

Introducing Dinosaurs to Preschoolers

Young children are natural scientists. Their curiosity leads them to ask interesting questions, observe the world around them and try to figure out how everything works. Dinosaurs are one subject that particularly fascinate most children. Whether it is their truly larger-than-life image, or the fact that you can't visit a live dinosaur in a zoo, children tend to have lots of questions about dinosaurs.

Asking questions and talking about ways to figure out the answers to those questions together is one way to introduce the topic of dinosaurs. Studying dinosaurs is also a great way to encourage children to use their observation skills. You may be surprised to see that even very young children can identify dinosaurs by name or make guesses about how the dinosaurs moved or what they ate by looking at dinosaur pictures.

On the following pages you will find:

- Songs and Poems About Dinosaurs
- Dinosaur Activities
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- Dinosaur Games

Songs About Dinosaurs

I'm a Mean Old Dinosaur
(Tune: *I'm a little Tea Pot*)

I'm a mean old Dinosaur
(Make a mean face)
Big and Tall
(Gesture hands big and tall)
Here is my tail, here is my claw.
(Gesture hands behind your back for tail and make claw hands)
When I get all hungry
(rub your tummy)
I just growl
(kids grrroooowwlll)
Look out kids I'm on the prowl.
(Teacher walks around students acting like a dinosaur)

Dinosaurs

An action poem by Nancy Klein.

Spread your arms, way out wide,
Fly like a Pteranodon, soar and glide.

Bend to the floor, head down low,
Move like Stegosaurus, long ago.

Reach up tall, try to be
As tall as Apatosaurus eating on a tree.

Using your claws, grumble and growl
Just like Tyrannosaurus on the prowl.

After reciting the poem once, have the children come up with dinosaurs and matching actions for the group.

Dinosaurs - Subtracting Numbers

Five enormous dinosaurs

Letting out a roar--

One went away, and

Then there were four.

Four enormous dinosaurs

Crashing down a tree--

One went away, and

Then there were three.

Three enormous dinosaurs

Eating tiger stew--

One went away, and

Then there were two.

Two enormous dinosaurs

Trying to run--

One ran away, and then there was one.

One enormous dinosaur,

Afraid to be a hero--

He went away, and

Then there was zero.

Triceratops

(Sung to: Three Blind Mice)

Look and see. One, two, three.

Count with me. One, two, three.

Triceratops has three big horns.

That's the way that he was born.

One, two, three. One, two, three.

Hiding Dinosaurs

Dinosaur, Dinosaur, where can you be?

Hiding behind me (hands behind back)

Where you cannot see,

Now you see one. (Bring out one hand)

It's waiting for you.

Here comes another, (bring out other hand)

And now you see two!

Stegosaurus

Stegosaurus, Stegosaurus
In the swamp, In the swamp
Spines along his "ba-ack"
With his tail he "wa-acks"
Clomp, Clomp, Clomp, Clomp, Clomp, Clomp

The Dinosaur Zoo

Allosaurus, Stegosaurus, Brontosaurus too,
They all went off together at the Dinosaur Zoo.
Along came the waiter called Tyrannosaurus Rex,
Gobbled up the table because they wouldn't pay their checks!

Dinosaurs Lived Long Ago

(sung to "London Bridge is Falling Down")
Dinosaurs lived long ago, long ago, long ago,
Dinosaurs lived long ago, That's prehistoric!
Tyrannosaurus was very mean, very mean, Very mean,
Tyrannosaurus was very mean, That's prehistoric!
Brontosaurus was very big, very big, very big,
Brontosaurus was very big, that's prehistoric!
Stegosaurus wore heavy spikes, heavy spikes, heavy spikes,
Stegosaurus wore heavy spikes, that's prehistoric!
Triceratops had big sharp horns, big sharp horns, big sharp horns,
Triceratops had big sharp horns, that's prehistoric!
Pterodactyl could fly in the air, fly in the air, fly in the air,
Pterodactyl could fly in the air, that's prehistoric!
All the Dinosaurs disappeared, disappeared, disappeared,
All the Dinosaurs disappeared, that's why their prehistoric!

Dinosaur Stomp

Play the bunny hop song and have the children pretend to be dinosaurs stomping around.

Dinosaur Activities

Vote and Graph it

Have the children vote for their favorite dinosaur and graph the results. Which dino did most children like the best?

Would a Dinosaur be a good pet?

Have the children vote if a dinosaur would be a good pet. Record the results on a graph. What is the result? Discuss with the children that a dinosaur would not be a good pet and reasons why. I.e., claws, eat a lot of food, they don't like humans, they might hurt us.

Ideas for dinosaur plastic figures

- Have the children sort the animals by size.
- Have the children sort the animals by the kind they like the best to least.
- Buy two or more sets and have the children sort the animals by type.
- Supply the children with a balance and let them experiment.
- Have the children count the animals.
- Supply the children with cards with numbers on them. Large playing cards work well. Have the children place the appropriate number of animals on each card. ie 4 animals on the card that has a 4 (or 4 of diamonds) on it.
- Let the children play with the animals in the sand and water table.
- Put the dinosaurs in the block area, encourage the children to create mountains with the blocks for the animals to live and play on.
- Supply the children with paint and white paper, and give them a figure of a dinosaur. Have them dip the animals feet in the paint then press on the paper to make dinosaur tracks.

Dino Bones

Have the children make their own dinosaur by gluing pasta noodles to a piece of paper.

Dinosaur Science

I'm a Paleontologist

Create rock with dinosaur fossils in it by using a clean small trashcan, two or three boxes of plaster of Paris, three cups of sand, and water. Mix all ingredients and add small plastic dinosaurs, blackened chicken bones, and any other "prehistoric" items you wish.

Let dry for two-three days. Remove "the Rock" from the trashcan and put it on a table. Provide goggles, a small hammer, screwdriver, and paintbrushes to let the children excavate the rock.

A second way to do this is to put the "prehistoric items" in your sand table.

A third is to put your Dino material on ice, Freeze the "prehistoric items" and let your children chisel them out.

Just How big were dinosaurs?

Make a people graph to find out. Have children measure out a dinosaur's length using yardsticks. Stretch a string the length of the dinosaurs.

Get your class to lie head-to-toe along the measured area. Count How many children it takes to make a dinosaur's length.

A second way to do this is by seeing how many of your children's footprints could fit into a dinosaur's footprint.

Paleontologists at work

Cut out the bone structure of a dinosaur. Make copies of all of the bones and cut them out. Let your children put the bones together just as a paleontologist would. Don't give them a model let each child design their own dinosaur.

My Own Fossil

Allow each child to choose from several items (Shell, leaf, bone, plastic Dinosaur, etc) to make into a fossil.

Coat the item with Petroleum Jelly. Next mix Plaster of Paris and water in a dish. After the mixture has set for a few minutes press the object into the mix. Let the object sit in the plaster for a couple of days. The imprint left behind after the plaster has dried will resemble a fossil.

Dinosaur Games

Dinosaur Shape Hop

Cut out large dinosaur shapes from colored paper. Laminate them and cut them out. Place them on the floor and ask the children to hop from one shape to another. These may also be used as seat markers for group time.

The Jaws of a Tyrannosaurus

Put a ten foot circle some where in your class. Hide large Dino teeth in different places around the room before they get there. Have the children find the teeth and bring them back to the circle. Tape the teeth around the circle. Explain to the children that the circle is how wide the Tyrannosaurus Rex mouth was. Let them see how many of them can fit in the jaw

