



plunket  
whānau āwhina

# Activities for whānau at home

## Four - five year olds

### Scavenger Hunts

Our pre-schoolers learn through play, observation, and exploration. While thoughtful and intentional worksheets have their place in a young learner's education, children gain so much through guided and free exploration of the world around them.

Scavenger hunts are an easy, adaptable, and fun way to interact with your child and help them start making discoveries of their own. It doesn't matter if you're grocery shopping, spending time at the park, or driving in the car -- there are always things your child can be searching for. Not only can scavenger hunts be done just about anywhere, they also boost observation skills and help children develop early learning skills in a fun, relaxed, and natural way. Plus, it's just so much more fun to hunt for the colour red, the letter E, and an octagon than it is to fill in a paper about them!

As you begin to encourage your child to become more aware of their surroundings, your child will begin to make observations independently.

Encourage your child to strap on their "eagle eyes" and start making discoveries! What will you find together? What will you see? Have fun!

#### Look for Colours

Go on a search for every colour in the rainbow. Challenge your child to find something of each colour. If they spot a colour they don't know, talk about it!



#### Look for Shapes

Young learners are always so excited to discover how much of their world is made up of shapes. Help your child look for the basic shapes, like rectangles and squares, but don't hesitate from introducing her to shapes like parallelograms and trapezoids. You can also begin to talk about three-dimensional shapes like cylinders and cubes.

#### Look for Letters

Even if your child cannot yet identify the letters, encouraging observation of environmental print can boost early literacy skills. Your pre-schooler will quickly begin to notice that letters are all around them. If your child knows his letters, give them specific letters to search for.

#### Look for Nature

Kids learn so much through careful observation of the natural world. As they inspect insects, rocks, and leaves, they have opportunity to simultaneously learn about texture, colour, shape, size, etc.

## Sorting activity



This activity can be done with counters, buttons, lego pieces etc. Have different jars / plastic containers to put labels on.

Sorting is an easy activity to set up which promotes colour recognition, measurement and classifying skills. Colourful buttons / counters / lego pieces are great for sorting and matching them according to colour and size. This activity is good for:

- Fine Motor Development
- Hand-Eye Coordination and Control
- Concentration
- Language development – describing the buttons and bigger, smaller, etc.
- Mathematics – measurement, comparing size.
- Colour recognition
- Problem solving skills – comparing the differences and sorting them accordingly



## Chalk activities

As well as being great for drawing on blackboards and concrete there are some great activities you can try outside. If you have a fence the activity below might be fun to try and will cheer up the fence too. Grab some insulation tape and different coloured chalk and head outside.



## Simon Says...

An oldie but a goodie – the whole whānau can play this together.

**SIMON SAYS**

<p>SIT DOWN TURN AROUND IN A CIRCLE JUMP UP AND DOWN HOP ON YOUR RIGHT FOOT HOP ON YOUR LEFT FOOT CLAP YOUR HANDS TOUCH YOUR KNEES WIGGLE YOUR FINGERS PUT ONE ARM IN THE AIR FLAP YOUR ARMS LIKE A BIRD SLITHER ON THE GROUND LIKE A SNAKE QUACK LIKE A DUCK RUN IN PLACE STAND ON ONE FOOT PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HIPS PRETEND YOU ARE A DOG MOO LIKE A COW WINK YOUR RIGHT EYE PUCKER YOUR LIPS SING AS LOUD AS YOU CAN PAT YOUR BELLY PUT BOTH HANDS ON YOUR HEAD WAVE HELLO RAISE BOTH HANDS IN THE AIR SHAKE YOUR RIGHT ARM SHAKE YOUR LEFT ARM</p>	<p>PRETEND LIKE YOU ARE SLEEPING ROLL ON THE FLOOR DO A SOMERSAULT SKIP AROUND THE ROOM GALLOP LIKE A HORSE MEOW LIKE A CAT HOP TO THE RIGHT HOP TO THE LEFT MAKE CIRCLES WITH YOUR ARMS TOUCH YOUR EARS STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE DO JUMPING JACKS DO A SILLY DANCE DO A CARTWHEEL SQUEAK LIKE A MOUSE WALK LIKE A PENGUIN SIT DOWN AND SCOOT ACROSS THE ROOM WALK ON YOUR TIP TOES MAKE A SAD FACE MAKE A HAPPY FACE ACT LIKE YOU ARE ICE SKATING DO A SIT UP TALK LIKE A ROBOT ACT LIKE YOU ARE DRIVING A CAR DO A PUSH UP WIGGLE YOUR TOES</p>
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## Activity sticks



"I'm bored, what can I do, there is nothing to do!" With these activity sticks with all the possibilities written on them then your children only need to pick out a stick to find another activity to do – a great way to keep little ones busy and off technology. All you need is some ice block sticks or strips of cardboard to write on and some containers to put them in.

