



Getting Your Child Ready for Kindergarten

1. Practice writing his/her first name

- a. Use a variety of tools such as a Magna Doodle, crayons, pencils and markers. Check that your child is holding the tool correctly. You may even consider having your child practice writing his/her name using different items around the house, such as pudding, rice, sand, or shaving cream.
- b. Cut apart the letters of your child's name (or use magnetic letters) and have him/her put them back in the correct order saying the name of each letter while doing so.
- c. Label your child's door or other objects so his/her name can be seen in print.

2. Practice recognizing and writing the numbers 0 to 10 (or higher)

- a. Read counting books together.
- b. Point out numbers in license plates, in the store, in your home, and all around you.
- c. Use magnetic numbers to have your child practice naming them. Have your child put the numbers of your phone number in order saying each number while doing so.
- d. Practice writing numbers with a variety of materials such as pencils, crayons, markers, sidewalk chalk, etc.

3. Practice counting out loud and practice counting to 10 (or higher)

- a. Have your child count his/her own snacks such as pretzels, goldfish crackers, grapes, etc.
- b. Count each item as you pick up 10 things to put away in the house or bedroom.
- c. Count the number of stair steps in your house or the number of steps from your car to the store.

4. Practice naming and writing the letters in the alphabet

- a. Read and enjoy alphabet books together.
- b. Help your child recognize letters of the alphabet in everyday life (i.e., restaurants, road signs, store signs, cereal boxes, etc.).
- c. Explore with magnetic letters.

5. Practice book handling skills

- a. Discuss how to open a book from the front cover. Point out the front and back of the book. Discuss how the front is where the story begins and the back is where it ends.
- b. Discuss how to hold a book so it is not upside down and where to start reading.
- c. Read with your child on a daily basis.

6. Practice recognizing the eight primary colors

- a. When your child is coloring, ask what colors are used.
- b. Have your child draw a picture and ask him/her to color the objects in certain colors.
- c. Have your child sort objects by color such as clothes, blocks, Skittles, M&Ms, or Fruit Loops while naming the colors.
- d. Discuss colors of things in the world around you such as the sky, the grass, cars, clothing items, etc.

7. Practice naming and drawing the six basic shapes (circle, triangle, square, oval, diamond, rectangle)

- a. Point out objects in your environment that have the basic shapes such as doors, windows, clocks, can tops, kites, etc.
- b. Have your child draw the shapes on chalkboards, papers, etc., then cut them out while naming each shape.

8. Practice personal information such as first name, last name, parents' names, phone number and address

- a. Have your child practice important phone numbers on a play telephone.
- b. Make up a rhyme or song to go along with your phone number that your child can remember. Practice it regularly.

9. Use classroom tools appropriately

- a. Allow your child opportunities to explore using pencils, glue, scissors, markers, crayons, etc.
- b. Discuss rules and set expectations for using the tools (i.e., "crayons are for writing on paper, not the wall" or "you may cut paper when you are sitting at the table" or "if you leave the cap off the marker, it will dry out.")
- c. Remember your child needs time to explore with the tools before performing tasks such as writing letters or cutting on a line.

10. Practice self-help skills

- a. Your child should practice buttoning, snapping, tying and zipping his/her clothes.
- b. Teach your child how and when to blow his/her nose and wash his/her hands.
- c. Your child should be able to go to the bathroom independently.

Activities To Do At Home

TRACING LETTERS WITH FINGERS: Let your child make the letters of his/her name, family members' names, or other words in any one of the following substances:
PUDDING, SALT, SAND, DIRT, SHAVING CREAM, MASHED POTATOES, OR ICING.



LETTERS YOU CAN FEEL:

Write your child's name or another word with glue on cardboard, index cards, or boxes, and let your child drizzle sand, dirt, salt, or glitter onto the glue. After the glue has dried, your child can do crayon rubbings of the word(s) and "read" his/her creation.

CAN YOU FIND THIS LETTER?:

Letters of the alphabet are everywhere! As you go through the grocery store, cook dinner, look at a magazine, drive down the road, or watch a Braves game, ask your child to point out a specific letter. Begin with asking him/her to find a letter in his/her name.

