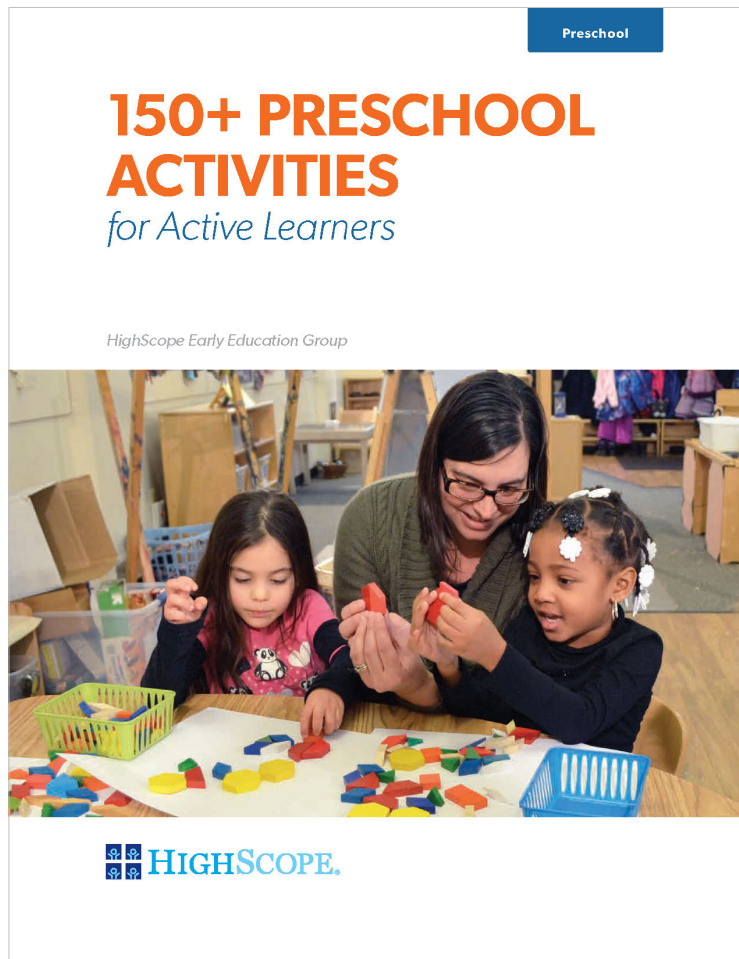


150+ Preschool Activities for Active Learners



Product code: P1465

This book provides early childhood educators with more than 150 activities for the preschool classroom, organizing HighScope Curriculum content and teaching strategies into the 10 domains of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Within each of these domains, teachers will find engaging activities for the following segments of the HighScope preschool daily routine: Planning and Recall times; Small- and Large-group times; Message Board time; and Outside time. Each activity includes complete step-by-step teacher instructions, suggested scaffolding strategies, and a list of materials (if applicable) for that particular time of the program day. HighScope's key developmental indicators (KDIs) and Child Observation Record (COR) assessment items are also identified to assist teachers in supporting each of the areas of development aligned with the Texas content domains.

1. Solving Problems With Stories

Children solve problems by creating a story in a construction paper booklet.

Time of Day: Message Board

Content Areas: Social and Emotional Development

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 4. Problem solving, 6. Reflection, 10. Empathy

COR Advantage Items: C. Reflection, D. Emotions, F. Building relationships with other children

Materials: Construction paper, markers

Intentional Vocabulary: *Problem, problem-solve, solution, idea, emotion words*

Activity Steps

1. Share your observation of behaviors in the classroom that have resulted in children having their feelings hurt. Write the title “Left Out” on the front cover of the construction paper book. Ask the children what it means to be “left out.”
2. Draw three characters on the first page of the booklet. Above two of the characters, write “You can’t play with us.” The third character should have a sad face and say “I feel left out.” Ask the children to describe the feelings of each of these characters.
3. Ask the children what each character might say to solve the problem. Draw the characters’ faces on the next page of the booklet with the children’s comments next to them.
4. Help the children rehearse some responses to the situation in the booklet. Remind them that their first idea might not always solve the problem. Challenge them to think of alternative solutions.
5. Place the completed story in the book area for children to access, add additional words, and use as a resource when a similar problem arises.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

