



# HEALTH EDUCATION

# EARLY LEARNING

AGES 3 to 5







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STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

For Early Learning Utah  
Core Standards Ages 3 to 5

**HEALTH  
EDUCATION**

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# HEALTH EDUCATION



## INTRODUCTION

The success of Utah's young children is strongly linked to their health. The goal of Health Education is to support early childhood educators and families in developing healthy, responsible children with knowledge and skills that lead to lifelong healthy behaviors. The inclusion of health practices in a child's education positively contributes to their ability to learn, focus, and achieve health and wellness throughout their lives. The Utah Early Learning Standards for Health Education are an introduction to physical, mental, emotional, and social health.

The Health Standards consist of four strands:

**Human Development** focuses on independence in personal care and hygiene. Children with experience establishing habits and routines for caring for and protecting their bodies in a developmentally appropriate way tend to have healthier growth and development (Britto et al., 2017).

**Health Foundations and Protective Factors of Healthy Self** focuses on learning characteristics of safe and healthy relationships with peers and trusted adults (for example, parent, guardian, relative, teacher, counselor, clergy). Children with experience in building strong protective factors through positive reciprocal relationships are less likely to develop mental illness or substance use disorders (Shonkoff et al., 2012).

**Mental and Emotional Health** focuses on awareness and care for the mental and emotional health of self and others. Children with experience using strategies to identify and manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors have shown to be more skilled in self-regulation and self-control (Montroy et al., 2016; Schore, 2015).

**Nutrition** focuses on understanding the importance of nutritional food on health throughout life, including food choices, such as identifying healthy or less healthy foods, and how to properly fuel the body. Proper nutrition is linked to learning readiness, academic achievement, emotional health, supporting the immune system, and reducing the occurrence of many diseases (Britto et al., 2017).

## ADULTS SUPPORT LEARNING IN HEALTH EDUCATION WHEN THEY:

- Encourage the child to participate in bedtime routines, including brushing their teeth, etc.
- Provide examples of what a good friend is and is not.
- Provide suggestions for appropriate turn taking.
- Talk about foods in the environment and discuss healthy foods during snack time.
- Help children acknowledge their feelings and teach them appropriate ways to handle those feelings.

# Strategies & Activities for 3-YEAR-OLDS

## Strand 1: **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

*Students will learn independence in basic hygiene skills and understand different types of touch.*

### **GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

- Teach, model, and practice personal care skills.
- Teach, model, and practice problem solving skills.

<b>STANDARDS</b>	<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>
<p><b>HE 3 yr.1.1:</b> Participate in and develop personal hygiene and care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create visual cues that display steps for everyday routines such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hanging up coats and backpacks</li> <li>• using the restroom</li> <li>• washing hands</li> <li>• blowing nose</li> <li>• coughing into elbow</li> <li>• packing backpacks to go home</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Use a puppet to show how to use a tissue</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 3 yr.1.2:</b> Develop an awareness between appropriate and inappropriate touch.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish simple classroom rules with visual cues for resolving conflict and involve students in identifying and discussing reasons for rules and behavioral expectations.</li> <li>■ Provide alternatives to hitting, kicking, biting, etc.</li> <li>■ Identify and follow <a href="#">Prevent Child Abuse Utah's</a> guidelines for teaching safe touch.</li> <li>■ Discuss that students have a choice in accepting physical touch from others (hugs, kisses, high fives, etc.).</li> </ul>

