

What to do with your preschooler when school is cancelled

 themeasuredmom.com/what-to-do-with-your-preschooler-when-school-is-cancelled/

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Are you trying to figure out what to do with your preschooler when you're stuck at home due to school cancellations?

I'm here to help!



These are crazy, unprecedented times. Fear has gripped the world. Travel is discouraged, school is cancelled, and many of us find ourselves home with our kids without anywhere to go.

As you figure out how to fill the days with your child who is home from PreK, I hope this post helps!

What to do with your PreK child

I recommend having a small portion every day when you do "school." This does not need to be long, and you can break it into several sessions throughout the day. 30 minutes (total) really is enough. You might also want to do two 30-minute blocks, depending on your child's attention span.

What you work on will depend on where your child is at developmentally.

Remember ... 30-60 minutes a day is plenty! You can break it up into 2-3 sessions if needed.

*Only free resources are included in this post, but you are always welcome to check out my **shop** and **online membership**.

Pre-Reading

If your child is still learning letters ...

Write capital and/or lowercase letters on a piece of paper, one at a time. Have your child name each letter as you write it. Keep track of the ones your child doesn't know. (This may get tiring; break it up into more than one session as needed.)



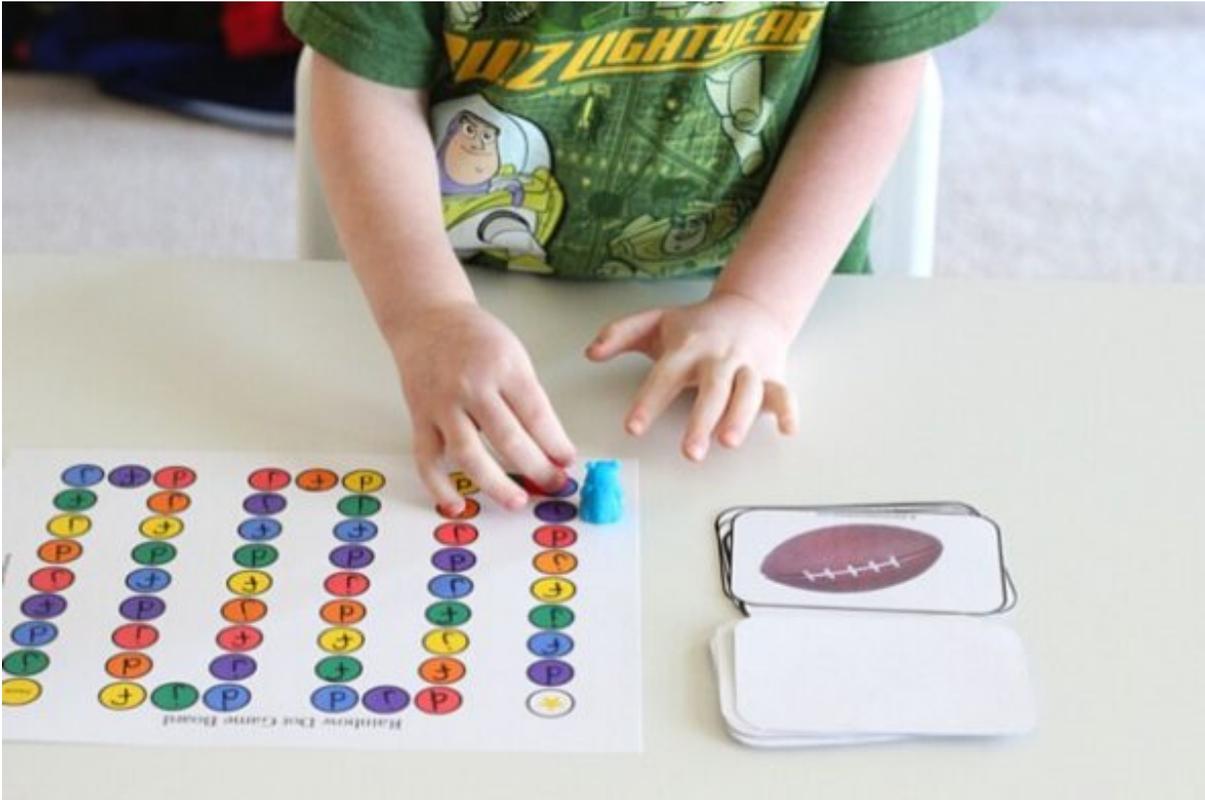
Play games to practice the unknown letters, but always include the letters your child knows as well. Just a few unknown letters at a time is a good idea.

