

K is for Kindergarten

...How to Help Your Child Be Ready



Early Learning Center at George Earle Elementary | School City of Hobart
Kindergarten Essentials Guide

400 North Wilson Street

Hobart, Indiana 46342

(219)942-7263 Fax (219)942-0249



Principal: Sara Gutierrez Secretary: Mindy Kusbel

Prepared By Trisha Carrillo

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Kindergarten is a big step in your child's life.

Kindergarten is the beginning of your child's journey in education. As your child's first teacher, you have been doing a lot to make starting school a positive adventure. This booklet offers ideas and activities to help you and your child get prepared for kindergarten.

You can learn about the different skills that help children succeed in school. You or a family member can try the activities offered here with your child. In addition to being fun, these skill builders can make a big difference for your child.

Along with easy tips, you'll find specific information for kindergarten websites, a kindergarten checklist, and a list of activities to be completed one month before starting kindergarten.

Starting kindergarten is a big step for children. By using the information in this booklet, you can help make those first steps a positive experience for them.

LEARNING

This section looks at the three skill areas your child is developing now and will continue to work on in kindergarten: **academic, motor, and social or emotional**. As you are doing the activities that are in this booklet, remember to encourage your child's efforts and give them positive feedback. Start a lifetime of learning by helping your child find the joy in learning new things.



ACADEMIC SKILLS



LITERACY

A primary focus during the kindergarten year is literacy development. Teachers recognize that all children entering kindergarten are at various stages in their literacy development. To accommodate these differences, the kindergarten program offers a balanced literacy program for young children.

To help your pre-kindergarten work on these skills, have them practice using the sounds of letters, learning new words, and listening to stories out loud.

A child entering kindergarten typically can:

- *Listen to and understand stories, directions, and conversations.*

Build the skill: Read to your child every day for 20 minutes will encourage a life-long love for learning. Ask your child to tell you about the story and the pictures. Ask them what their favorite part was and why.

- *Learn new words.*

Build the skill: Words are everywhere! It is amazing how many words your child already knows, those words are called environmental print. Besides these words, talk about new vocabulary during everyday activities.

(Car rides, grocery shopping, taking a bath)

- *Retell stories he or she has heard by talking or drawing about them.*

Build the skill: Have your child “read” or tell you about their favorite story.



- *Know different sounds in rhymes and familiar words.*

Build the skill: Teach your child nursery rhymes or silly songs that have rhyming words. When you hear a rhyme, stop and talk about the words and how they sound the same.

- *Use scribbles, shapes, and pictures to show ideas.*

Build the skill: Encourage your child to pretend write using scribbles or letters. Provide writing materials such as paper, pencils, markers, and crayons.

Build the skill: Ask your child to tell you about the pictures or writings s/he creates. Find a special place in your home, to show them off. (refrigerator or bulletin board)

- *Name some letters of the alphabet.*

Build the skill: Point out the letters of your child's name everywhere. Begin to show your child how to write or copy his or her name. Encourage children to play with magnet letters on the refrigerator. Playing with letters allows children to learn more about what they look like.



MATH

In math, pre-kindergarten children work on numbers, shapes, and counting. The primary focus in kindergarten is to build inquiry skills. Children learn hands-on how to manipulate objects. Some skills they will learn are grouping, patterns, simple measurements, graphing problems, addition, and subtraction skills.

A child entering kindergarten typically can:

- Count in order to 20.

Build the skill:

Count anything. (steps, doors, or chairs) Use words such as more, less than, how many, fewer. Talk about what each of these words mean.

