



Transitioning to Kindergarten

A Toolkit for Early Childhood Educators

 National Center for Learning Disabilities, Inc.
The power to hope, to learn, and to succeed



Welcome from AFT and NCLD



Getting Started



About NCLD

The **National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)** works to ensure that the nation's 15 million children, adolescents and adults with learning disabilities have every opportunity to succeed in school, work and life.

Our mission is to increase opportunities for all individuals with learning disabilities to achieve their full potential.

- NCLD's highest priority is to help meet the learning and literacy needs of young children aged 4 through 9.
- We are building new programs and products to help ensure that young children's difficulties with learning are recognized and responded to early enough to allow for a successful transition to kindergarten and beyond.



Why focus on early literacy? Research shows.....

- The majority of school-age children with learning disabilities have problems in reading.
- Poor development of early literacy skills can help identify children who are potentially at risk for learning disabilities.
- Children whose reading difficulties have not been identified by grade 4 will most likely still struggle with reading at the end of high school.
- Teaching strategies that work for children with learning disabilities work for all children.



Why talk about transitioning to kindergarten?

- Doesn't it just happen?
- Kindergarten teachers report that 48% of children have moderate or severe problems with transitions.

(National Center for Early Development & Learning. (1999, Summer). *Research and policy brief: Transition to kindergarten*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.)
- Year-long process...



Why talk about transitioning to kindergarten?

Are we doing everything we can to make sure that:

- Children are prepared for school?
- Teachers and schools are prepared for the children they will receive?
- Parents are prepared to participate in the process?



Life is filled with transitions: Sample Activity

Think about some of the important transitions associated with these stages of life:

- Early Childhood
 - Middle Childhood
 - Adolescence
 - Young Adulthood
 - Middle-Age Phase
 - Senior Citizen Phase
-
- What are some of the pleasant and/or negative feelings commonly associated with these transitions?
 - What types of internal and external factors impact these transitions?
 - What types of support can be offered to enhance these transitions?



If I could build a transition toolkit, I would include...Sample Activity

Please take a few moments and think about items you would include in a transition toolkit.



Essential Information: Sample Activity

Imagine that you are a kindergarten teacher, and you will be greeting a group of energetic kindergartners in a couple of months.

- What kind of information do you want to receive from the parents?
- What kind of information do you want to receive from the preschool center/family child care provider?
- When do you want to receive the information?



Essential Information— The NCLD Perspective

What information about a child is important for the kindergarten teacher to know?

- About the family
- Learning styles
- Skill development
- Social interactions



The Toolkit

The toolkit includes materials that will help you implement strategies to facilitate the transition process for children, families, schools and communities.

Let's take a walk through the toolkit.



School Readiness

How do you know if a child is ready for kindergarten?

School readiness tools:

- **Creating an Early Learning Passport**
- **The Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist**
- **The Kindergarten Readiness Indicators: Observation and Activity Guide**
- **Template for Drawing and Writing Sample**



Creating an Early Learning Passport

- Many early childhood educators have found it helpful to create (and receive) an early learning passport for each child.
- This passport is a folder filled with checklists, documents and work samples intended to pass along to a child's kindergarten teacher.
- There is no “right” way to create this passport.
- The most important thing is that information about a child's skills and development is passed on to the kindergarten teacher in a useful, organized way.



“Early Learning Passport”: Sample Activity

- **Step One:** Discuss the types of work samples you would share with parents and/or kindergarten teachers in an Early Learning Passport.
- **Step Two:** Discuss the benefits to children, parents and kindergarten teachers.



Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist

- This is a short checklist that helps track skills that children have mastered as they move through the pre-kindergarten year.
- This is simply a list of skills that will give you, as an early educator, a place to begin in preparing children for entering kindergarten



Kindergarten Readiness Indicators: Observation & Activity Guide

- This guide was designed to help educators know what to look for when observing a child throughout the year, and give some ideas for skill-building activities to use if a child needs some help.

