



# School Readiness Kit

## Preparing Children for Kindergarten



Interactive Activities for Adults and Preschool Children

Genesee Intermediate School District

## Unit 1 Oral Language

### Parent/Teacher Tips

**What is it?** Oral language is the language we use when we speak. We use it to express our thoughts and intentions and to interact with others. It is our knowledge of language that allows us to translate the sounds we hear into meaningful messages.

#### How can I help my child develop Oral Language skills?

Read and reread books to your child every day. Read informational books as well as fiction. Talk to your child all of the time. Talk in the kitchen about food and what you are preparing. Talk when you are in the car or bus. Observe the environment and help your child with names of objects and observations about what is going on and how things work.

**Research indicates that the more vocabulary words a child knows before starting school, the better the chances that the child will be successful.** The average girl has a vocabulary of 5,000-7,000 words, and boys have 3,000-5,000 word vocabularies when starting kindergarten. Children who have a small vocabulary when starting school will be challenged to understand directions and connect new information to prior learning. Difficulty in understanding words, results in children being inattentive and leads to behavior problems. A large vocabulary is the basis for learning and communicating in appropriate ways. This means that children should learn approximately 10 new words per day. The words will best be learned from experiences and listening to stories (flash cards are not recommended). Explore interesting topics with both rare and common words. Preschool children delight in learning and will not shy from big words. Keep the learning in small segments to keep the attention of the young learner. Words, experiences and stories should be revisited in a variety of ways to help the child remember the word, meaning and how to use the word in conversation.

**Vocabulary is best learned in conversations.** Discuss stories and observations with your child. Give the child plenty of time to form an answer. Encourage your child to stay on topic for three or more statements. Observe the child's conversation skills. Move from parallel play (two children playing next to each other but not communicating) to a more interactive play where words are used to cooperate and do things together.

*Research indicates .....*

*The more vocabulary words a child knows before starting school, the better the chances are that the child will be successful. Words learned in the preschool years set the stage for understanding the world.*

Adapted from research by Hart and Risley

### Items Needed for the Activities:

- ◆ Discussion Pictures
- ◆ Cut-out Characters for Rhymes
- ◆ Fabric Samples

### Learning to Listen

Help your child learn ways to describe sounds in his/her environment. Helping children hear subtle differences in sound will help when they are trying to hear the difference between the sounds that make up our spoken language and then

connect sounds to printed text. Be aware of and point out to your child sounds around you. Talk about these sounds as they occur. Examples include: thunder, music, sirens, and animal sounds. Practice using loud and quiet voices. Play games using different voices.

Talk about how sounds seem similar or different and extend your child's language using words to describe those sounds. Example: trains sound different from cars or busses.

*Adapted from Family Fundamentals/MLPP*

# Is My Child's Speech or Language Delayed?

Parents are often the first adults to notice a possible delay in their child's speech or language development. Your child's speech may not be clear. Your child may use shorter sentences than other children the same age. Children may seem non-compliant, act shy or hostile when they cannot express themselves adequately.

## Is My Child's Speech or Language Delayed?

Speech skills are different from language skills. Language refers to the use of words and sentences to convey ideas. Speech is the production of sounds that make up the words and sentences.

## Milestones of Speech and Language Development

Between the ages of three and five, children learn to carry on a conversation, ask and answer questions, follow and give directions, and speak alone in the presence of a group. Children should be able to have conversations with 3-5 responses back and forth with the other person in the conversation. These skills are important to success in kindergarten.

After age five, sentences become increasingly complex. Children begin using words like "when," "while," and "since" to relate two or more ideas in a single sentence. The language level used by teachers and textbooks assumes that children have this skill by the age of seven or eight. As a rule, children use understandable speech by age four and use all speech sounds correctly by age five to seven.

*Adapted from Carolyn A. Weiner, M.A., C.C*

## Five Little Mice

*See the Parent Tip Sheet in the kit to learn how the rhymes and finger plays contribute to school readiness. Use the mice cut-outs in the kit to dramatize the rhyme.*

Five little mice came out to play,  
Gathering crumbs along the way,  
Out comes a pussy cat,  
Sleek and fat.  
Four little mice  
Went scampering back.  
5-4-3-2-1

## Book Talk

### Adult Tip:

- *Hold the child on your lap so that the child can see the sequence of the book from left to right.*
- *The more stories a child hears, the greater the vocabulary potential!*

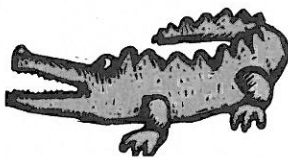
### What You Will Need:

- Quality story books
- Alphabet books
- Counting books

### Let's Go!

- Look at the book cover together.
- Read the title and talk about the pictures.
- Have the child predict what the story will be about.
- Read the story. Stop part way through and predict what will happen next.

## The Monkeys and the Alligator



*Use the monkey cut-outs to dramatize the rhyme.*

Five little monkeys  
Sitting in a tree,  
Teasing Mr. Alligator  
"You can't catch me,  
You can't catch me."  
Along came Mr. Alligator,  
As quiet as can be.

