

Before & After

SEEING HOW OUR COMMUNITY GROWS

♥ A 5 Day Activity Pack ♥



OBSERVE



DELIVER



BAKE



BUILD



GROW



CELEBRATE

[THEGROACADEMY.COM/BLOOMROOM](https://thegroacademy.com/bloomroom)

♥ Small steps. Big changes. Stronger together. ♥

Welcome to Before & After

Every day is filled with little moments that happen in a special order. From baking bread and delivering mail to planting gardens and building playgrounds, communities work because people plan, prepare, and take one step at a time. As children begin to notice these everyday sequences, they develop the confidence to predict what comes next, solve problems, and make sense of the world around them.

This week, children will explore the journeys behind familiar community experiences through playful movement, storytelling, building, and hands-on discovery. Along the way, they'll strengthen executive function skills like planning, sequencing, memory, and flexible thinking while learning that every big accomplishment begins with many small steps.

We hope you enjoy discovering the stories behind everyday moments as you explore **Before & After** together!

with open hearts,
the gro academy
team

Home Extension: Community Journey Walk

Discovering the steps behind everyday places together

Objective:

Children observe how familiar community places work by noticing and talking about the sequence of events they see during a neighborhood walk.

Materials:

- Community Journey Checklist (printable)
- Crayons or pencil
- Clipboard (optional)
- Comfortable walking shoes

Instructions:

1. Choose two or three familiar community places to visit, such as a bakery, library, park, garden, or post office.
2. Encourage your child to observe what people are doing before, during, and after each visit.
3. Talk together about the steps that help each place work, using questions like, "What happened first?" or "What do you think happens next?"
4. Draw or check off the places you explored on the Community Journey Checklist.
5. Finish by talking about one new thing your child discovered about how the community works.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Choose one familiar location and focus on simple observations. Use words like first, next, and last while pointing out everyday routines and encouraging toddlers to notice what people are doing.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Working toward shared goals • Following visual directions • Contributing ideas
- **Cognitive:** Understanding community roles • Symbolic representation • Everyday problem-solving
- **Literacy & Language:** Describing observations • Sequencing events • New vocabulary

Mail's Journey

Following the steps that connect a community.

Objective:

Children discover the journey of a letter by acting out each step, building sequencing skills, communication, and an understanding of how community systems work together.

Materials:

- Large picture cards showing each step of a letter's journey
- Envelopes (real or pretend)
- Small mailbox or decorated box
- Mail carrier bag or basket
- Community map or classroom path (optional)

Instructions:

1. Show children a letter and ask, "How does this get to someone's house?"
2. Introduce the picture cards and work together to place the steps in order.
3. Invite children to become the community by acting out each role—writing a letter, mailing it, sorting it, delivering it, and receiving it.
4. Repeat the journey, encouraging children to describe what happens before and after each step.
5. Finish by drawing or talking about one part of the journey they remember.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Simplify the activity by exploring just three steps—mailing, delivering, and receiving. Allow toddlers to carry pretend mail, place letters into a mailbox, and celebrate when a friend receives their delivery while adults model words like first, next, and last.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Planning sequences • Flexible thinking
- **Cognitive:** Understanding community systems • Sequencing events
- **Literacy & Language:** Retelling experiences • Using sequencing vocabulary
- **Social & Emotional:** Cooperating in shared roles • Appreciating community helpers

From Flour to Bread

Discovering how simple ingredients become something we share.

Objective:

Children explore the sequence of making bread through hands-on sensory play, dramatic play, and storytelling while learning how community bakeries transform simple ingredients into everyday food.

Materials:

- Picture cards showing each step of bread making
- Bowl and spoon
- Measuring cups
- Flour (or kinetic sand for dramatic play)
- Play dough or homemade dough
- Rolling pins
- Baking trays or cookie sheets
- Aprons (optional)
- Toy bread baskets or bakery props

Instructions:

1. Talk about where bread comes from and invite children to share their favorite baked foods.
2. Explore the picture cards together and place the bread-making steps in order.
3. Let children pretend to measure, mix, knead, shape, and "bake" dough in a classroom bakery.
4. Encourage children to retell the process while serving bread to classmates.
5. Finish by discussing what happened first, next, and last.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer soft play dough and simple bakery props for toddlers to explore. Talk about actions like mix, roll, pat, and bake while introducing simple sequencing words such as first, next, and last.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Following sequences • Flexible thinking
- **Cognitive:** Understanding everyday processes • Cause and effect
- **Literacy & Language:** Sequencing vocabulary • Retelling events
- **Social & Emotional:** Cooperative dramatic play • Sharing roles

Build the Playground

Planning, building, and improving together.

