

GETTING YOUR CHILD READY for Kindergarten



Connecticut State Department of Education

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Families are their children's first teachers. Parents can help their children enter kindergarten feeling happy,

confident and safe. Share what you see and ask your child

questions. Note what your child finds interesting and then

join him or her in his or her interests. Children love to explore

new places, ideas and things. Spending time with your

child is more valuable than any toy. Enjoy this time with

your child; it passes by quickly. The suggestions in this

booklet can help your child develop key thinking and

learning skills for kindergarten.

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GETTING READY

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SPEAK AND LISTEN

Before your child enters school, he or she should be able to:

Use and understand many words.

Speak in complete sentences.

Ask lots of questions.

Say and notice words that rhyme in stories.

Make up and share personal stories about his or her interests.

To help your child be ready for kindergarten, you can:

Use new words daily as you play together and go about everyday activities. For example, "I am going to a mechanic to have my car fixed."

Be a model for your child by speaking in complete sentences with five or more words per sentence. Help your child to add words to complete his or her sentences.

Listen carefully to your child's questions, and together spend time to find out the answers.

Say and sing nursery rhymes, rap and poetry, and play rhyme games. Help him or her to repeat the words that rhyme. Help your child to make up his or her own funny rhyming words.

Listen with interest to your child's stories, make comments and ask questions. Share your own stories. Show your own childhood photographs and tell stories about them.

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READ AND WRITE

Before your child enters school, he or she should be able to:

Select familiar books and tell why he or she likes them. Retell favorite stories from books.

Hold a book upright.

Identify letters of the alphabet.

Recognize letter sounds.

Recognize, copy and print his or her first name.

Hold a pencil and write with it.

To help your child be ready for kindergarten, you can:

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

Read books often with your child so he or she learns how to hold and use a book. Allow your child to pretend to "read" to you favorite stories from books.

Have your child point out and say the letters in his or her name; put magnetic letters of the alphabet on the refrigerator for your child to use. Help your child to point out letters on cereal boxes, street signs and stores.

Introduce your child to the sounds of letters by helping your child to say the sound of the first letter of his or her name. Have your child find or say things that begin with the same letter sound of his or her name. Have your child say the sounds of the first letters of the names of his or her brothers and sisters, and sounds of letters that your child is interested in.

Print your child's name whenever possible, such as on his or her drawings or below his or her photograph. Provide pencils, crayons or markers and paper for your child to scribble or write his or her first name. Help your child recognize shapes in letters that form his or her name.

Let your child see you writing for various reasons, such as making a shopping list or writing a birthday card. Provide pencils, crayons or markers and paper for your child to make marks, scribble or write in his or her own way.

USE MATHEMATICS

Before your child enters school, he or she should be able to:

Recognize and count up to ten items.

Recognize the number symbols 1-10.

Describe and talk about objects that have different sizes, colors, shapes and patterns.

Sort items by "same" and "different."

Use the words "near," "far," "top," "bottom," "under," "first," "second," "last."

Sort objects from smallest to largest, shortest to tallest and lightest to heaviest.

To help your child be ready for kindergarten, you can:

Turn meal times into counting fun by having your child count objects as he or she helps set the table. Count objects whenever you are driving or walking to school or on errands. Check out the local library for counting books—children love to read and re-read these books.

Play "I Spy" with numbers as you travel; find numbers in books; count, measure and estimate while making dinner. Look for number symbols in magazines, cut out and glue on paper all the 2s, 3s, etc. Put magnetic numbers on the refrigerator for your child to use.

Use a favorite story/picture book—describe objects according to color, shape and size. Play games with dancing and moving to a pattern: hop, wiggle, spin; hop, wiggle, spin. Play guessing games: "Can you find something that is red and round or looks like a triangle?" Color and draw patterns together.

Play games where your child has to find the matching sock, shoe and mitten. Set the table by matching every plate with a napkin, cup and fork. Look for picture games, playing cards and dominoes for finding matches.

Use your morning routine to practice "First we get up, second we wash our face." 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 these words in directions: "Put your sneakers under the bed; put the teddy bear on top of the pillow."

Gather a variety of objects from your child's toy box and line them up from largest to smallest. Organize boxes of cereal, rice and pasta from tallest to shortest. Put a variety of objects in a bag; sort them from heaviest to lightest.

PARTICIPATE AND COOPERATE

Before your child enters school, he or she should be able to:

Understand and participate in conversations.

Stay involved in a directed activity to its completion.

Follow routines and directions.

Work and play together with other children.

To help your child be ready for kindergarten, you can:

Set a good example for your child by listening to his or her stories. Encourage your child to tell you about what he or she did during the day.

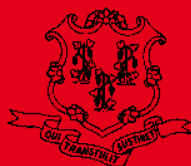
Help your child learn to stay with an activity to completion by sharing and working on the activity with him or her. Use positive words of encouragement such as, "You are doing a good job picking up your socks."

Be clear when giving direction to your child. Have your child repeat the directions in his or her own words so you can be sure that he or she understands. Play games with your child such as, "First find the red truck and then the yellow block. Put them both under the blue box." Children may need help in remembering, so remind them by going over the directions.

Provide lots of opportunities for your child to play and participate in groups with other children. Praise your child's efforts and accomplishments. Help your child in solving problems by helping him or her to look at other ways to do something or by giving him or her the words to resolve a conflict.

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**For more information, contact the
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