

A 4-Week Homeschool Term: Exploring "When I Grow Up"

Overall Term Goals

This four-week plan uses the song "When I Grow Up" from *Matilda the Musical* as a springboard for exploring aspirations, growth, and creativity. The focus is on play-based learning, fostering imagination, and developing key early childhood skills in language, motor control, and social-emotional understanding.

Week 1: The Sound of Big Dreams

Focus: Introducing the song, exploring wants vs. needs, and expressing personal dreams through art.

Materials Needed:

- Device to play "When I Grow Up" (YouTube has many versions, including the cast recording)
- Large paper or poster board
- Crayons, markers, or paint
- Child-safe scissors and glue stick
- Old magazines, catalogs, or printed pictures
- A clean, empty jar with a lid ("Dream Jar")
- Small slips of paper or colorful pom-poms

Lesson Activities:

1. **Listen and Move (Monday):** Play the song "When I Grow Up." Don't worry about the lyrics at first, just dance! Swing your arms, jump high, and move to the music. Listen a second time and ask your child: "How did that song make you feel? Was it fast or slow? Happy or sad?"
2. **Lyric Exploration (Tuesday):** Listen again, this time pointing out some of the silly things the singers want to do (e.g., eat sweets every day, watch cartoons till their eyes go square). Talk about the difference between things we do every day and "sometimes" treats. Ask: "What silly thing would you do all day if you were a grown-up?"
3. **My Dream Collage (Wednesday & Thursday):** On a large piece of paper, help your child create a collage of their "grown-up" dreams. They can draw pictures or cut and paste images from magazines that represent things they want to do, have, or be. This could be anything from "a pet unicorn" to "a firefighter." Write down their descriptions next to the pictures.
4. **The Dream Jar (Friday):** Decorate the empty jar together. Explain that this is a special "Dream Jar." Every time they have a new idea about what they want to do when they grow up, they can draw a little picture of it to put inside, or you can write it on a slip of paper for them. You can also use colored pom-poms, assigning a meaning to each color (e.g., blue for being an astronaut, green for being a gardener).

Teacher's Note: Observe how your child expresses their ideas. Are they verbal, artistic, or physical? Encourage their natural communication style. The goal this week is pure imagination and self-expression.

Week 2: Strong Enough to Help

Focus: Exploring the roles of community helpers and understanding the concept of strength in different forms (physical, emotional, intellectual).

Materials Needed:

- Building blocks, LEGOs, or cardboard boxes
- Dress-up clothes (or just hats, vests, etc. to suggest different jobs)
- Playdough
- Toy doctor kit, construction tools, etc.
- Paper and drawing supplies
- "Heavy things" for a game (e.g., pillows, stuffed animals, a small bag of flour)

Lesson Activities:

1. **Heavy Lifting (Monday):** Revisit the line, "I will be strong enough to carry all the heavy things for you." Set up a fun obstacle course where your child has to carry different "heavy" items (like pillows or a backpack with stuffed animals) from one point to another. Celebrate their strength and effort! Talk about how grown-ups help carry groceries or move furniture.
2. **Build a Town (Tuesday):** Use blocks, boxes, and other materials to build a town. As you build, talk about the buildings you are making. "Here is the fire station. Who works here? What do they do?" Add a hospital, a school, a library, and a construction site.
3. **A Day in the Life (Wednesday & Thursday):** Use the town you built for imaginative play. Let your child choose a role (doctor, builder, teacher, chef) and act out a day in that person's life. You can take on another role to interact with them. What problems do they solve? Who do they help?
4. **Design a Helper Uniform (Friday):** Ask your child to invent a new kind of helper. What is their job? What problem do they solve? Then, have them draw the uniform for this special helper. Does it have special pockets for tools? A cool hat? A cape?

Teacher's Note: This week is about connecting the abstract idea of "being strong" to the concrete actions of helping others. Focus on empathy and problem-solving during your pretend play sessions.

Week 3: Tall Enough to Reach

Focus: Understanding the concept of growth, both physically and in skills, using nature and personal history as examples.

Materials Needed:

- A fast-sprouting seed (bean or cress are great)
- A small pot or clear cup, soil, and water
- A tape measure or long piece of string/yarn
- Baby photos of your child
- A blank wall or door frame for a height chart
- Art supplies (paper, paint, crayons)

Lesson Activities:

1. **Plant a Seed (Monday):** Listen to the line, "I will be tall enough to reach the branches." Talk about how plants start small and grow tall. Plant a bean seed together in a clear cup so you can see the roots. Place it in a sunny spot and make a plan to water it. This will be your

"growth project" for the week.

2. **Measure Me! (Tuesday):** Look at baby photos together. Talk about how small they were and all the things they couldn't do yet (walk, talk, eat by themselves). Then, measure their current height on a wall chart. Use a piece of yarn to show how tall they are now. Use that yarn to measure other things around the house. "Are you taller than the chair? Are you shorter than the door?"
3. **Growth Art (Wednesday):** Draw a large, bare tree trunk with branches on a piece of paper. Each day for the rest of the week, have your child add something to the tree that represents a new skill they have learned or are practicing (e.g., a leaf for learning to pump their legs on a swing, a flower for learning to write a letter of their name, a bird for learning a new song).
4. **Check the Sprout (Thursday/Friday):** Keep checking on your seed. Has it sprouted? Talk about what it needs to grow (sun, water, soil) and compare it to what people need to grow (healthy food, water, love, sleep).

Teacher's Note: Make the concept of growth tangible. Celebrating small achievements on the "Growth Art" tree reinforces the idea that learning new skills is a form of growing, just like getting taller.

Week 4: Creating My Grown-Up World

Focus: Synthesizing all the ideas from the past weeks into a culminating creative project that expresses their unique vision for the future.

Materials Needed:

- A large cardboard box (a "diorama") or a large sheet of butcher paper
- Recycled materials: toilet paper rolls, yogurt cups, bottle caps, fabric scraps, etc.
- Glue, tape, and paint
- Modeling clay or playdough
- Any other favorite art supplies
- Your "Dream Jar" from Week 1

Lesson Activities:

1. **Project Brainstorm (Monday):** Sit down together and listen to "When I Grow Up" one more time. Open up the Dream Jar and look at all the ideas you collected in Week 1. Ask your child: "If you could create your own perfect grown-up world, what would it look like? What job would you have? What would your house be like? What fun rules would you make?"
2. **Build and Create (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday):** This is the main project. Using the cardboard box or large paper as a base, help your child build a model of their "grown-up world." They can use recycled materials to make buildings, playdough to make people or animals, and paint to create the scenery. This is their world, so encourage all ideas, no matter how whimsical! Maybe the trees are purple and the fire trucks spray chocolate milk.
3. **Tell Me Your Story (Friday):** When the creation is complete, ask your child to be a tour guide. Have them show you their world and tell you all about it. You can record a video of their tour or write down their story as they tell it. Ask open-ended questions like, "What is happening over here?" or "Who is this person and what are they doing?" Celebrate their amazing creation and all the hard work they put into it.

Teacher's Note: This final week is all about creative application and storytelling. Your role is to be the assistant and scribe, facilitating their vision rather than directing it. The final project serves as a wonderful, tangible assessment of their learning and imagination throughout the term.