

Information and activities
to help prepare your
child for kindergarten



Making the Transition to Kindergarten



Collaborative for Educational Services



collaborative.org / early-childhood

Everyone is a learner



Starting kindergarten is a milestone in your child's life.

Is your child curious about what it will be like? Eager to find out? Maybe a little nervous? Do you have questions about how to help your child with the transition?

The Collaborative for Educational Services has put together this booklet with information, tips, picture book recommendations and activities for you and your child to do together to help make the transition to kindergarten a positive experience.

There are many simple things you can do to help prepare your child, and you're probably already doing a lot of them. Having conversations with your child, writing shopping lists, counting out apples at the grocery store, reading together every day, having play dates and encouraging exploration will help lay the foundation for a lifelong successful school experience.

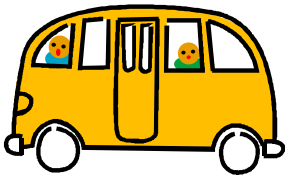
Getting Off to a Good Start



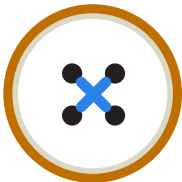
Share your child's excitement about school.
Talk positively about school and teachers.



Teach your child her full name, address,
telephone number and birthday.



Talk with your child often about arrangements
for getting to and from school.



Encourage your child to dress and undress
himself, zip, button and snap.

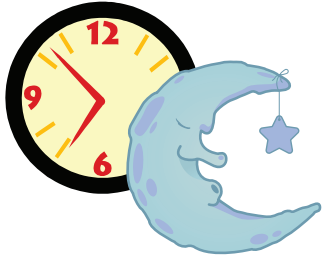


Teach your child to take care of toileting
needs with little assistance.



Remember to put your child's name on her
lunch box, backpack and all belongings.

Helpful Hints for Every Day



- Set regular bedtime routines for your child. Make sure she gets enough sleep.
- Start the day calmly. Leave enough time for morning routines and breakfast.
- Recognize and praise your child for his efforts.
- Remember that children's abilities vary. Your child is an individual with her own rate of growth, interests, strengths and talents—honor her for those!
- Read to your child daily.
- Allow your child to make choices and assume responsibilities around the house.
- Limit television and other screen time; be aware of the appropriateness of TV program choices.
- Ask your child what happened in school today (and every day!).
- Remember to check the backpack daily for your child's work and school notices.
- Dress your child appropriately for the weather and the day's activities, which may include painting and other messy projects.
- Keep your child's teacher updated on any changes that may affect your child (such as separation, moving, trips and the serious illness or death of any family member or pet).

Practicing Kindergarten Readiness Skills ► It's Routine!

Personal and Self-Help Skills ►

- Dresses self
- Recognizes primary colors
- Attends to a task independently
- Clean-up skills
- Performs daily routines

What They Might Look Like in Your Daily Routine

- Velcros, snaps, zips, buttons
- “How about wearing your blue shirt today?”
- Uses bathroom and washes hands
- Puts toys away when finished
- Hangs up coat independently

Social and Emotional Development Skills ►

- Take turns
- Is able to separate
- Is flexible in transitions
- Is persistent and asks for help when needed
- Engages in two-way conversation
- Uses words to resolve conflicts
- Plays or works cooperatively

What They Might Look Like in Your Daily Routine

- Takes turns while playing a game
- Leaves parents/guardian easily
- Moves easily with preparation
- Tries independently then asks
- Answers a question when asked
- Asks for toy rather than grabbing
- Colors or builds something together

Mathematical Development Skills ►

- Recognizes common shapes
- Understands cooking concepts
- Understands spatial awareness
- Sorts objects into groups

What They Might Look Like in Your Daily Routine

- Plays “I Spy” with shapes nearby
- Tries measuring while baking
- Moves toys, up, down, over, under
- Sorts clean laundry, cars, toys

Reading Skills ►

- Shows appreciation for books and reading
- Understands where a book starts
- Is aware of rhyming words
- Differentiates between letters and numbers

