

# Approaches to Play and Learning: 3-5 Years

Children learn about themselves and the world around them through purposeful play. <sup>1</sup>

**a Use play to interpret and understand the world around them. <sup>1A</sup>**

**1a. 3 Years <sup>3.1A</sup>**

- 1 Use felt pieces to recreate a story told by an adult. <sup>3.1A.1</sup>
- 2 Play “house” or other pretend games alongside other children. <sup>3.1A.2</sup>

**1a. 4 Years <sup>4.1A</sup>**

- 1 Pretend to be a firefighter when playing with dramatic play props. <sup>4.1A.1</sup>
- 2 Ask other children to join them in pretend play. <sup>4.1A.2</sup>
- 3 Use props as part of pretend play. <sup>4.1A.3</sup>

**1a. 5 Years <sup>5.1A</sup>**

- 1 Use interactive technology and/or other materials to create a story with other children. <sup>5.1A.1</sup>
- 2 Assign roles as part of pretend play. <sup>5.1A.1</sup>

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**b Explore, investigate, and ask questions about the world around them. 1B**

**1b. 3 Years 3.1B**

- 1 Watch the ants move around in an ant farm. 3.1B.1
- 2 Throw a ball straight down at the sidewalk to see how high it will bounce. 3.1B.2
- 3 Mix colors together when painting and notice how the colors change. 3.1B.3
- 4 Ask a familiar adult why another child is crying. 3.1B.4

**1b. 4 Years 4.1B**

- 1 Try using blocks of different sizes to balance a scale. 4.1B.1
- 2 Use twigs and rocks to build a small structure. 4.1B.2
- 3 Ask questions about their observations, and other things that interest them, such as “Why are the leaves yellow?” and “Why don’t you like to eat oranges?” 4.1B.3

**1b. 5 Years 5.1B**

- 1 Use digital technology and/or books to find information about astronauts and space. 5.1B.1
- 2 Use a magnifying glass to look at varying leaf patterns. 5.1B.2
- 3 Pull a toy car backward across the floor to find out if it will roll forward on its own. 5.1B.3

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**c Reconstruct their ideas about the world around them based on new thoughts and information. 1C**

**1c. 3 Years 3.1C**

- 1 Repeat or copy friends' words and actions. 3.1C.1
- 2 Notice that someone has changed their hair cut or color and tell others about it. 3.1C.2
- 3 Try a new food they're hesitant about it and discover they like it. 3.1C.3

**1c. 4 Years 4.1C**

- 1 Discuss and compare the ways their family is the same as and different from others. "I have two sisters, but you only have one." 4.1C.1
- 2 Watch seeds grow into plants. 4.1C.2
- 3 When looking at pictures of everyone's families, ask another child, "Is that your dad in that picture? This is a picture of my mom!" 4.1C.3
- 4 Adapt their behaviors based on the setting and situation – such as being quiet in a library or running on the playground. 4.1C.4

**1c. 5 Years 5.1C**

- 1 Read and request stories about people going camping after their family plans a camping trip. 5.1C.1
  - 2 Use the correct names of different types of dinosaurs—identifying something as "a stegosaurus" rather than "a dinosaur." 5.1C.2
  - 3 Recognize that each child has their own likes and dislikes. For example: "Sierra doesn't like peas, but I do!" 5.1C.3
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**Children demonstrate increasingly complex play styles. 2**

**a Initiate, join, and take turns in play with others. 2A**

**2a. 3 Years 3.2A**

- 1 Play with blocks “with” another child, but without coordinating what they are each building. 3.2A.1
- 2 Wait for their turn in a line to go down the slide. 3.2A.2
- 3 Begin to show preferences in who they play with. 3.2A.3

**2a. 4 Years 4.2A**

- 1 Invite other children to join in pretend play or games. 4.2A.1
- 2 Accept invitations from other children to join in their games and pretend play. 4.2A.2
- 3 Play a simple board game with other children. 4.2A.3
- 4 Wait until a timer goes off to signal their turn at the computer. 4.2A.4
- 5 Pass dishes during a family-style meal and wait for another child to pour the juice. 4.2A.5
- 6 Follow a suggestion that they will pretend to be superheroes rescuing someone in their outdoor play. 4.2A.6

