

Hello Kindergarten!



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood



CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Supporting Your Child's Learning as you Prepare for Kindergarten

Families are their children's first teachers. You can help children enter kindergarten feeling safe, confident, and excited about learning. Share what you see and ask your child questions. Join your child in exploring their interests. Help them to learn new skills, words, and ideas during your daily routines. Try new ways of doing things and visit new places during your day. The suggestions in this booklet can help your child develop key thinking and learning skills that will help them to continue learning in kindergarten and beyond.

Getting ready for kindergarten should be fun for you and your child! Remember that all young children are still learning and growing. Your child may still be working toward some of the skills listed here, and that's okay. Schools are ready and able to support all children who are age eligible to enter kindergarten!

Hello Kindergarten!



For more tips on preparing for the transition to kindergarten visit:

<https://www.ctoec.org/hello-kindergarten/>

Speak and Listen



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Ways to support learning at home:

Use language to communicate

Model describing what you see, hear, and do. Ask your child questions about events, objects, and actions. Help your child use language to share ideas, express emotions, ask questions, and get their needs met.

Learn new words and understand longer sentences

Use new and different words every day as you do chores, play, and talk. Use sentences that describe size, color, position, action, and other interesting things that are happening around you.



Get Ready to Read and Write



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Ways to support learning at home:

Enjoy books

Read with your child and discuss things that your child likes about the books. Talk about the pictures and the story. Take your child to the library to select books. Read books that your child likes over and over.

Identify symbols and some letters of the alphabet, and learn the sounds of those letters

Have your child point out and say the letters in their name. Help your child to point out letters on cereal boxes and street signs. Point out familiar signs and symbols, such as stop signs or store logos. Introduce your child to the sounds of letters by teaching them the sound of the first letter of their name. Explore new letter sounds as you talk about people you know and objects they are interested in.

Use writing or drawing to show something

Provide pencils, crayons, markers, and paper for your child to scribble or draw. Talk about what they are drawing or writing. When they talk about something, suggest drawing or writing about it. Help your child write their first name. Make a shopping list or card together.

Engage in Learning



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Show curiosity and interest in learning new things

Ways to support learning at home:

Help your child see learning as something that is fun and exciting. Talk to them about things they are interested in and help them learn more about those things. Ask questions and show interest in the new things they are discovering about the world. Let them explore, ask questions, build, take apart objects, and try things out. Take “discovery walks”. Ask and work together to answer questions, such as, “What do worms eat?” and “Why is the sidewalk uneven here?”

Choose and plan

Let your child make safe and simple choices, and plan for how they will do something. Help them follow through on their plan and finish the activity. Encourage them by telling them what they have left to finish a task (e.g., “Only four more blocks and you’ll be all done picking up!”).

Solve problems

Support your child to solve simple problems. Ask them to share ideas for different ways to do something. Use positive words to encourage them, such as, “What else can you try?” or “That was a good idea, but it didn’t quite work.”

Sort items into groups by size, color, function, or other features

Find activities where your child has to group things, such as silverware, clothing items, or toys. Give your child many different items and talk about how items are “alike” and “different”.

Use Mathematics



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Ways to support learning at home:

Show interest in counting and number-related activities

Turn mealtime into math fun by having your child count objects as they help prepare the table. Count objects when you are driving or walking to school, or on errands. Check out the local library for counting books.

Solve simple math problems in everyday life

Ask questions such as, “You have two blocks. How many will you have if I give you one more?” or “You have four berries. How many will you have if you give me two berries?”

Describe and talk about objects that have different sizes or shapes

Talk about the big and small balls, the long and short blocks, and the round cookie or square plate. Find activities where your child can group things by size or shape. Give your child many different items and talk about how items are “alike” and “different”.

Compare the length, weight, or height of familiar objects

Ask, “Which is taller?” and talk about ways to compare size. Gather a variety of objects and line them up from largest to smallest. Organize boxes of food from tallest to shortest.

Use words like *beside*, *above*, *below*, *over*, and *under* to describe the position of objects

Use the tune of a familiar song to create a movement song: “Put your hands on top of your head; stand on top of the box; crawl under the table.” Use position words in directions: “Put your sneakers under the bed; put the teddy bear on top of the pillow.”