**Strand 2: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF A HEALTHY SELF**

*Students will learn the characteristics of safe and healthy relationships.*

**GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR HEALTHY SELF**

- Use students’ names often in daily routines, songs, games, transitions and other activities, both orally and written.
- Provide time and play opportunities for students.
- Teach, model, and practice social behaviors through games and play.
- Teach, model, and practice polite language with and for students.
- Use puppets or stuffed animals to role play possible solutions to help solve conflicts.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 3 yr.2.1:</b> With prompting and support, recognize trusted adults (for example, parent, guardian, relative, teacher, counselor, clergy) and describe how to recognize the characteristics that make them trusted and safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Help students identify a minimum of 3 trusted adults in the home, school, or community that can provide help to them.</li> <li>■ Invite school employees (for example, administration, custodian, secretary, cook, etc.) and community helpers to visit the classroom.</li> <li>■ Create a visual display or book to help students identify trusted adults.</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 3 yr.2.2:</b> Identify and practice how to make friends and be a good friend by calling peers by name and engaging in parallel and associative play.</p>	<p>Provide time and play opportunities for students to practice social skills and play together, including a dramatic play center.</p>
<p><b>HE 3 yr.2.3:</b> With prompting and support, begin to join in, maintain interactions, and interact cooperatively with others by sharing, turn taking, resolving conflicts, and recognizing others’ needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teach, model, and practice social behaviors through playing games in small groups and actively engage and support students in cooperative play.</li> <li>■ Teach, model, and practice appropriate ways to get someone’s attention and respond to others. For example:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lightly tap someone on the shoulder.</li> <li>• Refer to them by name.</li> <li>• Turn and look when they call your name.</li> <li>• Listen and respond when spoken to.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 3 yr.2.4:</b> With prompting and support, attend to and show appreciation for the actions or choices of others (for example, compliment others).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teach, model, and practice polite language. For example:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use kind words.</li> <li>• Give genuine and descriptive compliments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ When conflicts arise, foster problem-solving discussions.</li> <li>■ Discuss simple classroom rules and use visual cues for resolving conflict.</li> <li>■ Teach, model, and role play problem-solving skills with peers.</li> </ul>

**Strand 3: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

*Students will identify emotions and react appropriately to different emotions.*

**GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

- Teach and model expressing and labeling emotions and feelings. Practice these skills in small groups or individually.
- Focus on a new calming down technique each week and repeat them throughout the year.
- Ask students to label how they are feeling daily.
- Support students in identifying facial expressions and body language that communicates the feelings and intentions of others.
- Support students with social prompts and cues to teach expected behaviors.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 3 yr.3.1:</b> With prompting and support, express, identify, and label emotions (for example, happy, sad, angry, afraid) and feelings (for example, thirsty, hungry, hot, cold, tired).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide visual supports for identifying and expressing emotions such as cue cards, books, and posters.</li> <li>■ Teach and model that feeling different emotions is ok.</li> <li>■ Allow students to view their different facial expressions in a mirror.</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 3 yr.3.2:</b> With prompting and support, begin to demonstrate methods to calm down (for example, deep breathing, count to ten, mindfulness).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Practice and model deep breathing as a relaxation technique using visual cues and imagery (such as pretend to blow out candles by slowly breathing out through the mouth).</li> <li>■ Practice and model impulse control by identifying appropriate behavioral responses (for example stop, count to 10 and gain control of body and/or emotions; take a drink of water).</li> <li>■ Practice and model mindfulness strategies such as stretching like an animal and positive self-talk.</li> <li>■ Have students lay on their backs and place their hand or an object on their chest or stomach to see it rise and fall with deep breaths.</li> </ul>

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STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 3 yr.3.3:</b> With prompting and support, begin to develop self-control by regulating one's own impulses and feelings, following simple directions, waiting for turns, transitioning between activities, and complying with limitations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage students in games and activities specifically related to teaching self-regulation (for example, "freeze" games or songs, activities, games, or songs that involve turn taking).</li> <li>• Develop consistent, predictable schedules and routines for the classroom.</li> </ul>