## Ball Play

Find some balls of different shapes and sizes. Allow space to kick, throw, pass, catch, toss, bat, bowl, sit on the ball. Make up rules for the 'game' to suit the age of your child.

- Get balls of different textures and weights – blow-up beach balls are light
- Hit balls with bats

- Blow up a balloon and see how long your child can keep it in the air by gently batting the balloon. Toddlers can safely develop catching skills with balloons
- Put up a basketball hoop (down low) to practice hoops
- Blow ping pong balls with a straw (table top soccer)

## Water Play



You will need:

- A basin of water [this must be supervised at all times]
- A floor covering such as a towel
- Items bigger than a ping pong ball that float or sink, for example, large seashells, plastic animals, boats, a teaspoon, scoop, a sponge

Children find waterplay soothing. They may develop ideas about floating and sinking and practice their hand eye coordination.

## Play dough

With good handwashing routines and care play dough is still a great option for young children even when they can't be around others. Remember if they are unwell then it is a one-use item but if they are in good health the play dough can be stored for a few play sessions in the fridge in an airtight container.

Playdough activities:



## Play dough recipe

Play dough is a great activity for children of all ages.

### Ingredients:

2 cups flour, 1/2 cup salt, 2 tablespoons cooking oil, 2 tablespoons cream of tartar, 2 cups boiling water, 1 teaspoon food colouring

Mix all dry ingredients, add oil and boiling water with food colouring, mix well.

Store in an airtight container.

To add interest, you can add glitter for a textural change, some aromatherapy scented oil for smell.

With some shaped cutters, rolling pin and some imagination your set for hours of fun.



# A visit to the park

## 30 THINGS TO FIND AT THE PARK

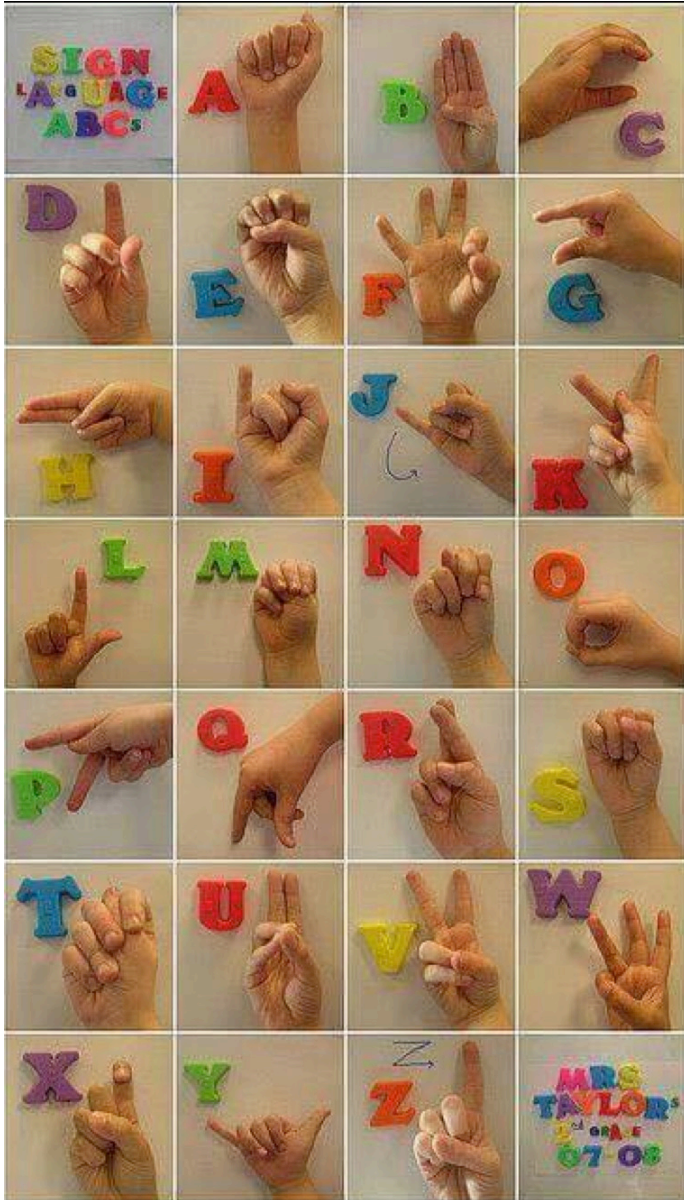
<input type="checkbox"/> Birds	<input type="checkbox"/> Bees	<input type="checkbox"/> Puddle	<input type="checkbox"/> Something too big to carry	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinking fountains
<input type="checkbox"/> Squirrels	<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers	<input type="checkbox"/> Pinecone	<input type="checkbox"/> Butterflies	<input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom
<input type="checkbox"/> Vine	<input type="checkbox"/> Picnic table	<input type="checkbox"/> Grill or fire pit	<input type="checkbox"/> Something to climb	<input type="checkbox"/> Stairs
<input type="checkbox"/> A jungle gym	<input type="checkbox"/> Doggies	<input type="checkbox"/> Slide	<input type="checkbox"/> Seed Pod	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand
<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage can	<input type="checkbox"/> Something small enough to fit in a pocket	<input type="checkbox"/> Trail sign	<input type="checkbox"/> Slugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Stick
<input type="checkbox"/> A wooden walkway	<input type="checkbox"/> A bridge	<input type="checkbox"/> Geese or ducks	<input type="checkbox"/> Bike racks	<input type="checkbox"/> Basketball or tennis courts