### SNAP!!!

*(Repeat with 4 little monkeys, etc. 3,2,1, then...)*

No little monkeys sitting in a tree,  
Away swims Mr. Alligator, as full  
as can be.

## Rhymes and Finger Plays

## Dramatic Play

### Wheels on the Bus

*(Suit actions to words)*

The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
Round and round, round and round.  
The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
All through the town.

The people on the bus go up and down,  
Up and down, up and down.  
The people on the bus go up and down,  
All through the town.

The money on the bus goes clink, clank,  
clunk,  
Clink, clank, clunk, clink, clank, clunk.  
The money on the bus goes clink, clank,  
clunk,  
All through the town.

The driver on the bus says, "Move on back," etc

The children on the bus say, "Yak, yak, yak," etc.

The mothers on the bus say, "Sh, sh, shh," etc.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish, etc.

The horn on the bus goes honk, honk, honk, etc.

The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
Round and round, round, and round.  
The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
All through the town.

Encourage children to develop imaginative play. Establish an area, cupboard or box where inexpensive items can be stored to allow pretend play. Empty boxes, old sheets, old clothes, paper and writing instruments, etc. are useful in the collection. Children can make and pretend with the items.

Conversations between children develop vocabulary as they make up characters, situations and events. Children act out adult roles, fictional characters or recreate familiar stories. The imaginative play will help children create and write stories in future years.

Adults can play along too! Give the child a chance to direct the activity. It is empowering for the child to be in charge for a while, and it will give the adult some insight into how the child sees the adults interact.

## Conversations

Help your child describe events using correct tense. Using family photos, tell stories about family events shown in the photos using past tense. *Example:* "We went to the beach. We had so much fun, but it was hot!" Encourage your child to tell what he remembers about the event. Have conversations about what you and your child are doing together. *Example:* "We are looking

at pictures. What are they doing in the pictures? Name someone you know in the photos. What do you like about this picture?" Make plans for later; include your child in the plan. *Example:* "Tonight we will go over to Grandma's house. What would you like to take with you?"

*Adapted from Family Fundamentals/MLPP*

### Parent Tip:

Discuss the photographs provided in the kit with your child. Ask your child, "What is happening? How do you think the children in the picture feel? Can you tell where the picture would take place? Have you ever done what the children in the picture are doing?" Look for other cues in the picture to discuss. Your child will be learning expressive language skills for kindergarten.

## Five Little Elephants

*Use the elephant cut-outs in the kit to dramatize the rhyme.*

Five little elephants  
Rowing toward the shore.  
One fell in,  
Then there were four.  
Four little elephants  
Climbing up a tree.

One slid down,  
Then there were three.  
Three little elephants  
Living in the zoo.  
One walked off,  
Then there were two.  
Two little elephants  
Playing in the sun.

One fell asleep,  
Then there was one.  
One little elephant  
Isn't any fun.  
Abra-ca-da-bra!  
Then there were none.

**Big Words?**  
Kids like  
unique words.  
Dinosaur names,  
machine parts,  
unusual colors, etc.  
are interesting to  
learn !

Genesee Intermediate School District  
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Celebrating 50 Years  
of Service



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Funded through grants by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, the Michigan Department of Education (ASAP-PIE, Great Parents-Great Start), Community Foundation of Greater Flint, United Way of Genesee County, Merkle Trust, Target, and Macy's, in partnership with Genesee Intermediate School District, area health and human service agencies, and Genesee County school districts.



*The mission of the Great Start Collaborative is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and support to help all Genesee County families provide a great start for their children from pre-birth to age five.*



The School Readiness Kits are designed for children who will enter kindergarten the following school year. The activities in the kit will provide a foundation for curriculum and assessments that children will continue to work on in kindergarten. The kits provide parent/teacher information on literacy development and activities that parent/preschool teachers and child may do together.

## Oral Language Expectations During Kindergarten

The State of Michigan has established Grade Level Content Expectations for kindergarten in English and Language Arts. The expectations are rigorous and align the curriculum with the national standards. Children are very receptive to learning between birth and five years old. It is the best time to expose children to a variety of learning experiences and play that will set the stage for the academic experience in school.

Children will know the meanings of common words used in a kindergarten classroom setting. Children will be shown pictures (*see samples in this kit*) and asked to predict what is happening, who might be in the picture, when it might occur,

where it would take place and why they think people would look that way in the picture.

Children will be asked to discuss simple story elements: setting, characters, and events to retell the story and discuss what is happening in the story.

Children will be able to make drawings to represent a portion of a story. They will be able to discuss how the illustrations in a book support the story line.

Children will be asked if they have experiences that are alike or different than the ideas in the story through discussion and drawing.

Children will be able to predict familiar story lines, rhymes, and words with first letters that sound the

same (alliterations).

Children are capable of all the tasks listed, but parents, caregivers and schools must work together to provide experiences that will provide a solid foundation for learning. For more information on the Grade Level Content Standards, please visit:  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde).