

# At Home Learning Guide for Prekindergarteners (4 years old)

Week of March 30, 2020



# This Week's Theme: In the Spring

[Getting Ready for the Week: Guidelines and Materials Prep](#)  
[How to Think Like a Teacher: Learning Happens Everywhere](#)  
[Focus on Routines: Good Morning!](#)  
[Everyday Learning Experiences: Neighborhood Critters](#)  
[Video Field Trips and Outside Resources](#)  
[Social and Emotional Resources](#)

## MONDAY

- [Physical Development and Wellness Activity: Jumping Like Frogs](#)
- [Phonics Enhancement: \*Jan Ran\* and the Word Family an](#)

## TUESDAY

- [Language and Literacy Activity: Spring Stories](#)
- [Cooking Enhancement: "The Hand Washing Song"](#)

## WEDNESDAY

- [Cognitive Development Activity: Bird Nests](#)
- [STEM Enhancement: Water Fireworks](#)

## THURSDAY

- [Executive Function Activity: Picking Up Plastic Insects](#)
- [Music Enhancement: "Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day"](#)

## FRIDAY

- [Creative Expression Activity: Painting Landscapes](#)





### Getting Ready for the Week

This week in our centers, children get to explore both big and little changes that happen in the natural world during the spring season. This guide includes several experiences to help your child explore the changing spring season at home. Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind as you plan for these learning activities and the week ahead.

Our guide for preschool and pre-Kindergarten blends active experiences with more low-key lessons. We suggest ways to incorporate independent play within a daily schedule that offers children comforting routine by alternating between family activities and solo activities. And as always, the guide makes connection between everyday tasks like cutting sandwiches and zipping up jackets and educational areas like math and motor skills.

Our activities for this age group include:

- Tips on how to “Think Like a Teacher”
- Opportunities to work on social emotional learning, and we’ve even included some Learning Adventures content.
- How to incorporate age-appropriate screen time through apps, videos, etc.
- Recommendations for choosing books that reinforce the theme (at-home, e-books).
- Self-directed learning activities for children.
- Tips on mixing it up by adding mindfulness to active activities and movement to more sedentary activities.



### Materials to Gather for the Week

If you'd like, you can gather these materials Sunday evening and put them in a basket or container so they are ready to go for the week!

- Items your child can use to tell a story, such as puppets, dolls, toys, or picture books related to spring
- Glue or tape
- Variety materials your child can use to build a nest, such as sticks, twigs, yarn, paper strips, cardboard tubes, small boxes, fabric scraps, and pipe cleaners
- Basket
- Number cards for 1 through 10
- Plastic insects, 20-30 (cotton balls or pompoms can be used instead)
- Tongs
- Paper
- Paint, watercolor or tempera
- Paintbrush
- Piece of scrap paper
- Pencil
- [Video link](#) to the book *Jan Ran* by Lyssa Horvath, illustrated by Krista Martenson
- [Video link](#) to the storybook and song "Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day"
- Clear plastic bottle, empty and clean with labels removed
- fizzing tablet, such as an Alka Seltzer® tablet
- food coloring
- vegetable or olive oil
- water
- flashlight (optional)
- Sink that your child can safely reach, with or without assistance
- hand soap
- clean paper towel or hand towel
- [lyrics to "The Hand Washing Song"](#)



### How to Think Like a Teacher: Learning Happens Everywhere

Children may be out of school but learning never stops. In fact, every moment of your child's day is full of opportunities to learn. Check out these resources to help you spot- and make the most of- these "teachable moments."

**How Children Learn** Check out this [video](#) from Harvard's Center on the Developing Child to learn why experiences are so important to your child's development, no matter where they happen.

**3 Surprising Ways that Children Learn** Children learn through experiences, even the ones you might not expect. Here are three types of experiences you can pay attention to as you look for teachable moments with your child.