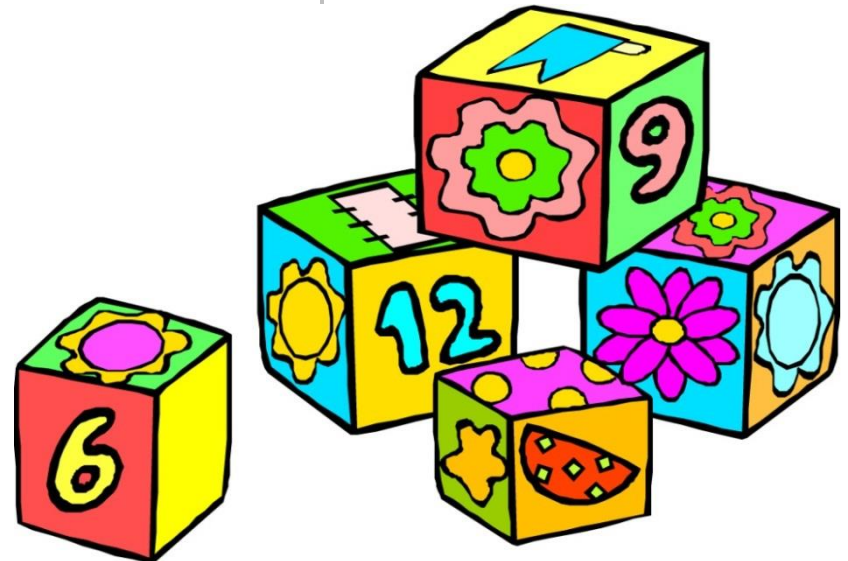
- Organize objects into similar groups.

Build the skill:

Encourage your child to group objects by their size, color, or shape. Discuss how they are the same and different.

- Find, make, and copy simple patterns.

Build the skill: Using blocks, have your child make a simple pattern. Use only 2 colors at first. When your child can complete that task, add more colors.



- Know that objects can be measured by length, time, weight, and size.

Build the skill:

Allow your child to help you cook. Show them the different measuring cups. Also, measure your child's height with yarn.

Compare the yarn with other things around your home. Talk about words such as tall, short, and long and what they mean.

- Find and name common shapes.

Build the skill:

Find different objects in your home or neighborhood, such as a ball, door, window, car wheel and then sort them by shape, size, and color.

- Have your child put two different sized fruits on the scale in the grocery store. Talk about words such as heavy and light and what they mean.





SCIENCE

Children entering kindergarten explore the world using the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. They show interest in and ask questions about the natural world. Science is a way of knowing, a process for gaining knowledge and understanding of the natural world. It is not enough for students to read about science; they must do science. The students, as scientists, should have hands-on, active experiences throughout the instruction of the science curriculum.

A child entering kindergarten typically can:

- Use his or her senses to learn about materials and the environment.

Build the skill: Take walks in your neighborhood and talk about what you see. Talk about any of the 5 senses you use, see, hear, feel, taste, or smell.

Build the skill: Plant a seed in a pot or garden. Talk about what living things need to grow. (Water, sun, air, and food.

- Show interest in and ask questions about the natural world in everyday activities.

Build the skill: Visit a park, museum, or zoo. Talk about the things your child notices.

Build the skill: Go to a library and find books on subjects that interest your child. Read them together, and encourage your child to ask questions.

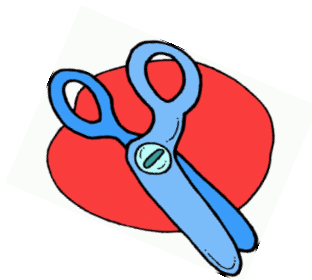
- Use simple tools such as a magnifying glass, bucket, shovel, and measuring cup.

Build the skill: Encourage water play, sand and play- dough.



MOTOR SKILLS

FINE - MOTOR SKILLS



FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Children going into kindergarten are still building their fine motor skills. Motor skills are the foundation for much of a child's early learning and are more important than we ever thought.

Fine motor skills are needed before a child can learn to write and there is a relationship between gross motor skills and learning how to read.

A child entering kindergarten typically can:

- String large beads and build with blocks.

Build the skill: Give your child dried noodles, large beads, or big buttons to string. Offer things to stack, such as blocks or small boxes.



- Handle and begin to cut with child-sized scissors.

Build the skill: Help your child learn to cut with scissors by providing coupons or pictures from the newspaper to cut out.

- Use pencils, crayons, or markers.

Build the skill: Help your child learn to pick up, hold, and use pencils, crayons, markers. Let him or her decorate a box for storing these materials.

- Begin to write some or all the letters in his or her name.

Build the skill: Write your child's name on a special card. Let him or her use the card to copy the letters.

- Copy and draw a line, a circle, an X, and a plus sign.

Build the skill: Take turns being the "leader" who chooses the shape and the "follower" who draws the shape.



Other Activities:

- Shaking dice by cupping hands together, forming an empty air space between the palms.
- Scrunching up 1 sheet of newspaper in one hand. This is a super strength builder.
- Playing games with the "puppet fingers" - the thumb, index, and middle fingers. At circle time have each child's puppet fingers tell about what happened over the weekend, or use them in songs and finger plays.
- Turning over cards, coins, or buttons, without bringing them to the edge of the table.