- Prompt discussion by objectively stating problems that occurred in the classroom (e.g., “Yesterday I noticed some children were upset because they really wanted to play, but they felt left out”).
- Acknowledge children’s feelings and reframe children’s words so as not to place blame (e.g., “It made you angry. What can we do to solve the problem so you won’t feel that way today?”).
- Avoid including words that are absolute, such as “always” or “never.” Instead, offer multiple solutions the child can choose between in the moment.
- Refer back to the book as appropriate throughout the day.

7. Mirror, Mirror

Children make faces representing different emotions into a hand mirror.

Time of Day: Small-Group Time

Content Areas: Social and Emotional Development

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 9. Emotions

COR Advantage Items: D. Emotions, FF. Knowledge of self and others

Materials: Handheld mirrors, paper, crayons

Intentional Vocabulary: *Emotions, feelings, angry, frustrated, upset, excited, anxious*

Activity Steps

1. Give each child a hand mirror and ask them to make funny faces into the mirror.
2. Ask the children to make faces representing different emotions.
3. Describe a situation, and make a face to represent the corresponding emotion. For example, you might say, “I wonder what your face would look like if you got a new puppy.”
4. Make a sad face in the mirror, and say “Look how I feel now.”
5. Ask the children to help you think of happy things as you put the mirrors away.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

Early Development

- Imitate children’s actions and name the emotions for children as they are making faces (e.g., “You are smiling — that looks like a happy face”).

Middle Development

- Ask children to describe the connection between the face they are making and the emotion (e.g., “Tell me what it means when you make that face”).
- Introduce more complex vocabulary, such as “frustrated,” “anxious,” “excited,” etc.

Later Development

- Have children consider reasons why they might feel a specific emotion (e.g., “I wonder what would cause you to feel so angry that you would need to make that face?”).

13. Telephone Planning

Children take turns talking to the teacher on an old phone while the rest of the group listens to the child's plan for work time.

Time of Day: Planning Time

Content Areas: Language, Literacy, and Communication

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 2 Planning, 52. Tools and technology

COR Advantage Items: A. Initiative and planning, EE. Tools and technology

Materials: Cameras

Activity Steps

1. Provide a telephone for yourself and the child who is planning (and, if possible, for any other children in the group).
2. Take turns "calling" the children to hear their plan for work time.
3. After a child has shared their plan, they may go to the interest area of their choice for work time.

28. Area Card Recall

Children use classroom area signs to recall what they did during work time.

Time of Day: Recall Time

Content Areas: Language, Literacy, and Communication

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 3. Engagement, 6. Reflection

COR Advantage Items: C. Reflection

Materials: Area cards

Activity Steps

1. Prepare the classroom area card(s) in advance of recall time.
2. Allow each child to take a turn selecting the area cards that represent where they played during work time.
3. If children played in more than one area, allow them to select multiple cards and place them in the order in which they visited those areas.
4. Give each child the opportunity to hold the cards as they talk about what they did during work time.

41. Looking for Letters

Children find letters on newspaper pages and circle them with markers.

Time of Day: Small-Group Time

Content Areas: Language, Literacy, and Communication

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 25. Alphabetic knowledge, 40. Art

COR Advantage Items: O. Alphabetic knowledge, X. Art

Materials: Newsprint, scissors, glue sticks, markers

Intentional Vocabulary: *Letters, letter-sound association*

Activity Steps

1. Hold up a newspaper page and have children point to and/or name three or four of the letters. Circle each of the named letters with a marker.
2. Give children newspaper pages and markers and suggest that they find and circle letters on the pages.
3. Give children scissors, paper, and tape to cut out and arrange their letters on a page.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

Early Development

- Acknowledge when children match letters or recognize letters that look familiar (e.g., “You did find the letter in *Michelle’s* name. That’s an *M*”).
- Search for letters in children’s first names and assist children in naming them (e.g., “Look, *A.J.*, I found the letters in your name. An *A* and a *J*”).