**2a. 5 Years 5.2A**

- 1 Suggest that a child joining the play can be “the uncle” or “another superhero.” 5.2A.1
- 2 Listen to other children share their journal entries. 5.2A.2
- 3 During interactive and shared writing experiences, contribute to the group story without speaking over other children. 5.2A.3
- 4 Propose ideas to expand a block city by adding a fire station. 5.2A.4
- 5 Collaborate with other children to develop, share, and follow rules or expectations in their play together. 5.2A.5

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**b Demonstrate imagination and creativity in their play. 2B**

**2b. 3 Years 3.2B**

- 1 Complete 3- or 4-piece puzzles. 3.2B.1
- 2 Use yellow and orange paint to paint a picture of how sunny it was yesterday. 3.2B.2
- 3 Sing a song they made up. 3.2B.3

**2b. 4 Years 4.2B**

- 1 Make up stories, songs, and dances. 4.2B.1
- 2 Use a stuffed animal as a “baby” in pretend play. 4.2B.2
- 3 Build a crib out of blocks to use in pretend play. 4.2B.3

**2b. 5 Years 5.2B**

- 1 Complete a puzzle independently. 5.2B.1
- 2 Set up chairs and other props to represent an experience they’ve had, such as being on an airplane, and ask other children to pretend to be characters like the flight attendant, pilot, and passengers. 5.2B.2

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**c Propose and explore possibilities for how things work, what they might do, or what they might be. 2C**

**2c. 3 Years 3.2C**

- 1 Stack blocks to make a tower. 3.2C.1
- 2 Take a connecting-block construction apart and put it back together in a new way. 3.2C.2
- 3 With adult support, predict that a car going down a ramp will go faster than one rolling across a flat floor. 3.2C.3

**2c. 4 Years 4.2C**

- 1 Suggest that two friends arguing over a toy can take turns with it. 4.2C.1
- 2 Capture a caterpillar to have as a pet. 4.2C.2
- 3 Participate in a discussion about what plants need to grow and draw pictures of the way the seed they planted is growing. 4.2C.3
- 4 Suggest a new ending to a familiar story. 4.2C.4

**2c. 5 Years 5.2C**

- 1 Use art scraps to build a bridge. 5.2C.1
  - 2 Guess how long it will take for a snowball to melt after they bring it inside, and then set a timer to test their prediction. 5.2C.2
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**Children engage in explorations and interactions with confidence. 3**

**a Express and share their own interests, ideas, or opinions freely. 3A**

**3a. 3 Years 3.3A**

- 1 Share stories about what their family did over the weekend. 3.3A.1
- 2 Repeatedly ask for the same story to be read. 3.3A.2
- 3 Ask to use alphabet stamps from the writing area so they can finish their painting. 3.3A.3

**3a. 4 Years 4.3A**

- 1 Bring a favorite book or toy from home to show others. 4.3A.1
- 2 Save a seat for a friend. 4.3A.2
- 3 Show a preference for where to sit during large group time. 4.3A.3

**3a. 5 Years 5.3A**

- 1 Read a story they wrote aloud to familiar adults and children. 5.3A.1
- 2 Choose a math activity over an art activity. 5.3A.2
- 3 Begin mixing ingredients to make playdough independently. 5.3A.3

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**b Show an increasing ability to maintain concentration, persist in, and complete a variety of tasks. 3B**

**3b. 3 Years 3.3B**

- 1 Persist in trying to zip their coat. 3.3B.1
- 2 With adult support, work on a puzzle for a short time while other children work on other puzzles. 3.3B.2
- 3 Look for a missing piece in a puzzle and then return to working on the puzzle. 3.3B.3

**3b. 4 Years 4.3B**

- 1 Persist in trying to tie their shoe. 4.3B.1
- 2 Continue working on a painting until they are satisfied with the results. 4.3B.2
- 3 Ask an adult to save an activity or project so they can continue working on it later. 4.3B.3
- 4 Retry or attempt a new strategy to rebuild a fallen block tower. 4.3B.4
- 5 Continue working on a puzzle until they are finished, while other children move on to another activity. 4.3B.5

**3b. 5 Years 5.3B**

- 1 Return to a drawing, story, or journal entry over a period of days to add more content or detail. 5.3B.1
- 2 Begin to explore longer books that may be read over a period of several days. 5.3B.2
- 3 Respond “I’ll come play as soon as I’m done” when another child invites them to play. 5.3B.3
- 4 Keep working on an activity even after another child interrupts to show them something. 5.3B.4
- 5 Complete a cycle of activity (select materials, work to their satisfaction, clean up, return materials), such as choosing a glitter pen and butterfly paper, writing a brief letter to their grandparents, putting the letter into their backpack, and returning the pen and extra paper to the shelf. 5.3B.5