- 1. Challenging behavior:** Some of the things that frustrate us the most are actually children exploring the world around them. Think about it: Flinging peas across the table with a spoon? That's science! Literally climbing up the walls? That's physical development! Does that mean you should initiate a food fight at lunch or turn your living room into a jungle gym? Probably not. But you can re-frame the way you look at these behaviors to see them not as random acts meant to drive you crazy, but instead as learning in action. Once you see the underlying skill that your child is working on with their behavior, you can look for creative- and appropriate- opportunities for them to learn it.
- 2. Trying things that are "too hard":** We all get frustrated when faced with a really difficult task, and children are no exception. But doing something that's incredibly easy poses a different problem: Boredom. What's the sweet spot? Things your child can do, with your help. Don't be afraid to challenge your child's abilities. Instead, pay attention to what they can already do with ease and what's still too hard for them to do on their own. Then, when you have time, work with them to practice the skills that will help them accomplish the task by themselves. These kinds of experiences build connections in your child's brain and strengthen their connection with you- a powerful combination when it comes to learning!
- 3. Quiet Moments:** All experiences are teachable moments, even those without big body movements or materials like toys and art supplies. Slowing down, taking a few deep breaths, and paying attention to how their body feels can help your child learn to focus, self-regulate, and be aware of their own feelings. Check out our daily Social and Emotional Resources to learn how you can incorporate mindfulness into your child's everyday life.

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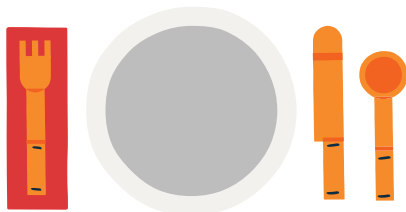
## Interactive Learning Activity - What Are They Learning?

Children learn from every experience, even the most routine ones. Check out the examples below of everyday activities. Think about what children might be learning, and how you can find other ways for them to practice those skills. Then fill in the missing examples for your child.

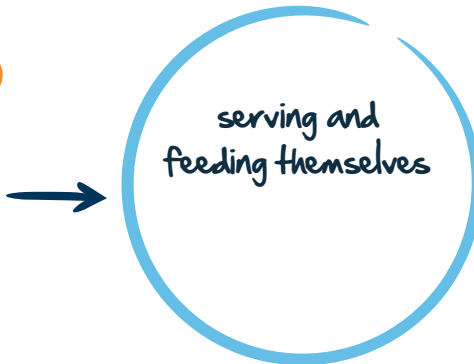
### What are they doing?

### What skills are they learning?

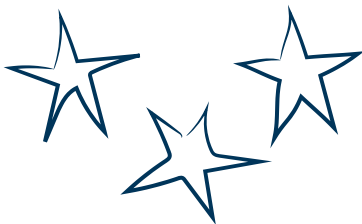
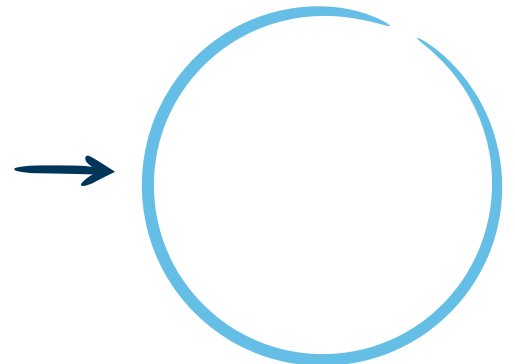
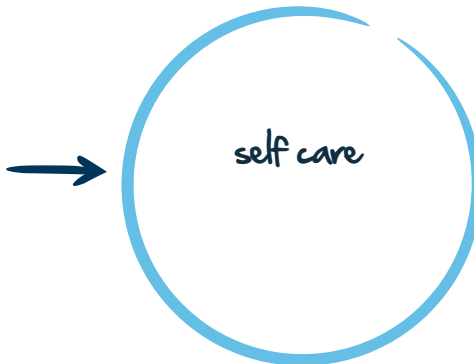
### How can I find ways to help them practice?