www.hikeitbaby.com

# Learn a language

Learning a language is a great activity for the whole whānau. There are some great resources online that can get you started.

How about sign language...



Or how about Te reo Māori...



## Hopscotch



Outside use chalk to make a hopscotch or for inside try using some masking tape on the carpet or on tiles / lino.

## Gardening

People of all ages can enjoy gardening, but children in particular will have lots of fun and gain special benefits. Gardening is educational and develops new skills including:

- Responsibility – from caring for plants
- Understanding – as they learn about cause and effect (for example, plants die without water, weeds compete with plants)
- Self-confidence – from achieving their goals and enjoying the food they have grown
- Love of nature – a chance to learn about the outdoor environment in a safe and pleasant place
- Reasoning and discovery – learning about the science of plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and simple construction
- Physical activity – doing something fun and productive
- Cooperation – including shared play activity and teamwork
- Creativity – finding new and exciting ways to grow food
- Nutrition – learning about where fresh food comes from

## Pet Rocks



Go out for a walk and find some stones / rocks that the children can personalise with paint and other craft items.

## Safety memo for this age and stage

**Adult supervision is the key to preventing injuries.**

**BEING THERE WHERE YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR YOUR CHILDREN AND ARE ABLE TO HELP THEM QUICKLY IS 'ACTIVELY SUPERVISING' THEM.**

- Toddlers can control their movements but have limited communication skills. They often suffer injuries due to their increased curiosity, activeness and interest in exploring their surroundings.
- Falls: look at placement of furniture; do not place it in front of windows. Ensure stairs have some sort of barrier placed at the top or bottom.
- Suffocation or choking: grate, cook, finely chop or mash your toddlers food and make sure they sit while they eat, sit with them. Small toys, smaller than a pingpong ball are choking hazards.
- Poisoning: Toddlers will still put things in their mouths as they explore and learn what is safe. To reduce the risk keep all poisons including medication out of reach and out of sight.
- Burns: Hot water or drinks are commonly spilled, toddlers are at higher risk of burns with their thin skin.
- Put hot drinks or food in the centre of the table and try not to use a tablecloth or place mats as small children can pull these off the table.
- **The purple section Safety in your Plunket Thriving under Five has details on many of the most common injury prevention topics.**

## Acknowledgements

This list of activities has been put together using a number of sources. We would like to acknowledge the following sites that we have used as part of this list.

Flo.health	Livewellplaytogether.com
Todayparent.com	Raisingchildren.net.au
Babyschooling.com	SLFP.org.nz
Under5s.co.nz	Jugglingwithkids.com
Momjunction.com	Learning4kids.net
Lessons4learners.com	Handsonaswegrow.com
Imagination Tree	Goodtoknow.co.uk
Scholastic.com	Mykidstime.com
Chelsea.co.nz	Pinterest