



Transitioning to
KINDERGARTEN

For Parents

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KINDERGARTEN TEACHER
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WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT
YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT



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The power to hope, to learn, and to succeed

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Getting to Know My Child:

A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Getting ready for school and learning to read and write begins early in your child's development, well before kindergarten or first grade. The love and guidance that you provide your child can set him or her on the way to many years of success in school.

This booklet guides you through the process of sharing what you know about your child with the kindergarten teacher who will be working with your child in the new school year. It gives you the opportunity to pass on important information about your child's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses and any concerns that you may have. If your child is receiving any special services, the information that you provide here can help to ensure that those services continue without gaps into the new school year.

This booklet will work best if you review and discuss it with your child's kindergarten teacher during the first month of school. Taking the time to connect with your child's teacher will get the new school year off to a terrific start!



For Parents

Getting to Know My Child:

A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Child's Name _____

Basic Information

Name(s) of Person(s)
completing this form: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Child likes to
be called: _____

Child's date of birth: _____

Parent's name: _____

Parent's name: _____

Other adult(s)
living in the home: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____

Best time to reach us: _____

About My Child

My child's favorite things:

Favorite color _____

Favorite food _____

Favorite book _____

You may attach
a photo of
your child

For Parents

Getting to Know My Child: A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

About My Child (*continued*)

Favorite toy _____

Favorite expression _____

Other favorites: _____

My child is good at:

My child likes to: (*check all that apply*)

Listen to stories

Draw and color

Play alone

Play with other children

Play outside

Play quiet games inside

Go to a friend's house

My child doesn't like to:



For Parents

Getting to Know My Child:

A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

I'd like you to know this about my child:

My child learns best by:

About My Child's Early Learning Experiences at Age 4:

If your child is not enrolled in any program, check here _____

My child has been enrolled in _____ from
(name of preschool or program)

_____ to _____.
(date) *(date)*

This is a:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Child Care Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents as Teachers program | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Getting to Know My Child:

A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

For more information about this program, contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

About Our Family:

We speak the following languages in our home:

Most of the time, I speak _____ (*write in language*) to my child.

Most of the time, my child speaks _____ (*write in language*) to me.

Some things I'd like you to know about my family:

(*culture, activities that the family enjoys doing together, other*)

There are _____ children in the home. Their ages are:

The best times for me to come to the school are:

My family would like to share the following skills or activities with our child's class or school:



For Parents

Getting to Know My Child:

A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Screenings and Special Services:

My child had a hearing screening on _____ at _____.
(date) *(location)*

Results:

My child had a vision screening on _____ at _____.
(date) *(location)*

Results:

For Parents

Getting to Know My Child: A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

My child had other screenings:

Speech: date _____ location _____

Results:

Other (please describe):

For Parents

Getting to Know My Child: A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

My child receives these supports and special services:

If your child does not receive any special services, check here: ____

TYPE OF SERVICE	RECEIVED LAST YEAR	RECEIVES THIS YEAR	AMOUNT OF TIME/WEEK	SHOULD RECEIVE IN KINDERGARTEN
Occupational Therapy (OT)				
Physical Therapy (PT)				
Speech and Language (S/L)				
Social Worker				
Other* <i>(Please describe):</i>				

***Please describe any other health needs:**

For Parents

Getting to Know My Child:

A GUIDE FOR MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

I would like you to observe my child because I am concerned about the following:

Thank you for getting to know my child!

We want to work with you to ensure a successful kindergarten year!

Signature(s) Date

Signature(s) Date

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

The following pages contain 36 Get Ready to Read! skill-building activities. These activities are fun, engaging, child-friendly early literacy activities that you can try at home with your 4-year-old. You can use your knowledge of your child's skills to help you decide whether to start with “**beginning**” activities, “**making progress**” activities, or “**ready to read**” activities.

The activities are organized by skill level and type of skill. Each activity also states which specific skill the activity addresses. Here is what you will find:

	“BEGINNING” ACTIVITIES	“MAKING PROGRESS” ACTIVITIES	“READY TO READ” ACTIVITIES
 <p>Learning About Print (PRINT KNOWLEDGE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a Menu • My Favorite Book • My Name Has Letters • The Reading Puppet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a Word • Fishing for Letters • Name Memory • Word Puzzles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter Memory • My Word Box • Pick a Letter • Word Jump

	“BEGINNING” ACTIVITIES	“MAKING PROGRESS” ACTIVITIES	“READY TO READ” ACTIVITIES
 <p>Beginning Writing (EMERGENT WRITING)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw to the Music • Draw Your Day • I Can Write Letters! • Tell Me About Your Picture • Walk on a Letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Your Name • Clay Letters • Copy a Card • Sequence Story • Trace Your Name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guess What’s Inside • Send a Message

	“BEGINNING” ACTIVITIES	“MAKING PROGRESS” ACTIVITIES	“READY TO READ” ACTIVITIES
 <p>Oral Skills: Talking And Listening (LINGUISTIC AWARENESS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an Expert Listener • Find the Rhymes • How Many Words? • Match That Sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a Word • Find the Compound Words • Jump for a Rhyme • Mystery Sound • Rhyme-Out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Sound Sort • Stretched-out Story • What Word is Left?



Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Beginning



Making a Menu *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- paper
- glue stick
- pictures of food cut out from magazines
- crayons or markers
- names of different foods clearly written on index cards

What You Do:

1. Discuss with your child the purpose and use of a menu.
2. Choose a real or pretend meal for your child to put on the menu.
3. Lay out the pictures of food.
4. Have your child pick out a few pictures. Discuss good choices and favorites.
5. Write "MENU" at the top of the paper. Help your child, if he or she is ready, write the word on his or her own.
6. Have your child glue the pictures of the selected foods down the left side of the paper.
7. Help your child find the names of the selected foods on the cards. They can either glue the name next to the food or copy it directly onto the paper.
8. Your child can read the menu back to you or share it with a sibling or friend.

Why?

Your child becomes familiar with one of the many functions of print.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Beginning



My Favorite Book *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- construction paper
- pictures cut from magazines and newspapers
- markers
- glue
- stapler

What You Do:

1. Fold two sheets of construction paper and staple them along the crease to make a book.
2. Have your child pick a title for the book, such as "My Favorite Toys," "My Favorite Animals" or "My Favorite Foods." Write the title and your child's name on the front of the book.
3. Help your child pick pictures that have to do with the chosen title and glue them into the book.
4. Encourage your child to share his or her book with a sibling or friend.

Why?

Your child learns that pictures and print carry messages and have many uses. Your child also learns about how books work.

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Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Beginning



My Name Has Letters *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

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

What You Do:

1. Using the plastic letters, spell your child's name on the paper.
2. Trace the letters with the marker so that your child's name is written on the paper. Color in the letters all the same color.
3. Place the plastic letters that are in your 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 your child's name is spelled.

Why?

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

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Beginning



The Reading Puppet *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- puppet or stuffed animal
- picture book
- markers

What You Do:

1. Place the book upside-down where you and your child can see it.
2. Bring out the puppet and introduce it to your child. Explain that the puppet is going to read the book, but will need some help. Encourage your child to interact with the puppet.
3. Begin the activity by having the puppet look for the title, author and illustrator of the book. Since the book is upside-down, the puppet should ask for help from your child. For example, "I want to read this book, but first I need to tell you the title. I can't find it! The book is upside down. There's the title. What does 'title' mean?"
4. Continue the activity with the puppet asking for your child's help reading the book. For example. "What should I do first if I want to read the book?" "Where should I start reading?" "Help me turn the page." "Can you help me find the picture of ____?"

Why?

Your child also learns about how books work.

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Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Making Progress



Find a Word *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- pictures of familiar items cut from magazines and advertisements
(Some pictures should include print, and some should be simply a picture without any print.)
- scissors • glue • index cards

What You Do:

1. In advance or together with your child, glue each picture onto an index card.
2. Give your child two cards, one that has a word or words on it and one that has just a picture.
3. Say, "Letters can go together to make words. Look for letters and words on your cards. Show me the card that has a word on it."
4. Help your child choose a picture with a word on it. You can challenge your child to tell you what word he or she sees in the picture.
5. Repeat with a few cards. Reinforce the purpose of the print in each picture.
For example, say, "This cereal box has a word on it that tells us the cereal's name."

Why?

Your child will learn to tell the difference between print and pictures and learn one of the purposes of print.



For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Making Progress



Fishing for Letters *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- construction paper
- strings
- magnet
- stick or wooden dowel
- scissors
- large paper clips

What You Do:

1. Cut out 26 fish shapes from the construction paper.
2. Have your child decorate one side of each fish.
3. On the other side of each fish, write a letter of the alphabet.
4. Slide a paper clip onto each fish's tail.
5. To make the "fishing rod," tie the string to the end of the dowel or stick. Tie the magnet to the other end of the string.
6. Scatter the fish on the floor with the letter side down.
7. Have your child try to "catch" a fish with the fishing rod and say the name of the letter on that fish.
8. For a more advanced version of the game, your child can also say the letter's sound or a word that starts with that sound.

Why?

Your child learns about letter shapes, names and sounds.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Making Progress



Name Memory *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- same-colored index cards
- markers

What You Do:

1. Make the game cards: Using only the letters in the child's name, write each letter on two cards so that you have several pairs of cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and spread them out face down.
3. Ask the child to turn over any two cards. If the cards match, help the child name the letter. The child then keeps the cards. If the cards do not match, the child turns the cards back over and tries again.
4. Play continues until all matches have been made.
5. Help your child put the letters in order to spell his or her name.

Why?

Your child learns about letter shapes, names and sounds.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Making Progress



Word Puzzles *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- several empty cartons of foods familiar to your child (e.g., cereals, milk, pasta)
- plastic sandwich bags

What You Do:

1. Cut the carton front into 4-5 puzzle-shaped pieces.
2. Place each puzzle into a bag. If possible, have an intact, identical carton front for your child to see as a model.
3. Put the puzzle together with your child. Ask him to point out the food words on the puzzle and say them out loud.

Why?