Stand 4: **NUTRITION**

*Students will understand why food choices are important for health.*

**GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR NUTRITION:**

- Identify a variety of healthy foods and drinks, including cultural foods from students in your classroom.
- Provide pretend play foods and discuss if they are things you should eat any time or sometimes.
- Encourage students to try different foods. You can also invite them to touch, smell, and possibly lick foods they are hesitant to try.
- Encourage peer discussion during snack times.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<b>HE 3 yr.4.1:</b> Begin to identify the difference between healthy and less healthy food choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Discuss healthy and less healthy foods at snack and mealtimes.</li> <li>■ Use visuals such as pictures, play food, or real food to introduce the concept of “healthy” and “less healthy” food choices.</li> <li>■ Sort foods into healthy and less healthy categories.</li> </ul>
<b>HE 3 yr.4.2:</b> Begin to identify why eating healthy food is important.	<p>Use visual aids, such as posters and books, to discuss the advantages of eating healthy foods. For example, healthy foods can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help you grow</li> <li>• Help you stay strong</li> <li>• Keep you from getting sick</li> <li>• Keep your body working</li> <li>• Keep your teeth strong</li> </ul>
<b>HE 3 yr.4.3:</b> With prompting and support, try new foods from a variety of food groups.	Provide opportunities for students to sample a variety of foods from different food groups and cultures during snack and mealtimes (while maintaining the requirements of the state and local health department and federal food programs).

# Strategies & Activities for 4-YEAR-OLDS

## Strand 1: **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

*Students will learn independence in basic hygiene skills and understand different types of touch.*

### **GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:**

- Teach, model, and practice personal care skills.
- Teach, model, and practice problem solving skills.

Strategies and Activities that are highlighted in purple are specific to 4-year-old students.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 4 yr.1.1:</b> Show independence in personal hygiene and care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create visual cues that display steps for everyday routines such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hanging up coats and backpacks</li> <li>• using the restroom</li> <li>• washing hands</li> <li>• blowing nose</li> <li>• coughing into elbow</li> <li>• packing backpacks to go home</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Use a puppet to show how to use a tissue</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 4 yr.1.2:</b> With prompting and support, distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touch.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish simple classroom rules with visual cues for resolving conflict and involve students in identifying and discussing reasons for rules and behavioral expectations.</li> <li>■ Teach, model and practice problem solving skills with peers and provide alternatives to hitting, kicking, biting, etc.</li> <li>■ Identify and follow <a href="#">Prevent Child Abuse Utah</a>'s guidelines for teaching safe touch.</li> <li>■ Discuss that students have a choice in accepting physical touch from others (hugs, kisses, high fives, etc.).</li> </ul>

**Strand 2: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF A HEALTHY SELF**

*Students will learn the characteristics of safe and healthy relationships.*

**GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR HEALTHY SELF:**

- Use students’ names often in daily routines, songs, games, transitions and other activities, both orally and written.
- Provide time and play opportunities for students.
- Teach, model, and practice social behaviors through games and play.
- Teach, model, and practice polite language with and for students.
- Use puppets or stuffed animals to role play possible solutions to help solve conflicts.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 4 yr.2.1:</b> With prompting and support, identify trusted adults (for example, parent, guardian, relative, teacher, counselor, clergy) and describe how to recognize the characteristics that make them trusted and safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Help students identify a minimum of 3 trusted adults in the home, school, or community that can provide help to them.</li> <li>■ Invite school employees (for example, administration, custodian, secretary, cook, etc.) and community helpers, and members of the broader community to visit the classroom.</li> <li>■ Create a visual display or book to help students identify trusted adults.</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 4 yr.2.2:</b> Identify and practice how to make friends and be a good friend by developing and using friendship skills with peers and participating in cooperative play.</p>	<p>Provide time and play opportunities for students to practice social skills as they play together.</p>
<p><b>HE 4 yr.2.3:</b> With prompting and support, join in, invite, and interact cooperatively with others by sharing, turn-taking, resolving conflicts, and recognizing others’ needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teach, model, and practice social behaviors through playing games in small groups and actively engage and support students in play.</li> <li>■ Teach, model, and practice appropriate ways to get someone’s attention and respond to others. For example:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lightly tap someone on the shoulder.</li> <li>• Refer to them by name.</li> <li>• Turn and look when they call your name.</li> <li>• Listen and respond when spoken to.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 4 yr.2.4:</b> With prompting and support, attend to and show appreciation for the actions or choices of others (for example, compliment others).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ When conflicts arise, foster problem-solving discussions.</li> <li>■ Discuss simple classroom rules and use visual cues for resolving conflict.</li> <li>■ Teach, model, and role play problem solving skills with peers.</li> </ul>



**Strand 3: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

*Students will identify emotions and react appropriately to different emotions.*

**GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH:**

- Teach and model expressing and labeling emotions and feelings. Practice these skills in small groups or individually.
- Focus on a new calming down technique each week and repeat them throughout the year.
- Ask students to label how they are feeling daily.
- Support students in identifying facial expressions and body language that communicates the feelings and intentions of others.
- Support students with social prompts and cues to teach expected behaviors.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 4 yr.3.1:</b> Express, identify, and label emotions of self and others (for example, happy, sad, angry, afraid, frustrated, bored) and feelings (for example, thirsty, hungry, hot, cold, tired).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide visual supports for identifying and expressing emotions such as cue cards, books, and posters.</li> <li>■ Teach and model that feeling different emotions are ok.</li> <li>■ Allow students to view their different facial expressions in a mirror.</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 4 yr.3.2:</b> With prompting and support, begin to demonstrate methods to calm down (for example, deep breathing, count to ten, mindfulness).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Practice and model deep breathing as a relaxation technique using visual cues and imagery (such as pretend to blow out candles by slowly breathing out through the mouth).</li> <li>■ Practice and model impulse control by identifying appropriate behavioral responses (for example stop, count to 10 and gain control of body and/or emotions; take a drink of water).</li> <li>■ Practice and model mindfulness strategies such as stretching like an animal and positive self-talk.</li> <li>■ Have students lay on their backs and place their hand or an object on their chest or stomachs to see it rise and fall with deep breaths.</li> </ul>

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STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 4 yr.3.3:</b> With prompting and support, develop and practice self-control by regulating one’s own impulses and feelings, following simple directions, waiting for turns, transitioning between activities, and complying with limitations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Engage students in games and activities specifically relating to teaching self-regulation (for example, “freeze” games or songs; activities, games, and songs that involve turn taking; etc.).</li> <li>■ Develop and use consistent, predictable schedules and routines for the classroom.</li> <li>■ Support students in communicating their feelings and intentions to others through modeling, parallel talk, and identifying students’ body language.</li> <li>■ Support students with social prompts and cues to teach and remind them about appropriate behaviors.</li> </ul>

Stand 4: **NUTRITION**

*Students will understand why food choices are important for health.*

**GENERAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR NUTRITION:**

- Identify a variety of healthy foods and drinks, including cultural foods from students in your classroom.
- Provide pretend play foods and discuss if they are things you should eat any time or sometimes.
- Encourage students to try different foods. You can also invite them to touch, smell, and possibly lick foods they are hesitant to try.
- Encourage peer discussion during snack times.

STANDARDS	STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES
<p><b>HE 4 yr.4.1:</b> Identify a variety of healthy foods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify a variety of healthy foods students eat, including foods that reflect different family cultures of the students in your classroom.</li> <li>■ Use visuals such as pictures, play food or real food to introduce the concept of “healthy” and “less healthy” food choices.</li> <li>■ Provide activities to help students sort foods into healthy and less healthy food categories.</li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 4 yr.4.2:</b> Identify why eating healthy food is important and begin to categorize into food groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use visual aids, such as posters and books, to discuss the advantages of eating healthy foods. For example, healthy foods can:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help you grow</li> <li>• Help you stay strong</li> <li>• Keep you from getting sick</li> <li>• Keep your body working</li> <li>• Keep your teeth strong</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>HE 4 yr.4.3:</b> With prompting and support, try new foods from a variety of food groups.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for students to sample a variety of foods from different food groups and cultures (while maintaining the requirements of the state and local health departments and federal food programs).</p>

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