

Learning About Cause and Effect: Ages 4-5

Cause and effect activities will give your child an opportunity to:

- See that one event can cause another (action and reaction)
- Learn that the cause is WHY something happens
- Learn that the effect is WHAT happens

Ideas to try with your child:

- Blow up a balloon and do not tie it. Ask your child what she thinks will happen if you let it go. Let go and watch as it flies around the room.
- Sink and Float-Put a few inches of water in a large bowl. Gather up items such as a key, a wooden block, a pencil, a cotton ball, a marshmallow, or a toy car. One by one drop them in the bowl of water and talk about whether they sink or float.
- Put a few drops of red food coloring in small cup of water and yellow food coloring into another. Talk with your child about what they think will happen if you mix the two together. Use an eye dropper, small spoon, or simply pour one into the other. Discuss the results as you experiment with other colors. Read Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh to read about some mice with the same idea.

If your child is struggling:

- Make playdough of two different colors. Talk with your child about the changes she sees as she squeezes the colors together.
- Build a block tower together. Keep adding “one more” until the tower topples over. Ask your child why she thinks it fell and build it many more times, testing out ways to make it more stable.

Going further:

- Read stories with examples of actions and their consequences such as The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash by Trinka Hakes Noble or If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Nemeroff.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 4-5** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Seek to understand cause and effect.” Learning About My World (Knowledge), Ages 4-5, pg. 78