paper, coffee cans, pieces of wood).
9. Provide opportunities for children to listen to stories and records. Include music and stories which relate to particular ethnic groups.
10. Sing and move to songs that provide instructions which encourage careful listening. (e.g., Hokey Pokey, Farmer in the Dell, Bluebird. See bibliography for others.)

## READING SKILLS

At the end of this unit the child is:

- becoming familiar with the literature of many cultures,
- becoming aware of the relationship between symbols and the object or idea symbolized,
- gaining an awareness of the nature of reading progression (e.g., left to right, top to bottom, front to back),
- identifying his/her name with a visual cue,
- beginning to recognize some of the letters of the alphabet,
- gaining an understanding that stories in a book are words written down,
- learning to manipulate the pages in a storybook in a sequential manner,
- learning to recall symbols (e.g., signs, shapes, television commercials),
- identifying with the feelings of others through literature.

By developing reading skills, the child:

- assimilates information,
- gains reinforcement for more learning,
- establishes a better base from which to function as a productive member of society,
- satisfies his/her curiosity,
- derives enjoyment,
- discovers and expands his/her world,
- gains skills for survival.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Take the children to the library to select books to be read. Show the children how to turn the pages. Help them learn to care for books. Show them a place to keep books when they are not in use.
2. Play lotto and other matching games. Have the children help make them. Use greeting cards, labels from cans, material scraps and buttons.
3. Putting groceries away can help to develop reading readiness. Help the children find labels that are alike. Read the labels and let them decide where they belong (e.g., pantry, refrigerator, bathroom, washroom).
4. Cut pictures from comic strips, catalogs and magazines and play "Read the Picture" game. Help the children make up a story about them.
5. Take a sign-reading walk together. Walk around the neighborhood and look for names of streets, safety signs and numbers.
6. Create a comfortable and inviting reading center. Rugs, soft pillows and beanbag chairs are conducive to relaxation.
7. Labels in the languages of particular ethnic groups make children feel that their language is also valued and accepted. Put sentence labels on objects in the schoolroom. (Example: On the science table, place this sign: "Look through this magnifying glass." Underline the object to be identified. Translate the labels into language familiar to the children.)

8. Display names cards in a pocket chart. Use symbols that children can identify with their names.
9. Develop a large talking mural. Paste magazine pictures of things that children think they will see on a field trip. When they return from their trip, check their predictions. Circle the things that they saw. Add any additional things that the children remembered. Discuss things seen to add to children's understanding.
10. Build a make-believe story. Have the children add a new part each day (e.g., "The Monster . . . [U.F.O., snake, cowboy] came to town and . . ."). Four-year-olds like to talk about "scary things." It helps to separate the real from the pretend and to conquer fears by seeing things as they really are.

## WRITING SKILLS

At the end of this unit, the child should be:

- aware that what is thought can be said, that what is said can be written, and what is written can be read,
- able to use the small muscles in hands and fingers to handle a variety of materials,
- becoming familiar with the instruments of writing,
- able to attempt a symbol for communications from scribble to letter formation.

By developing writing skills, the child:

- establishes a better base from which to function successfully in school and in society,
- acquires another form of communication,
- learns another way to express himself/herself,
- derives pleasure,
- discovers inner thoughts and feelings.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Give the children an old paint brush and a pail of water to paint a fence, wall or a tricycle.
2. Introduce the children to various things found around the home with which they can scribble or write. Try using a stick or finger to write in the mud, sand or dirt.
3. Write a short letter to the children or make a greeting card. Mail the letters to them. When they arrive, have the children open the surprise envelopes. Ask parents to read the message for them.
4. Find a special box in which the children can keep toys. Make cutout letters of each child's name and arrange and glue on the box. Help children put the toys away when not in use. Soon the children will learn to do it alone.
5. A pair of tweezers for picking up bottle caps, small pebbles or beans provides an opportunity for children to develop eye-hand coordination. After children practice picking up objects, it is fun to use a timer to play a game of "Pick-Up-Quick."
6. Make sandpaper letters for children to trace with their fingers. Place them in a writing center along with pencils, paper and bookmaking materials.