Your child learns about print in our everyday world and learns to differentiate print from pictures.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Ready to Read



Letter Memory *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- same-colored index cards
- markers

What You Do:

1. Make the game cards: Choose 6 letters that you would like to practice with your child. Write each letter on two cards so that you have 6 pairs of cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and place them face down.
3. Ask your child to turn over two cards. If the cards match, the child names the letter and keeps the cards. If the cards do not match, the child turns the cards back over and tries again.
4. Play continues until all matches have been made.

Why?

Your child becomes familiar with the names and shapes of the letters of the alphabet.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Ready to Read



My Word Box *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- small box
- index cards
- magnet
- marker

What You Do:

1. Write your child's name on the box.
2. Have your child decorate his or her box.
3. Ask your child to tell you 3 or 4 of his or her favorite words or words that are important to him or her.
4. Write these words on index cards. Your child can keep the special words in his or her own box. Repeat steps 3 and 4 every few days.
5. Your child can include pictures on the cards that illustrate some of the words.
6. Every few days, ask your child to "read" you his or her cards and tell you about the words.

Why?

Your child will begin to recognize words that are important to him or her.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Ready to Read



Pick a Letter *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- brown paper bags
- plastic letters

What You Do:

1. Place 10 letters in the bags.
2. Model the activity by closing your eyes and picking a letter. As you feel the letter, describe what letter you think you've picked. Open your eyes and confirm your answer with your child.
3. Have your child close his or her eyes and pick out a letter.
4. Ask your child, "What letter do you think it is?" If the child is having trouble identifying the letter, give clues.

Variations

Hide the letters in a bin of sand or rice. Have your child match the letter that he or she finds to words you have printed on a piece of paper.

Why?

Your child learns about letter shapes and letter names.



For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Learning About Print: Ready to Read



Word Jump *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- large index cards (*or paper*)
- marker
- list of simple words (*see list below*)

What You Do:

1. Choose eight words that your child is learning.
2. Write each word in large print in lowercase letters on an index card.
3. Spread the words out on the floor.
4. Say a word, and ask your child to jump to that word and read it.
5. Take turns saying words and jumping to them.

Why?

Your child will begin to recognize simple words.

Sample Simple Words:

And, the, in, is, on, you, cat, it, my, we, me, with

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Beginning



Draw to the Music *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- music with different styles and tempos
- paper
- crayons

What You Do:

1. Give your child paper and crayons. You can use construction paper or tape large mural paper on the wall or floor.
2. Tell your child to draw when the music is on and stop drawing when the music is off.
3. Turn on the music.
4. Let your child draw for a few minutes. Turn the music off and remind your child to stop drawing.
5. Repeat several times, changing the music after a few minutes to a different style or tempo.

Why?

Your child learns to connect arm and hand movements with the marks he or she makes on paper. Your child also practices controlling a crayon.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Beginning



Draw Your Day *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- a variety of drawing materials (*crayons, markers, pencils*)
- paper

What You Do:

1. As your child watches you, write at the top of the paper, "Today in school, I will ... " or "Today at home, we will "
2. Ask your child to finish the sentence with a drawing of something that will happen that day in school or at home. You can write your child's description of the drawing at the bottom of the page.

Why?

Your child learns that drawing a picture can tell a story or describe an event.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Beginning



I Can Write Letters! *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- sandpaper
- baking sheet with sand spread out on it
- large squares of carpet

What You Do:

1. Stand side by side with your child.
2. With your index finger, “write” the letter that you would like to practice in the air in front of you. This should be done in a large and exaggerated way. Say the name of the letter out loud as you “write” it in the air. Do this several times along with your child.
3. Encourage your child to experiment with “writing” the letter with his or her index finger on sandpaper, in sand on a baking sheet and on carpet. Encourage all of your child’s attempts and help him or her as necessary.

Why?

Your child will practice the muscle movements involved in writing letter shapes, which will help him or her to learn how to write letters.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Beginning



Tell Me About Your Picture *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- drawing paper
- crayons
- black marker

What You Do:

1. Give your child drawing paper and crayons. Tell your child to draw a picture of an activity that he or she has done recently. For example, the drawing can be about something your child did in school, at home or with a friend.
2. Ask your child to describe to you what he or she has drawn. Write, in clear print with the black marker, what your child says on the picture. Be sure to read the description out loud to your child after it is written.

Why?

Your child learns that pictures and words can be used to describe experiences.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Beginning



Walk on a Letter *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- masking tape

What You Do:

1. Make a large letter on the floor with the masking tape.
2. Talk with your child about the name of the letter and a word that begins with that letter.
3. Have your child walk or jump on the masking tape in the shape of the letter.
He or she can say the name of the letter while walking or jumping.
4. Help your child think of a few other words that start with the letter.

Why?

Your child becomes familiar with the names and shapes of the letters of the alphabet.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Making Progress



Build Your Name *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- uppercase and lowercase plastic letters
- bag or cloth sack
- paper
- pencil or crayons

What You Do:

1. Write your child's name at the top of the paper in large letters, using an uppercase letter for the first letter in your child's name, followed by lowercase letters.
2. Place the plastic letters that are in your child's name into the bag. Also include one or two letters that are not part of your child's name.
3. Tell your child to pick a letter out of the bag.
4. Ask your child, "What is the name of the letter that you picked? Look at your name. Is this letter in your name?"
5. Ask your child to place the plastic letter under the written letter, and continue until your child has picked all of the letters in his or her name.
6. When your child's name is complete, ask your child to print it out on the paper.

