

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

This four-week plan is designed for a 4-year-old learner, focusing on play, creativity, and exploration inspired by the imaginative ideas in Tim Minchin's book, 'When I Grow Up'. Each week builds on the last, turning the book's whimsical concepts into hands-on learning experiences.

Week 1: What Will I Be?

Materials Needed:

- The book 'When I Grow Up' by Tim Minchin
- Large piece of paper or cardboard
- Old magazines or catalogues
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue stick
- Crayons, markers, or paint sticks
- A few items for dress-up (hats, vests, scarves, toy tools, etc.)

Learning Focus:

This week is about introducing the book's central theme and connecting it to the child's own dreams and the world around them. We will explore different community helper roles and practice expressing ideas visually and verbally.

Activities:

1. Shared Reading & Wondering:

Read 'When I Grow Up' together in a cozy spot. As you read, pause on the pages and talk about the pictures. Use open-ended questions like, "I wonder why he thinks grown-ups can reach the highest shelf? What would you get from up there?" or "What do you think would be the best part about being a grown-up?" This builds comprehension and encourages conversation.

2. My Dream Board Collage:

On the large piece of paper, write the title, "When I Grow Up, I Will..." Look through old magazines together and help your child find and cut out pictures of things they find interesting—people working, fun activities, places to go. Let them glue the pictures onto the board to create a collage of their future dreams. This is a fantastic activity for developing fine motor skills (cutting and pasting) and for articulating personal goals.

3. Community Helper Pretend Play:

Using your dress-up items, take turns pretending to be different people with important jobs. Be a builder who fixes things, a chef who cooks yummy food, or a doctor who helps sick stuffed animals. As you play, talk about how each job helps other people in the community. This builds social awareness and empathy through imaginative play.

Week 2: The Grown-Up Rulebook

Materials Needed:

- Play food (especially "sweet" items like toy cakes and cookies)
- Toy kitchen, plates, and cups
- Grocery store flyers or food magazines
- Two paper plates
- Glue stick and child-safe scissors
- A paper fastener (brad) and markers

Learning Focus:

This week, we playfully explore the "rules" mentioned in the book, like eating sweets all day and staying up late. We'll use these ideas to introduce concepts of healthy choices and daily routines in a fun, non-judgmental way.

Activities:

1. The Silliest Cafe:

Set up a pretend cafe where your child is the chef and owner. The menu should be inspired by the book: "sweets every single day"! Let them "cook" and serve you all the play desserts they want. Take their order, pay with pretend money, and give compliments to the chef. This activity fosters creativity, numeracy (counting items, paying), and conversational skills.

2. Everyday Foods vs. Sometimes Foods Sort:

Cut out pictures of different foods from flyers. On one paper plate, draw a happy sun for "Everyday Foods." On the other, draw a little star for "Sometimes Foods." Talk about the foods together and sort them onto the correct plates. Explain simply that our bodies need lots of healthy foods for energy to play, but it's okay to have a treat "sometimes." This introduces basic nutrition concepts through a simple sorting game.

3. My Bedtime Routine Clock:

Since grown-ups in the book "stay up late every single night," let's make a clock to understand our own routine. Take a paper plate and help your child write numbers around the edge (or just draw pictures). Attach two paper "hands" in the middle with a brad so they can spin. You can move the hands to show key times in your day: a picture of a book for story time, a toothbrush for brushing teeth, and a moon for bedtime. This helps make the abstract concept of time more concrete and reinforces the comfort of routines.

Week 3: Brave, Strong, and Tall

Materials Needed:

- Pillows, cushions, and blankets
- Stuffed animals
- Painter's tape or a piece of yarn
- A clean spray bottle

- Water and optional glitter
- A measuring tape or ruler

Learning Focus:

This week is all about physical confidence and emotional intelligence, inspired by the lines about being "strong enough to carry all the heavy things" and "brave enough to fight the monsters." We will focus on gross motor skills, problem-solving, and validating feelings.

Activities:

1. The Heavy Things Obstacle Course:

Build an indoor obstacle course! Create a "tunnel" to crawl through with a blanket over two chairs. Lay down a "balance beam" with painter's tape on the floor. The final challenge is to pick up a "heavy" item (a big pillow or a basket of stuffed animals) and carry it to the finish line. This is a fantastic way to develop coordination, balance, and strength while having fun.

2. Brave Monster Spray:

Let's empower your child to "fight the monsters"! Decorate a spray bottle with stickers and markers to make it look magical. Fill it with water and, if you like, a pinch of "magic" glitter. This is official "Monster Spray." Explain that if they ever feel a little scared in their room, they have the power to spray the monsters away. This tool gives them a sense of control over their fears and acknowledges that it's okay to feel scared sometimes.

3. Measuring Up!:

Use a measuring tape to see how tall your child is. Make a small, clear mark on a doorframe or wall chart. Then, measure a grown-up and compare the heights. Talk about how kids are always growing, and one day they will be big and tall, too. This introduces early math concepts (measurement, comparison) and connects to the theme of growing up.

Week 4: Living the Dream!

Materials Needed:

- Large cardboard boxes, chairs, blankets, and sheets
- Paper and drawing materials (crayons, markers)
- Ingredients for a simple baking recipe (like sugar cookies or muffins)
- Baking tools: mixing bowl, spoon, cookie sheet

Learning Focus:

In our final week, we celebrate all the ideas we've explored. The focus is on imaginative construction, creative expression, and celebrating the journey of learning with a rewarding, hands-on project.

Activities:

1. Build a Grown-Up Fort:

Use all your construction materials—boxes, blankets, chairs—to build the ultimate "grown-up house" or fort. This is their space where they make the rules. They can furnish it with pillows,

bring in their favorite toys, and even have a special snack inside. This large-scale building project encourages problem-solving, spatial awareness, and independent play.

2. **My Page for the Book:**

Now that you've explored the book all month, it's time to add to it! Take a blank piece of paper and ask your child, "What is one more wonderful thing you will do when you grow up?" Have them draw a picture of their idea. You can write their words at the bottom to caption the illustration, creating a brand new page for the book. This finalizes their personal connection to the story and values their unique ideas.

3. **A "Grown-Up" Baking Celebration:**

To celebrate the end of your unit, choose a simple recipe to bake together. Being in the kitchen and helping with "real work" is a very grown-up feeling. Let your child help with pouring pre-measured ingredients and stirring the batter. The process of following steps and creating something delicious together is a perfect endcap. Enjoy your tasty treats while looking back at the dream board and the book page you made.