- Make a matching game out of slips of paper or index cards cut in half.
- Write letters on post-it notes. Then write the same letters on post-it notes again. Put one set all around the living room. Have your child match the other set to the posted letters.
- Print and sort letter cards. [This blog series](#) has printable letters at the end of every post.
- Try my free [letter find pages](#).
- Play my free [Alphabet Four-in-a-Row](#).
- Join my email list to get my [alphabet bingo cards](#) for free.

If your child knows letters but doesn't know his/her sounds yet ...

Start by having your child listen to sounds at the beginning of words without matching those sounds to letters. These [free clip cards](#) will help.

Focus on one letter at a time using these [free letter sound cover pages](#).



Create a simple game with letters whose sounds your child needs to work on ([here's a free resource](#)). Include just a few letters at a time, and start with the easier sounds: /b/, /d/, /f/, /j/, /k/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /s/, /t/, /v/, and /z/. Move on to harder sounds: /c/, /g/, /h/, /q/, /l/, /r/, /w/, /x/, and /y/. Conclude with the short vowel sounds.

As your child gets better at letter sounds, you might try these [simple letter sound parking lots](#) with toy cars (my now second grader *loved* this as a preschooler).

Whether or not your child knows letters and sounds, practice RHYMING ...

Rhyming is a super important skill, and I have loads of free resources to help you out. If your child doesn't "get" rhyming yet, [try this free game](#). It helped the concept click for my younger daughter.



Here are other fun, low-prep rhyming printables on my site:

If your child knows the letters and their sounds ...

Work on phonemic awareness, which is the ability to play with sounds in words. Start by [watching this video](#) to understand what phonemic awareness is.



Play [these phonemic awareness games](#) to help your child isolate beginning sounds in words.

Print these cards, and have your child identify which picture starts with a different sound.

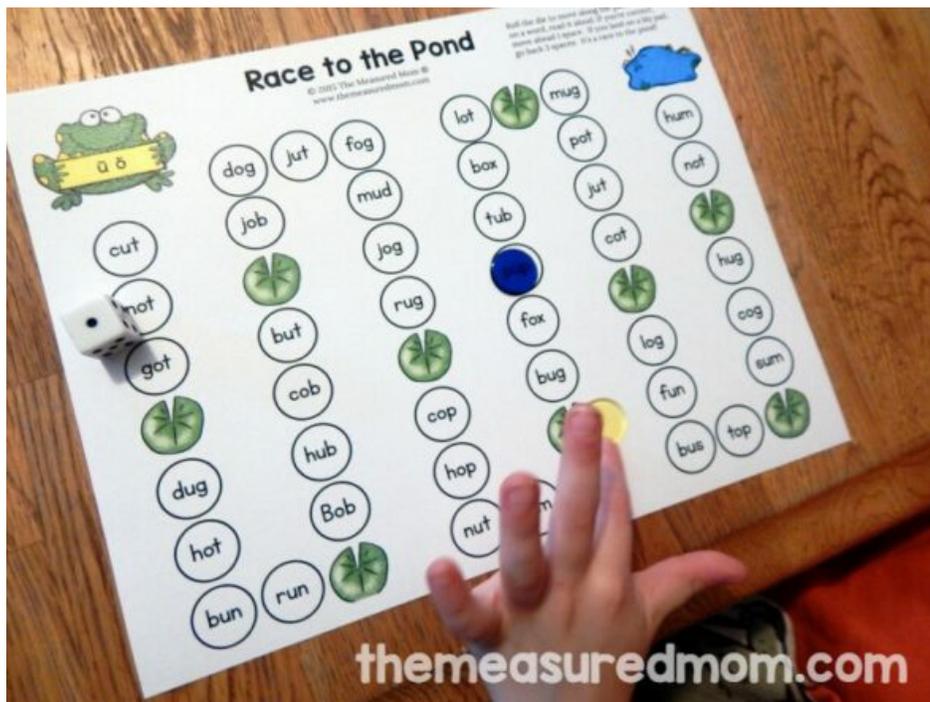
If your child is ready for something more advanced, **use these elkonin boxes** to help him/her separate sounds in words.

If your child is ready to read ...

You can start working at blending sounds together in short words. But please **check out this post** to make sure your child has the necessary pre-reading skills.

A fun way to start blending sounds into words is with successive blending. **This post has a free video and printable** to get you started.