Why?

Your child will become familiar with the letters in his or her name.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Making Progress



Clay Letters *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- modeling clay or play-dough
- paper and pencil

What You Do:

1. Print a few letters of the alphabet on the paper, making them at least 6 inches tall.
2. Roll lumps of clay or dough into long, thin strips.
3. Help your child form the strips into letters. At first, your child can make the letter directly on the written model. He or she can progress to forming the strips below the written letter, using it as a guide.

Why?

Your child will become familiar with the shape of the letters and practice forming them independently.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Making Progress



Copy a Card *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- paper
- crayons
- 12 index cards, each with a different figure on one side (*simple shape, squiggly line, letter*)

What You Do:

1. Sit down with your child at a table or on the floor. Give your child a piece of paper and a crayon. Help your child write his or her name on the paper.
2. Place the index cards face down in a pile.
3. Your child should pick a card from the pile. He or she can show the card to you and then draw that figure on the paper. You can do this along with your child on your own paper.
4. After all of the cards have been picked, you and your child can color and decorate the picture.

Why?

Your child practices the fine motor skills that will help him or her learn to form letters.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Making Progress



Sequence Story *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- crayons
- black marker
- stapler
- drawing paper

What You Do:

1. Tell your child about something you've done recently, like shopping or making dinner. On three sheets of paper, draw three simple pictures showing the beginning, middle and end of the experience. Use the pictures to tell the story again.
2. Help your child think of a recent experience. Talk together about the beginning, the middle and the end.
3. Help your child draw three pictures, describing the beginning, middle and end of the experience. Number the pictures in the correct order.
4. Ask your child to tell you about his or her pictures in sequence. Write the description for each picture on that picture.
5. Help your child put the pictures in order. Staple the pages together to make a "book" that your child can use to retell the experience.

Why?

Your child will learn to use words and pictures to communicate an experience and understand the importance of sequence in a story.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Making Progress



Trace Your Name *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- marker
- chalk
- construction paper or sandpaper, at least 8 1/2" x 11" in size

What You Do:

1. With the marker, write your child's name in large letters on the paper. Use an uppercase letter for the first letter of the name, and lowercase for the rest of the letters.
2. First, ask your child to use a finger to trace each letter of his or her name on the paper. Help your child say the name of each letter out loud as it is traced.
3. Give chalk to your child, and have him or her trace the letters with the chalk, saying the name of each letter out loud as it is traced. If necessary, begin by holding and guiding your child's hand as he or she holds the chalk.
4. Encourage your child to trace the letters in order, but be accepting of all attempts.

Why?

Your child practices writing and saying the names of the letters in his or her name.



Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Ready to Read



Guess What's Inside *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- large box
- markers
- lightly colored plain wrapping paper
- item familiar to your child that will fit inside the box and can be named with one word

What You Do:

1. Place the item in the box.
2. Wrap the box with the wrapping paper.
3. Tell your child that there is something in the box. You and your child could discuss some ideas about what might be inside. Place the wrapped box on a table with some markers next to it.
4. Ask your child to write his or her name on the wrapping paper, and try to write a guess as to what is inside. All attempts at writing a word should be encouraged!
5. To help, ask your child to say the word out loud that he or she wants to write. Help him or her listen for the sounds in that word and write the letters that make those sounds.
6. Later, open the box and show what is inside. The box can be reused another day with new paper on it.

Why?

Your child will learn that writing has a purpose and engage in beginning attempts at writing.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Beginning Writing: Ready to Read



Send a Message *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- shoebox decorated as a mailbox with slot cut in the top
- paper and pencil or crayons

What You Do:

1. Model writing a short message to your child in order to introduce the activity. The message can include both text and pictures that represent text.
2. Explain to your child that he or she can write a message to you and put it in the mailbox. Your child can use scribbles, letters, and/or pictures for the message.
3. Be sure to write a message back to your child. You can leave it near your child's bed, on the kitchen table, or in his or her own "mailbox."

Why?

Your child will practice using written language and drawings to communicate a message.



Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Beginning



Be an Expert Listener *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- CD with common sounds recorded on it
- CD player

What You Do:

1. Introduce the activity by talking to your child about the different sounds that are heard in the house and around the neighborhood. Help your child think of a few sounds and discuss them.
2. Encourage your child to close his or her eyes and listen carefully to the sounds that are heard. Talk about the sounds with your child.
3. Try this activity with sounds recorded on a CD or smart phone or on a "listening walk" outside.

Why?