LABELS, LABELS:

Children can learn to recognize some words by sight if the words have meaning to them. You and your child can label his/her bathroom, bedroom, or any rooms. Print, in lower case letters, the names of items in the room and place the labels near or on those items.



CUTTING OUT THE LETTERS OF

MY NAME: Let your child cut out the letters of his/her name from a magazine or newspaper. Call out the letter names as you find them.. This reinforces letter recognition.

WHAT I SEE, I WILL DO: We all know children will copy whatever they see someone else doing. If you want your child to be a reader/writer, she/he must see you modeling those behaviors. Make sure your child sees you making out grocery lists, writing letters, reading books, etc.

WRITING MATERIALS: Children do not always need fancy paper and pens to benefit from writing activities. Cardboard and an old sock make a perfect chalkboard and eraser for practicing letters, words, etc. Sidewalk chalk is fun, too! Children can write on any scrap of paper that you have around the house.

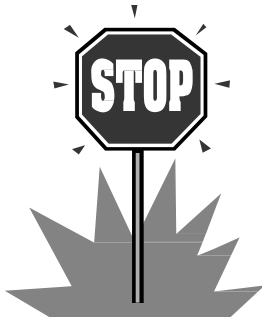


LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE:

Keep a summer diary with your child, having him/her watch while you write what she/he says happened on a particular day, either after a special day or "just because." Keep these entries in a spiral notebook and let your child illustrate the pages of their "book."



ENVIRONMENTAL Print: Children recognize many symbols and words they see everyday. "Environmental print" examples include the labels of cereal boxes, toothpaste, or any other item whose name your child would recognize (even McDonald's or Publix bags, for instance). Cut the label off the box or bag and glue it to a blank page in a spiral notebook. Have fun reading your book!



PREDICTABLE BOOKS: These are books that have the same or a similar phrase on each page and are easy for the children to memorize. An example is Brown Bear, Brown Bear. Children love these books because they give them a sense of success in reading.

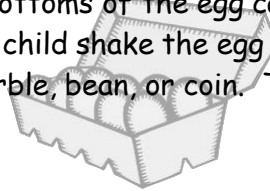
ALPHABET BINGO is an all-time favorite game and easy to make at home.

- Make some bingo cards with uppercase or lowercase letters in the boxes.
- Make a set of "pull" cards with the same letters on them.
- Use pieces of paper, small rocks, or other small items as counters.
- Take turns being the "caller."



You can also make a bingo game using numbers, colors, or shapes. Have fun!

Egg carton fun: Write letters in the bottoms of the egg carton compartments. Place a marble, bean, or coin inside the carton and close it. Let your child shake the egg carton for a minute. Then open the carton and let them tell the letter underneath the marble, bean, or coin. This game can be used for letter, number, or word recognition.



Kid Friendly Internet Sites

www.4kids.org

www.funschool.kaboose.com

www.pbskids.org

www.beritsbest.com

www.kidscom.com

www.nickjr.com

www.bonus.com

www.mamamedia.com

www.crayola.com

www.cyberkids.com

www.kids.msn.com

www.funattic.com

www.yahooligans.com

www.funbrain.com

www.sesameworkshop.org

Tips for Reading to Your Child

1. Read to your child for at least fifteen minutes each day. Pick a time when your child wants to listen and when there are no distractions. Bedtime is usually a good time.
2. Sit next to your child and hold the book so that the child can see it.
3. Allow your child to choose some of the books she/he wants you to read aloud.
4. Look at the book cover before reading. Point out the title, author and illustrator.
5. Your child may want to hear the same story over and over again. Repetition builds knowledge in beginning reading. Encourage your child to finish predictable phrases or rhymes.
6. Allow the child to interrupt you and ask questions or comment on the story. Ask what might happen next, or what she/he might do in the same situation; this strengthens thinking skills. Some helpful questions:
 - a. What happened at the beginning, middle, or end of the story?
 - b. What do you think will happen next?
 - c. Why do you think the character did that?
 - d. What would you have done if you were that character?
 - e. What was the best thing about the story?
7. Encourage children in your family or neighborhood to read to each other. This is good for both the reader and the listener.
8. Try to relate stories to things your child has seen on television, in the movies, or in the course of his/her daily life. This will give more meaning to the reading.
9. Draw attention to the pictures as part of the story.
10. Don't stretch your child's attention span to the breaking point when you are reading aloud. Fifteen minutes is about the maximum time for a beginning reader.
11. Poetry is excellent for reading aloud because rhyming is very important in learning to read.
12. Make sure your child sees you as a reader: reading a newspaper, enjoying a good book, reading a catalog, etc.
13. Consider giving books as a present so they become associated with a pleasurable experience and have special meaning.