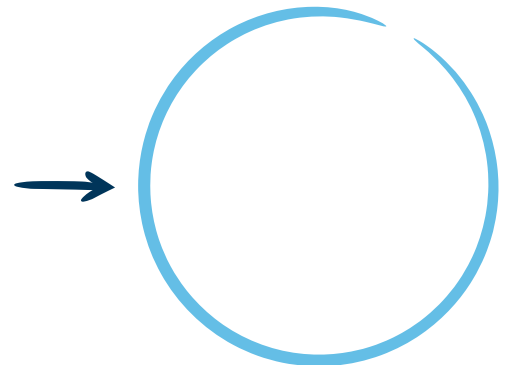
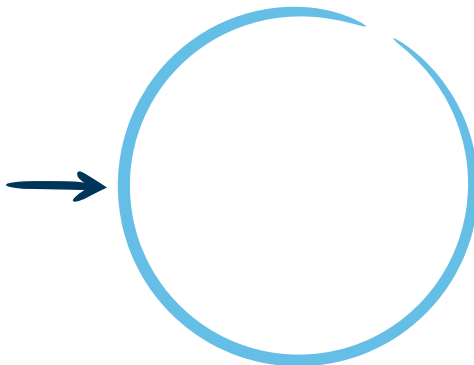
Meal Time



Getting Dressed



Going to Sleep



**Try It!** This week, spend 1 minute watching your child during a time where it seems like nothing much is going on. Take a closer look- what are they really doing? How can you find even more ways to practice the skill they're working on?

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## Daily Routines

From our tiny babies to our big kids, consistent, predictable routines will help everyone, including grownups, find some stability and sense of order in such unpredictable times. Here's a simple sample schedule you can modify in the way that feels right for your family and an example of an engaging routine in-line with what your child would be doing in their center!

Children thrive on predictability and consistency which will help you manage long days at home and even get some work done!

### Routine to focus on: Good Morning!

While not much feels "normal" right now, maintaining as many of our normal routines as possible will help us all feel like some things are still the same. While making every day pajama day might sound appealing, following a consistent morning routine will help get each day off to a great start. Waking up at their regular time, having breakfast, brushing teeth and getting dressed will let your child know that even when big changes happen, some things also stay the same.

TIME	CHILD	CAREGIVER
8:00–9:00 a.m.	Morning routine: Breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed	Help your child through your morning routine as needed, stealing a few minutes to check emails and calendar over breakfast. While you have some extra time in the mornings, allow your kiddo to spend some time working on emerging self-care skills like dressing themselves and mastering snaps and buttons.
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Play time	Play time! Look for activities that will be easy to do if you have to take a call – don't worry, we've provided suggestions.
10:00–10:15 a.m.	Snack time	Snack time! Involve your child by counting crackers together or allowing them to place slices of cheese on top of crackers.
10:15–11:30 a.m.	Play time	Play time! Look for activities that will be easy to do if you have to take a call or activities you know your child can enjoy independently. It also might be the right time for an educational video or an episode of a favorite cartoon.
11:30 a.m.–noon	Lunch	In their center your kiddo would be helping to set the table, so they can do the same at home! Giving your child a role to play in these types of routines not only gives them something to do, but it also teaches them about working together and caring for themselves and others.

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TIME	CHILD	CAREGIVER
noon-3:00 p.m.	Nap time	Nap time for little one! It may be tempting to join them, but this is also your moment to get some work done uninterrupted!
3:00-5:00 p.m.	Snack and Play	One more snack, a bit more play, and you and your kiddo have just about made it through the day!

## Everyday Learning Experiences: Neighborhood Critters

In the Spring, we begin to see signs of animal life once again. Whether you have a backyard to spend time in, go for a walk around the block, or even peek out the window, there are animals to be seen and heard, if we pay close attention. While enjoying (or observing) the outdoors, help your child focus on their senses of sight and sound to observe what animals are out and about.

## Outside Resources

All the people are at home, but where do animals take shelter? Extend this week's learning by providing shelter for our feathered friends by creating a homemade bird house! Resource: [Homemade Birdhouse](#)

## Virtual Field Trip -

[Phipps Conservatory Online Tour](#)

## Social and Emotional Resources

### Learning Routines

Opportunities to teach social and emotional skills are intertwined in everything that we do. Relationships and repetition are key ingredients for learning any skill. Routines give children a sense of security and helps them learn self-control, positive behaviors, and social skills.