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**c Set aside fear of failure when beginning a new or challenging task. 3C**

**3c. 3 Years 3.3C**

- 1 Try to buckle their own car seat. 3.3C.1
- 2 Try to zip their coat or tie their shoe. 3.3C.2

**3c. 4 Years 4.3C**

- 1 Climb the rock wall on a play structure. 4.3C.1

**3c. 5 Years 5.3C**

- 1 Write using invented spelling. 5.3C.1

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**d Identify when to seek support with a challenging task. 3D**

**3d. 3 Years 3.3D**

- 1 Ask a familiar adult to write their name on their artwork. 3.3D.1

**3d. 4 Years 4.3D**

- 1 Ask a familiar adult to start a new program on the computer. 4.3D.1

**3d. 5 Years 5.3D**

- 1 Ask a familiar adult or another child to hold the top of a block structure as they build the “tallest” tower. 5.3D.1

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**e Demonstrate a growing capacity to make meaning, find a solution, or figure something out. 3E**

**3e. 3 Years 3.3E**

- 1 Work with other children to complete a floor puzzle. 3.3E.1
- 2 Use a ruler or wand to reach a toy that slid underneath a shelf. 3.3E.2

**3e. 4 Years 4.3E**

- 1 Actively participate in a large group discussion to create a list of expectations for the learning environment. 4.3E.1
- 2 Begin to use specific strategies to remember and find matches in a memory card game. 4.3E.2

**3e. 5 Years 5.3E**

- 1 Figure out how many snacks are needed for the whole group. 5.3E.1
  - 2 Negotiate with other children to decide who goes first in a game. 5.3E.2
  - 3 Discuss who will take which role during pretend play. 5.3E.3
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**Children develop an increasing ability to manage their emotions and behaviors. 4**

**a Manage the ways they express difficult or strong emotions. 4A**

**4a. 3 Years 3.4A**

- 1 Ask a familiar adult for help in handling another child's actions, such as asking another child to stop doing something. 3.4A.1
- 2 Tell someone to "Stop!" 3.4A.2
- 3 With adult guidance, take deep breaths to calm themselves. 3.4A.3

**4a. 4 Years 4.4A**

- 1 Walk away from an upsetting situation. 4.4A.1
- 2 Express frustration by stomping their feet or making a growling sound. 4.4A.2
- 3 Tell someone they are being "mean" or doing something upsetting. 4.4A.3
- 4 With adult reminders, take deep breaths and/or talk through their emotions. 4.4A.4

**4a. 5 Years 5.4A**

- 1 Explain why they are angry, sad, frustrated, etc. 5.4A.1
- 2 Use self-talk and breathing techniques to help them manage strong emotions. 5.4A.2

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**b Manage their actions and the ways they communicate, increasingly referring to their previous experiences. 4B**

**4b. 3 Years 3.4B**

- 1 Engage in a new activity for a short time before returning to a favorite toy or activity.. 3.4B.1

**4b. 4 Years 4.4B**

- 1 Participate in a group cooking experience, helping to measure the ingredients and then wait for the food to be ready before getting to taste it. 4.4B.1
- 2 Use a paintbrush for an art project because they remember not liking the texture of the paint on their hands. 4.4B.2

**4b. 5 Years 5.4B**

- 1 Wait to eat dessert until the end of their meal. 5.4B.1
- 2 Try not to tell someone about a surprise gift or event 5.4B.2

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**c Consider another's perspective in their learning and interactions. 4C**

**4c. 3 Years 3.4C**

- 1 Notice and ask questions about differences in physical characteristics. For example: "My skin is dark. Why is Liana's skin so light?" and "Joy has black hair but mine is yellow." 3.4C.1

**4c. 4 Years 4.4C**

- 1 Tell about their own family and cultural traditions and notice differences and similarities when others share their stories. "I have Hanukkah and Devon has Christmas, but we both get presents!" 4.4C.1

**4c. 5 Years 5.4C**

- 1 Notice and discuss differences between families' beliefs, structures, and expectations. 5.4C.1
- 2 During mealtime, point out that "Zeinab can only eat halal meat," and another child answers, "Well, my family doesn't eat any meat!" 5.4C.2
- 3 Imitate or reiterate things family members have said, such as "My mom says..." 5.4C.3