

Lesson Plan: All Aboard the Train Adventure!

Subject: Creative Arts & Play-Based Learning

Age Group: 3-Year-Old Homeschool Student

Focus: Trains, creative expression, fine and gross motor skills.

Materials Needed

- **For Craft:** Several small cardboard boxes (e.g., tissue boxes, granola bar boxes), paper towel or toilet paper tubes, non-toxic paint or crayons, child-safe glue or tape, paper plates or bottle caps for wheels.
 - **For Story Time:** A book about trains (e.g., *The Little Engine That Could*, *Freight Train* by Donald Crews, or any favorite).
 - **For Movement:** A small whistle (optional), pillows or chairs.
 - **For Snack:** Graham crackers, banana slices, circular crackers, cream cheese or a seed/nut butter, pretzel sticks.
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify a train and use related vocabulary (e.g., "choo-choo," "track," "engine," "wheels").
 - Assemble a simple train craft using various materials, practicing fine motor skills like gluing and painting.
 - Participate in a gross motor activity by moving their body like a train along a designated path.
 - Follow simple, multi-step directions to create a themed snack.
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Lesson Activities

Part 1: The Station Start - Introduction (5 minutes)

Goal: To capture interest and introduce the theme.

1. **Train Sounds:** Sit with your child and make train sounds together. Start with a quiet "chugga-chugga" and get louder. End with a big "CHOO-CHOO!" and a whistle blow (if you have one).
2. **Ask Engaging Questions:** "What makes that sound? A train! Where do you think trains go? What do they carry?" Listen to their ideas and build excitement for the activities.

Part 2: The Journey - Main Activities (25-30 minutes)

Activity A: Story Time — Reading the Timetable (5-7 minutes)

Goal: To build vocabulary and listening skills.

1. **Read Aloud:** Read your chosen train book with lots of expression. Point to the pictures of the trains, the wheels, and the tracks as you read.
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2. **Interactive Reading:** Encourage your child to make the "choo-choo" sound whenever you point to the engine. Ask simple questions like, "What color is this train car?" or "Can you find the wheels?"

Activity B: Creative Craft — Build Your Own Boxcar Train (10-15 minutes)

Goal: To develop fine motor skills, creativity, and problem-solving.

1. **Design the Engine:** Give your child a cardboard box and the paper towel tube. Show them how they can glue or tape the tube to the top to make a smokestack. Let them paint or color the box to be the engine.
2. **Add the Cars:** Use other boxes for the train cars. Let your child decide how many cars their train should have. They can color these, too!
3. **Attach the Wheels:** Help your child glue paper plates or bottle caps to the bottom sides of the boxes for wheels. This is great for talking about circles and counting.
4. **Connect the Train:** Use tape or pieces of string (with supervision) to connect the engine and cars together. Your train is ready!

Differentiation Tip: For a child who needs more support, you can pre-cut materials. For a child who wants a challenge, offer more complex materials like brads for wheels that can actually spin.

Activity C: Movement Game — Follow the Tracks! (5 minutes)

Goal: To practice gross motor skills and following directions.

1. **Lay the Tracks:** Arrange pillows, blankets, or chairs in a line or a winding path around the room. This is your "train track."
2. **Be the Train:** Have your child be the "engine." You can be the caboose! Hold onto each other's shoulders or waists.
3. **Travel the Route:** Start moving along the track, making "chugga-chugga" sounds. Call out instructions like, "The train is going fast!" (speed up), "The train is slowing down!" (slow down), "Stop at the station!" (stop). Blow the whistle for "All aboard!"

Part 3: Fueling Up - Themed Snack (5-7 minutes)

Goal: To reinforce the theme in a fun, sensory way and practice assembly skills.

1. **Gather Ingredients:** Lay out the graham crackers (train cars), banana slices or circular crackers (wheels), cream cheese/seed butter ("glue"), and pretzel sticks (connectors).
2. **Build Your Snack Train:** Show your child how to spread the "glue" on the graham cracker. Let them stick on the "wheels" and connect the "cars" with pretzel sticks.
3. **Enjoy!:** Eat your delicious train creations together. Talk about the shapes (rectangles, circles) and count the wheels as you eat.

Part 4: The Final Stop - Conclusion & Assessment (3-5 minutes)

Goal: To review the day's fun and assess learning through observation.

1. **Show and Tell:** Bring out the boxcar train you made earlier. Ask your child, "Can you show me your favorite part of the train we built?" or "What sound does our train make?"
2. **Reflect:** Talk about your favorite activity. "Was it more fun to build the train, be the train, or eat the train?"
3. **Informal Assessment:** Observe if the child is using new vocabulary (train, wheels, track),

was able to follow the simple instructions for the craft and snack, and participated happily in the movement game. The goal is joyful participation, not perfection.