**TRY THIS:** Create a consistent hand washing routine. Teach your child appropriate times to wash and how to wash the tops and bottoms of their hands. Practice washing hands while singing to the tune of their favorite songs or chants. Be sure it lasts 20 seconds or more. Ex. We will, we will, wash you. Repeat 3x.

### Reading Behavior Cues

Spending more time at home than usual may lead to new behavior issues or intensify current concerns. Since behavior is a form of communication, it's important to observe your children closely to understand the meaning behind their big feelings. Reading behavior cues is the key to understanding your child's behavior.

**TRY THIS:** Identify what happens right before your child's behavior issue to find out what triggered the emotional response. Think about things such as time of day, temperature, boredom, yawning, and hunger.



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## Exploration Space

Setting up an engaging and safe space for independent exploration and movement is not only helpful in building confidence in your child but offers you an opportunity to engage in online meetings, prepare meals, complete other tasks on your to-do list or take a much-needed break.

**TRY THIS:** Fill a bin with a few toys and soft objects in an open space for free movement. This bin can be filled with a new set of toys to play with each day to create excitement around playtime.

## Development of Play

Play nurtures your child's development and offers them the opportunity to test their ideas and learn new skills. Learn more about the power of play [here](#).

**TRY THIS:** Schedule a daily family play date. This can be for any length of time. Let your child take the lead and watch as they use their imagination while you play along. Knowing that there is time dedicated to play as a family can be helpful with limiting interruptions when you're busy.

## What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is simply taking a moment to slow down and notice what your mind is doing and how your body feels. By noticing these things children can begin to create space between strong emotions and their actions.

**TRY THIS:** Have a mindful snack and encourage your child to chew slowly while they describe the color, smell, texture, and taste of the food. If you are feeding your child, take a moment to describe the food to them.



### Monday, March 30, 2020

#### Physical Development and Wellness Activity: Jumping Like Frogs

**Length of activity:** 5–10 minutes

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** Low

**What you need:** N/A

**What you do:** Invite your child to share what they know about frogs. Explain that in the spring, frogs come out of hibernation and begin to lay their eggs. Ask your child how frogs move. Have your child practice squatting down towards the ground, extending their arms and placing their hands on the floor, and then jumping like a frog, landing in the same position in which they started. Once your child is familiar with jumping like a frog, invite them to jump like a frog to different locations and to count how many jumps it takes. For example, how many jumps does it take to get from the bedroom door to the bed?

**What your child is learning:** This activity strengthens the large muscles in your child’s legs and improves their balance and coordination while also giving them a chance to practice counting in a physically active way.

**If your child is ready:** Invite your child to think of other animals they see in the spring, how those animals move, and how they could move like those animals. For example, how can they move like a caterpillar? Like a butterfly? Like a squirrel? Like a bird?

#### Jan Ran and the Word Family an (Phonics Adventures)

**Length of activity:** 5–10 minutes

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** High

**What you need:** Piece of scrap paper, pencil, and [video link](#) to the book *Jan Ran* by Lyssa Horvath, illustrated by Krista Martenson

**What you do:** With your child watching, write an on paper. Explain that when the letters a and n are put together in this way, they make the /an/ sound. The /an/ sound is made up of two smaller sounds, /a/ and /n/. Show your child how to blend the two sounds together by sweeping your finger under the letters from left to right and saying /aaannn/.

Explain that an is a word family. “Word families are groups of words that have the same ending sound, like the ending an.” Tell your child that the book they are going to hear has lots of words from the an word family. Play the video and invite your child to watch along as the book is read aloud. After viewing, help your child recall the different an words they heard.

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If you'd like, you can mute the audio while you play the video and read the book aloud yourself. Or if your child is ready, they can do the reading!

## Questions to ask:

- Who is the story about?
- What can Jan and Dan do?
- Can you do that too?
- How do the illustrations help tell the story?
- What are the an words you saw and heard?