What They Might Look Like in Your Daily Routine

- Is read to daily
- Reads or looks at books from front to back
- Plays rhyming games
- Identifies some letters and numbers

Physical Development Skills ►

- Able to perform simple fine motor skills
- Combines movement to accomplish physical tasks

What They Might Look Like in Your Daily Routine

- Assembles puzzles, holds writing tools correctly, uses scissors
- Runs, jumps, throws, kicks, hops

Picture Books about Kindergarten



Having conversations with your child about what to expect in kindergarten and how she is feeling about it can make the transition easier. Here are some books that might spark those conversations.

- **Countdown to Kindergarten** *by Alison McGhee*
- **Franklin's New Friend** *by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark*
- **Kindergarten Count to 100** *by Jacqueline Rogers*
- **Kindergarten Diary** *by Antoinette Portis*
- **Kindergarten Kids** *by Ellen Senisi*
- **Kindergarten, Here I Come!** *by D. J. Steinberg*
- **Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten** *by Joseph Slate*
- **Off to Kindergarten** *by Tony Johnston and Melissa Sweet*
- **School Bus** *by Donald Crews*
- **The Night Before Kindergarten** *by Natasha Wing*
- **Tom Goes to Kindergarten** *by Margaret Wild and David Legge*
- **Welcome to Kindergarten** *by Anne Rockwell*
- **When You Go to Kindergarten** *by James Howe*



How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

Books, books, and more books! If there was one thing that would help children get ready for Kindergarten it might just be reading books with them. Reading starts with building children's vocabulary and language. Add pictures and a good conversation where you and your child can share your thoughts and feelings and you've got magic!

Try these at home!

- **Examine a book.** Let your child hold the book you're about to read to him. Show him how to turn the pages gently and from the middle so the pages don't tear. Ask about the title and the image on the cover. What does he think the book is about? Point out the start of the story, and later on ask how he thinks it will end. Talk about the author and illustrator of the book.
- **Set up a reading corner.** Even very young children enjoy handling a book. Start with board books (hard covers) which might be held upside down at first (it's really OK!). She may just look at the pictures, or pretend to read. She might read to her stuffed toys or imagine that she's the teacher in a classroom. Put a comfy pillow in any corner and a few books on a shelf or in a small box where she can see the choices.
- **Read books about Kindergarten.** Some books are about what happens in Kindergarten, and others show the mixed emotions of excitement and apprehension that children share about starting school. Check out the books below that are available in your library or at the book store.



How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

As children interact with each other, negotiating the sharing of materials or planning imaginative play, they learn concepts and skills in cooperating, advocating one's own ideas and listening to others, handling frustration, and empathizing with others.

Try these at home!

- If you have more than one child at home or when a friend is visiting, encourage the children to play a game together. Get them started by providing blocks, a board game, or dramatic play items so they can develop a scenario together.
- Let kids problem solve together. Try to talk less and listen more. When one child cries, you might hear another say, "Don't worry, I'll help you."

Things to say:

- **"I can see you two have both decided to be doctors!"**
Positive reinforcement will encourage better social skills.
- **"If you had two pans, could you both become cooks?"**
Encouraging cooperation is important.
- **"How would you feel if she took your toy away?"**
Teaching empathy helps children understand how another person might be feeling.



Do It Yourself



Think

How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

How many times lately have you heard your child say, “I can do it by myself!” Why now? Because during the preschool years, young children want to assert their independence by doing things for themselves. They also love to watch and copy what other people are doing. Their eagerness to be independent at this age makes it the ideal time to learn basic self-help skills. Encourage them to DIY!

Try these at home!

