

LEARNING TO GROW

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII



Effective Communicator

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 Hawai'i's Department of Education to evaluate students' performance in all grade levels and all academic disciplines.

This month's readiness activities focus on
GLO #5:

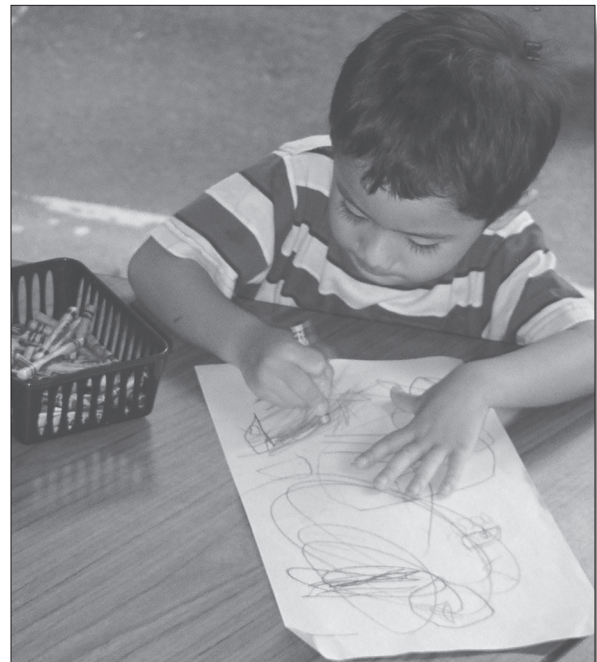
Effective Communicators have the ability to communicate effectively.

When you use language in many ways with children – by reading or telling stories together, describing or explaining experiences, asking and answering questions, encouraging expression of thoughts and feelings either verbally or in writing – you help them learn:

- ♥ new words and ideas,
- ♥ different ways to express themselves, and
- ♥ the connection between spoken language and written language.

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

- ♥ speak effectively in front of a group,
- ♥ listen attentively to gain understanding,
- ♥ follow directions, and
- ♥ contribute effectively through speaking, drawing, and writing.



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 **effective communicators**. In addition, you help them develop their physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive skills.



Create a Story*

WHAT YOU NEED:

- ♥ Paper
- ♥ Jumbo crayons or washable markers

WHAT TO DO:

1. Ask the child to think of someone or something; for example, a familiar person like grandpa or a favorite animal or flower.
2. Start the story by making up something about the person or item. For example, if the child picked “turtle,” you might say, “A little green *honu* (turtle) lived in the ocean.”
3. Ask the child to add the next line to the story.
4. Continue taking turns adding to the story. Let the child take the lead in directing the story. Don’t worry about whether the story makes sense. Have fun with it. If the child needs help with ideas, ask a few questions, for example:
 - ♥ What is the *honu*’s name?
 - ♥ What does she like to do?
 - ♥ Who does she like to play with?
 - ♥ What does she see as she swims in the ocean?
5. Write down the story and have the child draw or color pictures to illustrate the book.

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

Other Activities:

1. **Write a Note:** Help the child write a note to someone special – it’s okay if he scribbles. Demonstrate how to fold the letter, put it in the envelope, address it, seal it, and affix the postage stamp. Go to the mail box together and explain what happens to the mail.
2. **Scavenger Hunt:** Have a scavenger hunt by making picture cards to use as clues. Together, cut out pictures from magazines and glue them to index cards. Write the names of the pictures on the cards. Make up different themes to hunt for such as alphabets, colors, opposites, etc.
3. **Trip to the Beach Book:** After a family outing, write a corresponding story. Have the child tell you the story as you write it down. Have him illustrate the story. Help him write his name, saying each letter as it is written.
4. **Drama:** After reading a favorite book, act out the story together. Or, make a felt board or puppet show. Follow the child’s lead. Keep it familiar or expand on the story, create alternate story lines, different endings, and additional characters.
5. **Grocery List:** Have the child help you prepare a grocery shopping list by cutting pictures and coupons from the newspaper. Or make a book using the newspaper pictures of food (favorite foods, fruits, vegetables, etc.)

These types of activities also help children:

- ♥ Learn through their senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching (Physical Development)
- ♥ Learn to cooperate with others (Social and Emotional Development)
- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language (Language and Literacy Development)
- ♥ Develop their creativity and imagination (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.