The guide focuses on the areas of:

- Expressive and Receptive Language
- Learning and Cognition
- Phonological Awareness and Print Knowledge
- Early Mathematics
- Social/Emotional
- Physical Development



School Readiness: Sample Activity

- **Step One:** Using the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist, create a profile for an imaginary child.
- **Step Two:** Discuss the type of information you would like to share with parents and/or kindergarten teachers.
- **Step Three:** Discuss the benefits to children, parents and kindergarten teachers.
- ****Look at the Observation and activity guide. How might this be helpful?**



Drawing and Writing Sample

- It is important to provide kindergarten teachers with drawing and writing samples from different points throughout the year.
- Many early educators provide these samples to parents, collecting them for kindergarten teachers can be as simple as photocopying select sample sent home to parents or using the template provided.



Early Literacy Screening



Get Ready to Read!

- *Get Ready to Read!* is a program of the
- National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD).
 - *Get Ready to Read!*
 - is an early literacy program designed to help parents, early educators and child care professionals ensure that young children are equipped with the fundamental skills necessary for learning to read.



Get Ready to Read!

***GRTR!* resources in the toolkit:**

- Introduction to the screening tool
- How to use the screening tool
- How to score the screening tool
- A child booklet (screening tool and answer sheet)
- “What I learned about this child from the *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool.”
- Skill-building activity cards



About *Get Ready to Read!*

- The goal of *Get Ready to Read!* is to screen four-year-olds for early literacy skills before they enter kindergarten and provide skill-strengthening activities to ensure reading success.
- The *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool screens for early literacy skills, not learning disabilities.
- The screening tool and resources were designed to complement classroom curriculums, not replace them
- Can be used by educators, parents, childcare providers and others



Get Ready to Read! national partners

- American Federation of Teachers
- Child Welfare League of America
- Easter Seals
- Family Education Network
- Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPO)
- International Dyslexia Association
- International Reading Association
- Jumpstart
- Learning Disabilities Association
- Lee Pesky Learning Center
- National Association for Family Child Care
- National Center for Family Literacy
- National Council of La Raza
- National Head Start Association
- Parent-Child Home Program
- Parents as Teachers
- Parent Services Project
- Pearson Early Learning
- Public Library Association
- Reach Out and Read
- Reading Is Fundamental
- Schwab Foundation
- Stern Center for Language and Learning
- WETA/Reading Rockets/LDOnline
- WGBH/ *Between the Lions*
- Yale Bush Center/School of the 21st Century



What does research tell us?

- Learning to read and write begins early in children's development, well before they enter kindergarten or first grade.
- Learning to read and write does not happen naturally without adult guidance. Children need:
 - regular exposure to and interaction with print
 - rich oral and written language interactions with adults
 - systematic, explicit instruction to develop and enhance skill mastery.
- Along with vocabulary growth, key predictors of early success in reading are print knowledge, emergent writing, and linguistic awareness.



Why screen for early literacy skills?

- Early literacy screening helps parents and early childhood professionals:
- understand each child's progress towards developing concepts and skills necessary for eventually learning to read.
- identify developmentally appropriate activities that can be used to support early literacy learning.
- seek additional advice and services if a child does not appear to be making appropriate progress.



Screening vs. assessment

- A **screening tool** is a brief measure that helps to differentiate children who are at risk for atypical development from those who are not.
- A **screening tool** could be used to decide whether or not to take specific actions such as seeking referrals, further testing, and instructional activities. It does not provide a “diagnosis.”
- A **test or assessment** is a more rigorous and complex measure of knowledge and skill with more extensive reliability and validity properties.



The *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool

–The *GRTR!* screening tool consists of 20 easy-to-use items that sample some of the key predictors of early success in reading:

- print knowledge skills
- emergent writing skills
- linguistic awareness skills

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- *GRTR!* is for four-year-olds, in the year before kindergarten.
- The screening tool is available in English and Spanish online or on paper.
- It provides a “snapshot” of where a child is in their skill development



Key features of the screening tool

- Twenty easy-to-use items that sample print knowledge, emergent writing, and linguistic awareness skills.
- Each item has four pictures and a question.
- Used by an adult working with an individual child in a quiet environment.
- Screening takes an average of 10 to 12 minutes.
- May be used two or three times in the year before kindergarten, as long as there are several months between administrations.