7. Supply magic markers, crayons and charcoal for children to use often. Be sure to include paper close to the other tools.
8. Show the children how to make clay letters of the alphabet and spell out their names. Letters may also be cut out of heavy paper and covered with glue and sawdust, sand or coffee grounds. Feeling and touching helps children learn.
9. Give children colored chalk for scribbling on the blackboard and drawing pictures.
10. Provide experiences for children to use their eyes and hands together (e.g., puzzles, beads, blocks, assembly toys).

## THE ARTS

At the end of this unit the child should be:

- feeling free to express thoughts and feelings through a variety of art forms (e.g., music, dance, movement, painting, drawing and poetry),
- exploring and experimenting with materials, movement and music with a minimum of adult direction,
- developing an awareness of his/her ethnic background and that of others,
- becoming aware of differences in color, line, form, texture and how they can be used,
- learning to use a variety of tools and equipment,
- beginning to use imaginative, descriptive and comparative language.

By exploring the arts, the child:

- enhances self-esteem,
- develops an awareness of internal response to external stimuli,
- experiences relaxation, pleasure and a feeling of well-being,
- refines motor skills and coordination,
- becomes aware of the similarities of various cultures,
- gains respect for the differences in various cultures.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Attend free concerts in the park with the children. Visit art shows and museums.
2. Take the children to choose paintings which are available on loan from the public library. Hang a painting in a room. Talk about the picture and colors. Mention the name of the artist.
3. Relate folktales learned as a child. Encourage the children to tell imaginative stories. Help them recall things that took place with family members.
4. Use a hand as a puppet. Draw eyes, a nose and a mouth with lipstick or a magic marker on the palm. Sing songs and dance with the puppet.
5. Blow up a balloon and attach a string. Let the children punch it as they run, hop, skip and walk. The balloon can be used to experiment moving in various ways (e.g., forward, backward, sideways, fast, slow).

6. Plan to have music each day. Play records when children rest, eat and play. Explore creative movement outdoors with rhythm instruments.
7. Prepare materials for children to use combining art media, such as gadget printing, string painting, wood and wire sculpture, starch and tissue paper.
8. Help children learn to practice relaxation and body control (e.g., child assumes shapes and forms of animals and objects such as a cat, bird or tree).
9. Provide cooking experiences. Children enjoy decorating food such as sandwiches, crackers and jello with happy faces, using cheese and raisins. Include foods with which children of particular ethnic groups are familiar.
10. Make a dry flower arrangement with a glass jar. Collect small pebbles, shells, twigs, straw flowers and sand. Press modeling clay in the lid to hold the arrangement. Screw the jar onto the lid. It makes an interesting, enclosed artifact.

## PHYSICAL SKILLS

At the end of this unit the child should be:

- developing and refining motor skills (e.g., coordination of eye/hand, large/small muscles),
- learning to determine which objects and situations he/she can control,
- developing a feeling for creative movement,
- learning to experience music, dance, movement, musical instruments and games derived from many cultures.

By developing physical skills, the child:

- becomes aware of the environment and learns to deal with the surroundings,
- gains spatial relationships,
- obtains physical and emotional release.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Recycle tin cans, soda pop containers and plastic bottles. Use them as bowling pins or for stacking and building.
2. Stuff a pair of trousers, blue jeans, pillow case of an old shirt with newspaper or soft material. Hang it from a tree or a beam. It provides release from tension when the children feel like hitting.
3. Collect boxes from the grocery or shoe store for building a train, ship or house. Large boxes can become a tunnel or special place to be alone.
4. Provide a digging place outdoors for the children. Sticks, old spoons, shovels and tin cans make good diggers. Cut scoops and funnels out of old bleach bottles. Sand from the river bed is fun to play in, too.
5. Spend an afternoon in the park. Take a lunch along. Children enjoy exploring the playground and making their own selection of equipment.
6. Use the outdoor equipment to create a circus. Tightrope walkers can walk a balance beam using a small umbrella. Trapeze artists can swing in leotards. Clowns wearing hats can ride tricycles and dare-devils with small tails can climb the monkeybars.