Recognize some numbers

Look for numbers in the community as you drive or ride the bus. Find numbers in books or on food packages. Help your child make a shopping list and include the number of each item you will get.

Support Physical Development & Health



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Ways to support learning at home:

Choose activities that involve movement

Find times when your child can use their big muscles to lift, throw, move around, twist, and balance. Find safe places for your child to be active. Encourage your child to run, jump, throw, climb, use a swing, or go for a fast walk.

Use items that involve hand control

Allow your child to use small objects with their fingers when it is safe. Use tongs, write or draw, twist caps off, or use scissors.

Learn safety rules and healthy behavior

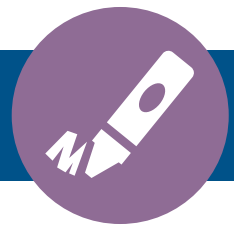
Talk to your child about rules that keep them safe at home and other places you visit. Talk about why you do certain things to stay healthy, such as using a tissue or washing hands.

Take care of simple dressing and healthy behaviors

Work with your child to practice putting on jackets and shoes, and using buttons and zippers. Help your child learn to wash their hands and wipe their nose.



Create



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Enjoy and move to music

Ways to support learning at home:

Listen to music that is meaningful to your family and/or culture. Sing, play instruments, or move to the music together.

Talk about and create drawings, paintings, and sculptures

Look at art around you. Talk about shape, color, and texture. Use markers, crayons, clay, and other materials to create things together. Don't worry about the finished product – just enjoy the experience!

Play pretend

Engage in pretend play with your child, or allow them to use things around the house to dress up or play “house”. Plan playdates so they can pretend with friends or relatives. Whether your child is acting out a favorite story or imitating the adults they know, pretend play helps them learn new skills, take perspectives, and socialize.



Participate and Cooperate



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Ways to support learning at home:

Work and play together with other children

Provide opportunities for your child to play and participate in groups, such as library story hours, church groups, or visits with friends or relatives.

Seek help from trusted adults

Help your child ask familiar and trusted adults for help. Have them give books to the librarian to check out, ask a family friend to show them something, or encourage them to ask a relative for help.

Try new things

Encourage your child to try new things that might be a little hard for them. Help them learn and practice new skills.

Follow routines and directions

During familiar routines, such as bedtime or mealtime, ask your child what comes next. Play games with them, such as, "First find the red truck and then the yellow block. Put the truck and the block under the blue box." Be clear when giving directions. "Please hold my hand as we cross the street." Have your child repeat directions so you know they understand.

Work out problems with others

Help them solve problems by offering different ways to do something, or by suggesting some words to help resolve a conflict. Encourage your child to ask an adult for help when they are unable to resolve a problem.

Understand other people's feelings

Recognize your child's feelings and help them recognize the feelings of others. Give your child suggestions on how to help others. Read stories that describe feelings and talk about events related to characters' feelings.

Investigate, Experiment, Discover



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Show interest in simple and safe experiments or investigations

Ways to support learning at home:

Talk with your child about what you see happening around you and wonder. Talk about “what happens when...” Find out what rolls, what melts, or what happens when you add different things to water. Experiment with how cooking changes food (e.g., a raw egg versus a boiled egg). Mix different paints and see colors change.

Use words that describe how things change, motion, position, and what things look like

Use words such as *day/night*, *big/little*, *fast/slow*, *sunny/cloudy*, *ice/water*, and *soft/hard*. Talk about motion and try different ways to move objects (e.g., rolling, blowing, pushing, and pulling). Ask, “What happens when you drop an egg?” or “What happens when ice melts?”

Look, listen, smell, or feel in order to observe, describe, and predict

Find objects to feel, touch, hear, smell, taste, and weigh. Play “I see ...” games. Listen to music, taste new foods, and touch textures (e.g., wood, wool, leather). Notice when plants have grown and flowers have bloomed. Talk or “write” about experiences and predictions. Watch and draw weather conditions.

Learn About the World Around Us



When your child enters kindergarten, they will benefit from being able to:

Learn about self and others

Ways to support learning at home:

Talk about your child's interests and things they like. Discuss your family members and the things you do together. Talk about things that are the same and different as other people and families.

Learn about time and change

Talk about yesterday, today, and tomorrow with your child. Describe things that you did as a child or share pictures of family members when they were young.





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