Read Aloud Books for Children Ages 3-5

One of the best things you can do to help your child succeed in life and in school is to read aloud to your child at least 15 minutes every day. Parents, grandparents, caregivers, and other adults should start reading to children when they are infants and continue reading to them throughout their school years.

Archambault, John. *A Beautiful Feast for a Big King Cat*
Asch, Frank. *Happy Birthday, Moon*
Ashley, Bernard. *Cleversticks*
Aylesworth, Jim. *Old Black Fly*
Barton, Byron. *Three Bears*
Bertrand, Diane. *Sip, Slurp, Soup, Soup/Caldo, Caldo, Caldo (English & Spanish)*
Bond, Felicia. *Tumble Bumble*
Bornstein, Ruth. *Little Gorilla*
Bridwell, Norman. *Clifford the Big Red Dog (and other Clifford titles)*
Brown, Marc. *Finger Rhymes*
Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon*
Brusca, Maria. *Three Friends/Tres Amigos (English and Spanish)*
Carle, Eric. *From Head to Toe*
Carle, Eric. *Very Hungry Caterpillar*
Charles, N.N. *What Am I: Looking Through Shapes at Apples*
Christelow, Eileen. *Five Little Monkeys Jumping On the Bed*
Coker, Deborah. *I Like Me*
Curtis, Jamie Lee. *Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day*
Crebbin, June. *Cows In the Kitchen*
Cronin, Doreen. *Click Clack Moo Cows That Type*
Eastman, P.D. *Are You My Mother?*
Evans, Katie. *Hunky Dory Ate It*
Flack, Marjorie. *Ask Mr. Bear*
Fleming, Denise. *Mama Cat Has Three Kittens*
Fox, Mem. *Hattie and the Fox*
Freeman, Don. *Corduroy*
Galdone, Paul. *Cat Goes Fiddle I Fee*
Galdone, Paul. *Little Red Hen (Other fairy tales by Galdone are also available.)*
Guarino, Deborah. *Is Your Mama a Llama?*
Hudson, Cheryl. *Bright Eyes, Brown Skin*
Hutchins, Pat. *Good Night Owl*
Hutchins, Pat. *Rosie's Walk*
Inkpen, Mick. *Lullabyhullaballo*
Kalan, Robert. *Jump Frog Jump*
Kasza, Keiko. *Wolf's Chicken Stew*
Katz, Karen. *The Color of Us*

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*
King, Bob. *Sitting On the Farm*
London, Jonathan. *Froggy Gets Dressed*
London, Jonathan. *Wiggle Waggle*
Long, Silvia. *Silvia Long's Mother Goose*
Lowell, Susan. *Los Tres Pequeños Jabalíes/Three Little Javelinas (Spanish & English)*
Martin, Bill, Jr. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*
Martin, Bill, Jr. *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*
Martin, Bill, Jr. *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*
Mayer, Mercer. *There's An Alligator Under My Bed*
Miller, Margaret. *Guess Who?*
Nikola-Lisa, W. *Bein With You This Way*
Nodset, Joan. *Who Took The Farmer's Hat?*
Numeroff, Laura. *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*
Piper, Watty. *The Little Engine That Could*
Raschka, Chris. *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*
Reiser, Lynn. *Margaret and Margarita/Margarita y Margaret (English & Spanish)*
Rey, Hans. *The Original Curious George (& other Hans Rey Curious George books)*
Rockwell, Anne. *Sweet Potato Pie*
Rosen, Michael. *We're Going On a Bear Hunt*
Say, Allen. *Grandfather's Journey*
Slobodkina, Esphyr. *Caps For Sale*
Smalls, Irene. *Kevin and His Dad and Jonathan and His Mommy*
Soto, Gary. *Big Bushy Mustache*
Soto, Gary. *The Old Man and His Door (English & Spanish)*
Taback, Simms. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*
Tafari, Nancy. *Will You Be My Friend?*
Tarpley, Natasha Anastasia. *I Love My Hair!*
Walters, Catherine. *When Will It Be Spring?*
Wellington, Monica. *Mr. Cookie Baker*
Wells, Rosemary. *Yoko*
Wood, Audrey. *Napping House*
Wood, Don. *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear*
Zion, Gene. *Harry the Dirty Dog (There are 3 additional books about Harry.)*