Middle Development

- Support children in making letter-sound connections (e.g., “You found the letter *F*. It says /f/, like *fish*”).
- Challenge children to look for certain letters by name or sound association (e.g., “Can you find the letter *X*?” or “Let’s look for the letter that says /b/”).

Later Development

- Challenge children to find all of the letters in their name or other familiar words and glue them sequentially on their paper.
- Encourage children to use inventive spelling to create words with the letters they have found.

53. Where's the Rest?

Children listen to the middle of a familiar story, then draw, write, and talk about what they think happens before and after the part they've heard.

Time of Day: Small-Group Time

Content Areas: Language, Literacy, and Communication

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 11. Community, 21. Comprehension, 22. Speaking, 28. Book knowledge, 29. Writing

COR Advantage Items: G. Community, L. Speaking, M. Listening and comprehension, Q. Book enjoyment and knowledge, R. Writing

Materials: Paper, drawing materials, writing implements

Intentional Vocabulary: *Beginning/middle/end, plot, details, characters*

Activity Steps

1. Tell a brief introductory story about two children who went to a book store, picked up a book the children in your small group are familiar with, and realized that the beginning and ending of the book were missing.
2. Distribute the materials and say “I wonder if you can make up a beginning and ending for this book.”
3. As children work, ask what they think happened before and after the parts you read. Encourage them to illustrate their thoughts and write what the beginning and ending pages will say. If children are interested, help them spell out words to complete their stories.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

Early Development

- Ask children what they think might happen after the parts you read. (Note: They may retell ideas from the familiar story or make up their own.)
- Take dictation from children based on their drawings.

Middle Development

- Encourage children to describe.
- Ask children what they think happened before and after the parts you told.
- Encourage children to make a cover for the story.
- Ask children to describe their drawings and take dictation.

Later Development

- Support children in writing words and sentences to accompany their drawings.
- Encourage children to think about the plot of the story and challenge them to add a twist or alternate ending.

59. Two Places to Tap

Children learn to feel and express a steady beat by performing simple, repetitive movements.

Time of Day: Large-Group Time

Content Areas: Mathematics

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 16. Gross-motor skills, 18. Body awareness, 21. Comprehension, 38. Patterns, 42. Movement

COR Advantage Items: I. Gross-motor skills, M. Listening and comprehension, V. Patterns, Z. Movement

Materials: None

Intentional Vocabulary: *Pattern, steady beat*, parts of the body

Activity Steps

1. Assemble with children in a circle and begin by putting your hands on your head.
2. Say that you have found one place to tap the beat (e.g., on your head) but that you need to tap another place, and ask for a suggestion from the children.
3. Tell the children to follow your two movements (e.g., patting your head and shoulders).
4. Chant the following words as you continue the movements in sequence for children to follow:
Two places to tap,
Two places to tap,
Head and shoulders,
Two places to tap.
5. Continue asking for additional ideas from children while facilitating patterning.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

- Challenge children to make more complex patterns (e.g., AABAAB, or AABBAABB) or change the words to *Three Places to Tap* for an ABCABC pattern.

89. Guess Who Recall

Children take turns feeling objects in a bag, trying to guess what the object is and who used it at work time.

Time of Day: Recall Time

Content Areas: Science

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 3. Engagement, 6. Reflection

COR Advantage Items: C. Reflection

Materials: Bag

Activity Steps

1. Ask children to bring you one item that they played with during work time.
2. Collect all of the items and place them in a bag.
3. Give each child a turn to feel for items in the bag.
4. Have each child try to identify an item, using only their hands, and guess which child played with it.
5. When the children guess correctly who used the item, ask that child to share a few details about what they did with the item.

107. Planting Bulbs

Children plant bulbs in the fall to anticipate future events and recall past events.