LARGE MOTOR SKILLS

Children going into kindergarten are working on strengthening their large motor skills. Schools call children's ability to make controlled movements with their arms, legs, and the body's **large motor skills**.



A child entering kindergarten typically can:

- *Hop several times on each foot.*

Build the skill: Encourage your child to hop in time to a favorite song.

- *Hop over a low object, such as a line.*

Build the skill: Set up a line inside or outside for your child to play hopscotch.

- *Throw a ball in a direction and catch a large ball or soft object.*

Build the skill: Play catch with your child using a large ball, stuffed animal, or small pillow. Try hitting a balloon several times before it hits the ground. Keep track of the number of hits.



Other Activities:

In and Out. Place a plastic hoop on the floor or ground. Then invite your child to jump in and out of the hoop, all the way around. When he's able to hop (one-footed), invite him to hop in and out.

Tag With a Twist. A game of tag is a great way to get children to practice both running and dodging. To be sure the latter skill is involved; gradually reduce the available area in which the game is played!

- *Bounce a ball several times and kick a ball that isn't moving.*

Build the skill: Pass a ball back and forth between you and your child by bouncing or kicking it.

More to Try:

- Encourage your child to run, jump, climb, skip, and move to music.
- Give your child time each day to play safely outdoors.
- Give your child time to use large muscles daily, either indoors or out.
- Join your child in active play.





SOCIAL SKILLS

In kindergarten, teachers expect children to polish their social skills. Taking turns, playing cooperatively with other children, sharing, and listening to an adult other than their parent or caregiver are all top concerns. Here are some specific social milestones you can expect your child to reach this year.

Keep in mind that children develop at different rates and that every teacher follows a different curriculum, so your child may not do everything on this list.

A child entering kindergarten typically can:

- Say his or her first and last name, phone number, and address.

Build the skill: Help your child practice saying his or her name, address, and phone number in English and whatever language you speak at home.



- Use the bathroom, wash his or her hands, and get dressed alone.

Build the skill: Help your child practice going to the bathroom and washing his or her hands.

Build the skill: Help your child practice getting dressed, buttoning and zipping, and tying shoes.

- Know basic safety rules, such as watching for cars, crossing the street, and not talking to strangers.

Build the skill: Teach your child these basic safety rules. Practice them while on a walk.

Build the skill: Teach your child how to buckle their own seat belt. (This will help with pick up procedures for car riders)

- *Interact easily with one or more children.*

Build the skill: Help your child learn how to share with others, stand in line, and wait for his or her turn. Let your child practice in places where there are other children, such as at a playground.

- *Interact easily with familiar adults.*

Build the skill: Encourage your child to tell a special adult about something he or she is excited about, such as a new book.



EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Kindergarten is a time when children increasingly learn they are part of a larger community. They learn more about the world around them and how their family, home, school and familiar places like the park, library, and grocery store fit into larger organizations and institutions.

Kindergarteners begin learning how to better identify and express their feelings and develop stronger empathy and understanding. Socializing with new classmates, learning to share and play cooperatively, and learning to assert one's self while understanding the importance of rules and authority are all key skills.



- *Show confidence in the things he or she is learning to do.*

Build the skill: Pay attention to your child and their ideas. Notice the things your child can do.

Build the skill: Watch for things in which your child shows interest. Suggest activities that include those interests.

Build the skill: Be patient and let your child develop at his or her own pace.

- *Follow rules.*

Build the skill: Play simple board or card games with your child.