Your child learns to listen carefully for sounds.
This helps him or her to be a more active listener to the sounds in language.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Beginning



Find the Rhymes *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- pictures of rhyming word pairs

What You Do:

1. Begin with any two pairs of pictures displaying rhyming words.
2. Spread the pictures out on the table or floor.
3. Explain to your child that words that rhyme end with the same sounds. Give a few examples, such as fat/rat or sing/ring.
4. Let your child choose one of the pictures. Find the picture that rhymes with the chosen picture and ask your child to determine if the words rhyme. Say the words together to emphasize the rhyming parts of the words. Do the same with the other rhyming pair.
5. Spread out more pictures and have your child find the rhyming pairs.

Why?

Your child begins to recognize that some words rhyme because they share common sounds.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Beginning



How Many Words? *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- several plastic counters (*buttons, paperclips, etc.*) or other small game pieces

What You Do:

1. Give your child a pile of counters. Tell your child that sentences are made up of words, and that you are going to help him or her count the words in some sentences.
2. Say a simple sentence such as, "I have three books."
3. Help your child put down a counter for each word in the sentence.
4. Say the sentence again, having your child touch a counter for each word that is heard.
5. Continue with a few different sentences, using longer sentences when your child is ready.

Why?

Your child learns that sentences are made up of words.
He or she also practices listening for small segments of language.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Beginning



Match That Sound *Get Ready to Read!*SM

What You Need:

- 8-10 empty solid-color containers with tops
- noisemakers: e.g., salt, beads, water, rice, metal keys, chalk, pebbles

What You Do:

1. Fill two containers with the same item, e.g., a key.
Do this for a total of eight containers (four pairs).
2. Model the activity for your child: Shake one container and describe what it sounds like.
Shake another container and describe it.
3. Repeat until you find two containers that make the same sound.
Describe the sound to your child.
4. Ask your child to try the activity. Encourage him or her to describe what is heard
as the containers are shaken.

Why?

Your child will learn to listen carefully for sounds. This will help your child to be a more active listener to the sounds in language.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Making Progress



Be a Word *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- the first line of a nursery rhyme, poem or song that your child knows very well
- a ball or beanbag

What You Do:

1. Sit or stand facing your child.
2. Take turns, each saying a word of the line of the rhyme or poem. As you or your child say each word, pass the ball or beanbag back and forth until you have said the whole sentence.

Variation:

For a challenge, write the line from the rhyme or poem on a strip of paper. Cut the strip into words and hold up or point to the word that is being said.

Why?

Your child learns that sentences can be divided into words.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Making Progress



Find the Compound Words *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- list of compound words
- pictures of items that illustrate compound words and their parts
(for example, a picture of a cup and a picture of a cake for "cupcake")

What You Do:

1. Tell your child that some words are made up of two shorter words put together and that you are going to use some of those words to play a word game.
2. Say a compound word and ask your child to repeat it. For instance, say, "Say cupcake," and let him or her repeat the word.
3. Help your child to select the pictures that show the parts of the word, such as "cup" and "cake."
4. Continue with several other words on the list below.

Word List:

Cowboy, baseball, jellyfish, grasshopper, cupcake, doorbell, raincoat, bedroom, football, starfish, haircut, sailboat

Why?

Your child learns to listen for the smaller segments of language that are contained in words.



Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Making Progress



Jump for a Rhyme *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- rhyming dictionary or online at www.rhymezone.com
- list of pairs of rhyming words
- list of pairs of non-rhyming words

What You Do:

1. Model the activity for your child. Say a pair of words that rhyme. For example, say, "Cat-bat. The end of those words sounds the same. The words rhyme. I'm going to jump for a rhyme!"
2. Say a pair of words that do not rhyme. Tell your child, "Those words don't rhyme, so I'll just sit down."
3. Play the game with your child, beginning with several pairs that rhyme, and then add in some pairs that don't rhyme.

Variation:

To adjust level of activity, begin with one-syllable words and progress to two- and three-syllable words.

Why?

Your child will become aware of rhymes and learn to identify them.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Making Progress



Mystery Sound *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- index cards • glue or tape
- pictures of items familiar to your child; a few items should begin with the same sound

What You Do:

1. Make picture cards: Glue a picture on each index card. Spread the cards out on a table or on the floor.
2. Choose a beginning sound, but don't tell your child what it is. Collect the cards with pictures that begin with only that sound and give them to your child to hold.
3. Tell your child that his or her job is to figure out what the mystery beginning sound is.
4. Point to each picture on the cards that your child is holding and guide him or her in naming the pictures, emphasizing the first sounds. Help your child figure out the "mystery" first sound.

Why?

Your child will learn that words are made up of sounds and learn to isolate the first sound in a word.

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Making Progress



Rhyme-Out *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- rhyming words

What You Do:

1. Give your child some examples of words that rhyme. Then, start with a simple word with many rhyming possibilities (hat, tall, sing, bell).
2. Take turns saying a word that rhymes with the first word until you run out of rhymes.
3. If you can, make a list of the rhyming words on paper as they are said.

Why?