7. Toss beanbags from various distances into large or small containers. This helps develop coordination.
  8. Play "Follow the Leader." A leader takes the children and teacher through the schoolyard, climbing up and down equipment and going in and out of concrete pipes (tunnels). This is a good activity to develop spatial relationships (e.g., up and down, in and out, over and under).
  9. Play games derived from different cultures. (e.g., Matarile, Hambone, Johnny-Over-the-Water. See bibliography for others.)
  10. Enjoy the outdoors. Children need lots of space for movement. Use a grassy area to run, jump, hop, skip and do exercises for enjoyment.
7. Use an old sock, bag, box or pillowcase to make a "Feely." Put different items inside for the children to touch, describe and identify.
  8. Supply materials such as cans, boxes and lids in graduated sizes for nesting (placing inside one another).
  9. Clay or play dough is a good medium to use for discussing shape, size, texture, numbers, weight, space and color.
  10. Measure and weigh the children at different times of the year. Use a grassy area to run, jump, hop, skip and exercise for enjoyment.

## THINKING AND REASONING SKILLS

At the end of this unit the child should be:

- beginning to observe and use the senses to distinguish similarities and differences in size, shape, color, texture, pattern, dimension, quantity and quality,
- beginning to order items on the basis of dimensions such as size, quality or quantity,
- learning to locate positions in space,
- becoming aware of particular points in time,
- beginning to understand and to verbalize the probable sequence of cause-effect situations,
- learning to make one-to-one relationships.

By developing thinking and reasoning skills, the child:

- develops curiosity,
- makes sense of his/her experiences,
- furthers his/her understanding of the world,
- increases skills for learning and survival,
- forms a base from which to further skills in math,
- forms a base from which to further skills in science.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Buy a pumpkin for the children so they can cut open and discover what is inside. Clean, cook and eat it. Roast and eat the seeds, too. Plant some of the seeds. Water often and watch them grow.
2. Group coins, buttons or other small items with the children. Let them sort the nickels, dimes and pennies. Help them count them. Buttons can be grouped according to size, shape and color. These activities develop readiness for reading and numbers.
3. Collect rocks or leaves and compare sizes, shapes, colors and textures.
4. Assist the children in developing an awareness that days have names and occur in sequence (e.g., "Today is Monday. Tomorrow will be Tuesday").
5. Provide a place for the children to play with water. Sinks, bathtubs and wading pools can be used in discovering quantity, buoyancy and other properties.
6. Play a lotto game to recognize, label and match shapes.

## SOCIAL SKILLS

At the end of this unit the child should:

- get along with peers and adults,
- become an effective member of a group,
- share equipment, materials and attention of others,
- regulate behavior on the basis of his/her judgment and experience,
- deal with the demands or suggestions of others without surrendering his/her own sense of judgment,
- care for and replace materials which are used.

By developing social skills, the child:

- becomes conscious of himself/herself as an individual, a member of the family and a part of society,
- begins to develop sensitivity and consideration for other people and the environment.

While the following activities are suggested for a school setting for four-year-olds, many of them may be done at home:

1. Plan a workshop for parents. Let them select a topic of interest (e.g., game and toymaking, a cake decorating session).
2. Involve the children in roleplaying family choices. (e.g., "Where/When can we go on a picnic?" "What shall we take?")
3. Plan a party with the children. Invite friends. The children will enjoy helping make refreshments and preparing for this special event.
4. Pair the children and have them roleplay helping with household chores. Allow children to choose the job (e.g., washing and drying dishes, setting and clearing the table, cleaning the yard).
5. Allow children to arrange the home center as they wish for their dramatic play sessions. An interesting group activity is making a wallpaper design. Have each child draw a picture of himself/herself on a large sheet of paper. Label each child with his/her name. Hang the wallpaper in the playhouse. It will help the children learn each other's names.

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