Objective:

Children work together to design and build a playground while exploring planning, sequencing, teamwork, and problem-solving through open-ended engineering play.

Materials:

- Wooden blocks
- Cardboard tubes
- Craft sticks
- Recycled boxes
- Masking tape
- Loose parts
- Toy people or animal figures
- Clipboards and crayons (optional)

Instructions:

1. Invite children to talk about what makes a great playground and decide which features they would like to build.
2. Encourage children to sketch or describe a simple plan before gathering materials.
3. Work together to build the playground, making changes and solving problems as needed.
4. Add toy people or animals and pretend to use the finished playground together.
5. Finish with a gallery walk, inviting children to explain one part they helped create.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Provide large foam blocks, cardboard boxes, or soft building materials for toddlers to stack and explore. Encourage simple building together while introducing sequencing words like build, add, try, and finish.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Planning ahead • Flexible thinking
- **Cognitive:** Engineering design • Spatial reasoning
- **Health & Physical:** Fine motor coordination • Hand strength
- **Social & Emotional:** Teamwork • Shared decision-making

Growing Together

Discovering how gardens grow one step at a time.

Objective:

Children explore the sequence of growing a community garden by planting, caring for, and observing seeds while learning that growth happens through patience, teamwork, and daily routines.

Materials:

- Flower or vegetable seeds
- Small pots or recycled cups
- Potting soil
- Child-sized trowels or spoons
- Watering cans or spray bottles
- Plant growth picture cards
- Garden journal paper (optional)

Instructions:

1. Talk about where plants begin and invite children to predict what a tiny seed might become.
2. Explore the plant growth cards together and place them in order.
3. Plant seeds, gently adding soil and water while discussing each step.
4. Create a class watering routine and encourage children to care for the plants throughout the week.
5. Finish by predicting what the plants might look like tomorrow, next week, and later.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Invite toddlers to scoop soil, press seeds into the dirt, and help water plants. Use simple language such as plant, water, grow, and wait while encouraging children to notice small changes over time.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Persistence • Observation
- **Cognitive:** Plant life cycles • Predicting change
- **Literacy & Language:** Fine motor control • Tool use
- **Social & Emotional:** Describing observations • Sequencing vocabulary

Community Celebration Parade

Planning, creating, and celebrating together.

Objective:

Children work together to plan and create a classroom community celebration, sequencing the steps from preparation to celebration while practicing teamwork, communication, and flexible thinking.

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Crayons and markers
- Streamers or ribbon
- Craft sticks
- Musical instruments or rhythm sticks
- Dress-up accessories (optional)
- Wagons or baskets (optional)
- Community helper props from previous activities

Instructions:

1. Talk about why communities celebrate together and brainstorm ideas for a classroom parade.
2. Work together to decide what needs to happen before the celebration begins.
3. Create simple signs, decorations, instruments, or parade props.
4. Practice walking through the classroom while sharing music, smiles, and community roles.
5. Celebrate with a classroom parade, then reflect on everything the class created together this week.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Provide simple scarves, ribbons, rhythm instruments, or decorated wagons for toddlers to explore. Walk together around the classroom while singing familiar songs and using simple sequencing words like first, next, and celebrate.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Planning together • Flexible thinking
- **Health & Physical:** Coordinated movement • Fine motor creativity
- **Literacy & Language:** Sharing ideas • Speaking with confidence
- **Social & Emotional:** Community belonging • Cooperative celebration

Facilitator Focus: Before & After

Supporting Executive Function through Everyday Sequences

Executive function skills are developed through meaningful experiences rather than memorization. Children learn by observing routines and solving problems in everyday activities, realizing that significant achievements result from connected actions. This week's activities will help children strengthen planning, flexible thinking, memory, and self-regulation by encouraging them to explain their thought processes, make predictions, and revise ideas instead of merely seeking the "right" answer.



Supporting Learning throughout the Week

Encourage rich conversations by asking open-ended questions such as:

What happened before this?

What do you think happens next?

How did we get from here to there?

What changed along the way?

What might happen if we skipped this step?

How could we solve this problem together?

These questions help children organize their thinking while building language, confidence, and problem-solving skills.



Building Sequencing Language

Use sequencing vocabulary naturally throughout the day instead of teaching it in isolation.

Model words like:

first • next • then • before • after • finally • later • yesterday • today • tomorrow

Hearing these words during meaningful experiences helps children understand both time and order while expanding their everyday language.