- **Practice Pouring-** Let your child learn how to pour using a small plastic pitcher and a few plastic cups. Tell your child that the cups are “empty” and that he should pour the liquid into them until they are “full.” Try emptying the pitcher and filling the cups, then emptying the cups to fill up the pitcher. Experiment with different size cups.
- **Help Around the House-** Helping with family chores and performing simple household tasks can be fun! Children can help when jobs are safe and fail-proof – put toys away, help set the table, wash the dishes, and put the laundry in piles.
- **Dress Yourself-** First, leave lots of time for your child to undress or dress. Unless your child shows an interest in learning to dress herself, wait until she can undress with some help before you introduce dressing. Use a doll or book to practice dressing skills.

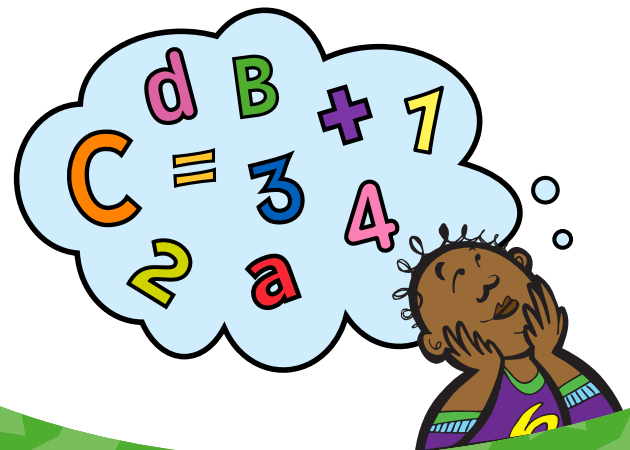


How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

Sorting and counting are great ways to develop logic and learn basic math skills. Through play with blocks, colors, and shapes children begin to learn scientific concepts such as classification and ordering.

Try these at home!

- **Shopping can be fun:** When you are in the grocery store, ask your child to help you find things based on a color or a food group. This works well in the fruits and vegetables aisle.
- **Make your walk go faster:** When walking down the street, choose a color and help your child to count how many items like cars, houses or other objects of that color you see.
- **Make clean-up fun** by putting out containers for each type of toy and play a game to see who can finish first. Put all the trucks in one bucket, all the blocks in another, all the people in another. Watch your child learn to sort and their room will get clean in a hurry!
- Keep some magnetic letters, numbers, or shapes on the fridge. While you’re cooking a meal, have your child arrange them by color or other category.



Illustrations by Corey Smigliani



BOSTON
CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM



BOSTON
CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM



Cut

How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

Scissors are used almost every day in kindergarten. They help children develop eye-hand coordination and strengthen their hand and finger muscles for writing. Scissors can be fun, but they also teach children to use their tools with care.

Try these at home!

- **The Right Tool (even for a lefty).** Get a pair of child-friendly scissors that have blunt, not sharp ends. If you have noticed that your child is left-handed, there are scissors for left-handed people.
- **Show Me.** Show your child how to hold scissors. The thumb goes in the top hole and the pointer (index) finger should be placed in the lower hole. The middle finger should rest just below the rim of the lower hole to support the scissors. The ring and little fingers are not used in cutting.
- **Follow the Line.** Draw a simple wide line from the top to bottom of a sheet of paper. Ask your child to cut right along the line. Remind your child that his thumb should always be up (in the top hole of the scissors).
- **Creative Cutouts.** Draw a few different shapes on paper and let your child cut them out. Save the cutouts (and scraps) for use in other art projects!



Play

How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

Playing games is the perfect way for children to exercise their bodies and their social skills. Games are fun, but they also teach children to take turns, share with others, follow rules, build physical strength, and use the large muscles in their body for hopping, jumping, walking, and balancing. These are skills they will use every day in kindergarten.

Try these at home!

- **Remember when.** Think back to the games you learned as a child. Share your stories of playing childhood games, teach your child the rules, and play them together!
- **Obstacle course.** Create an indoor obstacle course using small furniture like kitchen chairs, a stool, or sofa cushions. Direct your child to climb "over" the stool, "under" the chair, "around" the corner, and so on through your home.
- **Games for a gang.** Play outdoor games like "Red Light, Green Light," "Tag," or "Red Rover."