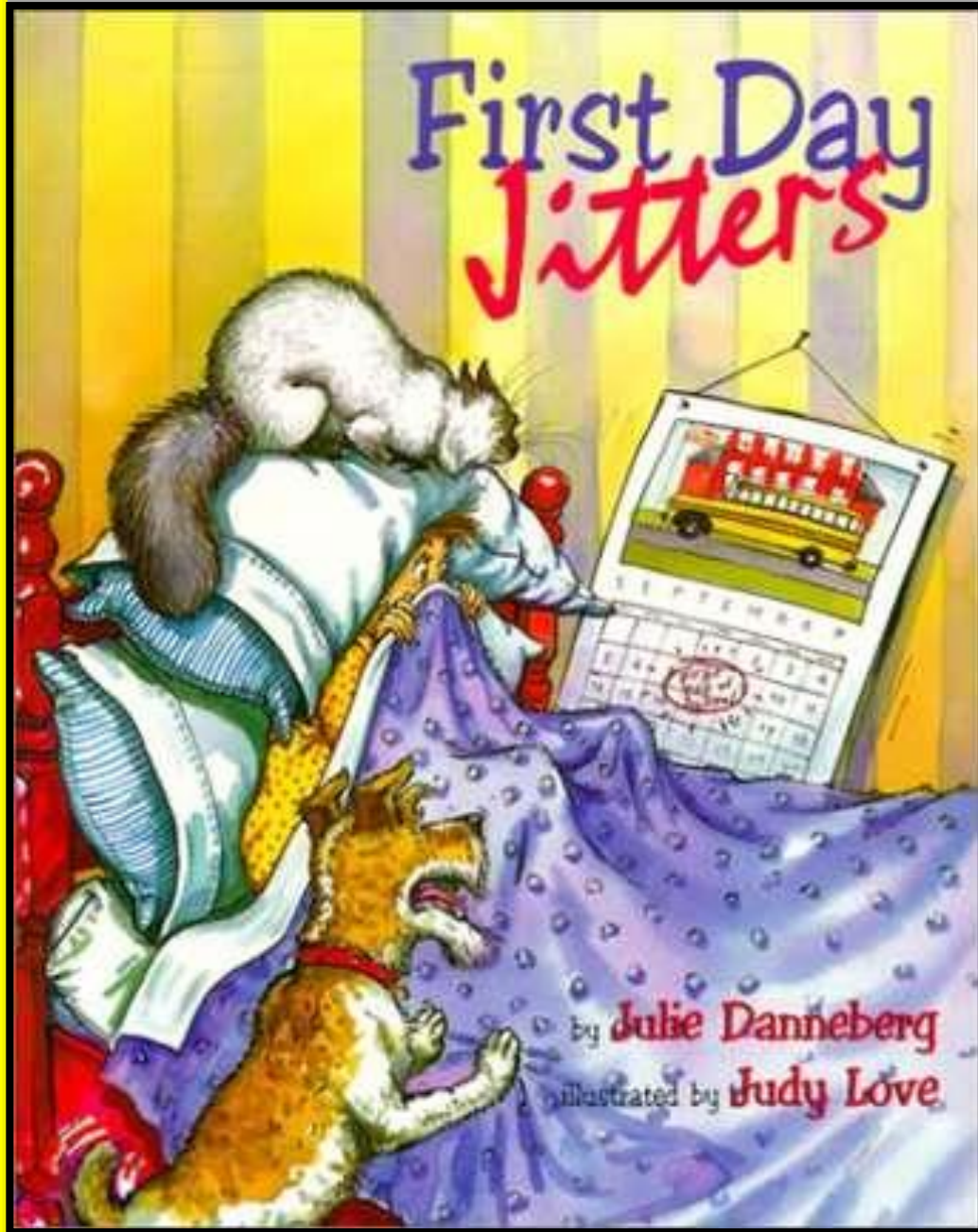
- *Begin to handle his or her emotions appropriately.*

Build the skill: Teach your child it's okay to have feelings, but not all actions are okay. For example, it's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit someone in anger.

- Tell if he or she is a boy or a girl and say his or her age.

Build the skill: Create an “All about Me” book with your child. Have your child give personal information such as name, age, family members, likes, and dislikes.





The First Day

I gave you a little wink and smile
As you entered my room today.
For I know how hard it is to leave
And know your child must stay.
You've been with him for five years now
And have been a loving guide,
But now, alas, the time has come
To leave him at my side.
Just know that as you drive away
And tears down your cheeks may flow
I'll love him as I would my own
And help him learn and grow.
For as a parent, I too know
How quickly the years do pass
And that one day soon it will be my turn
To take my child to class.
So please put your mind at ease
And cry those tears no more
For I will love him and take him in
When you leave him at my door.

Parents Activities to Ease the Jitters

- **What Parents Can Do**

Stay Positive: Keeping the topic of school positive and exciting is important. Don't let your own emotions influence your child's feelings about starting school.

Be Sensitive: Validate your child's fears and reassure him or her. Point out that you, too, have felt nervous about starting something new, such as a new job.

