

Welcome to Kindergarten!

Kindergarten is an exciting time for you and your child. During this important year, your child will become accustomed to the routine of school, and he/she will develop the basic skills needed to read, write, and do math. This will be a year of tremendous growth!

Your child will learn a great deal this year, but kindergarten is about more than academics. In kindergarten, students develop important social skills, and they become more self-sufficient, responsible, and independent.

In this guide you will find information that will help you help your child have a successful year in kindergarten. Included in this guide are:

- ▶ Tips to help your child build his/her reading, writing, and math skills.
- ▶ Ways to help your child become more independent, self-reliant, and confident.
- ▶ Information on the physical, intellectual, and emotional growth of kindergarteners.

Your involvement and support are key to your child's success!



Learning in Kindergarten

Reading

Kindergarteners go from identifying letters to reading words and short sentences.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Read aloud to your child every day. While reading a story, ask your child questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" "What would you do?" "How do you think that made him feel?"
- ▶ Help your child learn "sight words." Look for these common words in everyday situations and in the books you read.

a	come	in	my	this
am	do	is	no	to
an	go	it	on	up
and	he	like	see	we
at	here	look	so	went
can	I	me	the	you

Writing

Your child will start the year writing individual letters, and will progress to writing whole words and short sentences.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Have writing supplies readily available (e.g., pencils, crayons, various kinds of paper, markers).
- ▶ Help your child hold a pencil properly and steady the paper.
- ▶ Take a break from paper. Practice writing words with sidewalk chalk, finger paint, salt or sugar on a cookie sheet, or with fingers on a steamy window.



Math

In kindergarten, children learn about numbers, counting, sorting, and grouping.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Ask your child to bring you a specific number of objects, such as four spoons or five cups.
- ▶ Play board games that require moving a number of spaces, or card games that involve identifying a number, such as "Go Fish."
- ▶ Look for opportunities to use relative terms such as more, less, bigger, smaller, taller, shorter, heavier, lighter. For example, ask your child, "Which of these glasses has more juice?"
- ▶ Have your child sort Legos or blocks by color and shape, or put coins into categories (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters).

By the end of the year, your child should be able to count to 100, write numbers up to 20, and give you the "next number" for numbers 1 to 100.

Support Your Child

Kindergarteners are learning many new skills, and they may become frustrated at times. If your child is feeling discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement, keep a positive attitude, and be available to help.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, or if you are looking for more ways to help build your child's skills at home, talk to your child's teacher.



Growing Up: Kindergarten

Your child will develop skills and grow in a number of ways during this important year.

Physical

As the year goes on, kindergarteners improve their fine motor skills (e.g., holding a pencil properly) and gross motor skills (e.g., running and skipping).

To help your child improve fine motor skills, do art projects that involve drawing and cutting. To help develop gross motor skills, encourage activities such as playing ball, dancing, or swimming.

Intellectual

Kindergarteners are curious about their world, and they ask lots of questions.

Be open to your child's questions, and encourage his/her curiosity by taking trips to museums, nature centers, and aquariums.

Emotional

Friendships are becoming more important to kindergarteners.

Set up play dates with classmates and encourage your child to take turns, share, and be respectful.

"Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning." Fred Rogers



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Parent Involvement Guide

Building Independence

Kindergarteners are expected to be able to take care of more things on their own. You can help your child become more self-sufficient and independent by teaching self-care skills, providing your child with choices, and giving your kindergartener age-appropriate responsibilities.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Teach your child how to properly hold utensils, open a milk carton, use a napkin, and tidy up when he/she is finished eating.
- ▶ Make sure your child can wash his/her hands and use the bathroom independently.
- ▶ Encourage your child to get dressed without your help. Be patient if your child becomes frustrated with zippers or buttons.
- ▶ Give your child simple household tasks to complete, such as feeding the dog, helping set the table, or watering the plants.
- ▶ Help your child develop decision-making skills by giving him/her choices. Let your child choose which shirt to wear, what to eat for lunch, or which game to play.
- ▶ When something is difficult, don't immediately swoop in to help. Let your child try to problem solve—and celebrate when he/she is successful.