Along with successive blending, you could try sounding out words using word families. **Try this word building mat with cards.**



It can take quite some time to be fluent with 3-letter short vowel words, but if your child is really rocking it, **print and use these CVC word board games.**

Fine Motor / Handwriting

When your child is in kindergarten, s/he will be expected to hold a pencil and write letters. It's good to get a head start on this in PreK, but building fine motor skills should come before handwriting practice.

Help your child build hand strength by doing the following:

- Squeezing play dough
- Squeezing newspaper up into balls and throwing it into a basket
- Use a squirt bottle to water plants.
- Play with sponges in the bath tub.
- Use a single-hole punch to cut holes in construction paper.



“Write” letters without using pencil and paper.

Write one letter at a time on a piece of paper. Show your child how to use your finger to “write” the letter in a tray of salt, flour, cornmeal, etc. Remember to use proper letter formation (starting at the top). Have your child “copy” the letter with a finger.

When your child is ready for simple handwriting practice with pencil and paper, you can start with my **letters of all sizes handwriting pages**. I recommend starting with uppercase letters first.

Have your child write his/her name every day. This may begin with you writing it with dotted letters and having your child trace it. Here’s a post with **ideas for teaching name writing before kindergarten**.

Math

Practice counting.

If your child struggles with counting small groups of objects, **this post has ideas that will help.**

If your child is ready for counting larger groups, try **these gumball counting mats,** which go up to 20. Use pennies if you don't have small counters.



More advanced learners can **try these one-player counting games,** which come in a variety of levels of difficulty.

Work at number recognition.

If your child doesn't know any numbers yet, this **free number tracing book** is a good place to start. Just print the numbers 1-10.

Join my email list to get these **free number find worksheets.**

Try these **hands-on number worksheets,** one of the most popular resources on my site.

If your child is ready, do simple addition.

No flash cards, please! Try these games to introduce the concept.

Grab two dice and play this **[ladybug roll and cover game](#)**.



I know we're moving into spring, but **[these winter roll and color games](#)** are fun.

Here are activities for more advanced learners:

- **[Make 10 addition games](#)**
- **[Ladybug addition mat](#)**
- **[Monster missing addends](#)** (these take some time to put together)

If you want to do more math activities, here are some to try ...

- **[Sort coins](#)**.
- Do other **[simple sorting activities](#)**.
- Use these **[shape clip cards](#)**.
- Work at patterns with this **[truck patterns pack](#)**.

Those are the academic skills I recommend working on, but you have a whole day ahead of you. What else should you do?

Read, read, read. Do this as often as possible – for as long as both you and your child are enjoying it. Normally I'd tell you to choose to check out my book lists and head to your library. I realize that may not be an option now. Do the best with what you have. Be sure to talk about books as you read. **Here are my tips for doing that.**

Get moving. If possible, get outside. **Here's a fun game** that you can play in your backyard – it even incorporates math skills! If you're stuck indoors, here are some **indoor gross motor activities.**

Pull out things that will keep your child busy.

Make **homemade play dough**, or buy it online.

Order **kinetic sand**. This stuff keeps my preschooler busy for 30 minutes at a time – or more! Plus, it's easy to clean up.

If you are up for it, provide simple sensory play. This can be a pain to clean up, but kids love it (and it's good for them). Here are **some ideas from Teaching Mama.**

Do simple art projects. Browse Pinterest and you'll find some easy activities you can do at home. Here are a bunch of ideas from **Happiness is Homemade.** I also recommend creating small cards/crafts that you can mail to family and friends.

If you can, Facetime grandparents and other relatives.

Cook together. **Here are a bunch of fun ideas.**

Do simple science projects, **like these.**

Play with building toys – **Duplos, Legos, Magna Tiles,** etc.

Play board games. **Candyland** may not be your favorite, but my own preschooler wants to play this multiple times in a row. (Every.single.day.) Other games my preschooler currently loves are **UNO, Pengaloo, Sequence for Kids,** and **Penny Drop.**

Give them screen time. Yes, I said it. I recommend planning this for specific times in the day – as late in the day as possible so you save it for when you really need it.

I hope this helps as you plan for several weeks at home. Please feel free to reach out to me through my email: [anna\(at\)themeasuredmom\(dot\)com](mailto:anna(at)themeasuredmom(dot)com).

My inbox is bursting these days, but I do my best to answer every message.

Hugs to you!

Anna

[Check out the full series here](#)



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