## What your child is learning:

- Word family an and /an/ as the ending sound in consonant/vowel/consonant words
- Building words using a word family
- Beginning to read words

## Tuesday, March 31, 2020

### Language and Literacy Activity: Spring Stories

**Length of activity:** 10 minutes

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** Low to medium

**What you need:** Items your child can use to tell a story, such as puppets, dolls, toys, or picture books related to spring

**What you do:** Talk with your child about spring where you live. What changes do you notice? What flowers are blooming? What animals are you noticing? What activities does your family normally do in the spring? Show your child the items you have selected and invite them to use the items to tell you, or another family member, a spring story. If using picture books, invite your child to tell you the story that they see happening in the illustrations.

**What your child is learning:** This activity develops your child's ability to understand and tell stories, as well as their understanding of the relationship between pictures and text in a book.

**If your child is ready:** Revisit your child's spring story using the materials you gathered or the book you selected. Pick an event from the story, using the materials or book as a visual reminder. Then ask your child to describe what happened before or after that. See if, together, you can remember the sequence of events in the story.



## “The Hand Washing Song” (Cooking Academy)

**Length of activity:** 3-5 minutes

**Level of engagement required by adult:** High

### What you need:

- Sink that your child can safely reach, with or without assistance
- hand soap
- clean paper towel or hand towel
- lyrics to “The Hand Washing Song” (see next page)

### “The Hand Washing Song”

(sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row, Your Boat”)

Wet, wet, wet your hands,  
Get both palms and tops.  
Now cover them with sudsy soap,  
But it’s not time to stop!

Wash, wash, wash your hands.  
Scrub those germs away.  
Now rinse your hands with water,  
And “Goodbye, germs!” you’ll say!

Dry, dry, dry, your hands,  
With paper towels, and  
Turn off the faucet with the towels,  
Then toss in a trash can!

**What you do:** At a time that you would normally have your child wash their hands, like before helping to prepare food or eating, tell your child that you learned a new hand washing song and would like to share it with them.

Slowly sing “The Hand Washing Song” while demonstrating the actions in the song. The actual hand washing should take about 20 seconds.

Next, encourage your child to slowly sing the same song with you while they complete the actions in the song. Again, the actual washing should take about 20 seconds.

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## Questions to ask:

- Why is it important for you to scrub your hands for so long?
- Why is it important to scrub your hands and not just rinse them?
- What do you think the soap bubbles are doing while you wash your hands?
- Why do you think the song tells you to turn the faucet off with a towel?
- When are other good times to wash our hands throughout the day?

## What your child is learning:

- The proper steps for hand washing
- How long to wash hands before they are fully clean

## Wednesday, April 1, 2020

### Cognitive Development Activity: Bird Nests

**Length of activity:** 10–15 minutes

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** Low to medium

#### What you need:

- Glue or tape
- Variety of materials your child can use to build a nest, such as sticks, twigs, yarn, paper strips, cardboard tubes, small boxes, fabric scraps, and pipe cleaners

**What you do:** Ask your child what they know about bird nests. Why do birds build nests? What materials do birds use? Show your child the materials you have gathered and invite them to build a bird nest of their own design.

**What your child is learning:** By thinking about then building a bird's nest, your child is practicing skills related to creative thinking, problem-solving, engineering, and representational thought—the ability to understand that one object symbolizes or represents another.

**If your child is ready:** Add a challenge, such as providing your child with a toy or stuffed bird and having them build a nest that is just the right size for that bird or having them invent a way to attach their nest to a tree branch.



### Water Fireworks (STEM Innovators)

**Length of activity:** 10–15 minutes

**Level of engagement required by adult:** High

#### What you need:

- ❑ Clear plastic bottle, empty and clean with labels removed
- ❑ fizzing tablet, such as an Alka Seltzer® tablet
- ❑ food coloring, vegetable or olive oil
- ❑ water
- ❑ flashlight (optional)

#### What you do:

Fill the bottle  $\frac{1}{4}$  full with water. Add 8–10 drops of food coloring and gently shake the bottle to mix the food coloring and water.