Your child will learn to listen for and generate rhymes.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Ready to Read



First Sound Sort *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- 3 bins or baskets
- paper bag
- several objects that begin with each of three different letter sounds

What You Do:

1. Label the outside of each bin or basket with one of the three chosen letter sounds.
2. Show the bins to your child. Review the names and sounds of the three letters.
3. Place all of the objects in a paper bag.
4. Have your child pick one object out of the bag at a time. Help your child name what he or she has chosen and say the first sound of the object's name.
5. Tell your child to put the object in the bin or basket that is labeled with the first sound of the object's name.
6. Repeat until all of the objects have been sorted into the appropriate bins.
7. Take a few minutes at the end of this activity to go through each bin with your child, naming each object while emphasizing its first sound.

Why?

Your child learns to listen for and isolate the first sound of a word.

Your child also learns that a letter sound can appear in many different words.



Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Ready to Read



Stretched out Story *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- a picture book, poem or nursery rhyme

What You Do:

1. Say to your child, "I am going to tell you a story, but some words will sound a little different. I'm going to stretch out some words so that you can hear all of the sounds in the word. Your job is to put back together each word that I stretch. Let's try a word for practice. Ssss-k-ooo-llll. What word am I stretching?"
2. Read or tell the story, rhyme or poem to your child. When you get to an important place, character or object in the story, say that word stretched out sound by sound. For example, "One day, Karen went to the sss-t-ore. She had to buy some mmm-i-lll-k for her sister."
3. As you tell the story, pause for your child to help say the word that you have stretched out.

Why?

Your child will learn about the individual sounds in speech and that words are made up of sounds.

For Parents

Get Ready to Read!

ACTIVITIES

Oral Skills: Ready to Read



What Word is Left? *Get Ready to Read!*_{SM}

What You Need:

- list of compound words (*see below*)

What You Do:

1. Tell your child that some words are made up of two words put together, and you can take away part of a word and have a new word.
2. Say a word and ask your child to say the word back to you. For instance, say, "Say cowboy," and let him or her repeat the word.
3. Tell your child, "Now say it again, but don't say 'boy'." Model the correct response: "Cow ... boy, without 'boy'. Cowboy without 'boy' is 'cow'."
4. Continue with several other words on the list below. Ask your child to try to think of other compound words.

Word List:

Cowboy, baseball, jellyfish, grasshopper, cupcake, doorbell, raincoat, bedroom, football, starfish, haircut, sailboat

Why?

Your child will learn that smaller segments of language are contained in words.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✓ Can speak in complete sentences
- ✓ Can follow directions with at least two steps
- ✓ Can understand words such as 'top' and 'bottom,' 'big' and 'little'
- ✓ Can follow directions in a simple game with other children or adults
- ✓ Can say or sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes
- ✓ Can recognize when words rhyme, such as 'cat' and 'hat'

To Encourage Your Child's Language Development:

- ★ Take time each day to listen to and talk with your child. Some good times for conversation are while traveling, at mealtimes and at bedtime.
- ★ Encourage your child to listen and use language to express ideas. Ask questions, encourage them to tell stories, give opinions, and provide details.
- ★ Involve your child in activities and games that require listening and following directions.
- ★ Read and tell stories that have interesting characters and easy-to-follow plots. Talk with your child about the stories after you read or tell them.
- ★ Read and sing nursery rhymes and rhyming stories with your child.

For Parents

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

LEARNING AND THINKING

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✔ Can match two pictures that are alike
- ✔ Can tell things that go together (a spoon and a fork, a fish and a boat)
- ✔ Can match, recognize and name circle, square, and triangle
- ✔ Can match, recognize and name at least 5 colors
- ✔ Can repeat a pattern you start (step, step, jump—step, step, jump)
- ✔ Can put 3 pictures in order
(1. Planting flower seeds; 2. Flowers growing; 3. Picking flowers)
- ✔ Can work simple puzzles

To Encourage Your Child's Learning and Thinking Skills:

- ★ Collect real objects that go together: shoe/sock, hammer/nail.
- ★ Involve your child in putting pictures in order. You can use photos of your child at different ages, or pictures cut from a magazine.
- ★ Let your child help you fold laundry. Your child can match socks and other clothes by color or size.
- ★ Play “shapes” and “sizes” games with your child.
Use coins, cutout shapes, and other objects from around the house.
- ★ Have simple puzzles available for your child to play with.
Make puzzles by cutting up greeting cards or the front of a cereal box into puzzle-shaped pieces.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

BEGINNING READING

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✓ Can make simple predictions and comments about a story being read
- ✓ Can tell a simple story back to you after listening to it
- ✓ Knows the letters in his or her own first name, and can recognize his or her own first name in print
- ✓ Can recognize words or signs he or she sees often (local restaurants and stores, street signs)
- ✓ Can hold and look at books right side up, turning the pages one at a time from front to back
- ✓ Knows and names at least 10 letters of the alphabet
- ✓ Can match a letter with the beginning sound of a word (such as the letter 'B' with a picture of a banana)

To Encourage Your Child's Beginning Reading Skills:

- ★ Set aside a special time each day to read with your child. Read your child's favorite books and rhymes over and over. Read some of your favorites from childhood, too. Talk with your child about the story and the characters.
- ★ Involve your child in putting pictures in order. You can use photos of your child at different ages, or pictures cut from a magazine.
- ★ Get a set of letter magnets, and put them on the refrigerator or a cookie sheet for your child to play with.
- ★ Make a name card for your child. Display the name card in a special place, and talk to your child about the names of the letters.
- ★ Using pictures from a magazine or real objects, and magnetic letters, help your child match pictures to their beginning sound.