Time of Day: Small-Group Time

Content Areas: Science and Technology

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 51. Natural and physical world, 57. History

COR Advantage Items: DD. Natural and physical world, HH. History

Materials: Variety of bulbs (tulips, crocuses, snowdrops, daffodils, etc.), hand shovels

Intentional Vocabulary: *Plant, bulb, observe, sprout, bloom*

Activity Steps

1. Find an out-of-the-way spot in your outdoor area to plant bulbs with the children. The bulb garden should be free of foot traffic and have soil with good drainage. (Add organic material to the soil when planting to provide nutrients and proper drainage.)
2. Allow the children to dig small holes for their bulb. A good rule of thumb is 2–3 times as deep as the bulb is tall.
3. Have children plant the bulb “pointy end” up (roots down) and cover with soil (and any organic material).
4. Take plenty of photos of the children hard at work.
5. Periodically check on your bulbs as spring approaches. As buds break the surface and flowers begin to bloom, be sure to show children the pictures you took from the previous fall and discuss the time that has passed and major events that happened while the bulbs were still “sleeping” underground.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

Early Development

- Talk with children about their predictions for spring (e.g., type/color of flower, how tall the plant may grow).
- Have children draw what they observe at different times throughout the year.

Middle Development

- Talk with children about their predictions for spring (e.g., type/color of flower, how tall the plant may grow).
- Have children draw what they observe at different times throughout the year.

Later Development

- Discuss with children what happens to the bulb between fall and spring (e.g., roots grow and cool temperatures spark the biochemical process that produces flowers).
- Encourage children to keep a scientific observation journal to regularly chart the transformation from bulb to flower.

113. Planning With a Classroom Map

Children use a classroom map to place a car or other small figure in the area in which they want to play.

Time of Day: Planning Time

Content Areas: Social Studies

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 2. Planning, 56. Geography

COR Advantage Items: A. Initiative and planning, GG. Geography

Materials: Classroom map, toy cars

Activity Steps

1. Create a classroom map that includes all of the interest areas.
2. Allow each child in turn to maneuver a car or other figure to the area on the map where they plan to play.
3. Converse with children in detail about their plans.
4. Repeat this process for each child, then let them get started with their plans.

120. Architecture All Around

Children build three-dimensional structures based on photographs of their neighborhood's architectural features, taken during the previous day's field trip.

Time of Day: Small-Group Time

Content Areas: Social Studies; Creative Arts

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 40. Art, 56. Geography

COR Advantage Items: X. Art, GG. Geography

Materials: Three-dimensional building materials (e.g., unit blocks, Legos, play dough); photographs from the previous day's field trip around the local neighborhood to look at architectural features (e.g., doors, railings, awnings, trim, brickwork, etc.)

Intentional Vocabulary: *Architecture, three-dimensional, features, structure, build*

Activity Steps

1. Spread out the photographs and talk with children about the previous day's field trip, helping them to remember and describe the different architectural features they saw. Encourage children to hold, pass around, point to, and engage with the photographs.
2. Choose one of the photographs and a building material and say "I wonder if we can make a house that looks like the apartment building we saw on the corner." Distribute the materials and say "I wonder what sorts of structures you can make."
3. Encourage children to look at the photographs as they explore the building materials. Talk with them about the features and shapes they see and might want to incorporate into their own building projects. Encourage children who are interested to work together and collaborate on projects.
4. Take photographs of the structures children make to use at recall time, share with families, etc.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

Early Development

- Talk with children about what they are doing and making with the materials (e.g., "You're lining up the blocks; you made a big blue shape").
- Comment on non-architectural representations, using descriptive and spatial language (e.g., "Your dog is tiny next to you").

Middle Development

- Comment on and encourage children to say more about the content or process of making their model.
- Use and encourage children to use descriptive language related to color, shape, size, pattern, position, etc.

Later Development

- Comment on the details in the child's model; repeat and add to the child's use of descriptive words (e.g., "The black-and-white stripes make a pattern just like a zebra!").
- Show your representation to children and ask them to suggest ideas that are not in the photograph (e.g., make the house bigger).

132. Painting to Music

Children paint to express the feelings evoked by different types of music.