Adjust Schedules Early: Do not wait until the day before school starts to give your child an earlier bedtime or wake up call. If your child knows the routine of what is expected on a school morning in advance, it definitely will make school mornings less stressful and more positive.

Stay Involved: Join the *Parent Pal Group or volunteer in the classroom. This keeps you up to date on what is happening within the school and also gives you a chance to meet your child's classmates. Kids do get excited to have their parents witness their new independence.

*Information about the Parent Pal Group coming soon.

Children Activities to Ease the Jitters

- Things to do with your child

Make School Prep Fun:

Making the shopping trip to buy new clothes and school supplies fun can make your child feel special and excited about school.

Read Books: Reading with your child has always been a wonderful bonding experience. There are many [books about starting Kindergarten](#) that highlight some of the feelings your child may be having.



Books to Read

Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner

by Amy Schwartz

Kindergarten Kids

by Ellen Senisi

Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten

by Joseph Slate

Tom Goes to Kindergarten

by Margaret Wild

Timothy Goes To School

by Rosemary Wells

Will I Have A Friend?

by Miriam Cohen

The Night Before Kindergarten

by Natasha Wing

Countdown To Kindergarten

by Allison McGhee

Wemberly Worried

by Kevin Henkes

The Kissing Hand

by Audrey Penn

Tiptoe into Kindergarten

by Jacqueline Rogers



View School Websites:

<http://hobart.schoolwires.com/Page/4055>

Teachers post information on their classroom websites such as needed supplies, photos of the classroom, school calendar, or the schedule of a typical day, as well as useful links and resources that you may want to be familiar with throughout the year.

RESOURCES

To help better prepare you and your child for Kindergarten, this section will offer kid links, kindergarten readiness checklist, and a monthly Jump Start Calendar.



KID LINKS



<http://www.kindersite.org>



www.abcya.com



www.starfall.com



www.ixl.com



www.learningplanet.com



www.funbrain.com



[http://www.scholastic.com/kids/stacks/
games](http://www.scholastic.com/kids/stacks/games)



www.gamequarium.com



<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/skills-k-langbuilders.htm>

JUMP START CALENDAR



JUMP START CALENDAR

Here is a monthly list of activities you can try with your child to get them prepared for the upcoming school year.



Activities

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
4 weeks before 1st day of Kindergarten						
<p>Library Visit Obtain a library card to your local library and explore what the library has to offer. Get familiar with you librarian.</p>	<p>All About Me Have your child tell you their first and last name, their age, and parents' names. Also, practice phone number and address.</p>	<p>Counting Practice counting with your child. Count anything you see, count the number of blocks s/he builds, number of rocks on the ground, doors in your house.</p>	<p>Simon Says This game will help children I with listening skills and allows them to use both large and small motor skills.</p>	<p>Play with Clay Use play-doh to help your child build strength in their hand muscles for fine motor skills.</p>	<p>Conversation Have your child call someone on the phone that they know. They should have a conversation about his or her day or a special activity they have done.</p>	<p>Playing Ball Using a large ball, take turns bouncing, kicking, and catching back and forth.</p>
3 weeks before 1st day of kindergarten						
<p>Library Visit Have your child pick out a book for him or her to read. Do a picture walk, talk about what they see, what they think will happen next. Ask questions at the end of the story.</p>	<p>Finding Patterns Have your child practice patterning using small items around the house, (e.g. cereal, buttons, cards, beans). Pattern by color and then give them AB pattern (red, blue, red, blue) and ABB pattern (red, blue, blue)</p>	<p>Social Butterfly Strengthen interpersonal skills by having your child address people (hello, how are you, good morning, good night, fine thanks and you). Practice anywhere in your community.</p>	<p>Categorizing Have you child create a collage using old magazines or books, cut out pictures that obtain to a certain group, foods, transportation, etc.. and create a collage.</p>	<p>Number Sense Have your child count numbers 1 to 10 and then backwards. Use items to count. (books, bears, cars)</p>	<p>Following Directions Give your child two simple step directions, unrelated directions to follow, such as , pick up the ball, then open the door.</p>	<p>Journal Time Purchase a writing journal for your child. Have your child draw a picture about something that happened this week. Kids love to do what adults do, as your child is writing, you should write in your own journal.</p>



