

LEARNING TO GROW

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII



Community Contributor

Raising A School-Ready Child

As parents, guardians, and/or child care providers, you have a powerful influence on children's learning. Children's love of learning begins at home. Your active involvement in providing positive early learning experiences gives them a solid base to build on when they enter school. It also makes an important contribution toward creating strong, positive home and school partnerships that help children succeed in school.

Each month, *Raising a School-Ready Child* will provide you with ideas on how to engage young children, especially 3- and 4-year olds, in everyday activities that help them develop the characteristics, positive behaviors, and skills that lead to success at home, school, work, and in life. These activities will be linked to one of the six General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) identified and used by Hawaii's Department of Education to evaluate students' performance in all grade levels and all academic disciplines.

This month's readiness activities focus on GLO #2:

Community Contributors understand that it is essential for human beings to work together.

By spending time regularly interacting with and guiding children – in play or in family activities – you provide them opportunities to learn:

- ♥ appropriate behaviors,
- ♥ important values and expectations, and
- ♥ how to work cooperatively with others.

These are important readiness skills that will help children be ***community contributors*** in school. In kindergarten, children will be expected to:

- ♥ participate cooperatively and appropriately with others to achieve shared goals,
- ♥ show respect and recognize others' feelings,
- ♥ follow school and classroom rules, and
- ♥ make good choices.



See the back of this sheet for suggestions of activities you can do with young children. As you involve them in these types of activities, you give children the practice and encouragement they need to become ***community contributors***. In addition, you help them develop their physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive skills.



Following Directions *

WHAT YOU NEED:

- ♥ Music with a lively beat
- ♥ Radio or CD player or a musical instrument such as a tambourine, drum, or homemade instrument

WHAT TO DO:

1. Tell the children you are going to play a game with music. When the music is playing, they can dance, march to the beat, or jump around. When the music stops, they must stop moving and “freeze” in whatever position they are in.
2. Turn on the music and encourage them to move around. Then turn it off. When they stop, praise them for listening and controlling their actions. For example, “You did a good job of following directions. You stopped dancing when the music stopped.”

* Adapted from *Learning to Grow Early Learning Activities for Young Preschoolers*, produced by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Center on the Family.

Other Activities

1. **Hand Motions:** Instead of using music, have the children watch you. When you have your hands on your lap, they can move or dance, but when you raise your hand, they must freeze.
2. **Simon Says:** Play the game of “Simon Says.” Explain that when Simon Says to do something, they need to follow the instruction. For example, when you say

“Simon says jump up and down,” they should jump until you say “Simon says stop jumping.” Explain that if you do not say “Simon says,” they should not follow the instructions. Take turns being Simon.

3. **Chores:** Have children help with simple chores such as sorting and folding the laundry, setting the table for mealtime, or emptying the trash.
4. **Citizenship:** Talk about what it means to be a good citizen – how to be responsible and to help others. Read stories about community helpers (police officers, firefighters, lifeguards, paramedics, etc.) and what they do to help others.
5. **Games:** Provide opportunities to play with other children. Teach children one of your favorite games or activities, e.g. card or board games, hanafuda or mahjong, or outdoor activities like mini golf, fishing, or ball games. Explain rules of the game, importance of taking turns, and good sportsmanship.

These types of activities also help children:

- ♥ Use and strengthen large muscles such as neck, arms, and legs (Physical Development)
- ♥ Learn to cooperate with others (Social and Emotional Development)
- ♥ Increase their observation, listening and understanding skills, and attention span (Language and Literacy Development)
- ♥ Build math vocabulary (Cognitive Development)*

IMPORTANT REMINDER

The knowledge and skills children learn at an earlier age provide the foundation for more complex learning as they get older. To encourage children's love of learning:

- ♥ focus on having fun rather than improving specific skills
- ♥ follow their interests; select activities they enjoy
- ♥ adapt activities to match their capabilities, making them more challenging as children mature.