



School Readiness Kit

Preparing Children for Kindergarten



Interactive Activities for Adults and Preschool Children

Unit 7 Print Awareness

Preschool children should work on learning the letters of the alphabet. Additional time will be spent in kindergarten learning letter names and sounds. Children do not have to know all their letters and numbers before kindergarten, but the more letters they know, the sooner they will be able to read.

Children often know their ABC song as a stream of sounds. They need additional practice to recognize the shape of the letters, the name and the sound(s) the letter makes.

It is not necessary to start at A and learn all the letters to Z. Keep the learning interesting and relevant by starting to spell the child's name, then family members' names and names of familiar objects. Go slowly. Focus on one word at a time until the child understands the concept. (For example: A boy's name is Jackson. "J" is a letter he can look for in books, etc. Mom starts with an M. Dad starts with a D. Sister's name is Madison, it sounds the same as Mom.) Use the familiar letters to build new words. "J" is used for Jackson, jump, joy, journey.

"Using pictures to tell stories lengthens your child's language"

C. Thomas



Forming Letters

Letters can be made from clay, play dough, in shaving cream, sandpaper shapes, etc. Appeal to a child's multiple senses. Use different colors, textures and substances. (Try a Ziploc bag with ketchup or mustard in it. Form the letter, then squish the bag to erase and try again).



Rebus Books



Rebus books substitute pictures for words in a story. Adults and children can read them together. Point to each word and stop when you get to the picture. Allow the child to name the picture. This will help children learn the left to right order of reading, and gain a sense of what words and punctuation look like. Children will eventually progress to recognizing words from sight, looking for picture cues and sounding out words.

Items Needed for the Activities:

- ♦ Magnetic Letters
- ♦ Magnetic Letters
- ♦ Developmental spelling chart
- ♦ Developmental spelling chart
- ♦ Clay mat and clay
- ♦ Clay mat and clay
- ♦ Rebus Story
- ♦ Rebus Story

Left to Right

Early attempts at writing and letter formation often result in confusion with directionality. Children will write the word backwards (a mirror image) or put the stem of the letter on the wrong side (d vs. b). These early attempts do not indicate a problem such as dyslexia. As the child sees the word spelled correctly and practices writing left to right, the misperception will be corrected by the child.

Ways of Learning Letters

To promote flexible learning of letters, children must acquire knowledge of letters in many ways. Letters that look distinctively different from each other will be easiest to learn (m, b, f, s, r).

Over-learning or exploring the letters and sounds in many different ways will create a better foundation for learning than just copying or memorizing letter names. Talk with children about how the letter looks – does it have curves, sticks, circles, tunnels, etc.? Name the letter. Practice the sound the letter makes. Talk about how the mouth looks when you say the sound of the letter (watch the mouth when making the vowel sounds of A, E, I, O, U). How is the sound being formed? With the teeth, tongue, using puffs of breath? How does the hand move when writing the letter? What words start with that letter? How does the letter look when it is in the middle of a word?

Capital or Lowercase Letters?

Ninety percent of written language is in lower case. When a person's name is being spelled, always use the capital letter. When the child understands the lower case letters, introduce the capital forms through matching games.

Keep Learning Fun!

Games using number and letter shapes, names and sounds will keep a child's attention much longer than flash cards or a long list of letters. Bingo and matching cards can easily be made at home. Focus on letters and numbers that are familiar to the child. Learning will progress faster when the child finds it easy and familiar. Repeat games adding a couple of new letters or numbers at a time.

Top to Bottom, Left to Right

Help your child learn that we read English from left to right and from top to bottom.

You will need:

- A pencil with an eraser end
- Time with your child
- Crayons

Read the words in the "colors" (below) to your child. Put the eraser end of a pencil or your finger under each word as it is read. Have your child color each picture.

A Red Apple



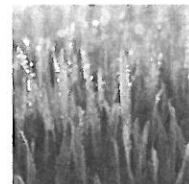
A Yellow Star



An Orange Ball



Green Grass



Rhymes and Finger Plays

Adults and children can practice the rhyme for the month until the child can recite it in unison with the adult. Learning the rhymes will help children attune to the sounds of the English language and help them read as they know similar words.

I Am a Snowman

I am a snowman, cold and white;

I stand so still through all the night.

Stand up tall.

With a carrot nose,

Point to nose.

And head held high,

Hold head high.

And a lump of coal to make each eye.

Point to eyes.

I have a muffler made of red,

Pretend to tie muffler around neck.

And a stovepipe hat upon my head.

Place hands on top of head.

The sun is coming out! Oh, my!

Form circle with hands.

I think that I am going to cry.

Start sinking to floor.

Yesterday, I was so plump and round.

Form large circle with arms.

Now, I'm just a river on the ground.

Sink to floor.



Dramatic Play Office

Give children the opportunity to learn through play. Create a play office using materials found in the home. Adults and children can pretend to write forms and conduct business. The child will learn about adult roles and the need to read and write to be successful in the work environment. Change the center each month to keep play and ideas new and interesting.



- Message pads
- Appointment Book
- Stapler
- File folders
- Racks for filing papers
- In/Out trays
- Index cards
- Business cards
- Assorted forms
- Desk and wall calendars
- Computer and printer
- Clipboards
- Note cards, sticky notes, address labels
- Paper clips of various sizes
- Pens, pencils, markers

English is Confusing!

Our alphabet has 26 letters, but some letters combine with others to make completely different sounds than each letter individually (ch, ng, sh, th) or the same sounds but different spellings (boat, goo, seu). These complex understandings of the English language will develop during the elementary school years.

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Celebrating 50 Years
of Service



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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.

Print Awareness in Kindergarten

The Michigan State Board of Education and the Department of Education established Grade Level Content Expectations for kindergarten through eighth grades. The standards are rigorous. Children who have a good foundation of vocabulary, hearing books read to them, reciting stories from pictures, drawing, looking at books, etc. will most likely be able to meet the expectations.

Children will quickly progress into writing for meaning. In kindergarten, children will learn how to spell 18 or more words correctly and recognize some "sight words". They will follow

along with a familiar story while pointing to the words being read.

Reading strategies taught will include predicting words, using letter sounds, picture clues, and patterns of language (what makes sense?) Children will learn how to use helpful clues to determine the word before they can recognize a word in isolation.

Kindergarten students will learn how to compose poems, reports and stories using pictures and words. Punctuation marks will be introduced for children to include in their writing.

Children will be able to work on these complex tasks in ways that are fun and age appropriate.

Reinforcement and practice of the new concepts should be continued at home.