Things to say:

"You're taking turns!" Describe behavior you want to encourage.

"Keep trying!" Encourage your child when she needs it.

"Wow, you're working so hard!"

"You can do it!"

"Way to go!" Applaud every effort.








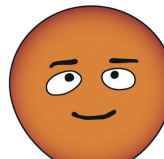
"I knew you could do it!"




Talking About Feelings

Conversations you have with your child about feelings will help develop social-emotional skills. Children who recognize and express their feelings are more successful in school.

How do you feel?

 Angry	 Scared	 Sad	 Happy
 Frustrated	 Anxious	 Disappointed	 Calm

 **Conscious Discipline**

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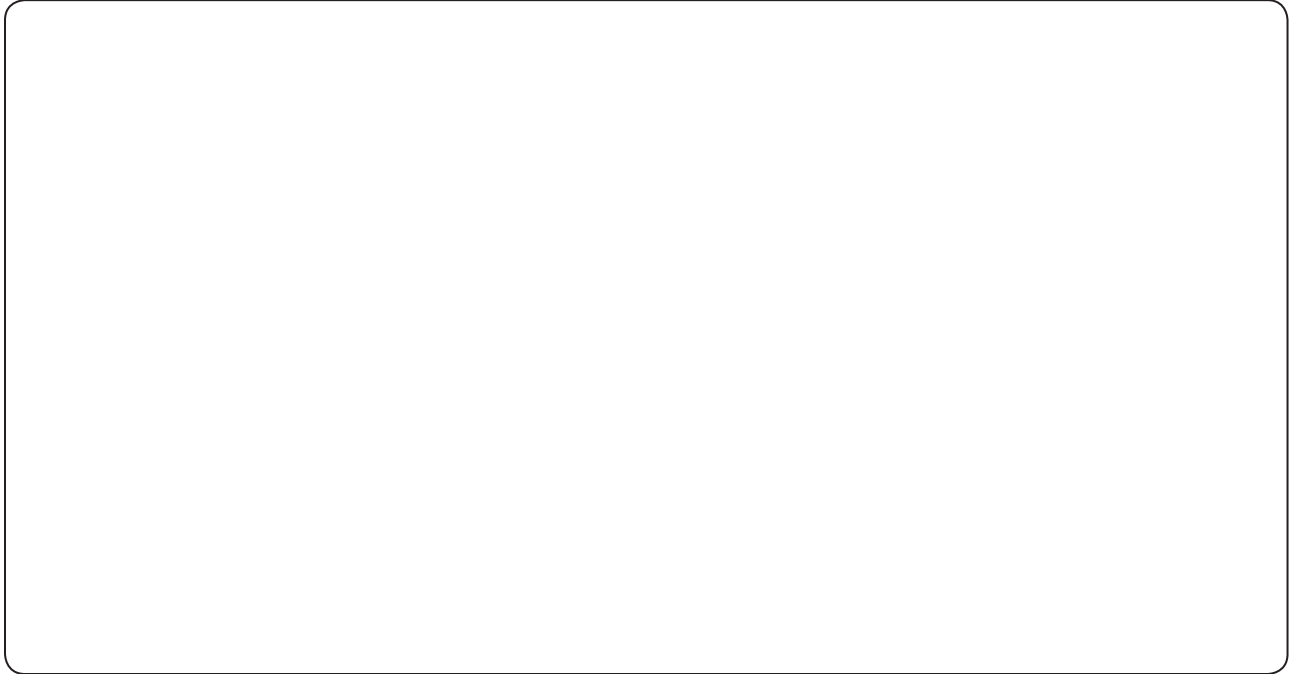
How Do You Feel Chart | ©2010 Loving Guidance, Inc. (consciousdiscipline.com/resources)

Draw a picture that shows how you're feeling today.

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for drawing a picture. The box is white and occupies most of the page below the instruction.

Cut and Glue Activity Page

Cut up some paper and glue it in this box.