Time of Day: Small-Group Time

Content Areas: Creative Arts

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 9. Emotions, 17. Fine-motor skills, 40. Art, 41. Music

COR Advantage Items: D. Emotions, J. Fine-motor skills, X. Art, Y. Music

Materials: Paper, paint, paint brushes, smocks, instrumental music

Intentional Vocabulary: *Speed, tempo, effect, design*

Activity Steps

1. Let children know that they will be painting to different types of music. They should paint how the music makes them feel.
2. First, play a slow, quiet piece and ask children what they notice about the music. Next, play a fast, loud piece, or one that contrasts with the first, and ask children what they notice about this piece.
3. Play the first piece of music again. Distribute painting supplies and ask children to paint how the music makes them feel.
4. After about three minutes, do the same for the other piece of music, asking children to paint how the music makes them feel.
5. Introduce more music, as appropriate. As you circulate, describe and encourage children to describe the qualities of the music, children's motions with their brush, and the effects they create on paper.
6. Let children know that you are about to play the last music selection. Together with the children, clean up the painting supplies.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

Early Development

- Describe and encourage children to describe what they are doing (e.g., "You are making the brush go around and around on the page").
- Gently extend learning by listening to and talking about the music's qualities. (*Note:* If children are painting and do not choose to attend to the music, respect their choice.)

Middle Development

- Repeat children's descriptions and comment on how they capture those qualities in their brushwork (e.g., "You are moving the brush fast because the music is fast").
- Extend learning by using other descriptive terms and wondering aloud how children could paint them.

Later Development

- Comment on the variety of painting techniques children are using.
- Extend learning by introducing new vocabulary words (e.g., *flowing, staccato*) and by encouraging children to represent those musical qualities by using their brush in different ways.

146. Kicking Balloons

Children are given the opportunity to kick balloons in a large, open space.

Time of Day: Large-Group Time

Content Areas: Physical Development and Health

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 16. Gross-motor skills, 18. Body awareness

COR Advantage Items: I. Gross-motor skills

Materials: Music player, balloons, instrumental music

Intentional Vocabulary: *Aim, drift, float, target, trajectory*

Activity Steps

1. Give each child a balloon to kick around the large-group area.
2. Balloons are soft enough that they won't hurt the children or materials, but be sure to prepare enough space so children can freely kick their balloons without interfering with one another.
3. Play instrumental music as the children are practicing their kicking, and be sure to acknowledge and comment on what the children are doing (e.g., "Clare, when you kicked your balloon, it went right over Aaron's head!").
4. Give the children a warning that they will have one more chance to kick balloons while listening to the last song; then collect the balloons and transition to the next activity.

Strategies for Supporting Individualized Learning

- Use self- and parallel talk to demonstrate the skills and their effect on the balloon (e.g., "When I kicked the bottom of the balloon, it flew up into the air"; "You were facing the shelf and when you kicked your balloon, it went in the same direction").
- Provide a large target for children at which they can aim their balloons.
- Encourage children to kick with both feet.
- Engage children in cooperative play, encouraging them to kick balloons back and forth to one another.
- Provide targets of varying sizes and/or targets placed at different levels on the wall.
- Challenge children to keep their balloon afloat using only their lower body (e.g., feet, legs, and knees).

159. Using Video at Recall Time

Children use a tablet (or another video recording device) to record one another saying their plans. Then at recall time, they revisit the videos and compare their plan(s) to what they did at work time.

Time of Day: Recall Time

Content Areas: Science and Technology

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs): 6. Reflection, 52. Tools and technology

COR Advantage Items: C. Reflection, EE. Tools and technology

Materials: Tablet (or another video recording device) with planning videos from earlier in the day

Intentional Vocabulary: *Watch, replay, play button*

Activity Steps

1. Remind children of the videos they recorded at planning time. “At planning time, your partner recorded you saying your plans. Now we are going to replay those videos and see if what we did at work time is the same or different than our plans.”
2. Let the child whose video is next press the play button. As a group, watch the child’s video.
3. Have the child reflect on and compare and contrast their planning video with what they did at work time. For example, a child might say, “No. I didn’t go to block area like I planned. I stayed in the sand and water table all of work time.”
4. Repeat for each child. Encourage each child to swipe to the next video to practice that skill.
5. As children reflect, support them by helping to make connections between their plans and what they actually did at work time. For example, you might say, “In your planning video, you said you wanted to build a bus with the blocks and you did that. You followed through with your plan.”