For Parents

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

BEGINNING WRITING

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✔ Can express ideas through pictures he or she draws
- ✔ Can use pencils, crayons, and markers for drawing and writing
- ✔ Can copy and draw a line, circle, X and +
- ✔ Is beginning to write some of the letters in his or her own first name

To Encourage Your Child's Beginning Writing Skills:

- ★ Let your child use school tools such as pencils, washable markers, crayons and blunt-tipped scissors. Gather and organize these materials, along with some paper, in a box that your child can decorate and have access to.
- ★ Encourage your child to explore with drawing materials, and to use drawing to express his or her ideas.
- ★ Let your child see that written words are a part of daily life. Make grocery lists together, or write notes to relatives and friends. Point out the different ways that you use writing in your daily routine.
- ★ Label your child's belongings with his or her name. Let your child label some of his or her own things such as a notebook or crayon box.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

NUMBERS AND COUNTING

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✓ Can count at least 5 objects
- ✓ Knows that the written numeral '3' means 3 objects, such as 3 bears
- ✓ Can add and subtract small numbers of familiar objects, such as, "I have 3 cookies. You have 2. How many do we have all together?"
- ✓ Can put written numbers in order from 1 to 5
- ✓ Can count from 1 to 10 in the correct order
- ✓ Can use the words 'more' and 'less' correctly

To Encourage Your Child's Skills With Counting And Numbers:

- ★ Collect a variety of materials your child can use for counting and learning about numbers. Old keys, plastic bottle caps, thread spools, and pictures from magazines all work well.
- ★ Use materials from around the house to experiment with addition, subtraction and "more" and "less" activities.
- ★ Use number words, point out numbers, and involve your child in counting activities as you go through your day.
- ★ Read, tell stories, sing songs, and say poems about numbers and counting with your child. Try to include books in which characters are added or subtracted as the story progresses. (Good books include: *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, by Eileen Christelow and *Roll Over! A Counting Song* by Merle Peek.)

For Parents

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✓ Can cut with child-sized scissors
- ✓ Can run at a comfortable speed in intended direction
- ✓ Can hop several times on each foot
- ✓ Can throw a ball or beanbag in intended direction
- ✓ Can catch a large ball or beanbag
- ✓ Can jump over a low object, such as a line, string, or balance beam
- ✓ Can bounce a large ball several times
- ✓ Can kick a stationary ball
- ✓ Can walk along a line or a low balance beam
- ✓ Can pedal and steer a tricycle

To Encourage Your Child's Physical Development:

- ★ Collect safe toys and equipment to help your child develop large muscles. Some examples are hula hoops, bean bags, tricycle, large beach balls and a child-sized basketball hoop.
- ★ Give your child the space and freedom to use large muscles, both indoors and outdoors. You can set up empty water bottles like bowling pins, and let your child use a soft ball to "bowl." Invite your child to toss rolled up socks into a basket or a masking tape circle on the floor.
- ★ Join your child in active play. You can play catch with your child, or set up a simple obstacle course.
- ★ Give your child opportunities to cut with scissors while you watch. Your child can cut pictures from magazines or shapes for a matching game.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What to Look For



Your child...

- ✓ Can say if he or she is a boy or girl
- ✓ Can tell first and last name and names of parents
- ✓ Can say how old he or she is
- ✓ Takes care of own needs, such as toileting, washing hands and dressing
- ✓ Adjusts to new situations without parent being there

To Encourage Your Child's Social and Emotional Development:

- ★ Create with your child an "All About Me and My Family" book. Staple or tie a few sheets of paper together to make the book. Involve your child in adding personal information, such as first and last name, parents' names, child's gender, age, address, likes and dislikes. Your child can make a cover and decorate the book.
- ★ Support and celebrate your child's independence. Give lots of praise for things that your child has learned to do on his or her own, such as brushing teeth, washing hands, putting on shoes, zipping jacket, riding a tricycle, and buttoning shirt.
- ★ Help your child be prepared for going to kindergarten. With your child, pretend to go to school and practice how you will say goodbye. Visit the new school to meet the kindergarten teacher and explore the classroom and building together.

For Parents

Next Steps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Should I Be Concerned?

You Are the Key

As the parent of a preschooler, you play an important role in your child's development. Preschoolers are continually gaining important knowledge and skills that will help them learn to read, write, and succeed in school when they get older. It is important that you observe your child carefully and regularly share your observations with teachers, caregivers and health care providers. Sharing information about skills and about possible concerns will avoid later frustration, if your child shows signs of struggle.

Each Child is Unique

It's likely that your child will learn to read, and over time will become a good reader. But we also know that children take different paths while learning to read. They develop early reading skills at different rates and through different kinds of experiences. For some children, learning to read may seem effortless. Others may struggle with the same kinds of learning that appears to come naturally to other children their age. So when should you be concerned?