Three domains of learning to read

PRINT KNOWLEDGE

Differentiating Print from Pictures
Functions of Print
Book Rules
Print Components
Rules of Print
Naming Letters

EMERGENT WRITING SKILLS

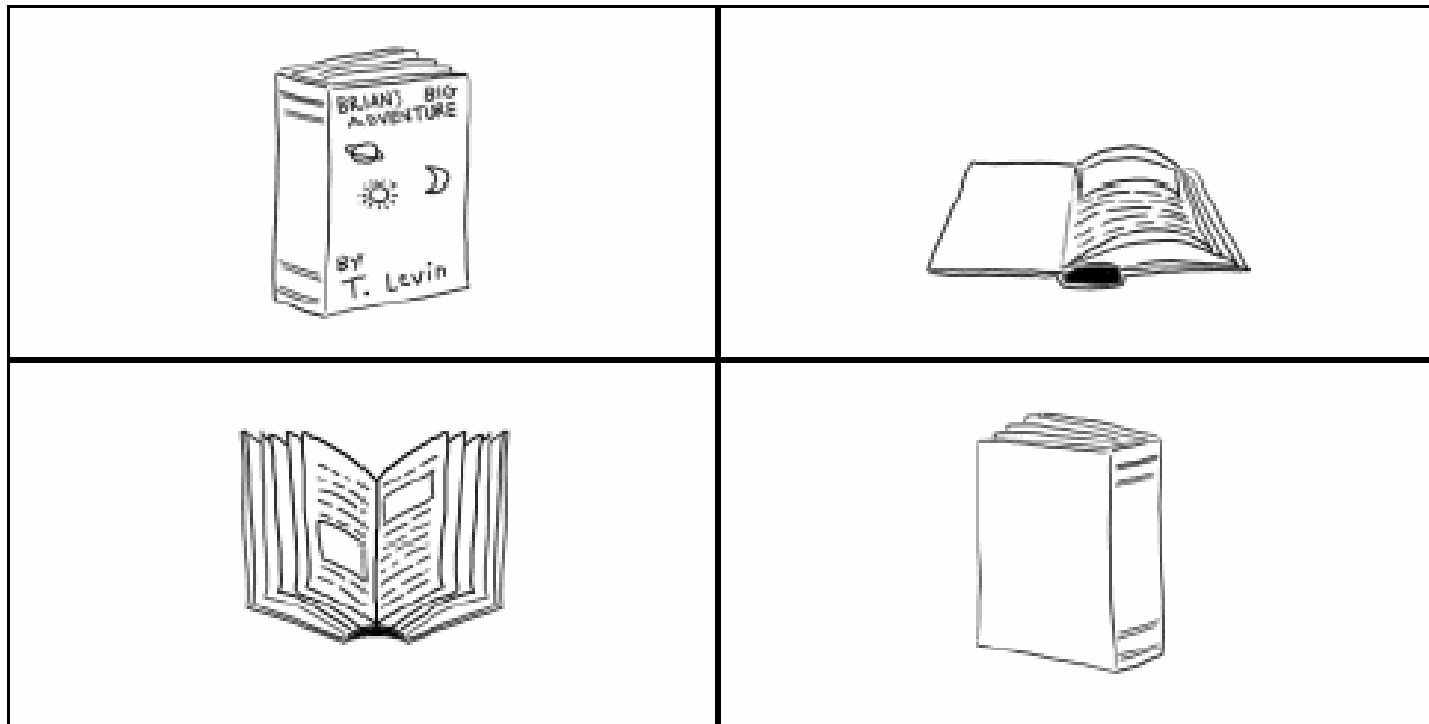
Scribbling
Drawing
Copying
Printing Letters
Printing Name
Invented Spelling
Message Composition

LINGUISTIC AWARENESS

Active Listening
Vocabulary
Rhyming Words
Segmenting Sentences
Segmenting Words
Phonemic Awareness



Print knowledge



These are pictures of a book. Find the one that shows the back of the book.