Add vegetable or olive oil to the bottle, leaving an inch or two of empty space at the top.

Break the fizzing tablet in half and drop one half into the bottle. The fizzing tablet will sink to the bottom and start the fireworks show! To keep the effect going, add the other half of the tablet. If you want a real lava-lamp effect, dim the lights and shine a flashlight through the bottle.

After doing this activity together, dispose of the mixture right away. It's pretty to look at, but not good to drink!

#### Questions to ask your budding scientist:

- ❑ What will happen when we drop the tablet in the bottle? (predict)
- ❑ Describe each liquid... (observe and compare)
- ❑ How can you use the lava lamp? (invent)

#### What your child is learning:

- ❑ STEM mindsets of wonder and observation
- ❑ Properties of various liquids

**The science behind it:** Oil isn't as dense as water, so when oil is poured onto water, it floats on the top of the water. Food coloring is water-based, meaning it has a greater density than oil, too. When drops of food coloring are added on top of the oil, they sink through the oil and mix into the water below, causing a watery explosion.



Thursday, April 2, 2020

### Executive Function Activity: Picking Up Plastic Insects

**Length of activity:** 5-10 minutes

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** Low

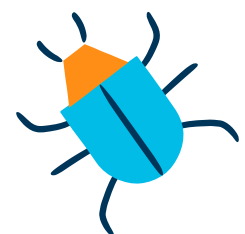
**What you need:**

- Basket
- Number cards for 1 through 10
- Plastic insects, 20-30 (cotton balls or pompoms can be used instead)
- Tongs

**What you do:** Shuffle the number cards and place them in a facedown stack. Have your child spread the insects out in the playing area and place the basket near the insects. Have your child turn over the top card in the stack, read the number, and then using the tongs to pick up the insects, move the corresponding number of insects into the basket. Repeat for the rest of the cards in the stack, occasionally removing the insects from the basket and returning them to the playing area.

**What your child is learning:** This activity builds your child's understanding that a written number represents a specific number of objects. It also helps them strengthen and control the small muscles in their hands and arms.

**If your child is ready:** Turn this into a game using a die instead of number cards and giving each player their own basket. A player takes a turn by rolling the die and placing that many insects in their basket, then it is the next player's turn. After every player has had a turn, each player counts the number of insects in their basket and the player with the most insects wins that round. The insects are returned to the playing area and the next round begins. You and your child can determine when the game ends. For example, it may end when a single player has won three rounds, or it may end after five rounds of play.





### “Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day” (Music Explorers)

**Length of activity:** 3-5 minutes

**Level of engagement required by adult:** Low

**What you need:** [Video link](#) to the storybook and song “Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day”

**What you do:** Play the video and invite your child to watch along as the book is read aloud. After viewing, help your child recall the characters and what happened. Next, you can mute the audio while you play the song and encourage your child to dance.

#### Questions to Ask:

- ❑ Who were the characters in the story?
- ❑ What were each of the ducks doing?
- ❑ Where did the ducks go?
- ❑ How did you feel when the ducks came back?
- ❑ How does the music make you feel?
- ❑ How can you dance to this music?

#### What your child is learning:

- ❑ Counting forward and back
- ❑ Connection that can exist between a song and a book
- ❑ Moving creatively to music







Friday, April 3, 2020

## Creative Expression Activity: Painting Landscapes

**Length of activity:** 10–15 minutes

**Level of Engagement Required by Adult:** Low

### What you need:

- Paper
- Paint, watercolor or tempera
- Paintbrush

**What you do:** Set up a painting station near a window, or if possible, outdoors. Invite your child to sit or stand at the painting station and share what they see out the window, or if outdoors, what they see around them. Explain that some artists paint landscape pictures to help them remember someplace they have been or to share what that place looks like with others. Invite your child to create a landscape painting based on what they see.

**What your child is learning:** This activity encourages your child to express their thoughts using art, and helps your child practice using different artistic tools to create and add details to representations of the things around them.

**If your child is ready:** Invite them to create a variety of landscape paintings showing different locations, and then help them to display their paintings and have a gallery show where your child can share and talk about their paintings.

