



4-5 Years

Here are some ways that you can help your child learn and grow in all of the areas covered in the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS). You may see some ideas in different areas that are almost the same. That's because children are learning a lot of different things as they learn more about the people and the world around them. These ideas don't have to be all you do with your child! You can think of new ways to build on everything included here. Just as your child is learning, you can keep learning ways to support your child's growth. The most important thing to remember as you use these strategies is to have fun and find ways to help your child learn every day!



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood



Cognition

Discover learning

When your child is interested in a particular topic, find ways that they can learn more about it. Find a website or video, have a phone call or video chat with a community member who knows about the topic, or read books on the topic.

Solve problems together

Find solutions to problems together. For example, if your child comes to you for help getting something out of a high cupboard, ask what might be done to get it down. Ask for your child's help solving household problems, such as unclogging the vacuum cleaner or fixing something that is broken.

Explore your home, yard, or neighborhood

Learning can take place anywhere. Explore your cupboards or closets and the outdoors. Cook and bake together, talk about math, talk about nature, and talk about how things work.

Find creative ways to use common items

Build a fort using cushions, sheets, and laundry baskets. Use cardboard boxes and paper towel tubes to create a farm or city. The possibilities are endless!

Social and Emotional Development

Talk about feelings

Label emotions and talk about ways to help your child calm down when they are upset.

Teach your child about getting along with others

Show your child how to get along with adults and children. Help your child understand why we follow rules and use nice words. Talk about how words and behaviors make other people feel, so your child can make choices about their words and behaviors.

Model ways to handle conflict

Show your child how to handle disagreements by talking through them. Ideas for helping your child include:

- Suggesting words to use when upset (e.g. "Tell him that you feel mad when he knocks over the tower you were building.")
- Modeling ways to calm down before talking (e.g. "I'm feeling mad right now and I need a few minutes alone to calm down before we talk.")
- Helping your child figure out a compromise (e.g. "You both want this toy. What could we do so you both get to use it?")





Physical Health and Development

Plan time for your child to be active

Make sure that your child has time to engage in vigorous physical activity. Go to a park or have a dance party in your living room. Try to vary the actions, so your child gets to use a variety of muscles. Play with them or find others who will help them stay engaged and interested in moving.

Make motion a part of everything you do

Jump off the curb, walk a silly walk, or stretch like a giraffe in the morning. Physical activity can be a fun part of many everyday activities and, best of all—it helps children learn and grow.

Make a game of nutrition

Challenge your child to find foods from various food groups and help you plan a healthy menu. Use a list to go grocery shopping together and talk about other foods. Try one new food each week, rotating the food group you try.

Language and Literacy

Read, read, read

Reading lots of different books with your child can help them build a love of reading, as well as help them learn new things! Let your child choose books about topics they are interested in. Pair reading with other things your child enjoys, such as sitting in a favorite, comfortable chair or having a snack.

Point out the words and symbols you see everyday

Talk about how words tell us where to go (e.g. park entrance signs) and what to do (e.g. stop signs). Point out times that words help you, such as reading a recipe or reading a letter or a message from a family member. Share signs and symbols that your child might get excited about, such as the sign for the library or the grocery store.

Make words fun

Engage in wordplay, rhyming, and using words that start with the same sound (alliteration). Sing silly songs that involve plays on words or read books that have rhymes. Have fun learning new words or making up new words.





Creative Arts

Encourage creativity

Encourage creativity and expression, and don't worry about how things turn out! Ask your child questions about their thoughts and what they're doing. Point out things you notice about the artwork instead of focusing on whether it looks like something or matches someone else's work.

Allow your child to make pictures and sculptures

Provide your child with materials to create visual works! Use recycled materials, glue or paste, paints, items with different textures, pencils, and paper. Ask your child about what they are doing. Encourage your child to be creative and remember that they are learning no matter how things look in the end.

Build on children's pretend play and interest in music

Many young children enjoy pretending to be other people or animals. Play games with your child that involve pretending to be different things. Use your body, voice, and any handy props. Build on any interest in music to explore listening to and/or playing different types of music.

Dance

Encourage your child to use their body to express how they feel or to show the mood of the music. Show your child how they can move fast or slow, smooth, or choppy, etc.

Mathematics

Talk numbers

Count and point out numbers in the environment, talk about age, and use other math words such as *more*, *fewer*, *longer*, *taller*, etc. Make numbers fun by singing songs that include numbers or playing games that involve counting.

Use numbers to solve problems

If you are trying to see if something fits in a certain space, use a ruler and count the inches. If your child draws something, ask them to draw it bigger and then measure to compare. Ask your child to find out if you have enough plates for dinner. Have them count the number of people who will be eating and the number of plates to figure out how many more you need.

Explore shapes

Handling and combining different shapes helps your child understand two- and three-dimensional shapes. You can name the shape of household items or things you see in the community and talk about features, such as *edges*, *corners*, and *lines*. You can use household items like empty boxes to build or make art. Try to expose your child to a variety of shapes and new vocabulary, such as *cylinders* (paper towel tubes), *cubes* (boxes), and *spheres* (a ball or orange).





Science

Explore and investigate

Talk with your child about solving problems and how things work. Start a conversation about how something works as you are using it (or when your child asks a question about it) and help them figure out the answer by trying some different things. For example, if your child is playing with cars and ramps, investigate how changing the slope of the ramp affects the speed of the car. Children are oftentimes more engaged in learning experiences that are initiated through their own curiosity. Simply giving them the answer to a question is not always enough for them to grasp an understanding of how things work. Conducting experiments gives children the opportunity to research, observe, and record their results—all skills that are needed for future scientists!

Avoid immediately correcting your child

If your child says something scientifically incorrect, help them discover what is correct rather than correcting them. For example, if your child says, "Heavy things sink," you can ask, "Which heavy things have you seen sink?" Or, "I wonder if we can find something heavy that can float?" Then, allow your child to explore and discover the answer on their own. Modeling curiosity and teaching them to wonder is the first step to scientific discovery.

Social Studies

Explore roles and responsibilities of different jobs

Talk to your child about different roles, responsibilities, tools associated with jobs, etc. Wonder about how different jobs and people contribute to the community. Young children learn a lot through play, so pretending to take on one of these roles can help children to understand what different people do.

Talk with your child about similarities and differences

Children often notice similarities and differences between individuals or groups of people. Talking respectfully about these similarities and differences helps to show that these differences are okay and reinforces children's observation skills.

Talk about your family and history

Tell your child about what has changed since you or an older family member were young children. Looking at pictures of your family or telling stories from your own past can help children to understand their family history. It can be a powerful way to begin to understand changes that occur over time, especially if they know the family members.