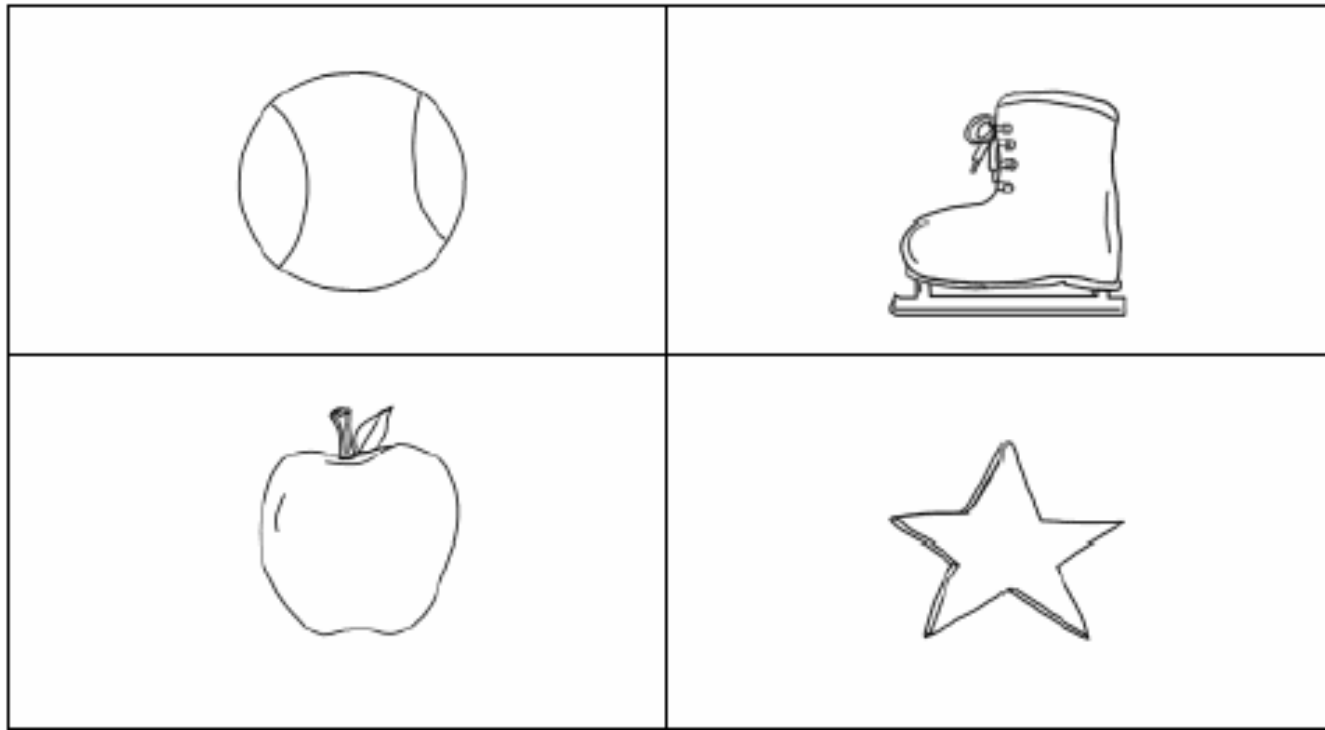
Emergent writing

Jenny	Jenny
Jenny	Jenny

Some children wrote their name. Find the one that is written the best.



Linguistic awareness



These pictures are ball, skate, apple and star.
Find the one that starts with the *buh* sound.



A child's screening results

- Results indicate a **child's progress** in developing the early literacy skills needed to learn how to read and write.
- Results enable adults to **choose and adapt appropriate learning activities** based on screening results.
- The program provides ideas to **engage a child in a range of opportunities** that build knowledge of letters, sounds, books and print.