Activities

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
2 weeks before 1st day of kindergarten						
<p>Following Directions Play the game "follow the Leader" with your child. Also, have your child jump, skip, gallop, and clap with a beat.</p>	<p>Letter Practice Have your child use different materials to write their letters. For example, place sand or shaving cream in a pie tin or cookie sheet and practice writing letters inside it.</p>	<p>Sequencing Work with your child to come up with the steps to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, draw pictures in their journal, when completed make your sandwich</p>	<p>Pictures Need Words Use a magazine or a picture from your photo album and have your child dictate what is happening in the picture. Extend his language by asking, "What is happening here?"</p>	<p>Words are Everywhere Teach your child about environmental print by having them write down words they see around. For example, cereal boxes, movies, books, stores, and restaurant menus.</p>	<p>Rhyming Basket Collect pairs of objects that rhyme (sock/lock, shoe/glue, hat/cat, car/star, soap/rope) and place in a basket. Make sure your child knows the name of all items. See if your child can find pairs of items that rhyme.</p>	<p>Writing Practice Make a grocery list with your child. Ask them to help write down or draw the items that you need from the store. Ask your child to read it back to you.</p>
1 week before 1st day of kindergarten						
<p>Library Visit Find out what your child's favorite animal is. At the library, find fiction and non-fiction books with that animal in it. Read and discuss together.</p>	<p>Tracing Shapes Have your child use a crayon to trace the shapes and color them in. Cut the shapes out and find things around the house that have the same shape.</p>	<p>Make a Story Using cookie cutters make different shapes and create a story based on the things you cut out.</p>	<p>Stringing Things Reinforce cutting skills by having your child cut straws into small pieces. Have your child put the pieces onto a string. You can also string O-shaped cereal, beads, and other small objects.</p>	<p>Talking Together Ask your child what their favorite thing is to do. Give your child your full attention.</p>	<p>Play with Words Play with words by clapping and singing them. Clap out the sounds, sing it to music and change the first sound of the words to create a silly word that rhymes (e.g., log, hog, sog, tog).</p>	<p>ABC's Sing the alphabet song. Use magazines or books to help your child spy letters inside them.</p>

Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

by Peggy Gisler, Ed.S. and Marge Eberts, Ed.S.

While there's no perfect formula that determines when children are truly [ready for kindergarten](#), you can use this checklist to see how well your child is doing in acquiring the skills found on most kindergarten checklists.

Check the [skills your child](#) has mastered. Then recheck every month to see what additional [skills](#) your child can accomplish easily. Young children change so fast -- if they can't do something this week, they may be able to do it a few weeks later.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to stories without interrupting ▪ Pay attention for short periods of time to adult-directed tasks ▪ Understand actions have both causes and effects ▪ Show understanding of general times of day ▪ Cut with scissors ▪ Trace basic shapes ▪ Begin to share with others Identify rhyming words ▪ Can follow simple, verbal instructions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Start to follow rules ▪ Be able to recognize authority ▪ Manage bathroom needs ▪ Button shirts, pants, coats, and zip up zippers ▪ Begin to control oneself ▪ Separate from parents without being upset ▪ Speak understandably ▪ Talk in complete sentences of five to six words ▪ Count to ten and counts objects to 10 ▪ Bounce and catch a ball | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at pictures and then tell stories ▪ Identify the beginning sound of some words ▪ Identify some alphabet letters ▪ Recognize some common sight words like "stop" ▪ Sort similar objects by color, size, and shape ▪ Recognize groups of one, two, three, four, and five objects ▪ Runs, jumps, plays outdoors and does other activities to exercise ▪ Recognize rhyming sounds |
|--|---|---|

If your child has acquired most of the skills on this checklist and will be 5 on or by August 1st he or she is probably ready for kindergarten. What [teachers want to see](#) on the first day of school are children who are healthy, mature, capable, and eager to learn.

Read more on FamilyEducation: <http://school.familyeducation.com/kindergarten/school-readiness/38491.html#ixzzJh1lzzY9>

Congratulations!

Congratulations on all you have done to reach this point with your child. Your involvement—and taking the time to learn about the things covered here—will help make your child's first school experience a positive one.

Children take pride when their parents are involved. They also perform better in school when parents and schools work together to help them succeed. By staying involved with your child's learning, you will help your child gain the best education possible in kindergarten and beyond! We look forward to seeing you and your child on the first day of school.



Educationally Yours,

Sara Gutierrez, Principal of the Early Learning Center, Teachers, and Staff