Travel Games

Getting your child ready for kindergarten will be fun using some of these games:



Magic Word

Before taking a trip to the store, everyone agrees on the magic word. During the trip, as people are talking, everyone listens for the "magic word." The first one to raise his/her hand when the word is heard, gets a point. At the end of the trip, give a treat to the person with the most points.

I'm Going to Mary's

The first person begins by saying, "I'm going to Mary's and I'm taking some milk." The next player repeats that sentence replacing "milk" with another word that begins with "m." Continue until no one can think of another word. Then work with another consonant.

License Plate Identification

Keep a list of the states you see. Find them on a map. Another game is to find the alphabet, in order, on license plates.

My Grandmother's Trunk

One person begins by saying, "In my grandmother's trunk there was an apple." The next person repeats the verse..."In my grandmother's trunk there was an apple and a baseball bat." The next person repeats the verse adding an object beginning with the letter "c." This goes on until the last letter of the alphabet. The last person who goes has to list all twenty-six things.

Category Game

The first person begins by naming a category, such as fruits, vegetables, animals, toys, sports, etc. The next person must name an object that fits in the category. Each player takes a turn until no more objects can be named. Then move on to a new category.

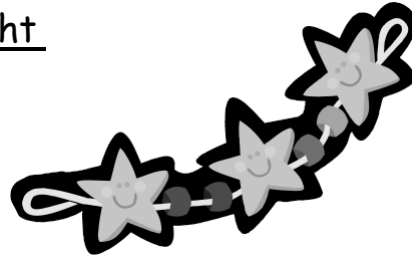
The Art of Cooking

Dough Delight

This is a recipe for dough to make clay beads.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups of flour
- 2 cups of water
- 1 cup of salt



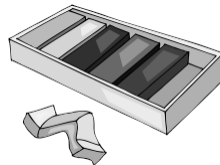
1. Mix all of the ingredients together. Do NOT eat the dough!!
2. Roll the dough into shapes, making sure that the beads are big enough to not get swallowed.
3. Use a straw to poke a hole through each bead.
4. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
5. Bake for one hour on an ungreased cookie sheet. Beads should be light brown when done.
6. When the beads are cool, paint with tempura or acrylic paint.
7. Apply a coat of clear varnish to each bead. This will protect them from chipping. Let the varnish dry.
8. String the beads and wear them any way you'd like! ENJOY!!

Modeling Clay

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound box baking soda
- 1 pound box cornstarch
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of water

Mix well. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until you are unable to stir mixture. Turn out on wax paper. Cool. Knead and store in plastic bag. If clay becomes dry, dampen hands and work clay. Roll to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness and cut desired objects. If you want to create a permanent sculpture, let dry several days; paint with tempura paint.



Bubbles

INGREDIENTS:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white corn starch
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dishwashing detergent



1. In a medium bowl, combine corn syrup and water.
2. Microwave on HIGH for 3-4 minutes until mixture is hot and corn syrup is mixed with water. Stir.
3. Add the detergent and mix gently so that you don't make a lot of suds.
4. Store in a container with a lid. To make bubbles, dip a ring shape into the mixture (you could cut out the center of a plastic top), lift out, and blow!!

Playdough

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- food coloring



DIRECTIONS:

Mix all ingredients together and cook for 3 minutes; drop onto wax paper and knead. Cool. Store in a plastic bag or an airtight container.