Can you find something soft? Something fluffy? Something rough?

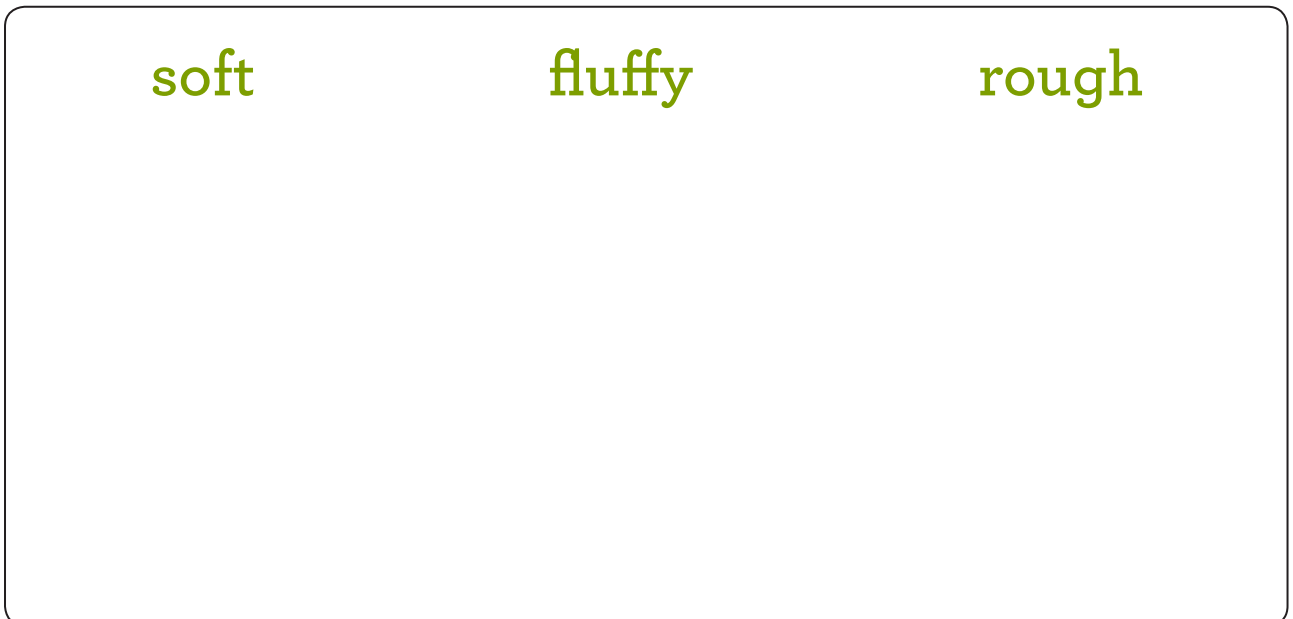
Now, can you glue what you found below the words in the box?

(Or, write the name of the item.)

soft

fluffy

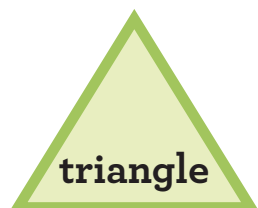
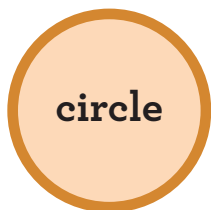
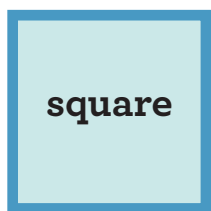
rough



Math Activity Page

Count out small handfuls of pennies with an adult. Keep track of how many pennies were in each handful by writing the number in the boxes below.

Play “I spy.” What can you find that looks like any of these shapes?



Draw a picture of something you saw on a walk today.

(Or, draw what you see outside your window.)

Did you see something green? Do you see something red?

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for drawing. The box is white with a thin black border and occupies most of the page below the text.

What do you think **you** will
like best about going to school?



Happy Learning!

This booklet is published by the Collaborative for Educational Services.



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Everyone is a learner

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