♥ Why It Matters

Sequencing supports far more than early math skills. It helps children:

- plan and organize ideas
- follow multi-step directions
- remember routines
- solve problems independently
- understand cause and effect
- communicate experiences clearly
- build confidence through successful planning

When children begin to recognize that every finished project starts with a first step, they develop the confidence to approach new challenges with curiosity, patience, and persistence.



🌸 Facilitator Reminder

Celebrate children's thinking, not just their answers. When children explain why they chose a sequence, changed their plan, or solved a problem differently, they are strengthening the executive function skills that support learning across every area of development.



Community Journey Journal

the gro academy
Cultivating Exceptional Early Childhood Professionals



Let's discover how our community works! ♥



Grown-Up Helper: Help your little learner read the prompts, talk about what they notice, and celebrate their discoveries together!



Today We Visited...



☐ Bakery



☐ Library



☐ Park



☐ Garden



☐ Post Office



☐ Store

☐ Other: _____

Draw Your Favorite Community Place ☆



Before & After

1 What happened **first**?

2 What happened **next**?

3 What happened **after**?



My Favorite Discovery

"I noticed..." ✨



The Journey of a Letter

Letters have a journey! Let's follow each step.

Grown-Up Helper: Use these cards to talk about what happens first, next, and last.
Perfect for story time, dramatic play, and learning about our community!

1 Write a letter



2 Mail the letter



3 Sort the mail



4 Deliver the mail



5 Arrive at a home



6 Read the letter



Bakery Story Cards

Let's follow the steps to make and share bread!

Grown-Up Helper: Use these cards to talk about what happens first, next, and last. Perfect for story time, dramatic play, and learning about our community!

1 Gather the Ingredients



We get everything we need to make our bread.



2 Mix the Dough



We mix the ingredients together to make dough.



3 Knead the Dough



We push, fold, and press the dough to make it soft.



4 Bake the Bread



We bake the dough in the oven until it turns golden and smells yummy!



5 Share the Bread



We share the bread with others in our community.



Every ingredient matters. Every step is important. Every loaf is made with care. We are a community!



Playground Planner

Let's plan a playground our community will love! ♥

♥ **Grown-Up Helper:** Use this planner to help your little builder think, plan, and create step by step!



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1 What should we build? ✨

Choose the features you want in our playground.



Other ideas: _____

2 Where should it go? ✨

Draw or place your pieces in the space below to design your playground.



3 What do we build first? ✨

Let's put our plan in order!

1 First...



2 Next...



3 Last...



♥ Plan together. Build together. Play together! ♥

My Garden Growth Journal



♥ We plant. We care. We grow together! ♥

♥ **Grown-Up Helper:** Help your little gardener observe, predict, and celebrate how their plant grows over time!



1 Today I planted...

Draw or write what you planted.



2 What do I think will happen next?

Draw or write your prediction.



My Plant Growth Chart

Take photos or draw your plant as it grows!

Day 1

Day 3

Day 7

Day 14

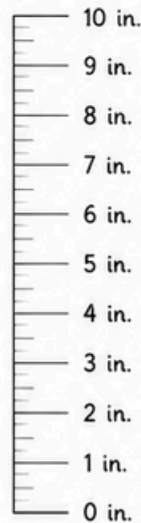
3 What changed?

Draw or write what you noticed.



4 My plant is this tall!

Measure your plant and color the ruler to show how tall it is today. ♥



5 How did I help my plant today? ♥♥

Circle all the ways you helped your plant grow!



Watered



Watched



Talked



Cared



♥ Every day you care, your plant grows!

Date: _____

Our Celebration Planner

Every step brings us closer to celebrating together! ♥



♥ **Grown-Up Helper:** Help your little learners talk through each step as they plan a celebration together. Encourage every child to share an idea and work as a team.



1 What are we celebrating? ☺



2 What do we need? ☆

☐ Decorations



☐ Music



☐ Parade signs



☐ Instruments



☐ Costumes



☐ Other: _____



3 Let's make a plan! ☺

First...



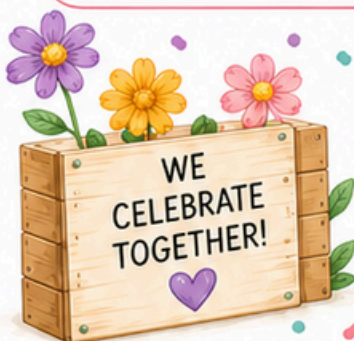
Next...



Last...



4 Our favorite part was...



♥ Together we plan, together we create,
together we celebrate our community! ♥