Even when children develop differently, there is a typical or usual path of development that should guide your thinking. Many children struggle with learning at some point during their development. Most will catch up with a little bit of extra practice and individual attention. However, you are right to be concerned if your child appears to be having difficulties, especially if he or she seems frustrated.

Parents are often the first ones to realize that their child may be having trouble. Sometimes teachers mention that they are concerned, and it's not unusual for pediatricians or health care providers to suggest that you "keep an eye" on some aspect of a child's development. Whether or not you agree with these

Next Steps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

warnings, the bottom line is: don't wait. Gather information that will help you make an informed decision, and take action as early as possible, because research has proven that earlier is better when it comes to providing help.

Early is Better

If your child is having difficulties learning, it's never too early to start looking for ways to help him or her experience success. Maybe you think your child should be able to do something that he or she is not yet doing. And maybe you think that, overall, your child's development is right on the mark. In either case, you can take the lead to find out if your child would benefit from some extra or specially targeted help.

There are many people who share your goal of helping your child succeed. You can ask a teacher, principal, school nurse, neighbor, librarian, pediatrician or clergy person to point you in the right direction. Remember, with the right instruction and support, almost all children can become successful readers right from the start.

For Parents

Next Steps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Here's What You Can Do Next

Be an Observer

Here are some things to watch out for as you observe your preschooler:

- Very small vocabulary and/or slow vocabulary growth;
- Often unable to find the right word and speaks in very short sentences;
- Even with age-appropriate instruction, struggles with learning the names of letters of the alphabet, matching letters to sounds, and rhyming;
- Difficulty remembering sequences such as numbers, alphabet, days of the week;
- Difficulty pronouncing simple words;
- Difficulty understanding simple directions and following routines;
- Difficulty learning colors and shapes;
- Extremely restless and easily distracted, compared to other children of the same age;
- Fine motor skills slow to develop. Has difficulty holding crayon or pencil, picking up small objects with fingers, copying basic shapes; and/or
- Strong avoidance of certain activities, like storytelling and circle time.

It's best to watch your child in different settings at different times. Use a notebook or pad to write about what your child can and cannot do. Remember, you do not need to write down everything. Jot down notes about your child's strengths and problem areas that concern you.

And don't forget to ask your child some specific questions about things that are easy or hard for him or her to do. Don't stop there...also ask your child for ideas about how to make learning easier and more fun!

Next Steps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Remember, most children exhibit one or more of these worrisome behaviors from time to time. However, if several of these behaviors persist over time, you should seek the advice of a qualified professional such as a teacher or other early education professional, doctor, nurse or social worker.

Take Action

If your observations and experience cause you to be concerned about your child, what you do next can make all the difference. The more you know about how to get help for your child, the better off your child will be.

- Talk with everyone who knows your child: your child's teachers or early care providers, doctor, nurse or health care professional. Share details about your concerns and ask for feedback and specific recommendations.
- Have your child's hearing and vision checked regularly.
- Talk with other parents who have children of the same age to see whether they have similar concerns about their children.
- Go to a public library to gather information and check out your concerns in books or on the Internet. Ask the librarian to point you in the right direction. See the section below for specific resources that might be helpful.
- Call or go to your local school district office and request information. Keep in mind that going to the school district and asking for information or help does NOT mean that your child is headed for a special education evaluation. School personnel can be very helpful and can often lead you to help and resources that are free of charge and may be just what you are looking for to help your child make progress.



For Parents

Next Steps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

You Can Help

There are so many ways that you can help your child to get ready to read. Even if it's only for a few minutes, look for fun ways to incorporate early literacy activities into your daily routine. Your child will love the one-on-one time with you and will look forward to repeating this special time day after day. Ask your child's teacher, care provider or your local librarian for ideas about activities that will strengthen your child's skills. Watch for and keep a record of changes and growth. Here are some ideas:

- Read to your child every day.
- Point out words and letters that you find in your daily routines, while shopping or traveling through the neighborhood.
- Sing songs and share nursery rhymes.
- Go to the library and read books together. Here are some free resources that you can find on the *Get Ready to Read!* website: **www.GetReadytoRead.org**.
- Use the online version of the *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool with your child.
- Print out the Home Literacy Checklist and check it for ideas from time to time.
- Print out the Classroom Literacy Checklist and share it with your child's teacher or early care provider.
- Print out *Get Ready to Read!* activities and try some early literacy activities with your child and even with a small group of his or her friends!
- Play the *Get Ready to Read!* online games.

Next Steps

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Helpful Early Literacy Resources

Get Ready to Read!

www.getreadytoread.org

Reading Rockets

www.readingrockets.org

www.colorincolorado.org (*in Spanish*)

National Reading Panel

www.nationalreadingpanel.org

Reading Is Fundamental

www.rif.org

**Center for the Improvement of
Early Reading Achievement
(CIERA)**

www.ciera.org

Between the Lions/WGBH

www.pbskids.org/lions

National Institute for Literacy

www.nifl.org

**National Institute for
Early Education Research**

www.nieer.org

**National Black Child
Development Institute**

www.nbcdi.org

National Education Association

www.nea.org/parents/

preparechild.html

Share My Lesson

www.sharemylesson.com