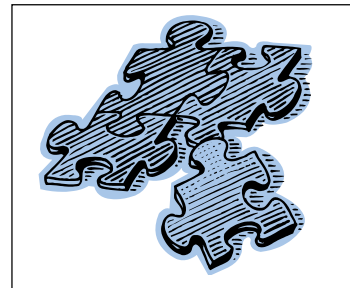


Puzzle Play

Putting together puzzles will help your child to:

- Strengthen and use the muscles in her hands
- Focus her eyes and the hands together
- Sharpen visual skills as she begins to “see” where each piece is placed



Ideas to try with your child:

- When putting a small puzzle (3-4 pieces) together with your child, have her look for similar colors. If the border of the puzzle is blue, have her look for pieces with blue first. You can sort the pieces by color and help them turn the pieces if they’re struggling at first.
- Create your own puzzles by cutting up an extra family photo, a postcard, or a cereal box. Make 3-4 large pieces with jagged edges so they easily fit together. Puzzles can also be purchased for a low cost at the dollar store. Look for thick cardboard puzzles or wooden puzzles.

If your child is struggling:

- Use puzzles without interlocking pieces and knobs on the tops. This will help with finding the right place to put the pieces and makes gripping much easier.
- Practice putting together connecting blocks (like Duplo or bristle builders) to help learn how to connect pieces.

Going further:

- Create a puzzle using an old calendar. There is a picture on one side and numbers on the other, so for advanced learners they can put the numbered pieces in order.
- Increase the number of pieces in the puzzle (5-9) as your child gains skill.
- Put larger floor puzzles together as a family activity.



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 3-4 years** that parents can help improve at home.

Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Work puzzles of three to four pieces” Touching, Seeing, Hearing and Moving Around, Ages-3-4 years, pg. 60