Get Ready to Read! My Name Has Letters

Print Knowledge

GROUP

BEGINNING: Matching Letters

What You Need:

- plastic 3-D letters
- markers
- paper
- shallow basket

What You Do:

1. Using the plastic letters, spell the child's name on the paper.
2. Trace the letters with the marker so that the child's name is written on the paper. Color in the letters all the same color.
3. Place the plastic letters that are in the child's name in the shallow basket.
4. Have the child pick letters from the basket and match them, one by one, to the corresponding letters on the paper. Continue until the child's name is spelled.

Why?

The child learns that his or her name is made up of letters and what those letters look like.





Resources to Use with Parents



Engaging Parents

- *Getting to Know My Child: A Guide for My Child's Kindergarten Teacher*
 - getting it into the hands of parents;
 - helping parents fill-in-the-blanks;
 - getting the completed forms to kindergarten teachers.
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten handouts
- Early Literacy Activities
- *Next Steps: What to do if you are concerned about your child's literacy development*



Getting to Know My Child

- Simple booklet in English and Spanish to provide to families to include their voice in the transition process



Activity Cards

- English and Spanish activities to use at home to build skills throughout the year and in the summer before kindergarten



Developmental One-pagers

- English and Spanish one-pagers to send home to help build understanding for skills their child is building and ways to help them build their skills
- Language Development
- Learning and Thinking
- Beginning Reading
- Beginning Writing
- Numbers and Counting
- Physical Development
- Social and Emotional Development



Next Steps: What to do if I am concerned

- A hand out to provide parents with tips on how to talk about concerns they have and ways to take action.



Resources



Exploring the *GRTR!* Web site

Early Literacy & Learning PRESCHOOL | Help Kids Learning GRADES K-3 | Living with LD GRADES 4 & ABOVE | Policy & Advocacy Center | LD Talk EXPERTS ONLINE | Become an NCLD Friend

Get Ready to Read!

Home | Parents | Educators | Healthcare Professionals | Español

GET READY!
About GRTR

GET STARTED!
Screening!

GET GOING!
Activities

GET INFORMED!
Resources

Early Literacy Webinars

The National Center for Learning Disabilities and the Stern Center for Language and Learning in Williston, Vermont co-sponsored a series of three Webinars focused on various aspects of building literacy skills of pre-K children for teachers and child care providers. To access archived versions of the Webinars and other related resources, [click here](#).

December 2006 Newsletter is Now Online

The December *Get Ready to Read!* newsletter features information about professional development, great lists of books to get you through the winter months, plus a new word of the month and early literacy activity.

Transitioning to Kindergarten

Transitioning to Kindergarten: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Educators is an easy-to-use resource to help educators and child care providers prepare their children for kindergarten. [Download it free here](#).

Don't miss our new early education resource at www.RecognitionandResponse.org.

Check out these other new resources...

Printable word lists and pictures for the *Get Ready to Read!* skill-building activities

Online *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool in Spanish

Take the *Get Ready to Read!* Screening Test!

Play our new **interactive** reading games!

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Enter your email address to subscribe to *GRTR! News*.

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Go to LD.org
Find out more about learning disabilities

www.getreadytoread.org



Get Ready to Read!

- www.getreadytoread.org
 - *GRTR!* screening tool and answer sheet
 - activity cards in English and Spanish
 - 3 interactive games
 - Literacy environment checklists for classroom, home and family child care
 - information on early literacy for parents and educators
 - links to additional resources



GRTR! online screening tool

click here to return to FamilyEducation

Get Ready to Read! SCREENING TOOL
National Center for Learning Disabilities

Overview/Directions | Screening Tool
Skill-Building Activities

PAGE 1 of 20

READ TO YOUR CHILD:

“

These are pictures of a book. Find the one that shows the back of the book.

”

CLICK YOUR CHILD'S SELECTION, THEN CLICK "NEXT"

NEXT →

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http://www.getreadytoread.org/screening/grtr_directions.php



We want to hear from you!

- Sign up for our free Early Literacy & Learning e-newsletter at: www.getreadytoread.org
- Visit the AFT web site at www.aft.org for additional resources
- E-mail questions, comments or suggestions at: help@getreadytoread.org